

ABSTRACT

WATSON, TANYA ELAINE. Read-Aloud and the English Language Learner. (Under the direction of Dr. Ruie J. Pritchard and Dr. Angela Wiseman.)

Reading aloud (read-aloud) is quickly progressing as a useful strategy on the middle school level, yet research has not adequately caught up with its use with special populations such as middle school students and English language learners (ELLs). The purpose of this study was to add to the limited research on the read-aloud instructional strategy with 9 ELLs and delineate effective strategies for this population to increase their reading comprehension. This study was framed by three theories applicable to these learners. It addressed the educational value of using multicultural and classic read-aloud texts as the basis of read aloud instruction, and proposed a specific sequence for the read-aloud protocol. Multiple data sources in open- and close-ended formats, including surveys, annotations, multiple written retellings, vocabulary activities, and assessments were used in a six-phase read-aloud protocol. Learners were provided with 27 read-aloud sessions, multiple experiences with the selections, and specific strategies to enhance reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Under mixed methods conditions, the read-aloud protocol developed for this group of ELLs revealed positive effects on reading comprehension, writing performance, and vocabulary knowledge. In addition, ELLs indicated preference for multicultural text types and exhibited greater reading comprehension when this text type was used. Further, the study confirmed the use of the cloze-maze tests as a valid assessment of reading comprehension, especially when used in conjunction with qualitative measures. Recommendations include the need for larger scale studies, and treatment and control group studies on the use of structured read-aloud designs with special populations, such as middle school students and ELLs.

Keywords: *read-aloud, middle school, English Language Learner, mixed methods*

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Read-Aloud and the English Language Learner

by
Tanya Elaine Watson

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APPROVED BY:

Dr. Ruie Pritchard
Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Ron Honeycutt

Dr. Angela Wiseman
Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Jessica DeCuir-Gunby

Dr. Steve Amendum

DEDICATION

To the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you know my name;

To my peeps, you know me;

To the Honoré children, you bless my heart;

To friends, you make long days bearable;

To students, you make it all worth the while; and

To Dr. Margaret “Meg” Dulaney, you went away too soon.

BIOGRAPHY

Tanya E. Watson of New Orleans, Louisiana, earned her BA degree in education with an emphasis in English from Southern University at New Orleans. Watson began her career in the public school system at Lawless Middle/High School, where she worked as an English-language arts teacher with 7th, 8th and 10th grade students. Five years later, Watson transferred to Livingston Middle where she taught 8th grade for five additional years. During that time she served as department chair, team leader, student mentor, chair of numerous committees, and was recognized as Teacher of the Year. Watson then returned to Lawless School, where she taught English II – IV and remediation to 10th - 12th graders—a position she lost along with her home, church and other volunteer venues due to Hurricane Katrina. In pursuit of her master’s degree, Watson was fortunate to have NC State University accept her as a degree-seeking student in 2006. While in graduate school, she worked at the Witherspoon African-American Cultural Center library under Mrs. S. Dunn as well as served as a substitute teacher in schools in Raleigh, NC. After receiving her Master’s of Education in 2008, she was accepted into the doctoral program in Curriculum & Instruction. During that time, she worked as a graduate student at the William & Ida Friday Institute for Educational Innovation under Dr. H. Spires. She also became a 2010 Capital Area Writing Project Fellow and Borchardt fellow of the Triangle Community Foundation in 2011-12. Watson served as a University Supervisor for student teachers and participated in poster sessions, institutes, conferences, and speaking and teaching engagements (New Literacies Summer Institute, National Writing Project, National Council of Teachers of English,

American Educational Research Association, NC State Teaching Fellows, NCETA, and International Conference on Learning). Watson plans to relocate to Georgia to use her gifts and talents in the public school sector and endeavors involving youth.

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Chapter I Introduction

Chapter I is organized into multiple sections. The first section offers the context of the problem regarding the profiles of good and poor comprehenders, with a focus on the latter, and how these definitions relate to read-aloud practices for instructing English language learners and English as a Second language learner. Since the term *English language learner* describes those students who know multiple languages as well as those learning English as their second language (i.e., ESL), the term English language learner will be used from this point forward and throughout this document to describe the population targeted in this inquiry. The chapter moves into the background of read-aloud and problems and promises of it as an instructional strategy. The problem statement reveals two considerations for English language learner research involving reading comprehension and read-aloud. Two primary research questions guiding qualitative and other descriptive strands are announced, along with the purpose statement. The significance of the study is then presented and rooted in reports based on the English Language Learner. Before ending Chapter I with the researcher's bias statement, three theoretical perspectives guiding this study and research interests of this researcher will be presented.

Context of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to add to the limited research on the read-aloud instructional strategy and English language learners and delineate effective strategies for their learning by evaluating the read-aloud instructional strategy for its effectiveness in helping English language learners read and comprehend texts written in English. Further, the study aims to illustrate the educational and pedagogical value of using multicultural and

classic texts as the basis for the read-aloud lessons. The study addresses perspectives on why learners succeed or fail in literacy classrooms. Two theories guiding this study include culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and natural learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Both regard knowledge as socially constructed, promote building background knowledge, and suggest that modifications are needed for the marginalized reader.

For well over 25 years, the educational community has had in its possession profiles of how ideal good readers/comprehenders operate inside the classroom, and as a result has built a description of their cognitive processes and related activities. Good comprehenders are mature readers, semantically savvy. Before reading begins, they use contextual analysis in order to understand terms and predict context/content (Stanovich, 1986). They also understand ways to activate schema and are knowledgeable about the purposes for reading, whether they be strictly for pleasure, to figure out an idea, or learn a new subject matter (Paul & Elder, 2006; Snow, 2002). Good comprehenders focus attention and know how to monitor comprehension by modifying and correcting understanding. They operate at what Paul and Elder (2006) describe as the second and third levels of close reading because they are skilled with integrating main ideas of the reading into meanings they can better understand, as well as grasp the overall point of view. According to Snow (2002), these readers take action to clarify understanding of the material and are motivated to reread if/when necessary. After the act of reading, good comprehenders reflect on the reading and summarize new ideas. In addition, they understand how to paraphrase and identify the gist of diverse texts. They further evaluate the quality of the text as it relates to clarity, relevance, and logic (Paul & Elder, 2006). As indicated by Snow (2002), these proficient readers use “constant, ongoing

adaptation of many cognitive processes” (p. 34). As summarized by Stanovich (1986), good comprehenders read well, have high vocabulary knowledge, and will continue growing in reading abilities.

In contrast, poor comprehenders are ineffective readers, unable to “read and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding” of grade-level texts (Snow, 2002, p. 34). These readers take meaning in a literal sense and are deficient in syntactic knowledge and decoding skills. In addition, poor comprehenders lack purposes for reading other than to merely get it done (Snow, 2002; Stanovich, 1986). During reading, they are easily distracted and struggle with common vocabulary, which hampers their progression through texts (Stanovich, 1986). According to Snow (2002), poor comprehenders lack active integration of strategies that help them connect more deeply with texts. Stanovich (1986) added that these poor readers carry a “learned helplessness” mentality, and, as a result, are often labeled as low in intelligence. After reading, poor comprehenders do not think back on what they read or recognize the main tenets of the reading. A final level of reading comprehension that Paul and Elder (2006) describes as *role-play*, where the reader is able to assume the author’s voice, is too difficult a level to achieve for these struggling readers. Moje, Young, Readence, and Moore (2000) extend these characteristics but re-label poor comprehenders as “marginalized” readers (p. 409). According to this description by Moje et al. (2000), marginalized readers, who resemble the poor comprehenders, are those students who lack engagement in the types of reading and writing conducted in schools. The language and/or cultural practices these readers use in their homes and communities are more valued there than in the schools and classrooms they attend. Due to issues associated with race, class, sexual orientation, or

gender, these students are considered “outsiders” to mainstream groups (Moje et. al., 2000).

Diverse reading perspectives built from these two profiles of good and poor comprehenders shed light on the marginalized reader and what is problematic for him/her. From an instructional perspective, Johnny was a marginalized reader due to ineffective methods regarding whole-word strategies (Flesch, 1955). Linguists contended students failed at reading due to a lack of exposure and experiences with diverse texts (Chomsky, 1957). Psycholinguists asserted these marginalized readers experienced a lack of meaningful context and incorrect encoding. Cognitive psychologists argued that the experience depositories of marginalized readers were inadequately filled with background knowledge (Rumelhart, 1980). Sociolinguists added that students’ dialects were invalidated in the process of learning to read (Labov, 1972). According to other theorists, the Matthew effect in reading, genetic issues, and/or environmental factors contributed to the lack of capital for marginalized readers (Stanovich, 1986). Collectively, these reading theories reveal the ripple effects that hinder our marginalized readers. Specifically in the middle grades, students are expected to fall into the good comprehender group and operate as independent readers (Lesesne, 2006). This is a highly problematic assumption. Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) reported that over 6 million middle/high school students read and comprehend well below basic reading levels. Thirteen years ago, Humphrey (1998) indicated:

In all curricular areas except reading, schools demonstrate continuous support for young people's learning. In reading, however, we often act as if students are competent by the sixth grade and place the burden on them to continue to improve their skills and to choose to read without encouragement. (p. 92)

Researchers are still echoing this position today, and as a result, needs of post elementary readers are overlooked in curricula (Frantz, 2006). The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2012) contended that instruction in reading is still concentrated on more for elementary school students than for those at higher grades. Once students reach the upper grades, the assumption is that students are automatically proficient and have those foundational aspects needed to read. The Research and Development (RAND) Corporation (2002) reported that “Research has shown that many children who read at the third grade level in grade 3 will not automatically become proficient comprehenders in later grades” and that teachers assume students will comprehend inherently (p. 5). The report recommended that instruction be embedded with explicit comprehension elements for the primary grades through the high school years, which include middle school levels. RAND (2002) recommendations corroborated Duke and Mallette’s (2004) position that literacy is not a process “mastered once and for all time” (p. 17). Instead, it is a lifelong process.

This mindset of automatic proficiency may be fixed in our philosophy regarding the teaching of reading to our middle school populations. As indicated by recent test data and the philosophy of automaticity, middle schools are not producing an adequate number of viable readers. *The nation’s report card* (2003) reported average eighth-grade reading scores had increased only one point since 2005 and three points since 1992. Moreover, these data of increased scores were inconsistent over a 13-year assessment period. While gains from 1992 and 2005 illustrate a small increase of students performing at or above the *basic* level, no significant change occurred in the percentage of students at or above the *proficient* level (USDE, 2007). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2010), in 2009,

the average eighth-grade score was 1 point higher than in 2007, and 4 points higher than in 1992. However, scores were not consistently higher than assessment years in between. Recently, the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) reported that the average eighth-grade reading score was 1 point higher in 2011 than in 2009 and had increased by 5 points since 1992. These scores provide evidence for what is problematic across the nation: U. S. schools are showing no significant difference in reading achievement of post-elementary students in over three decades.

While the fluctuations in annual reading scores pacify us with small gains, our reading solutions and practices are failing a significant number of the nation's post-elementary students. Once such information is carried over to unique populations such as the English Language Learner (ELL), also labeled ESL, LEP, LOTE, L2, these issues are further compounded. Scores for White, Black, and Hispanic middle school students in grade 8 were higher in 2011 than in 2009. However, data collected on the reading levels of students nationwide indicate that struggling readers, who are typically minority students (e. g., African-Americans, LEP, and English Language Learners), lag significantly behind other ethnic groups in reading skills, including White and Asian students. For example, Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) noted that 89% of Hispanic middle/high school students read below grade level. From 1998 to 2011, English language learners overall lagged behind those classified as "not English language learners" with a 40 to 47 point difference (NAEP, 2011). While the average reading score for eighth-grade English language learners was higher in 2011 than in 1998 and 2009, the average scaled score revealed a 6-point and 5-point difference from non-English language learners for 1998 and 2009, respectively. In addition,

English language learners continue to “underperform as a sub group” (Artiles, 2011, p. 437). Statistics such as these persist for our middle grade, English language learner populations with each annual test and tell only a fragment of the story.

Some argue that English language learner readers, unlike native English readers, usually have the hurdle of unfamiliarity with American culture and with the native language promoted in American schools and suffer from deficits in phonological deciphering and naming-speed (Wolf & Bowers, 1999). In addition, Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) note that some of their literacy problems stem from their heritage language (e.g. language intrusion). These learners are not only attempting to learn the language, but they are studying content in areas through a language in which they are not proficient. In addition, these students usually enter American schools as older learners and have fewer years to master the language. Due to language acquisition challenges, English language learners are far more likely to be misdiagnosed and “too quickly referred” to special education, where a growing problem of racial disparities and disproportionality exist (Artiles, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). What is most unfortunate is the placement of these students in classes where teachers are not trained to provide for these challenges (Artiles, 2011; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). These compounded aspects of the English language learner reader’s story leave researchers and the educational communities considering how to best meet the needs of these learners and evaluate them in appropriate ways.

Over eighteen years ago, Ladson-Billings (1995) remarked on a growing interest “...to improve the academic performance of students who are culturally, ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse” (p. 15). As a middle school teacher for half of that time period,

this researcher grappled with ways to best assist these readers. One or two would enter her classroom during the school year, and it was a struggle to work with them individually and even more of an effort when they were pulled out of classes for special language services. She realized that if these students were not successful in her English-Language Arts class, it would lead to learning problems in other classes that required reading expertise, as well as down the road in their high school lives. Due to these English language learners being mixed into regular classes, the researcher had to also practice caution in her planning to not only address their learning, but also the learning of students who were on and above grade level. Studies show that this heterogeneous mix is not unusual. Since 1991, the rate of growth for English language learners has increased 105% (Farris et al., 2007). Pappamihel and Mihai (2006) reported that by 2003, rates had increased 45% more. In North Carolina, where this research was conducted, a 500% increase of English language learners was reported in the state's classrooms (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Over 12 years ago, a position statement by the International Reading Association informed the community of this expected growth in the number of English language learners in American schools and the challenges that would come with it. Optimism however is noted from DelliCarpini's (2010) contention that while there are challenges to making the English language arts curriculum accessible to these language learners, teachers can creatively fill the gap between effective, whole-class strategies and specific student needs, and surpass "rote, low level and... dull" curriculum oriented around memorization of isolated facts (Porter, 2009, p. 44). As a result, certain strategies were identified to keep students at all levels thirsty for reading. As noted in Short and Fitzsimmons (2007), some strategies work for certain groups of students due to

educational background, socioeconomic positions, and native languages. One strategy that this researcher found useful in her teaching to address the multiple levels of reading deficiencies in middle school students, both native English speakers and English language learners, was the read-aloud, the primary focus of this current inquiry.

Some 17 years later, this researcher of the read-aloud has refined her views by studying read-aloud in both teacher and student contexts to examine ways the strategy could be practiced and modified for unique populations in middle school. The English language learner community has also promoted the use of read-aloud. According to Amer (1997), English language learners bring with them an array of reading issues that could be circumvented by the practice of reading aloud by educators. Due to limitations in their linguistic competence in the target language, English language learners tend to read texts “word by word” and break whole sentences into “unmeaningful parts” during the process of reading; as a result of these actions, sentences lose context, the main content becomes meaningless, while irrelevant details become important (pp. 43-44). With such issues, the problems of the English language learner reader are rooted in frustrations concerning the aesthetic enjoyment of reading as well as the efferent, fact-finding task of the reading experience. An educator can fold each of these types of reading into one lesson in order to build pathways for both aesthetic and efferent experiences (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Background of Read-Aloud

Albright and Ariail (2005) conducted a survey specifically focused on the read-aloud on the middle school level and found that 86% of middle school teachers used the read-aloud with students. However, lacking in this seminal research were (1) the variations in the

definitions of “read aloud” among middle school teachers; (2) explicit ways the read-aloud was practiced by these teachers; (3) the imbalance of aesthetic and efferent approaches promoted through the read-aloud lessons; and (4) assessment of the read-aloud.

From prior research and information on its practice, the definition of read-aloud has been refined. Approximately fifteen years ago, the general definition of reading aloud was simply oral reading (Amer, 1997). Recently, Gibson (2008) and Lloyd (2009) described the read-aloud as a teaching technique that an educator uses to model effective fluent reading for students and to offer a myriad of opportunities, including enjoying a text, building community, modeling fluency behaviors, and introducing through demonstration a thinking (comprehension) strategy. Lesesne (2009) views read-aloud as sometimes instructional in nature, but always for enjoyment and appreciation of the language. The operational definition for read-aloud useful in research studies is an oral reading process where an educator makes use of his/her voice inflections, body language, and other expressive reading techniques to lend a “human” voice to a piece of fiction or nonfiction to aid in student understanding of the text. During this expressive reading, the teacher-reader strategically and systematically attempts to activate visual perceptions, auditory sensations, and prior knowledge to make the text come alive for the student-listener. Such a read-aloud was promoted by this researcher in this current study to foster the love of reading, offer English language learners accessibility to higher-level texts, and promote overall reading competencies. Such a definition has been unsteady when using the read-aloud practice with special populations such as the English language learner. Traditional definitions proposed in the professional literature do not take into consideration three issues important to read-aloud

research: (1) read-aloud as an instructional strategy that consists of concrete ways to practice it with English language learners; (2) the confusions resulting from of the English language learners' background knowledge, which is encoded in their heritage languages and not in the English language; and (3) the absolute necessity for vocabulary development for English language learners to comprehend texts written in English.

Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) presented a middle school read-aloud “modal” – the most common observed practices. They crafted a description of the customary practices of a read-aloud lesson at that time:

The classroom teacher reads to students from a trade book for a period between 10 and 20 minutes. The chosen literature is not connected to a unit of study in the classroom. The amount of discussion related to the book takes fewer than 5 minutes, including talk before and after the reading. Finally, no literature response activities are offered. (p. 500)

At the conclusion of this article, Hoffman et al. (1993) described a visionary read-aloud technique that would be “well-conceived and well-constructed” (p. 500). Before literacy growth could be realized, they concluded, the read-aloud would have to be shaped and refined beyond its roots as mainly an engaging or entertaining classroom activity. Some twenty years later, the read-aloud in middle school and the use of read-aloud with English language learner populations flourish in anecdotal studies and practitioners' journals revealing it as a top ten strategy. Several descriptive studies/articles recommend or provide guidelines for practicing the read-aloud in explicit, strategic ways and with sensitivity or clear aims to maximize literacy growth (e.g., Albright & Ariail, 2005; Fisher, et. al, 2004;

Meloy, Deville, & Frisbie, 2002). Across these classroom implementations, the read-aloud is transitioning towards a well-conceived and well-constructed technique when it is connected with viable reading activities and texts (e.g., instructional strategies, graphic organizers, diverse text types). However, it struggles to produce adequate footing in the research, and the community has questioned if read-aloud practice can be a valuable (Allen, 2000), worthwhile (Lesesne, 2006), and useful (Gibson, 2008) strategy for improving reading comprehension. Not until Ivey and Broaddus (2001) mentioned read-aloud as a practice on the middle school level in their comprehensive report and Albright and Ariail (2005) and Ariail and Albright (2006) brought attention to its practice in the middle school in two research articles, did teachers and researchers take a second look at it as an instructional strategy. Zehr (2010) surveyed middle school teachers who were only *beginning* to recognize that the read-aloud may be a beneficial strategy for middle students (6th -8th), let alone English language learner readers. Up until that point, the read-aloud had received substantial attention only in elementary school research. Read-aloud research continues to be limited in scope in terms of unique populations or middle school populations. Research is needed on how this strategy can be used to promote literacy growth in students with limited English proficiencies.

Hoffman (1990) describes English as a cold language, which has words without aura. In her attempts to acquire the language, she banished English as having "...no accumulated associations for [her], and it does not give off the radiating haze of connotation. It does not evoke" (p. 106). Such a contention is problematic, yet of interest to this research.

Rosenblatt's (1994) popular description of a balanced continuum may never be implemented

for such English language learners as Hoffman (1990). In Rosenblatt's (1994) popular transactional theory, reading is described as traveling back and forth, moving as if on a continuum between two poles of efferent and aesthetic stances. In the efferent stance, attention is allocated to "fact-finding" and gaining information in order to accomplish a task in learning (p. 23). The aesthetic stance, described as a "lived through" experience, occurs when attention is focused on the emotional, imaginative experiences and intellectual connections with the text (p. 1373). When efferent and aesthetic stances, what Rosenblatt explained as the "center of the continuum," are in balance, attention is devoted to content of the reading as well as the evoked feelings that occur during the process. This research attempted to make a case for read-aloud as an instructional strategy for English language learners which is both efferent and aesthetic. Miedema (2009) summarized what is problematic for this population:

Our attention is yanked from one bit of information to the next. It hardly feels like reading. We claim to multitask but in truth we can only give decent attention to one thing at a time. We shift back and forth rapidly, marshalling our cognitive resources on one stimulus only to release it for the next. At best, the strategy is inefficient. When it comes to reading anything of length or substance, we miss the meaning entirely. (p. 7)

In order to move the read-aloud into a well-conceived and well-constructed technique, as well as refine it for literacy growth, further study is needed of the technique practiced in diverse ways and with diverse populations. Some empirical evidence indicates that reading aloud has the potential to support English language learner middle school students'

comprehension and reading habits (Amer, 1997). However, further exploration is needed to understand and validate the strategy on the middle level and with this special population.

While some researchers of the read-aloud at the elementary school level are promoting a balance of efferent and aesthetic purposes (Barrentine, 1996; Wiseman, 2011), most elementary school research addresses read-aloud as a practice to promote such aesthetic reading purposes as love, enjoyment, pleasure, and entertainment (Barclay, 2009; Hall, 2008; Sanacore, 2006). On the middle school level, the opposite is the case, where the efferent is more pronounced and the aesthetic value of read-aloud is rarely mentioned (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Lesesne, 2006; Lloyd, 2004). Promoting the pleasurable elements of reading provides for that “interior space” where elements such as setting, situations, and characters come alive in the minds of readers (Newkirk, 2009, p. 116). The current research seeks to make a case for the balanced approach as proposed by Rosenblatt for using the read-aloud with English language learners.

Rosenblatt (2005) and Albright and Ariail (2005) contended that schools promote the efferent stance rather than the aesthetic stance and that students are “alerted to adopt” the efferent stance (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 43). The dichotomy is better explained in Britton’s (1982) seminal work where the reader/listener is focused on the efferent aspects of the message for the sake of receiving the message. The aesthetic aspect emerges when the attention is on the message for something outside itself. Rather than the act of reading operating as a balanced, “...continuous, meaningful process of building larger semantic units,” it becomes instead a daunting task of decoding meaning (Amer, 1997, p. 44; Rosenblatt, 1994). Since readers fluctuate when reading between the two stances, according

to Rosenblatt (1978, 2005), teachers should attempt to balance efferent and aesthetic stances to ensure reading interests and success.

Middle school research reports the dominance of high levels of efferent use due to the concentration on standardized testing, which is insensitive to English language learners (Albright & Arial, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). In this researcher's roles as educator and researcher, the primary question is: Is what I am doing of any benefit to the population I am teaching? Hesse (2009) notes: If English classrooms have the reasonable aspiration to teach the reading and writing that students can or should encounter beyond our classrooms, then we ought to make a place for nonfiction written to delight and surprise, as well as texts meant to contain "the point" (p. 20). In past research, this researcher has argued for mature read-aloud texts for the developing middle school reader. Ivey and Broaddus' (2001) comprehensive report on middle school reading habits offered limited, but useful, information regarding the status of middle school read-aloud and discussed its promotion of both efferent (factual) and aesthetic (enjoyment) reading stances. Their survey described how educators used teacher read-alouds to promote aesthetic stances in language arts classes with literature, as well as efferent stances in social studies/history classes with terminology. However, the two stances promoted simultaneously in the same subject matter were not evident. This current research contends that a read-aloud lesson balanced with multiple approaches, including aesthetic and efferent usage, is key and could aid the English language learner in reading comprehension. Ensuring a balance in instructional strategies to promote practice in both poles of the continuum (Rosenblatt, 1984) could deepen reading comprehension in developing readers as well as increase the ways they respond on

standardized tests.

The mission statement of the United States Department of Education is to “promote student achievement ... by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007, p. 103). Under such a mission, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), which is the only assessment in the nation to document what our students know and can do across content areas, does not include practices that promote accessibility (e.g., read-aloud, read-aloud accommodations) on any part of the NAEP reading test, except to communicate instructions (NAEP, 2011; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Furthermore, in 2010, NAEP put in place specific policy measures. The policy, *NAEP testing and reporting on students with disabilities and English language learners*, aimed to not only develop national rules to include English language learners in NAEP, but also to “maximize participation of sampled students” and ensure that NAEP is fully representative of English language learners (p. 68). In the meantime, the “right to assessment” for these students was not determined due to transfer of English language learners into mainstream language arts classes (Artiles, 2011; International Reading Association, 2000). As a result, their test performance is not adequately or appropriately accounted for and they continue to “underperform as a sub group” (Artiles, 2011, p. 437). English language learners who fall short with what the American education system labels as the “universal learner” are double labeled *limited English proficient* and *disabled*. This, compounded by the lack of information and research on assessment of these students, constitutes inequality in the testing environment due to linguistic diversity (Pappamihel & Mihai, 2006). Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) noted this

in their report as a major challenge. Without appropriate data from assessments, teachers and administrators are unable to (1) gauge the English language learners' strengths and deficiencies or (2) modify lessons for their instructional needs (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). The recommended assessments do not offer information on these two areas. Formative assessment is one of their recommended solutions since these assessments offer information that is continuous and concerns students' progress. This current research aligns the read-aloud with formative assessments and recommends them for classroom teachers and schools until the particulars at the national level are worked out. This is best stated by Short and Fitzsimmons' (2007) research on the English Language Learner: English language learners must perform "double the work" of native English speakers in the country's middle and high schools (p. 1). These students are flying the plane as they are building the plane by having to perform the double work of learning the nuances, vocabulary, and grammatical exceptions of the English language as well as studying content through the same medium. American schools are holding English language learners to learning language and content, yet assessing them with the same measures used by their native English user counterparts.

Problem Statement

The problem grounding this research centers on the lack of information regarding how educators are using read-aloud to foster reading comprehension with middle school, English language learners. The benefits of reading aloud to impact the reading comprehension of English language learners are offered in case studies of individuals or small groups (e.g., Garcia, 1991; Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1995, 1996). However, while these middle school studies have added to the knowledge regarding reading comprehension

and these learners, further research with students at these grade levels is needed to understand how the read-aloud can support their literacy. Rooted in these issues involving English language learners is the relationship of reading comprehension and the read-aloud.

One consideration important to this research is the fluctuating definition of reading comprehension that changes with the scope of research from Goda's (1998) description of comprehension as efficiently extracting required information from a text, to August et al. (2006) all-encompassing definition, where reading comprehension relies on a broad range of skills, including decoding (accurate/fluent reading, accessing lexical representations), knowledge in multiple domains (vocabulary, linguistic structure, and world knowledge), and cognitive processing (memory, accessing background knowledge, drawing inferences). Goodman et al. (1989) advised the American reading researcher to be "more knowledgeable about research on reading comprehension in other countries and in languages other than English" (p. 110). Due to the nature of this inquiry, August's et al. (2006) extensive definition of reading comprehension will undergird this study as well as those specific definitions filtered from read-aloud studies pertaining to reading comprehension for middle school/English language learners.

Another important consideration is how general research ignores issues that affect the reading comprehension of English language readers. Cultural, linguistic, socio-cultural, socio-linguistic constructs are top on the lists of issues that should be taken into consideration when discussing reading comprehension and language learners (Borrero & Yeh, 2010; Delpit, 2006; Pappamihel & Mihai, 2006; Prater, 2009; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). In her autobiography, Hoffman (1990) describes her shift from the use of one language to another:

Every day I learn new words, new expressions ... but mostly, the problem is that the signifier has become severed from the signified. The words I learn now don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue.... This radical disjoining between word and thing is a desiccating alchemy, draining the world not only of significance but of its colors, striations, nuances – its very existence. It is the loss of a living connection.... What has happened to me in this new world? I don't know. I don't see what I've seen, don't comprehend what's in front of me. I'm not filled with language anymore, and I have only a memory of fullness to anguish me with the knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don't really exist. (pp. 106-08)

While some of these aspects are outside the scope of this research, any researcher investigating the English language learner must have peripheral interests in these issues.

Closer to this research is the lack of explicit instruction for English language learners regarding reading comprehension strategies (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). These students bring with them learning strategies from their heritage languages; however, many are unable to make the transfer without explicit instruction to build those skills. Therefore, while these learners come to the reading of American texts with literacy, cultural, and, more important, background information to offer ideas and newer ways of thinking, their knowledge is often discounted, sometimes ignored and erasable (Artiles, 2011; DelliCarpini, 2010).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the read-aloud as an instructional focus for middle school students by examining its effectiveness in helping

English language learners read and comprehend texts written in English. In addition, illustrating the educational and pedagogical value of using multicultural and classic read-aloud lessons was a secondary goal. An instructional design was used to offer English language learners an optimal mix of the following attributes in each read-aloud lesson:

1. Read-alouds performed by an expert reader who embeds researched and recommended read-aloud characteristics and practices (Albright, 2002; Fisher et. al, 2004; Lloyd, 2004);
2. Diverse, theme/age-appropriate texts that consider social, legal, cultural, linguistic, and socio-cultural issues of the middle-school, English language learner reader (Prater, 2009; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007);
3. Research-based reading strategies, assessments, and practices embedded before and after each read-aloud (Biancarosa, 2005).

Research focused on these matters could directly benefit English language learners and improve read-aloud practices and assessment procedures among those who teach them.

Research Questions

This research examined the effects of using read-aloud as an instructional practice to improve literacy for middle school students who are classified as English language learners (6th grade). Guiding this inquiry were two questions:

(1) What effects does using the read-aloud protocol of this study have on reading comprehension when *classic texts* are used with middle school English language learners?

Sub-questions included:

- (a) What do cloze-maze assessments indicate about the reading

comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading classic texts?

(descriptive data)

(b) What do student retellings indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading classic texts? (qualitative and other

descriptive data)

(2) What effects does using the read-aloud protocol of this study have on reading comprehension when *multicultural* texts are used with middle school English language learners? Sub-questions included:

(a) What do cloze-maze assessments indicate about the reading

comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading multicultural texts?

(descriptive data)

(b) What do student retellings indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading multicultural texts (qualitative and other

descriptive data)

The study addressed the read-aloud by focusing on assessments and scales aligned with prior read-aloud practice [e.g., multiple choice tests, cloze-maze tests, scores on retellings and qualitatively by focusing on student retellings, where patterns were identified.

To capture a substantial amount of data on using read-aloud with this population, a concurrent triangulation design was employed where qualitative and other descriptive approaches were used to confirm or corroborate findings (i.e., use of two methods to explain one phenomenon) (Creswell et al., 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Schutz, Chambless, & DeCuir, 2004). The qualitative inquiry widened the scope of the analysis of the data gathered from

the participants as they studied the English language arts of reading, listening, writing, and speaking. The quantitative inquiry addressed those questions concerning students' scores on assessments of reading and writing comprehension as it pertains to read-aloud practice. A mixed methods approach guided by these questions could bring us closer to determining benefits and/or shortcomings of read-aloud as an instructional practice for middle school, English language learners.

Significance of Study

Two reading reports support the significance of this inquiry with English language learner students. The International Research Association (2000) bulleted a must-have policy for instruction that involved encouraging research and demonstration projects for English language learners. In a second report by the Alliance for Excellent Education (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007), a committee identified a lack of appropriate assessments as a challenge to documenting English language learner literacy. Both reports rooted in the topic of reading comprehension served as a basis for the significance of this current research. While some studies of middle schools have added to the knowledge regarding comprehension of the target language (English) for English language learners (Garcia, 1991; Jimenez et al., 1995, 1996), the whole of these studies do not make explicit the read-aloud strategy for middle-school, English language learners (1) suggest any modifications for using the read-aloud with them, or (2) promote formative assessments aligned with read-aloud. As English language learners progress from middle to high schools, they have a greater need to carry strategies to aid them in proficiency in reading as well as skills to help them succeed in formal assessments (Prater, 2009). Further research on the middle level is needed to understand how

the read-aloud can support these areas that add to the literacy profile of these learners.

Theoretical Perspectives

Achieving proficiency and efficiency in reading English, speaking English, and writing English poses complex problems for English language learners, exacerbated by political discussions external to the classroom, as well as political, theoretical, and instructional issues inside the classroom (Lacina & Newman 2005). The English language learner's acquisition of the English language is not prominent in the American research agenda or in its educational system. The theoretical perspective for this current study consists of two theories related to effective read-aloud teaching and learning for the English language learner reader. Ladson-Billings' (1994) *culturally relevant pedagogy* and Krashen and Terrell's (1983) *natural learning* (i.e., monitor model) are foundational to this study. First, Ladson-Billings' (1994) culturally relevant pedagogy invokes the need for English language learners to be targeted. Second, Krashen and Terrell's (1983) natural learning theory provides external modifications needed to teach English language learners. Additionally, it offers explanations for those mental processes that need to be in position for instructional strategies to fully operate during learning. Additional to these foundational theories, it is both appropriate and necessary to address frameworks for teaching diverse populations, various kinds of literacy (e.g., vocabulary, sentence, textual), and consideration in school culture that go beyond acquiring the English language.

Culturally relevant pedagogy. Crucial areas of culturally relevant theory underlie this research. In her definition of culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1994) describes the pedagogy as one that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally,

and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.” Irvine and Armento (2001) simplified the definition as effective teaching in a culturally diverse classroom setting.

When students understand and participate in the classroom, their knowledge is socially constructed and tied to elements of memory, recitation, and writing. Knowledge is evolutionary, when teachers and students are continually in the process of recreating, recycling, and sharing (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 81). Spaces are made in the classroom for knowledge to be gained through critical response based on the meanings students find in content. There is a continuous search for new ideas and thought patterns. “Necessary skills,” those needed to progress through an activity, is a form of procedural knowledge in culturally relevant teaching (p. 97). Multiple activities are embedded in lessons to aid in practicing old skills and acquiring newer ones. Finally, knowledge is closely aligned with excellence, which takes into account diversity and individual differences. In Ladson-Billings’ work, such knowledge is necessary specifically to the “educational lives of African American students” (p. 14). However, its use was later broadened by Billings and applicable to any race or ethnicity, which is aligned with this current research.

Using background knowledge about students’ interests and experiences was pertinent to this research. While this researcher had only a short amount of time to build relationships with students, getting to know who these students were as well as what they liked to read in school and in their leisure time provided the foot-in-the-door needed to win their buy-in to read-aloud. As stated by Irvine and Armento (2001), teachers must tap into background knowledge by (1) locating critical examples that students bring to the table; (2) juxtaposing

new concepts and concepts already established in the student; (3) and identifying gaps in knowledge and bridging those gaps to strengthen knowledge and concepts. Such a trio embedded in instruction helps teachers “create learning opportunities in which student’s voices emerge and knowledge and meaning are constructed from the students’ perspectives” (p. 60). Culturally relevant teaching recognizes that a teacher is not the only person in the classroom with expertise and that each of the 20 – 35 students comes with some expertise no matter how low or high in competency (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally relevant teaching filters multiple representations of knowledge and uses that knowledge to pull in students’ heritages by connecting information to their home lives, community lives, and global perspectives (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

Culturally relevant pedagogy has the premise that “learning *may differ* across cultures” (Irvine & Armento, 2001). However, some educators take the position that learning *differs* across culture and it behooves teachers to diversify ways they teach students who bring different cultures and, more important to this research, different levels of background knowledge and expertise (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Characteristic of the pedagogy is not seeing students as vessels void of information or viewing them through deficit lens, but acknowledging, valuing, and respecting linguistic, literate, and cultural expertise that students bring to the classroom. According to culturally relevant pedagogy, when classroom lessons are infused with these elements, more information is remembered and interest increases (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

According to Irvine and Armento (2001), culturally relevant pedagogy grounds itself in effective teaching by considering the classroom diversity. Classes today have a myriad of

students from very diverse backgrounds, yet our efforts to satisfy the palettes of all these different tongues are not fully realized. The classroom in this study was labeled as a special one due to the students coming from a wide range of backgrounds. More and more teachers are finding classrooms where large percentages of learners are of *Other* ethnic backgrounds, and it is important for teachers to become culturally competent by using the knowledge and expertise of students to inform practice (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Another area of importance derived from culturally relevant pedagogy is to have student backgrounds esteemed to include their cultures in instructional activities. As a teacher in New Orleans, Louisiana working mostly with African-American students, this researcher pulled students into the lesson with activities and strategies and helped them realize that reciprocity was a key element in the classroom. The beginning days of the school year were not an exercise in how many county, school-based, or classroom rules the students could explain, but one where the student's backgrounds were honored. Culturally relevant pedagogy centers on culture as an important component in a student's life as well as in his/her learning and provides teachers with the beginning strands for identifying a student's behaviors and social makeup. Home lives, family makeup, neighborhood affiliations, after-school activities, and likes/dislikes constituted the first ten or so pages of each student's portfolio. Drawing on what Irvine and Armento (2001) term the students' resources and experiences was the foundation for the school year, and in retrospect, each year of this researcher's years as an educator was very different. No year started without attending to the culturally relevant philosophy. In this current study, it was important to survey students early in order to represent and celebrate their cultures in the read-aloud sessions and listen to their

areas of interests (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Indicated in culturally relevant pedagogy is the notion of cultural relevance, where other aspects of an individual student and his/her culture are equally relevant to the aspects of the dominant culture. Ladson-Billings reported that negative repercussions could result when an *Other* does not see his/her histories, cultures, or backgrounds represented. By moving between the dominant culture and the cultures of the students, all are upheld as significant.

Specific to the English Language Learner, culturally relevant pedagogy is layered with political and practical matters. Ladson-Billings (1994) marked those areas where teaching practices correlated with students' background knowledge. Such a correlation regarding the read-aloud instructional strategy and background knowledge is a sidebar interest in this current study due to the English language learner needing more time to develop background knowledge than do native English users (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Strong areas in the pedagogy used in the current study included those of intentional scaffolding the knowledge of the students (Harris & Duibhir, 2011) and the relaxation of grammatical/mechanical rule-knowing. However, one notion that arose in Ladson-Billings' (1994) pedagogy veers from this current study and directly concerns the teaching of these learners: her notion that "telling isn't teaching" (p. 121). English language learners sometimes need such "telling" aspects of teaching as drill and skill exercises and "parroting back what the author had written" (p. 124). These are usually regarded as negative forms of teaching and passive forms of learning. However, such exercises for these learners do not water down their competency or weaken effective instruction, but are modifications necessary for their success. Focusing on such details by the teacher offered the models and

routines that make reading and writing struggles less demanding for students (Pappamihiel & Mihai, 2006). One other theory, natural learning, purports practices offering carrots and breadcrumbs to help these learners.

Natural learning approach. One of the three must-have policies for instruction recommended by the International Research Association (2000) is to not “mandate particular instructional methodologies or strategies” with the population (p. 10). However, one highly popularized approach in the second language learning literature is natural learning (i.e., monitor model) (Krashen, 1982; Schulz, 1991). Krashen’s (1982) monitor model, the most popular and controversial, establishes tenets to explain how comprehensible input and a filter between learner and environment cause language acquisition. The theory limits comprehensible input as the only explanatory factor for second language acquisition. Contending that language has natural and rule-governed structures, natural learning was born out of linguists and psycholinguists’ dissatisfaction with the concept of reading that was based on “discrete skills passively drilled and practiced until reflexively demonstrated” (Alexander & Fox, 2004, pp. 37, 39). Linguists called for a decrease in environmental factors in language learning and an increase in a “hard-wired” view of acquisition; psycholinguists called for an increase in the “natural communicative power” of language and its aesthetic value (p. 38). Because of their alliance, a language acquisition theory was developed through a meaningful use of language in one’s community that could be naturally acquired under favorable physiological and psychological conditions. Krashen’s model of second language acquisition includes two questions: (1) What are the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in second language acquisition? and (2) What are the conditions

(i.e., environmental) that need satisfying before the processes could be carried out?

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the approach is not based on a view of language but on a learning theory, which accounts for the processes of learning and conditions to promote it.

Krashen's theory promotes five tenets, which have individual implications for language development and teaching: (1) *acquisition learning hypothesis*, (2) *monitor hypothesis*, (3) *the natural order hypothesis*, (4) *input hypothesis*, and (5) *affective filter hypothesis*. In the *acquisition learning hypothesis*, two independent systems operate in language competence: the acquired and learned systems. In the acquired system, acquisition is a subconscious, natural process, where meaningful interaction in the target language is to be practiced. It concentrates strictly on communication rather than formation of utterances. In contrast, the learned system is a conscious, unnatural process, where formal instruction is implemented to help the speaker learn traits of the language. Of the two, the learned system is less important than the acquired. The *monitor hypothesis* helps speakers correct themselves. However, it is regarded as limited by (1) insufficient time given to the learner to learn and practice the rule (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007); (2) lack of focus on the forms to be learned; and (3) lack of knowledge of rules, which should be offered by the teacher in simplistic terminology and descriptions. The *natural order hypothesis* provides explanation about the predictable nature of language learning and how errors occur no matter what the speaker's language. The relationship between what the learner is exposed to and overall language acquisition is explored in the *input hypothesis*. Complexities in the relationship include (1) acquisition only; (2) challenges comparable to Vygotsky's (1978) zone of

proximal development, where the learner is challenged beyond competence; (3) natural language emergence; and (4) automatic comprehension if sufficient input is satisfied.

Ignored as a causative factor by the cognitive theory, but included in the natural learning theory, is the *affective filter hypothesis*, which provides for the emotional state of the learner. When the emotional state/attitude of the learner is motivated, confident, and low in anxiety, the filter is “adjustable” and language acquisition can be realized (p. 183).

From these tenets, Alexander and Fox (2004) list three principles important for English language learners and teachers: (1) A “preexisting template” to guide normal language development, where a human naturally develops oral language through written language; (2) the reader as an active participant constructing meaning from a variety of sources; and (3) the teacher as one more concerned with the students’ ways of comprehending and less with correcting mechanics/grammar (p. 39). As a result, grammar and mechanics were not considered parts of this study. Though natural learning has received its share of criticism, it is an approach highly accepted in the teaching of English language learners. However, for the purposes of this research, it cannot be the single approach due to the various levels of English language learners (newcomers to second year learners).

The natural learning approach offers value for the English language learner. Theoretically, the natural learning approach includes explanations, evidence, clearly defined terms and hypotheses about how language is acquired. Instructionally, natural learning theory endorses high levels of verbal communication, integration of indirect basic skills, collaborative learning, and natural progressions. It relies on incidental learning methods (Atwell, 1987), promotes cognitive skills and metacognitive strategies (Graham, 2000), and

has traits of explicit and systematic teaching (e.g., direct learning) (Graham, 2000; Krashen, 1989). It also includes explanations for a host of other components that have been added for the English language learner: wait time, pacing, feedback, review, and assessment (Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Lacina & Newman, 2005; Rubinstein-Avila, 2003).

These two theoretical perspectives offered support for how the read-aloud could be used with the English language learner in the current study. The first theory (Ladson-Billings, 1994) positions the read-aloud as a strategy relevant to English language learners and promotes knowledge experiences that may be more conducive to their interests and learning experiences. Culturally relevant pedagogy adds the sensitivities that are needed to teach these learners and acknowledge what they have to bring to the table. Natural learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1993) positions the read-aloud as one of those types of instruction centered on meaning making. While natural learning is overly popularized in English language learner learning, it makes space for those affective factors needed in learning situations. The theory is broadly effective for literacy development and specifically effective for the literacy development of English language learners (Goldenberg, 2001; Jimenez, 2000; Nagy & Scott, 2001). The combination of these theories comprises the theoretical foundation appropriate for these learners, as well as for this current research on read-aloud.

Researcher Bias Statement

Before entering the doctoral program in Education (Curriculum and Instruction), the researcher was a practicing English-Language Arts educator for twelve years in middle and high schools in Louisiana. Reading aloud to students who were often labeled as *struggling* was a vital part of her practice. In her last twelve years as an educator in New Orleans, she

practiced bringing texts alive by incorporating elements of storytelling (e.g., dramatic effects, facial expressions, body language). Using these methods of getting stories and information across to students benefited her student clientele. She observed the emotions, excitement, and importance that reading aloud had for many students and often experimented with ways to strengthen students' reading levels and model for them ways to connect to texts.

Currently, writings on orality and descriptive studies on the middle school, read-aloud have promoted a deeper interest for the researcher. Credibility for the read-aloud came from anecdotal authors such as Trelease (1989, 2001) and researchers promoting the middle school read-aloud such as Albright (2002) and Albright and Arial (2005, 2006) with their genuine love for read-aloud; Belgrave and Allison (2010) with their historical views of the read-aloud; and Hooks (1994) with her position on voice and read-aloud. Thus, folded into the inquiry of the read-aloud are the researcher's academic and pedagogical experiences and biases regarding its use for middle school students. She acknowledged that these academic and pedagogical experiences with the read-aloud could bring with them liability of bias and intrude upon the design and overall findings.

Fieldnotes were an important part of this research in that they were used to make researcher opinions transparent while grounding the interpretation of data in theory and research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In addition, safeguards were used with the mixed methods approach, including triangulation and member-checking, and the overall steering of the collection procedures (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2010). The researcher made every effort to critically reflect on her actions and interpretations carried out in the research design of the read-aloud. She took every precaution "to guard against" seeing

only those aspects of the phenomenon that she expected. As data emerged, she practiced daily journaling to document her new knowledge (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Assumptions and speculations of those “realities” that come from her experiences with the read-aloud were bracketed in her fieldnotes (Glaser, 1965, LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Reflecting on these issues prior to this research and throughout the inquiry made evident her commitment to raise the instructional value of the read-aloud to the reader’s consciousness in whatever ways the mixed methods approach allowed, especially the type of listening needed between the researcher and the researched and flexibility of information (Hesse-Biber, 2010). By appealing to the research, knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of others, as well as the students in the study, she was able to reach outside her pedagogical knowledge to inquire into the value of read-aloud for the English language learner (Maxwell, 2005).

Summary of Chapter I

Chapter I provided the core of the research on the read-aloud as an instructional practice to benefit the middle school, English language learner. It described the overall purpose of the current study, situated the read-aloud strategy historically, and set the theoretical foundation for the current study. Chapter II positions read-aloud as a strategy within the research literature.

Chapter II Review of Literature

Due to the mixed methods approach used in this research on the impact of read-aloud, the following review of the literature is divided into three sections with multileveled parts to tell a story of two central features pertinent to this research: *read-aloud* and the English language learner *student*. *Section One* of the review lays the background for the read-aloud movement from an elementary school practice to a middle school strategy. Areas of this movement include articles that are descriptive, critical, and anecdotal concerning the use of read-aloud as a middle school strategy. Some studies provide information on the practical nature of the middle school read-aloud but do not offer much detail on how it could be structured. Other articles compensate for this lack in detail by offering practical strategic uses for the read-aloud. *Section Two* announces the conflict in the story of the read-aloud by focusing the lens on the English Language Learner, middle school reader and on contrasting theories of how instruction should be provided for English language learner learners. This section also reviews literature on three special topics where the read-aloud could be exploited to serve the reading skills of English language learners: (1) reading comprehension, (2) vocabulary development, and (3) formative assessment. *Section Three* provides a blueprint of the read-aloud protocol used in the current research and research support for each of its six phases: Phase I: Say-something, Phase II: Stand up for the book, Phase III: Comprehension strategies, Phase IV: Read-aloud, Phase V: Retelling, and Phase VI: Cloze-maze Assessment.

Reading practices are primarily a matter of professional and personal choices and, according to Harris and Duibhir (2011), are decided by the teachers in charge, if their hands are not tied by system or school policies. Three elements are of interest: First, the argument

by the International Reading Association (2000) in its principles of literacy “rights” for better reading instruction that states “...no single strategy or single combination of strategies can successfully teach children to read” (p. 3). Second is Duffy and Hoffman’s (1999) assertion that teaching reading effectively does not lie with a single program or strategy. Finally, Harris and Duibhir (2011) argue the impossibility of an “ideal curriculum” design for each class or teaching situation (p. 16). The following three ideas--one put forth by the International Reading Association in its principles, one asserted by Duffy and Hoffman (1999), and one offered by curriculum and assessment researchers (Harris & Duibhir, 2011)--provide the rationale for the read-aloud practices used in this current research:

- (1) Because children learn differently, teachers must be familiar with a wide range of proven strategies for helping students gain the reading skills.
- (2) Teachers must have thorough knowledge of the students they teach, so they can provide the appropriate reading strategies for each student.
- (3) A vital concern in teaching reading is achieving an appropriate balance between instruction and assessment.

A premise of this rationale is that it is the teacher who “...thoughtfully and analytically integrates various program, materials, and strategies as the situation demands” (p. 11). Instructional strategies center on the teacher’s actions and students’ responses to those actions (Smith, 2004). Exceptions do exist in planning that privilege some strategies over others due to classroom population and needs. Read-aloud is one such strategy that is flexible enough to address the unique demands found in the English language arts classroom that includes a range of abilities. This chapter provides an overview of the literature

supporting read-aloud as an instructional strategy, including research from teachers and researchers who have used the read-aloud in middle school, integrated it in unique ways with other strategies, and/or performed appropriate research on its use with the middle school student. Attention will also be given to the population of this inquiry, English language learners, as well as to the read-aloud as a specific instructional strategy modified for their needs in reading comprehension.

Section I Background of the Read-Aloud

The first broad area encompasses the use of read-aloud as an appropriate practice with the middle school student. To situate the condition of the read-aloud on the middle school level, it is important to compare it to its counterpart on the elementary school level where it has received a substantial amount of attention in the research. The read-aloud is considered a traditional, elementary school instructional approach used to promote an aesthetic (i.e., enjoyment) stance for reading. One overarching trend in elementary school research regarding the read-aloud is its use to promote aesthetic reading purposes, including the (a) love of reading (Hall, 2008; Sanacore, 2006; Schine & Bianco, 1992); (b) enjoyment of reading (Barclay, 2009; Hahn, 2001; Rose, 1999), (c) entertainment of reading (Jennings, 1990); and (d) pleasure of reading (Cole, 2002; Schwartz, 2002; Waldner, 2004). The aesthetic value of read-aloud is noted on the middle school level as well, including providing for students' pleasure (Lesesne, 2006), entertainment (Jennings, 1990), and enjoyment (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Lloyd, 2004). However, an emerging body of literature on the middle school level suggests that in addition to promoting an aesthetic stance, the read-aloud can be used for efferent (i.e., acquiring information) purposes (Albright & Ariail, 2005; Ariail &

Albright, 2006; Blessing, 2005).

Over 47 years ago, the National Association for the Teaching of English dedicated a publication issue to oracy. In *Some Aspects of Oracy* (Wilkinson, 1970), oracy is considered a "new educational concept" (cover). Read-aloud, as it is operationalized in the current study, was in 1965 "a shamefully neglected" practice (p. 3). Wilkinson further complained of no guidance being offered to the teacher and no definition of what the read-aloud was, even though it was being recommended in a series of educational reports/texts of the time that were published in England (e.g., *The teaching of English in England* (Newbolt, 1921); *The education of the adolescent handbook of suggestions for teachers* (Haddow, 1926). Some decades later and 4000 miles away here in the United States, the read-aloud has been better shaped. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) documented the read-aloud as a vibrant middle school practice in their comprehensive research report on middle school reading habits. According to their study, the read-aloud was beneficial to students in terms of improving reading purposes, building fluency, promoting comprehension, modeling by teachers, and supporting both efferent (informational) and aesthetic stances (e.g., enjoyment, high interest, dramatic performance, and personal response).

Four years later, Albright and Ariail's (2005) landmark survey further documented the read-aloud on the middle school level and reported the multiple benefits and purposes of it from surveyed educators. Eighty-six percent (86%) of those middle school teachers surveyed reported using the read-aloud to assist students in such areas as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and fluency. Others used it to model self-regulatory aspects of reading, to make texts more accessible and comprehensible for students, to reinforce content, to

increase students' understanding, and to ensure that students were deeply immersed in information in textbooks. This survey and the follow-up article a year later (Ariail & Albright, 2006) informed the educational community of the status of the read-aloud specifically at the middle school level and called for its use with middle school student readers. Results derived from these seminal articles of the read-aloud on the middle school level provided beginning steps toward evaluating ways that middle school teachers use read-aloud in instruction.

In 2010, Zehr's read-aloud article in *Education Week* hailed the read-aloud as gaining favor among middle school teachers. This author contrasted elements of an elementary school read-aloud with a newer version of read-aloud proposed by Albright, a top name in read-aloud research on the middle school level. Zehr described the elementary read-aloud occurring "...in a cozy corner of an elementary classroom, [where] youngsters are gathered on a rug, listening intently to *Charlotte's Web*" (p. 1), in contrast to a newer, revamped read-aloud that is currently called for on the middle school level. In Zehr's (2010) interview with Albright, Albright stated a contemporary version of read-aloud that considers purposes beyond pleasure:

The teacher needs to think about why he or she is using the book and connect it to the curriculum, to have purpose, to think about how you will introduce it to the students.

You don't want to just pick up a book, read it, and then close it and move on. (p. 5)

This quote, which focuses on the middle school teacher and his/her use of the read-aloud as an instructional strategy, marks a new season in read-aloud research and how the community is refining its use to improve the literacy of the adolescent reader (Zehr, 2010).

A second broad area in the professional literature relates to the practical nature of the middle school read-aloud and specifically what in the practice makes it an effective instructional strategy. This research called for read-aloud use on the middle school level and identified characteristics of effective read-alouds in the middle school. Hoffman et al. (1993) described their version of a 6th grade read-aloud “modal” –meaning the predominate mode of practice by teachers--where a teacher read-aloud (i.e., teacher voice only) is used to read content from a trade book and fills at least 10-20 minutes of classroom time. Discussion time related to the content of the book spans five minutes. After the read-aloud, extension activities are not offered. In comparison, at the culmination of the study, Hoffman et al. (1993) constructed a “model” of the read-aloud practice, which presented the read-aloud in a holistic fashion, including a focus on the before, during, and after traits of a read-aloud, as well as an eye towards the activities and actions of both student and teacher. Since 2002, a hub of researchers has recommended practices for effective read-aloud with the middle school student. Albright (2002) posed three *stages* for the read-aloud on the middle school level: Stage one (i.e., planning) promoted choosing quality books. Arlington (2011) side notes that authority figures (teachers, librarians, administrators) do not always make effective choices when choosing texts that are interesting to students because the *reader* is factored out of the equation. In addition, Lesesne (2012) notes that important in text selection are students’ frustration levels, age appropriateness, and interests. Stage two (i.e., preparing) advised middle school teachers to designate a time and place for read-aloud and to formally introduce the session. Stage three (i.e., producing) involved the read-aloud event as well as activities occurring after it, including discussing the book, engaging knowledge, and

reinforcing knowledge. Table 2.1 summarizes these traits, as described by various researchers, which are foundational to the current study.

Table 2.1. Characteristics of Effective Read-Alouds

<p>Albright’s (2002) Three Stages</p>	<p>Fisher’s et al. (2004) Seven Components</p>	<p>Lloyd’s (2004) Five Responsibilities</p>
<p>STAGE ONE – Planning - Choose quality books - Select discussion questions</p> <p>STAGE TWO - Preparing - Designate a specific time for read-aloud - Designate a specific place for read-aloud - Formally introduce the session</p> <p>STAGE THREE - Producing - Read aloud - Discuss the book - Engage knowledge - Reinforce knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select appropriate texts - Establish purpose - Preview text selections - Use animation/expression - Model fluent, oral read - Stop to question - Connect the read-aloud to independent reading or writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose the text - Read aloud - Model fluent, flexible reading behaviors - Activate prior knowledge - Focus students on strategy through modeling

An evaluative report by Fisher et al.(2004) recommended that teachers (7th, 8th grades) implement seven *components* of an interactive read-aloud. These included (1) selecting appropriate text, (2) previewing text selections, (3) establishing purpose for the

read-aloud, (4) modeling fluent, oral reading, (5) using animation and expression, (6) stopping to question, and (7) connecting the read-aloud to independent reading or writing. The implementation of these components revealed that a structured read-aloud could foster both efferent (vocabulary development, listening, experiential background, and print concepts) and aesthetic (i.e., joy of reading) stances. The teachers in the study who used these seven components were labeled as *expert* read-aloud teachers (pp. 10-11).

Finally, Lloyd's (2004) study overlapped the report by Fisher et al. (2004) in certain respects, but added the *responsibilities* of including a metacognitive strand of activating prior knowledge as well as focusing students on strategy use after the read-aloud. A synthesis of the three researchers' lesson designs (*stages, components, responsibilities*) captures all the recommendations made for teachers to practice the read-aloud specifically with middle school, native English users. In a later section, one other piece of evidence from English language learner research will be synthesized to expand the characteristics of effective read-alouds as used in the current study.

Call for structured read-alouds. The next broad area of the literature review is related to those researchers who appeal to the need for structuring the read-aloud, yet are non-specific about what such a structure should be (Deville & Frisbie, 2004; Gibson, 2008; Hoffman et al., 1993; Lesesne, 2006; Meloy et al., 2002). Hoffman's et al. (1993) survey of 29 sixth grade classes indicated that the read-aloud with the middle school student must be maximized for literacy growth to occur, yet no specifics are suggested to implement the read-aloud. Meloy et al. (2002) proposed infusing the read-aloud strategy into other effective reading comprehension strategies practiced with middle school populations, but also did not

specify strategies. Similarly, Lesesne's (2006) descriptive report calls for a structuring of the read-aloud when teaching middle school students due to *No child left behind* pressures and the current need to defend classroom instructional strategies. Finally, in an evaluative article of the read-aloud for specialized groups, Gibson (2008) recommends designing the read-aloud with certain structural changes that promote sensitivity and clear aims in order to build effective reading skills. While these authors call for a structure of the read-aloud that is echoed in other recent research (Harris & Duibhir, 2011), no particulars are offered.

Suggestions for structured read-alouds. Commitment for a “well-conceived and well-constructed” read-aloud is needed before literacy growth can be realized (Hoffman et al., 1993). In Hoffman's et al. read-aloud “model,” the authors created an *ideal* read-aloud where all areas of the practice and surrounding eight activities of the read-aloud are equally important to the experience:

- 1) *Setting* - The classroom is “well-stocked” with the display of books;
- 2) *Time Frame* - Devote 20 minutes of read-aloud “daily”;
- 3) *Book Selection* – Reading material is age-appropriate and “evokes rich response”;
- 4) *Relevance* – Readings connect with units/standard course of study;
- 5) *Sharing* – Teacher and students equally share personal responses;
- 6) *Exploration* – Students explore “patterns, linkages, interpretations” of read aloud author and text;
- 7) *Diverse Activities* – Students perform activities (e.g., journaling, drawing, paired-share) before small/whole class discussion of read-aloud;
- 8) *Revisits* – Students revisit chunks of text that “hold promise for extended

exploration.” (p. 502)

These activities moved the read-aloud practice from a happenstance modal to a model tailored for students, and transitioned this review to the next broad area of the middle school read-aloud: How can read-aloud be structured? The following read-aloud studies with middle school students suggest effective read-aloud practices by connecting the instructional strategy to (1) specialized books, such as audio books (Beers, 1998); picture books (Albright, 2002); and comics (Ranke, 2007) and to (2) small group reading activities, such as literacy clubs (Horn, 2000) and literature circles (Lloyd, 2004). These studies extended the read-aloud with concrete strategies and suggested that structuring the read-aloud could strengthen its value as an instructional practice for the developing middle school reader.

Specific structuring of the read-aloud with specialized books. Two middle school research studies offer specific structuring of the read-aloud practice with specialized books (Albright, 2002; Beers, 1998). Beers’ (1998) overall purpose was to examine how educators used audio books in the read-aloud experience with two middle grade (7th) and one 9th grade classes. According to Beers’ examination of personal journal writings and interview transcriptions of conversations with the educator involved, students under the read-aloud/audio-book lesson were deemed focused, motivated, and did not want to stop reading when sessions were over. Text discussions based on the read-aloud/audio book lessons resulted in an increase in listening skills for the middle school students.

Albright (2002) presented her descriptive read-aloud study on the 7th grade level with the picture book text type. Picture book research is becoming popular in middle school levels due to format, detailed treatment of topics, and visual appeal for middle school

students (Beers, 1998). Portions of sample interview transcriptions from Albright's (2002) study showed that the read-aloud not only deepened engagement of middle school students but stimulated higher order thinking and reinforced prior knowledge.

Though limited in quantity, Albright (2002) and Beers (1998) studies illustrate that the read-aloud can be used as a springboard to help students strengthen reading skills through the use of specialized books. Based on these studies, the current research chose specialized text types (i.e., multicultural, classic) to employ in read-aloud lessons.

Specific structuring of the read-aloud with small group activities. Another trend connected read-aloud to whole group activities such as literacy clubs (Horn, 2000) and literature circles (Farris et al., 2007; Lloyd, 2004). These studies corroborated other research recommendations that educators should not only read aloud to middle school students but also provide them with opportunities to make personal connections between literature and their lives. Horn (2000) used the read-aloud in his *Reader of the Day* program, a literacy club where the students (7th grade), not the teacher, scaffolded each other in order to mediate comprehension and overall understanding. Findings from his qualitative study demonstrated an increase in students' comprehension as well as their sense of ownership of the read-aloud strategy. This not only involved students in the process of reading aloud but also enabled them to have an impact on one another through individual interpretations of the texts.

Lloyd's (2004) evaluative report examined her professional shift from using regular literature circles, a reading strategy that showed limited engagement for her 6th grade students to using the read-aloud to embed a comprehension strategy that acted as a springboard to talking about texts. These talks included seven actions for Lloyd's students to

experience reading, including making connections (e.g., personal, text-to-text, and text-to-world), questioning, inferring, visualizing, determining importance, synthesizing, and monitoring.

Farris, Nelson, and L'Allier's (2007) study on literature circles with English language learners refuted Lloyd's study on the notion of engagement when read-alouds were used. Students in Lloyd's study were not fully engaged in the literature circles, which resulted in a lack of participation and lackluster thinking skills. Due to its specific focus with English language learners, Farris revitalization of literature circles will be discussed in a later section.

Overall, the read-aloud was used in Horn (2000) and Lloyd's (2004) studies not only to strengthen reading skills by structuring the read-aloud with small groups, but also to raise awareness about the importance of the narrator/author's voice used in the texts. Due to these studies, small group instruction was elevated to help students connect to read-aloud content. Reshaping the format of the read-aloud into a more focused strategy was seen as helping the middle school teacher become aware of the multiple benefits of reading aloud to students.

Summary of Section

These studies describe the evolution of the read-aloud from elementary to middle schools and how researchers and teachers recommended and structured the read-aloud in diverse ways to help students become readers who are more skilled. Collectively, the studies and anecdotal reports serve as indicators that teachers and researchers are answering the calls and challenges to produce evidence for the read-aloud as a valuable (Allen, 2000), worthwhile (Lesesne, 2006) and/or useful (Gibson, 2008) instructional strategy in middle school classrooms.

Section II: Read-Aloud and the English Language Learner Reader

Section II of this review continues with additional areas of importance in read-aloud research as well as turns a lens specifically on its use with English language learners. The section begins with a review of effective read-aloud characteristics for middle school, native English users. The section then merges into the read-aloud research regarding English language learner student populations. Studies from 1991 through 2008 (Denton et al., 2008; Fung, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2003; Garcia, 1991; Jimenez et al., 1995, 1996; Sporer & Brunstein, 2009; Swanson, Hodson, & Schommer-Aikins, 2005) involve teaching reading to English language learners. They resulted in the following conclusion: “The same principles of systematic and explicit phonologically-based interventions that undergird instruction for English-proficient students also appear to benefit English language learners’ literacy development” (August & Shanahan, 2010, p. 343). This discussion will then take up established middle school read-aloud research in three areas: reading comprehension, vocabulary, and assessment. These three represent vital areas that influence the middle school English language learner but are not fully represented in current read-aloud research. The following research review will concentrate on English language learners and the importance of using the read-aloud instructional strategy for this group in these three areas.

Read-Aloud Practices for All Middle School Students

For well over 20 years, English language learners have been members of the nation’s classroom communities, representing 34% of the middle school student composite (Prater, 2009, p. 607). Farris et al. (2007) middle school study specifically with English language learners added another level to effective read-alouds as suggested by Albright (2002), Fisher

et al. (2004), and Lloyd (2004), thus extending it to a practice for all language students (e.g., Native English students and English Language Learner).

A descriptive study by Farris et al. (2007) purported that when a middle school teacher modeled a read-aloud in a literature circle and structured the strategy by providing extension activities after its use, English language learner 6th - 8th graders were able to experience literacy growth as well as strengthen their personal views by analyzing author viewpoints, reflecting upon their own views of authors of the read-aloud texts, and negotiating the viewpoints of others in a small group setting. Read-aloud use in Farris' et al. study is connected to literacy strategies and meaningful discussions that occur during teacher read-alouds, and cooperative group projects are used after as extension activities. The *tips* for an effective read-aloud for English language learners by Farris et al. (2007) somewhat overlap with Albright's *stages* (2002); Fisher's et al. *components* (2004) and Lloyd's *responsibilities* (2004) for effective read-alouds for native English students (See Table 2.1). However, as indicated in Table 2.2, Farris' et al. (2007) *tips* concentrated on aspects of the teacher's performance during the read-aloud (e.g., practice the read-aloud, use different voices, and speak loudly) and filtered in the English language learners' participation in the read-aloud (stop and encourage student sharing). These read-aloud characteristics were compiled from four research articles on effective read-aloud practices (Albright, 2002; Farris et al., 2007; Fisher et al., 2004; Lloyd, 2004). Parentheses indicate the number of researchers who recommended the practice [(1) = 1 researcher, (2) = 2 researchers, etc.], and the asterisk (*) denotes English language learner recommended practice. As indicated in the table, specific components included practicing the read-aloud before students hear it and pacing the

Table 2.2. Teacher Read-Aloud Practices for Teaching Middle School Students

PLAN <i>What to Plan Before the Read-Aloud</i>	PREPARE <i>What to Do with Students Before the Read-Aloud</i>	IMPLEMENT <i>What to Do During the Read-Aloud</i>	ENGAGE <i>What to Do with Students During the Read-Aloud</i>	EXTEND <i>What to Do After the Read-Aloud</i>
*Choose interesting texts (1)	Focus students on strategy through modeling (1)	Model fluent, oral reading (1)	*Encourage student participation (1)	Connect the read-aloud to independent reading or writing (1)
*Practice read-aloud before reading (1)	*Set the tone of the text prior to read-aloud (1)	Reading Aloud (2)	Activate prior knowledge (1)	Discuss the book (1)
Select appropriate text (1)	Activate prior knowledge (1)	Model fluent, flexible reading behaviors (1)	*Stop to question (2)	Engage knowledge (1)
Designate place for read-aloud (1)	Formally introduce the read-aloud session (1)	*Use different voices to distinguish characters (1)		Reinforce knowledge (1)
Designate time for read-aloud (1)	Establish read-aloud purpose (1)	*Consider pace (1)		Connect to a small group strategy
Choose quality books (2)		*Use appropriate intonation (1)		
Select discussion questions (1)		Use animation/expression (1)		
Preview text selections (1)		*Speak loudly (1)		

reading. When these recommended tips for the read-aloud were practiced, Farris et al. (2007) contended that students were deeply engaged in learning.

Reading Comprehension

Perhaps the weakest area in the research on read-aloud is its connection to reading comprehension. This area is complicated by a dispute over the definition of *reading comprehension* under which the reading community has included a wide array of skills.

Top names in read-aloud research on the middle school level take the term reading comprehension to mean a variety of skills. For Albright (2002), reading comprehension occurs in three levels in her study: (1) recognizing textually explicit references (stated in the text); (2) recognizing textually implicit references (not directly stated but implied); and (3) recognizing implicit background (based on prior knowledge or beliefs of the reader).

Albright and Ariail (2005) note that reading comprehension is equal to understanding and is a skill that can be enhanced. Beers (1998) notes that it can be helped through listening. Dolan et al. (2005) explained that comprehension is only a part of reading literacy. Fisher et al. (2004) focuses on two comprehension skills, inference and prediction, and separate “understanding” from the two. Dhaif (1990) allocates reading comprehension to the scores on comprehension activities, where it becomes a measurement “...obtained by the students in reading comprehension exercises rather than by the degree of enjoyment derived from what they read, or by their ability to discuss it intelligently” (p. 463). Evident in these definitions is that comprehension encompasses many reading skills working in unison.

Those who keep abreast of reading comprehension research realize that the reading process is not a one-time process, but a gradual, ongoing, long-term process, in the

instruction of both native and non-native learners/English as a second language and English language learners (Prater, 2009; Snow, 2002). The definition of *reading comprehension* changes with the scope and focus of research. Goda's (1998) simplified description of reading comprehension is that reading is efficiently extracting required information from a written text. August et al. (2006) definition involves a series of skills: decoding (accuracy and fluency skills); knowledge in vocabulary and linguistic domains; and cognitive processing, including memory, background knowledge and inferences. Much research ignores social, cultural, linguistic and socio-cultural issues that clearly affect comprehension (Prater, 2009). The closest definition in the current research comes from Snow (2002) who explains that reading comprehension is a *phenomenon* that involves "...the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language." Snow delineates three elements as important to reading comprehension: (1) The *reader* who is doing the comprehending, bringing a myriad of information with him/her to the text (e.g., capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences) as well as shaping of and interacting with the information; (2) the printed or electronic *text* that is to be comprehended *text* which entails more than meaning extraction but the construction of various representations noted in the content; and (3) the *activity* in which comprehension is a part, including purposes, processes, and consequences involved (p. 11). If there is an imbalance among the three elements, "...optimal comprehension" can be interrupted (p. 14). Two areas of reading comprehension most important to the current study are: (1) reading comprehension as a composite of abilities and (2) reading comprehension as a socially-constructed activity (Prater, 2009).

Read-Aloud and Reading Comprehension for Native English Users

Research on read-alouds with middle school native English learners posits that reading aloud promotes reading comprehension, but components as to what *reading comprehension* entails are wide in variation. A few studies (Barrentine, 1996; Baumann, Ware, & Edwards, 2007; Sandmann, 2006; Santaro et al., 2008) reveal that reading “between the lines” is enhanced through read-aloud for the English Language Learner, but findings are blurred due to the intrusion of other comprehension factors such as vocabulary. Barrentine (1996) restructured the read-aloud into an interactive strategy that promotes rich discussions. Based on the belief that text discussion encourages students to verbally engage with readings, Barrentine structured her read-aloud in three ways: *student-to-text*, *student-to-peer*, and *educator-to-student*. Her qualitative study described questioning techniques used with the read-aloud to extend the experience from merely listening to comprehending the texts.

Sandmann (2006) performed a structural change in the read-aloud by using it to teach her students the importance of revision in writing assignments in order to influence both reading comprehension and writing ability. Using what she termed the *Focused Question Card* (FQC) strategy, Sandmann encouraged student writers to review written works as oral readers and clarify the texts for better understanding. Similar to other read-aloud studies, Sandmann also reported on the questioning aspects involved in the FQC in order to promote reading comprehension of texts. In her model, these questions are read aloud between two students and discussed in terms of context and revision.

Santaro et al. (2008) also promoted a structure for the read-aloud to enhance areas of vocabulary and comprehension. Their research recommended that when the read-aloud is

strategically enhanced, vocabulary and comprehension significantly improve. This study promoted three areas where the read-aloud improved instruction and student comprehension, including text structure (information and connections among ideas), text-focused discussions (vocabulary and comprehension), and vocabulary (listening, seeing, and discussing new words in situated texts). Although these studies represent research on the middle school level where reading comprehension is addressed along with other areas of learning (e.g., writing, vocabulary), overall reading comprehension is not at the forefront of most studies and has not been adequately discussed in read-aloud research on the middle school level. Clear guidance on how the read-aloud can be used for comprehension purposes is limited. A small number of studies exists recommending read-aloud for enhancing reading comprehension, yet these studies are focused on native English speakers (Albright, 2002; Albright & Ariail, 2005; Ariail & Albright, 2006; Beers, 1998; Dhaif, 1990; Dolan et al., 2005; Fisher et al., 2004).

Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners

Fung et al. (2003) reported that few reading programs focus on teaching higher-level reading comprehension strategies to English language learners. This lack has affected the research, especially in the middle school population (Prater, 2009). While some studies have added to the knowledge of the middle school English Language Learner and reading comprehension, relatively few exist and there is a need for further research. The U.S. Department of Education charged the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth to identify, assess, and synthesize research on second-language literacy of language-minority students between the ages of 3–18 (August & Shanahan, 2010). What was bittersweet about the report was that although researchers found that English language

learners often matched the achievement of native English users in areas such as phonological awareness and decoding skills, they rarely were equivalent in reading comprehension.

Studies at the middle school level (6th – 8th grades) on English language learners and reading comprehension revealed two foci: (1) student-focused, where the English language learner and his/her barriers, perceptions, and mental processes were considered important to comprehension, and (2) strategy-focused, where specific and/or multiple strategy use were important to comprehension.

The studies with a student-focused approach (Garcia, 1991; Jimenez et al., 1995, 1996) described how these learners built context about problems they encountered in acquiring comprehension and used certain processes to develop the multiple skills that undergird comprehension. Garcia (1991) investigated student perceptions regarding comprehension responses on an English test and found that 5th/6th grade students' test scores underestimated their comprehension when compared with oral responses to the same questions. Barriers causing this difference were the diverse range of topics in the tests; vocabulary that was implicit and paraphrased; and English language learners' literal interpretations of the content.

Describing barriers in reading and strategic processes that affect comprehension, Jimenez's et al. (1995, 1996) case study on 6th grade students' use of cognitive and metacognitive knowledge revealed what good English language learner comprehenders do: resolve unknown vocabulary, monitor comprehension, connect prior knowledge, infer and draw conclusions, and self-question. Their research found significant barriers affecting the reading comprehension of the English Language Learner, including lack of vocabulary

knowledge and lack of background knowledge to understand texts. Recommendations included providing opportunities to practice cross-linguistic knowledge and cooperative learning. These student-focused studies disclosed barriers affecting English language learners that could be strategically addressed in the course of a read-aloud lesson, as was the practice in the current study.

A second theme from middle-school research on the English language learner and comprehension indicated a strategy-focused approach. Once the National Reading Panel (2002) recommended using several strategies in combination, the research reflected such a suggestion. Denton et al. (2008); Fung et al. (2003); Sporer & Brunstein, (2009), and Swanson et al. (2005) illustrate multiple interventions used to foster comprehension.

Reciprocal teaching (i.e., discussion and monitoring strategies), metacognition, and comprehension were focal points in Fung's et al. (2003) study of English language learners. Their interest was to investigate the effects of reciprocal teaching on the comprehension of 12 middle school students (6th/7th grades) using English expository texts. Reciprocal teaching had been shown in native English research to improve comprehension by conjoining small group discussions and monitoring strategies. For one month, students were introduced to cognitive and metacognitive strategies (e.g., questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting) and applied such strategies to their comprehension. The result was improved reading comprehension and gains on comprehension tests.

Swanson et al. (2005) study on phonological awareness, a predictor of reading comprehension and spelling, was implemented at a junior high school (7th grade). Findings indicated that direct instruction in phonological awareness improved the abilities of English

language learner in analyzing the phonological construct of words. The study found that direct, explicit, and systematic instruction in phonemic segmentation (i.e., breaking words according to sounds) and blending (close sound of a word) offered gains in word attack/word identification.

Denton's et al., (2008) middle school (6th - 8th grades) study on fluency investigated an intervention implemented with 38 English language learners with vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension deficits. No significant difference in fluency was found between the control group and intervention group for the three deficits.

Sporer and Brunstein (2009) examined the effects of peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS), which use (1) partner reading to promote fluency, (2) paragraph shrinking for main idea skills and summarization, and (3) predictions. Seventh grade, English language learner students (N=186) were exposed to age-appropriate readings and assessed on comprehension and declarative/procedural knowledge. Students in PALS achieved higher reading comprehension scores and had better understanding of self-regulation in reading.

These studies (Denton et al., 2008; Fung et al., 2003; Sporer & Brunstein, 2009; Swanson et al., 2005) identify some of the strategies (e.g., discussion, phonological awareness, peer assistance) that could be melded with the read-aloud to promote comprehension, and were, therefore, included in the current study.

Overall, these approaches clearly demonstrate the ways researchers are pooling various areas of reading skills in order to find the optimal mix of strategies and/or programs to strengthen reading comprehension for English Language Learner, middle school readers. Overall, these two themes of student-focused and strategy-focused approaches reveal those

areas that should be involved in the teaching of the English language learner when reading comprehension is the goal.

Best Practices for Teaching Comprehension to English Language Learners

Due to the preoccupation with testing, the best combination of strategies to promote reading comprehension have often been ignored, so that many research inquiries do not necessarily add new knowledge about reading comprehension. Though we have a limited number of studies on English language learners, the studies do reveal areas of interest that could promote comprehension for the English language learner. Well over 20 years ago, several techniques and strategies for teaching reading comprehension to English language learners were introduced into the literature as proven for effective reading instruction, including background knowledge, textual analysis, metacognitive strategies, academic engagement, and group instruction (i.e., cooperative learning and peer-to-peer strategies), reciprocal teaching, and summary writing (Miller & Perkins, 1989). Gersten and Baker's (2000) research on effective instructional recommendations by middle school educators and researchers has filled the gap by adding four accommodations for English language learners: (1) building and practicing vocabulary as a curricular anchor; (2) using visuals for reinforcement of concepts/vocabulary; (3) using native language; and (4) adapting cognitive and language demands. While these skills/activities are important for all students, Peregoy and Boyle (2000) explain that "teaching practices for native English speakers cannot simply be applied whole cloth to English language learners without modifications..." (p. 243). The list of needs to strengthen reading comprehension for these learners seems daunting, yet instruction that is fluid in nature and centers on what teachers and students do, can address a

wide range of skills in one lesson.

Distilling findings from these various studies, the researcher in this current study determined that for read-aloud use to be most effective for English language learners, five cornerstone areas should be folded into lessons: (1) exploration of background knowledge, (2) vocabulary, (3) cooperative learning, (4) use of the home language, and (5) metacognitive strategy training. Such areas became the protocol for the 27 read-aloud sessions promoted in this current study. Discussion of these five areas with emphasis on the English language learner will be summarized before reviewing the research support for the protocol lesson used in this study. A final section is devoted to assessment and the read-aloud strategy.

Background knowledge. According to Pretorius (2006), an important component of the comprehension process is the reader's ability to connect current information with information mentioned previously. One traditional strategy supported in the research is to use the background knowledge of the student in concert with reading instruction. Increasing background knowledge is simple, according to Gallagher (2009): Provide students with the widest opportunities in reading. Those with the broadest knowledge capital (i.e., background knowledge) will stand out in all measures. While Fung's et al. (2003) study successfully used comprehension modeling to invoke and relate the English language learners' knowledge and experiences to texts, Peck and Serrano (2002) study warned that presupposition of background knowledge cause English language learners to tune out reading instruction. Therefore, concerning the latter, the teacher of English language learners should remember that the term *background knowledge* involves a world of conceptual knowledge and literacy skills in the first language, as well as that represented in the text (Prater, 2009).

Vocabulary. Nagy and Anderson's (1984) best guesses for the in-class vocabulary encounters of the middle school reader are astounding. Through the teacher, marginalized middle school readers may experience 100,000 new words per academic year; average comprehenders, 1, 000,000; and good middle school comprehenders could range from 10,000,000 – 50, 000,000. These estimations do not account for the English language learner readers, however. If this population is included in the *marginalized reader* category, these students are missing out on a huge number of vocabulary words each year. English language learners are labeled “linguistically impoverished” bringing a vocabulary of approximately 5,000 to 7,000 words to reading instruction (Fung et al., 2008; Gallagher, 2009, p. 43). The lack of vocabulary experiences is a major area in the research for English language learner reading comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge is a critical need for students.

One major influence of the English language learners' vocabulary acquisition is the practice of multidimensionality, where they learn vocabulary through a variety of ways and approaches (Nagy & Scott, 2000; Schmitt, 1998; Spiro & Jehng, 1990). The long-term approach to building their basic vocabulary involves an intense mix of (1) identification of basic vocabulary, (2) appropriate materials, (3) extensive reading, (4) explicit vocabulary instruction and (5) use of word notebooks/dictionaries (Tran, 2006). Offering students time to acknowledge -words they do not recognize and discussing those words in a natural, conversational way, suggest that teachers can help students refine phonological representations, stabilize lexical meanings, and make content more accessible (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Explaining words is “unquestionably” effective and strengthens metalinguistic awareness (i.e., relation between language and other cultural factors) (August & Shanahan,

2010). Nagy and Scott (2001) reiterate and further suggest that teachers of English language learners promote metalinguistic awareness where students have time to reflect on and manipulate word features. By offering students a variety of opportunities in these areas and promoting strategies that could regulate ways they interact with vocabulary, students could learn to monitor their understanding of texts and strengthen their vocabulary acquisition (Nagy & Scott, 2001; RAND, 2002).

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning, partnering, and group interaction were noted ways to strengthen reading comprehension with these learners and native English learners. Peck and Serrano's (2002) revealed that a lack of interaction in a reading program caused English language learners to tune out reading instruction. These learners are in a constant struggle with his/her own culture and the culture prevailing in books and other texts, and research finds that these students are not afforded practice to resolve such issues (Gavelek & Bresnahan, 2009). Fung et al. (2003) reported that the use of reciprocal teaching in the study did not afford students "substantive dialogue"; as a result, the quality of dialogue for the students was considered weakest in the study (p. 14). Sporer and Brunstein (2009) recommended partner readings, which served to promote fluency through oral reading and provided opportunities for the English language learner to practice the basics with a partner and "mutually help each other" with reading comprehension tasks (p. 292).

Use and valuing of the home language. Many English language learners fear that in learning to read/speak English, their own languages will be forgotten (Jimenez et al., 2000; Tabors & Snow, 2001). This is no small worry since many of the stories read in classes identify with mainstream America and not the *Other*. According to Gavelek and Bresnahan

(2009), modifications must be made in areas of “macrosocial forces,” which affect English language learners’ meaning making by limiting their participation in cultural-historical activities and devaluing their linguistic resources (p. 161). This is supported by the National Literacy Panel (2002) which recommended that teaching English language learners in their home language would be beneficial to their reading comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2010). Since their language proficiencies are undeveloped, instructing these students in only English is problematic. Educational systems that ignore the languages of English language learners while forcing them to read and make meaning in English are considered unethical by Gavelek and Bresnahan (2009). These systems create the environments where language learners could more likely fail. Educators need to survey students and find what language backgrounds they have in order to determine language exposure (Tabors & Snow, 2001).

Metacognitive strategy training. According to Fung et al. (2003), the most critical gap in English language learner studies is the lack of attention to metacognitive strategy instruction. Such instruction develops reading comprehension and overall reading performance for the English Language Learner. Common self-regulation techniques help students along as they attempt to connect with texts. These techniques as gleaned from Zimmerman (2001) are operationally described in the current study as internal mental exercises that students can learn to perform in order to facilitate independent learning. A student’s ability to regulate the learning process is a main tenet of self-regulated learning that relates to metacognitive knowledge (i.e., what a student knows and does not know) and metacognitive skills (i.e., intentional regulation of strategies) (Cao & Nietfeld, 2007). Classroom research shows that metacognitive strategies distinguish students’ abilities to self-

regulate their learning (Ormond, 2008; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003), and teaching them to students could enhance academic performance (Cao & Nietfeld, 2007). Offering students strategic reasoning skills, for example, could help them learn how to self-regulate in order to fulfill comprehension goals. Offering marginalized readers the tools of regulation through a read-aloud session could have an impact on reading comprehension.

Section III Read-Aloud for the English Language Learner as Reader

Roughly 7 years ago, Albright and Ariail (2005) and Ariail and Albright's (2006) read-aloud research and read-aloud survey data sparked this researcher's general interest in the read-aloud as a useful activity in the middle school setting. What the Albright and Ariail research revealed is a lack of data from the middle school sector and a lack of data overall on ways that the read-aloud is being used by middle school teachers. What is not fully revealed in their research and many studies that followed is the use of read-aloud with special populations, such as English language learners, and the ways teachers are using the practice to promote reading skills and reading comprehension. Not discussed in prior research is how the read-aloud could be modified to release some of the pressures caused by language barriers and testing issues faced by these students. Activities that pave the way for better text comprehension are vital to helping students construct and store background knowledge. Therefore, this researcher drew on several recommendations to build a read-aloud for the English language learner and promote what works best for his/her reading comprehension.

While one such recommendation regarding the purpose of the read-aloud structure derived from the work of Goodman and Goodman (2009) is to give space in the reading classroom to "...examine language with students to inquire into its history, its use, its

structure, its variety, its purposes and function... , where knowing grammar and the relations between how oral and written language relate are part of exploring language use” (p. 108), such a recommendation was problematic with the natural learning theory undergirding this research. Alexander and Nygaard’s (2008) assertion that successful reading relies on the ability to “possess the orthographic form of a word and use that visual to access meaning or access linguistic or phonological representations that are then linked to semantic content” (p. 447). The grammar and mechanics of the participants in this study were not considered.

In each read-aloud session, there are modified elements of cognitive strategy instruction that further strengthen reading comprehension (e.g., self-questioning, predicting exercises and retellings) (Dole, Nokes, & Drits, 2009). These areas are aligned with the read-aloud session to guide English language learners through what Brown and Cambourne (1987) describe as “the gears of reading flexibility,” where the expert reader ushers students from basic skimming (i.e., understanding the gist of a text) to deeper text engagement (p. 11)

The Read-Aloud Protocol

Below is the read-aloud protocol implemented in this study, using six phases based on research recommendations for the English language learner student: Phase I: Say-something, Phase II: Stand up for the book, Phase III: Comprehension strategies, Phase IV: Read-aloud, Phase V: Retelling, and Phase VI: Cloze-maze Assessment. Each will be described along with the research support.

Phase I: Say-Something Response Strategy

A consistent recommendation for teachers is that they become facilitators, coaches, and guides rather than deliverers of explicit information (Raphael, George, Weber, & Nies,

2009; Stahl, 2009). However, some non-native readers need such direct teaching of information to develop some comfort and confidence in reading. The idea of *scaffolding*, which is a strategy that allows the teacher to operate in a student's practice space until the student can perform independently, has been hailed across native English and English language learner literature as one of the most effective instructional procedures available to a practitioner (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2005; Fournier & Graves, 2002; Rubinstein-Avila, 2003; Sawyer, 2006). Once the teacher is confident in the students' use of the strategies, gradual release of responsibility is transferred to students. Similar to the attainment of reading comprehension skills, development of the strategies would occur over time and can build on other competencies such as oral language, background knowledge, strategic processing, and overall self-regulation (Stahl, 2009, p. 443). The use of the say-something strategy performs such recommendations.

Say-something and prediction. *The English Language Learner's Dictionary* describes predicting as making a statement about what will or might happen in the future (Merriam-Webster, 2012). In the say-something strategy, students are offered opportunities to practice prediction and other strategies such as commenting, questioning, and connecting (Biancarosa, 2005). Research stipulates the strategy of prediction as an efficient manner for reading and learning to read (Smith, 1997). It is a directed thinking activity (Goodman et al., 1989; Goodman & Goodman, 2009). Since prediction is based on prior knowledge, informed guessing, and experiences, developing student readers/writers, such as English language learners, who are overly concerned with unknown words, are weak in predicting and interpretative skills (Smith, 1997, p. 21). Research on prediction indicates that the skill

influences reading comprehension (Bishop, Reyes, & Pflaum, 2006).

Say-something and self-questioning. As described in the *English Language Learner's* dictionary to question is to ask for information or a test of someone's knowledge (Merriam-Webster, 2012). Questioning is considered the most frequent form of assessment for comprehension (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). Good comprehenders use comprehension strategies such as self-questioning to construct meaning of texts (Theide et al., 2005). Leslie and Caldwell (2009) report positive effects when students engage in self-questioning and rely on models that promote self-generated questionings rather than those generated by the teacher or the textbooks. Baker and Beall (2009) consider self-questioning as an effective metacognitive strategy. Paris and Hamilton (2009) report that self-questioning promotes deeper engagement using ideas in the text. Goodman et al. (1989) suggest questioning helps students make stronger connections to their personal experiences. Results from a study by Berkeley et al. (2011) indicate that students participating in self-questioning strategies outperform students on multiple-choice and open-ended comprehension tests. Massey (2009) corroborates that self-questioning helps students focus on multiple answers instead of one correct answer. It also teaches them to evaluate an author's viewpoint and the purpose of the reading from internal perceptions. Dole et al. (2009) summarize that the act of self-questioning can lead to improvement in comprehension by helping students make sense of texts. Smith (1997) simplifies the practice by arguing when one self-questions, he/she performs the process of reading.

Say-something and commenting. To comment is to explain, illustrate, or critique a piece of writing, which reflects background knowledge or previous experiences with a topic

or text. As noted in the *English Language Learner's* dictionary, it reflects a true statement or condition of something (Merriam-Webster, 2012). In the current study, commenting excludes comments on texts encountered outside of the read-aloud lesson (e.g., references to read-aloud activities or repeated encounters with the same text). Goldstein et al. (1992) note that commenting is popular due to its high and consistent frequency of occurrence. Attached to comments in their study are examples and demonstrations, which result in an increase in both communicative and social interaction. Students who learn to comment by remarking on a situation from a story or offering commentary on a text could strengthen their language arts abilities (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking).

Say-something and connecting. To connect involves showing some relationship. Three types of connections popular in reading and writing are *text-to-self*, *text-to-text*, and *text-to-world* connections (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). Text-to-self is one of the easiest connections to make and most effective with texts that are closest to students' experiences. Students make these connections when they connect an event in a story to their personal background knowledge. The second type of connection, *text-to-text*, helps students develop those types of associations that teachers expect when asking students to make meaning. These are made when students make connections between present and past texts or between current reading (e.g., text types) and other reading experiences in online reading. In the current study, the current read-aloud text being connected to texts encountered outside of the read-aloud sessions (e.g., song lyrics, YAL, poems) are most appropriate. Santoro et. al. (2008) note that having familiarity with various texts gives students a framework to discuss and retell stories. Building necessary background knowledge is a crucial means for

providing the third type of connection, text-to-world. Students make text-to-world connections when they connect issues happening in a text to social and political issues happening in their worlds. When these connections are made, students are operating at high levels of text comprehension. Herold (2012) surmises that the "connection between text, context, background, and author" is an important link to make in reading. As students learn ways to associate information, involve themselves in texts, and concern themselves with the plight (or demise) of some characters, connecting to texts becomes an internal routine in their reading. English language learners attempting to read and write a language need these links made explicit, not to "dumb down" a text, but to create a bridge of accessibility so text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections will enhance reading comprehension.

The say-something strategy offers students opportunities to practice their choice of recommended strategies that could benefit their reading comprehension (Dole et al., 2009). Goodman and Goodman (2009) note that "legitimate behaviors" for good readers are...reading strategies such as predicting, inferring, selecting, confirming, and disconfirming informed by their own background knowledge" (p. 109). Significant comprehension gains occur when readers can predict, identify relevant information, summarize, and infer (Raphael et al., 2009). According to Baker and Beall (2009 middle school study, strategies such as predicting, summarizing, and questioning have dual potentials: to promote comprehension and to provide information on comprehension progress. While the focus of these read-aloud sessions in the current investigation is to concentrate on reading aloud to promote reading comprehension, regulatory skills featured in the say-something strategy could also promote self-regulated, internal reading strategies

specifically recommended for English language learners (Paris & Hamilton, 2009). Brown and Cambourne (1987) recommend having students interpret story titles, where a teacher reads aloud a title and students make *only* predictions. This current read-aloud research promotes the school-wide say-something strategy to offer students practice in predictions, but includes three other strategies: questioning, connecting, and commenting.

Phase II: Stand Up for the Book

Standing up for a book is equivalent to Lesesne's (2012) method of *booktalking* where an oral introduction or sales pitch for a book is offered to students. In the pitching of the book, students see the actual book (Pappamihiel & Mihai, 2006) where the reading originated and hear the teacher/reader pitch for one or two minutes the themes, likes/dislikes about the book, and/or other background information that may occur outside the book. The pitch phase in the read-aloud session is a method to verbalize and model the ways that people think and talk about books (e.g., text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world). In standing up for the book, the teacher offers background information external to the book, as well as personal opinions about its characters and situations. Lehr and Thompson (2000) describe how the "cultural mediator" (i.e., teacher) in their study uses background and historical information to offer additional facts not found in the text. Burroughs (1999) found in his study on multicultural text use that connecting texts to appropriate themes and other historical information not literally part of the text could spur students to think about the text in diverse ways. As a result, students were more informed about the context of the reading and "...the potential for a pooling of misinformation" (p. 484).

Goodman et al. (1989) note that effective reading research is conducted with

authentic reading materials that are for “real and functional purposes” (p. 110). Two types of text types were pitched in the current study to the English language learners. One is the *classic* text type that can aid students in establishing connections among literature, culture, and history (Burroughs, 1999). However, Paris (2012) describes the text type as promoting the “dominant language, literacy, and cultural practices” in alignment with the norms of White, middle-class society (p. 93). The other text type, *multicultural*, is included because primary characters are mainly non-White speakers. Important in choosing multicultural texts is what Ladson-Billings (1994) describes as *cultural relevance* where the students’ cultures are used to preserve, value, and model identity development. While it is important to highlight the *Other* in multicultural texts, it is equally important to highlight the traditions of classic texts as well. Both classic and multicultural texts have places in the curriculum

Classic text type. Information on classic texts reveals that students have no interest in these texts if they do not “speak” to them (Lesesne, 2012). The use of classic texts often elicits snide remarks from students who are not engaged in the content or who find the texts too difficult (Newkirk, 2009). Students need the classics (Gallagher, 2009), and with proper preparation, the content in classics can be made relevant and hold readers’ attention. Lesesne (2012) argues that it is the teacher’s obligation to make these texts accessible to students. Research reveals how classics broaden students’ historical perspectives and political sense (Hollander, 2012). Lesesne (2012) adds that school curricula are imprudent if the only focus is on the classics with no room for other texts that could interest middle school students.

Multicultural text type. The International Reading Association (2000) noted: “Schools and communities must provide sufficient attention and resources to help [English

language learners] learn to read and write and ultimately to do so in the dominant language” (p. 10). Brooks-Bonner (1993) asserted that “...educators have imposed white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant values, without appreciation for cultural and ethnic differences” (p. 69). An adequate case can be made that multicultural texts promote the dominance of English as well, but also make space for the minority culture uncommon in classic texts. Multicultural texts celebrate the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices of minority students (Paris, 2012) so that students recognize their heritages. Multicultural texts reflect the diverse situations and wide array of beliefs in our society (Burroughs, 1999), and do not candy-coat such realities. Biancarosa (2005) found that access to and experiences with multicultural texts are effective in reading instruction for middle school students. The use of these texts with English language learners can help them understand themselves and the world around them.

As Lesesne (2012) notes, young adult literature is clearly more accessible to students and can address the same themes as in the classics. She states that these books can “serve as stepping stones” into deeper reading as required to appreciate the classics (p. 24). Since the early 2000s when teachers began trading system/school-wide-recommended texts for other reading and content more conducive to their student clientele, many types of texts have slowly, yet progressively, made their way into classroom libraries and in educators’ anecdotes regarding how best to teach marginalized students. This research upholds the International Reading Association (2000) principle for the English language learners’ *right* to “reading instruction that makes meaningful use of their first language skills” (p. 10). Multicultural texts have the capability to ensure such a right to our English language learners.

Phase III: Comprehension Strategies

Due to low retention of word meanings in incidental learning tasks, in this current study a considerable amount of time is given to this phase of the read-aloud session. Findings from English language learner research indicate that only a small chance exists that students will remember word meanings when they occur only once in a passage read for content. To compensate, comprehension exercises based on the forthcoming read-aloud texts are used after response activities to expose students to vocabulary, specialized jargon, literary techniques, and/or to *scaffold* any sensory information (e.g. sight, smell, taste, touch, sound) that could make the text more accessible to English language learners. *Instructional scaffolding* is the support given during the learning process to tailor the needs of the student with the intention of helping them achieve learning goals (Sawyer, 2006).

Variations of (1) oral activities, (2) pencil/paper strategies, and (3) unfolding practices are used in instructional scaffolding interactions to assist students in reading comprehension activities. Oral activities include text discussions, whole class, and dyad discussions. Pencil/paper activities are composed of common activities, including student annotations, graphic organizers (Venn diagram, cluster mapping), matching assignments, drawings, and fill-in-the-blanks (See Appendices O - S). Unfolding activities and instruments are best described as activities created with specific texts in mind to aid the English language learner in comprehending the main ideas and characters, setting, etc. of a read-aloud text (Patton, 1997). They include graphic displays, pullouts (e.g., phrase pullouts, sentence pullouts, and passage pullouts), and dramatic scenarios, where students practice a variety of activities focusing on using their sensory indicators. In the current study, these

verbal and written exercises are present at the onset of each read-aloud story and dependent on the read-aloud type and text content.

Annotations. Annotating activities are comprehension exercises targeting individual student vocabulary issues and overall context pertaining to the read-aloud topic and theme. Historically, annotations are defined as notes in the margin that explain a text. These notes are written by an individual about specific parts of the text (i.e., context-dependent. Yeh and Lo (2009) note that annotation activities could be used for error correction and corrective feedback. Annotations in the current study consisted of underlined, circled, or highlighted word(s), summary phrases, and brief notes in some sections of a text to illustrate its meaning (Gale Group, 2008). Annotating could be a beneficial activity for English language learners with low verbal abilities and proficiency to decrease dependency on decoding and guessing answers (Ariew & Ercetin, 2004) and to *frame* a text by eliminating the unknown and unfamiliar (Gallagher, 2009).

Two types of annotations are appropriate to apply to this current research: *contextual* and *textual*. Contextual annotations, used to trigger top-down processes, focus on background and visual information about a topic. Researchers on vocabulary acquisition for English language learners contend that English/foreign language words associated with actual objects or visuals are more easily learned than those without such associations (Ariew & Ercetin, 2004). In addition, visual memory is used because the brain remembers words better when they are associated with images (Ariew & Ercetin, 2004; Chun & Plass, 1996). Research closest to this involves Buzan (2000) mind map technique, which uses symbols, signs, and colors to enhance recollection and memory of reading materials.

Textual annotations, used to facilitate bottom-up processes, offer definitions, pronunciations, and illustrations about a text (Ariew & Ercetin, 2004). In Ariew and Ercetin's (2004) study, participants considered definitions in annotation activities important because they increased reading speeds and improved the quality of pronunciations. Due to the bilingualism of the teacher-in-charge, the students in the current study also heard a definition or explanation or saw an illustration of the word in the student's heritage language. In this study, textual and contextual annotations were used by the students for accessibility.

Phrase, sentence, and passage pullouts. Pullouts were first encountered and operationalized by this researcher from an observation of a middle school, read-aloud teacher using Lowry's (1993) *The giver*. Preselected, small chunks of Lowry's text were filtered from the novel by the teacher to expose the social or political nature of the content. In the observation, the teacher directed the students to the chunks of text, had them listen to a read-aloud recording of the text, and, in a conversational tone, expressed her feelings/beliefs about the government's role conveyed in the excerpt as well as her personal rationale for these feelings/beliefs. The passage-pullouts in that research promoted discussions and helped students shape their own personal interests and beliefs.

Dramatic scenarios. *Dramatic scenarios* is an operationalized term for re-enactments or dramatic play where the teacher-in-charge, researcher, and/or random students re-enact or perform a phrase, sentence, or passage chunk directly from the read-aloud text. Dramatic scenarios are best described as those physical actions students participate in or witness that explicitly bring to life a word or text through drama. These scenarios give students opportunities to visualize action/meanings of a text as well as see their teachers and

peers in different lights. Since these scenarios occur before the read-aloud, students have a better opportunity of understanding that section of the text when it appears in the read-aloud.

Phase IV: Read-Aloud

Research reveals that reading aloud a text for five to 10 minutes is a powerful and effective activity for all age groups (Lesesne, 2012). The type of read-aloud selected for this research is the *teacher-only read-aloud*. The teacher-only read-aloud displays a sole voice reading the text (Harris & Duibhir, 2011). Teacher-only read-alouds model correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation and develop comprehension due to their focus on units of meaning (Amer, 1997; Harris & Duibhir, 2011). Teacher read-alouds in narrative reading contain frequent use of direct speech and dialogue as well as oral production that focuses on facilitating comprehension, enhancing story appreciation, and highlighting the characters' "feelings, moods, and emotions" (Amer, 1997, p. 44). In this study, the teacher or researcher read a classic or multicultural text uninterrupted by traditional questions or discussion during the read-aloud. Research describes the sensitivities of listeners who can identify and retain in their storage (i.e., memories) certain aspects from read-alouds, including speaker identity, dialect, and emotional state (Alexander & Nygaard, 2008). Not interrupting the read-aloud can allow the students a better opportunity to hear the traits of the language and rich dialects of the reader's speaking style. It also can afford better understanding of nonlinguistic information, including the reader's tone of voice and "its role in processing and representation of speech" (Alexander & Nygaard, 2008, p. 446). Important in this inquiry involving the English Language Learner, teacher-only read-alouds had dual purposes where to help students understand units of meaning that otherwise would be broken into

meaningless parts, and to understand the roles of language signals (e.g., punctuation, stress, and intonation) (Amer, 1997).

Research has shown that speech properties are not only retained in memory but are influenced by spoken language processes on three levels: phonological (i.e., the system or pattern of speech sounds), lexical (i.e., relating to the individual words that make up the vocabulary of a language), and sentential (i.e., relating to sentences in natural language or logic) (Nygaard, 2005). Lexically and phonologically, when good listeners hear and simultaneously visualize a recognized word or phrases, they can make connections between written language and spoken aspects of the language. Sententially, where the reader considers the structure of the sentence in the process of reading it aloud to indicate what is emphasized (intonation and pauses), an effective read-aloud can offer listeners expressive reading and prosodic elements of a sentence (i.e., tones, nuances, and ironies of written English) that they may otherwise lose when reading alone (Amer, 1997). By promoting vocal expressions, lifting confusing/unfamiliar vocabulary off the page, and displaying emotion, sound effects, and differentiating dialogue between and among characters during the course of the read-aloud, these teachers offered their students the opportunity to use what good comprehenders employ in their approaches to difficult texts and routine reading.

Phase V: Written Retellings

Retellings have been met with positive responses from the field. Retelling requires student to hold information in their memories until the culmination of a story and then use extractions such as the main idea, details, emotional influences, and basic story elements in an organized fashion (Romero, Paris, & Brem, 2005). In retellings, students retell stories that

are seen, heard, or independently read and reconstruct the events as well as integrate prior knowledge that is evoked from the story (Stahl, 2009). Retellings are based on a student's personal interpretations that make reading sensible to him/her (Leslie & Caldwell). Such meaning-focused retelling is effective in illustrating ways that developing readers focus and elaborate on what interests them in texts (Connor et al., 2009; Romero et al., 2005).

Sudweeks et al. (2004) contend that a "listener's assimilation and reconstruction of text" can indicate reading comprehension because the listener has the opportunity to interpret information and structure a response based on what he/she heard. According to Sudweeks et al. (2004), retellings can reflect a student's comprehension of a text and allow listeners to organize a response according to their interpretation of a text. The quality of a retelling serves as a representative of how well students comprehend similar passages and can serve as an indication of weak and strong problems in comprehension aptitudes (Sudweeks et al., 2004). Raphael et al. (2009) add that retellings lead to improved comprehension scores but caution that retelling strategies must be both taught *to* and practiced *with* students. Evidence shows that students who practice retellings have the opportunity to make small gains in areas of story grammar, high-level propositions, and cued recall, and large gains in reading proficiency (Stahl, 2009). For the current study and previous research using retellings (Brown & Cambourne, 1987), retellings also offered students opportunities to exhibit a wide range of literacy skills, including but not limited to traditionally interrelated skills such reading, writing, talking, listening, thinking skills, comparing, organizing, remembering, and comprehending, all which strengthen comprehension and writing abilities (p. 1). Allowing students to retell stories helps teachers better grasp students' thought processes, important

information gleaned from the reading, and socio-cultural information. In its use with middle school students, more instances emerge of affective and morale elements that reflect the students' well beings (Brown & Cambourne, 1987; Stahl, 2009).

The rationale for using retellings in this study is its fit as an assessment strategy. According to Yuh-Fang (2006), an immediate written recall task, such as retellings, has been traditionally used to measure second language reading comprehension and is recommended over traditional test methods, including multiple choice, cloze-maze assessments, and open-ended questions. Immediate written recall tasks are a direct and integrative assessment that requires students to read passages silently and then write everything they can remember from the text. While this practice has caused criticism due to memory requirements (Yuh-Fang, 2006), Sudweeks et al. (2004) argue that retellings are the preferred measurement of reading comprehension for English language learners due to their difficulty with traditional test designs. Their study represented oral retellings and this current study uses written retellings.

Stahl (2009) notes that retellings satisfy consequential validity as a result because the students have a positive experience when they can retell. However, retellings could compromise reliability due to the variety of ways they can be assessed, including accuracy rates, inclusion of information, richness of the retelling writing, and the amount of personal investment in the retelling (Sudweeks et al., 2004). In this study, these limitations were addressed by having a rubric for analyzing the written retellings and having multiple readers.

Phase VI: Cloze-Maze Assessments

“High stakes testing could make the difference between passing to the next grade and retention, or between exiting school with or without a standard diploma” (Elbaum, Arguelles,

Campbell, & Saleh, 2004, p. 72). This statement describes a final area of concern for the middle school read-aloud (i.e., how standardized tests and the read-aloud strategy can be used to promote better testing outcomes). Classroom tests and grading practices as an examination of reading comprehension are not a concern in most studies (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). However, due to the role assessment plays on the middle school level, testing is included in this study. Testing can be beneficial to students who depend on confirmation from their teachers regarding their reading abilities and help teachers track progress of students' skills.

Most of the research specifically uses the read-aloud as an accommodation for students in testing situations in order to produce higher standardized test scores. Lesesne's (2006) article on using the read-aloud in testing situations challenged the research community to begin connecting the read-aloud strategy in a vibrant, robust way to testing. However, past studies reported the read-aloud strategy to be "inconsistent" in improving performance on testing (Meloy et al., 2002). Meloy et al. (2002) found that all levels of students could make gains using the read-aloud strategy as an accommodation for testing. They recommended that the read-aloud should not be used exclusively but with other strategies as seen in previous studies. Elbaum et al. (2004) also studied the effects on comprehension of using the read-aloud in testing situations for students with and without reading disabilities. This team studied the effects of older students (Grades 6 and beyond) reading aloud to themselves and determined that students who read aloud *to themselves* had greater text recall and better short-term memory. Dolan et al. (2005) extended the notion that the read-aloud is a useful strategy in testing situations. One quantitative study on the read-

aloud (Walczyk et al., 2007) illustrated just that with their research on automaticity (i.e., verbal efficiency). Here the read-aloud is recommended as being useful for middle school students (7th grade) in order to alleviate confusion in activities that are reader-based (speech recoding, encoding, verbal capacities), knowledge-based (inaccessible knowledge and lack thereof), and text-based (vocabulary, verbose texts, choppy texts), the latter two presenting a difficult reading session for older students. Data from this study revealed that using certain practices during the read-aloud session, such as adjusting the reading rate, looking back in texts, pausing to allow time to process, and troubleshooting certain areas, can lessen confusion for English language learners and help them make gains in automaticity.

Leslie and Caldwell (2009) argue that if a reading researcher were determining if student readers have understood language arts content, reading comprehension is “one key variable” to assess (p. 410). Formative assessment has been identified in reading comprehension and validity theories as providing a fresher look into assessment issues. Standardized tests inadequately reflect or fail to provide rationale for a host of issues, including (1) the complexities associated with reading comprehension, as indicated by the discussion of its fluctuating definition, and (2) reasons why comprehension tends to break down. Formative assessments, given daily and over time, have the capability to shed light on the reading processes students develop over time.

One such formative assessment used in the current study is the cloze-maze modified test, where two tests, cloze and maze, are combined. English language learners have histories with both tests; in fact, in the current study, this test was used across the school for all students. The cloze test, also known as the *cloze procedure*, has been in practice in

language teaching for approximately 60 years and has been connected with reading comprehension investigations (Zhang, 2008). The cloze test presents a passage in which key words are left blank, and the reader is to fill in the blank with a meaningful word—both the correct part of speech, and also correct in the context. By the 1970s, the cloze test was used for measuring proficiency in these students. In its beginnings, however, cloze testing was developed to directly measure a text against a reader in order to indicate text comprehensibility and to measure readability levels in texts for English native-speaker children (O’Toole & King, 2010; Ren, 2011). According to O’Toole and King (2010), contemporary versions of cloze have been used to investigate fluency, bilingualism, and critical thinking, as well as in neuroscience studies to study brain activity and linguistic processing. Other uses of cloze offer information on accessibility estimates of a particular text for a particular group of readers. Ickes and Cottrell (2010) argue that when students add meaningful words that belong in the blanks, cloze can demonstrate a reader’s ability to understand the context of the passage and the aptitude to understand vocabulary.

Maze, a multiple choice variation of the cloze test, is a modification of cloze where words are suggested for the student to use to fill in blanks (Stahl, 2009). Similar to cloze, maze assessments indicate a wide array of information on readers, including decoding, fluency, and comprehension, and it is sensitive to the development in reading comprehension of novice readers. Maze assessment deletion strategies can vary in number, ratio deletion, and content. The point of where deletions begin can vary, but are typically in the second sentence of the passage. These assessments can also be used in individual/group situations, are easy to grade, and can be timed/untimed (Zhang, 2008). However, maze may cause

variations in reliability and validity, which are addressed appropriately in this current study.

The format of the cloze-maze hybrid used in the current study is based on literature on the use of cloze and maze, and modifications from such literature are considered to increase reliability and validity (Ickes & Cottrell, 2010; O'Toole & King, 2010; Ren, 2011; Stahl, 2009). For example, selection distracters (e.g., blanks, suggested words) could be problematic; therefore, test designers must make sure distracters meet one of the following criteria. They must be: (1) the same part of speech; (2) meaningful and plausible in one sentence; (3) related in content; (4) as familiar to the reader as the deleted word; (5) clearly incorrect or inappropriate to the context of the excerpt (Parker & Hasbrouck, 1992).

In regards to using the cloze-maze as a formative assessment in the current study, according to Leslie and Caldwell (2009), informal measures are those assessments that do not interpret scores using such comparative or normative data or those that standardize procedures for administrative scoring. One type of informal measure is formative assessment. Formative assessments are used as information for the classroom teacher to measure student progress and improve instructional practices (Biancarosa, 2005; Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Stahl, 2009). In addition, according to Leslie and Caldwell (2009), guidelines for valid informal assessment use must include (1) instructional purposes, (2) measures that extend over time and aggregation across assessments (p. 420).

Chapter Summary

Review of the literature important to this study on the read-aloud and its impact on the English language learner was divided into two sections with multileveled parts. *Section One* of the review told the story of the read-aloud and its movement from an elementary

school practice to a middle school instructional strategy. Three areas of that movement included descriptive, critical, and anecdotal accounts of its appropriateness as a middle school practice. *Section Two* featured a conflict in the story of the read-aloud due to changing definitions of reading comprehension. This section addressed three topics: reading comprehension, vocabulary, and formative assessment. Each topic and its designated parts were argued as appropriate areas for inclusion in this read-aloud inquiry. This two-part story offers a review of the read-aloud as an instructional strategy for the middle school level English language learner who could benefit from its flexibility and practices. Exploring these areas of read-aloud shapes the practice not only for the special populations who could benefit from it, but for any student who needs multiple opportunities to grow in reading comprehension.

Chapter III Methodology

To construct what LeCompte et al. (1993) explain as a “legal argument” for this study (p. 55), this chapter will be divided into five multileveled parts to describe the data collection and procedures for this mixed methods research on the impact of the read-alouds with English language learners. *Part I* provides the rationale for the mixed methods approach. *Part II* describes and illustrates those vital components that fulfilled such a complex, yet highly organized design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). It will begin with describing the research environment, including settings (e.g., school and classroom), participants (e.g., teacher and students), and instructional strategy (read-aloud technique) and end with explanations of the instructional materials (classic and multicultural texts of interest) used as data sources to provided evidence for the inquiry, including (1) student surveys (original and modified); (2) pre-, inter-, and post-vocabulary tests; (3) the read-aloud protocol; (4) student annotation exercises; (5) written retellings; and (6) cloze-maze modified assessments. *Part III* illustrates a data collection procedure, which describes the five-circuit data collection plan used in the research. *Part IV* will provide how the analyses of the data sets were conducted, including procedural guidelines. Each piece of data is critical to the study and will be used for dual purposes to address the research questions, as well as corroborate other data to assure the merit of the findings. *Part V* will conclude the chapter with matters of confidence that build sound research in the design approach, including reliability and transparency.

Part I: Mixed Methods Approach

Research on literacy is not always best explained using single method approaches (Calfee & Sperling, 2010; Duke & Mallette, 2004). Although in the field of literacy, many

aspects have been illuminated by purely qualitative or quantitative methods, mixed methods have also been employed as a valid, appealing approach for addressing the unique issues experienced in language and literacy research (Calfée & Sperling, 2010). The mixed-methods approach has gained favor and momentum in the last decade as an alternative approach to the restrictive nature of a quantitative dominated design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Though the *paradigm incompatibility* distinctions are evident when both quantitative (i.e., positivist) notions and qualitative (i.e., metaphysical) approaches are used concurrently (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), mixed methods data are appealing more to the contemporary researcher to appropriately complement one approach with the other and yield the widest possible information. While all approaches have strengths, weaknesses, and drawbacks, mixed methods was chosen for his inquiry into read-alouds on the middle school level. The design of this study employed a mixed methods approach to collectively compensate for what one approach cannot do on its own (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

For this research on the impact of read-aloud, the use of a mixed methods approach was appropriate due to two concepts: *synergy* and *sufficiency of evidence*. The concept of *synergy*, (Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008) recommends combining a large range of data sources to illustrate a greater collaboration between quantitative data and the thick description of qualitative research. Smith (2003) notes that an indicator of confidence in a study is the ability to demonstrate sufficiency of evidence, which assures that evidence is adequate to make important decisions about the data. Combinations of qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as these guiding concepts, have the capability to yield a wide range of

benefits to research (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Part II: Research Environment, Materials, and Procedures

Part II has three sections. Section I presents the research environment where the study took place for one semester from February – June, 2012, and the teacher and participants in the study. Section II offers detailed descriptions of the materials and instruments used in the study and data collection techniques. Section III of the second part describes the procedures used for qualitative and quantitative data as detailed by mixed methods guidelines and considerations (Creswell & Clark-Plano, 2007; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012). The chapter culminates with those areas that validate mixed methods research.

Section I: The Research Environment and Resources

The research environment and resources for this read-aloud inquiry were an interlocking of the middle school, the classroom, and the English language learner teacher and learners.

The middle school environment. The selection of the school site was based on three criteria: (1) middle school status; (2) diverse English language learner population; and (3) locale and/or proximity to the researcher who would study 27 lessons. The site was a traditional middle school located in an urban center, where high quality instruction, advanced study opportunities, creative exploration, and multiple extra-curricular activities were provided throughout the course of the school day and in afterschool activities. Four core classes (Science, Social Studies, Math, and Language Arts), Health/PE, a lunch period, and two elective courses comprised the student schedules, and opportunities to participate in a wide array of electives are also offered to the students, including theater, Spanish, music

exploration, chorus, piano, band, orchestra, computer skills and applications. During the course of the research, students were offered multiple opportunities to participate in a variety of academic, sport-related, and social events.

The middle school classroom environment. The study took place in a middle school classroom with English language learners learning English as a second, third or fourth language. The school site for this study provides regular language instruction for English language learners and also pulls them from regular classes to provide additional language instruction. The class would best be described as *sheltered instruction*, where English language learners continually receive content taught by a licensed teacher until they meet state proficiency mandates (Porter, 2009; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

The classroom was in an overflow, adjunct to the main building. Desks were arranged in groups of three side-by-side desks or five desks in V-shaped formations for small group/cooperative learning sessions. Two computer centers are on two separate walls of the classroom. Traits of an established reading environment are evident, with walls covered with posted information devoted to writing and literature, student-created posters, photos of literary figures, and advertisements for books turned into upcoming movies. Posters depicting language arts content are also posted throughout the room (parts of speech, grammar rules). Also on the walls is social studies information, including maps and national/international sites that the teacher-in-charge uses in daily lessons involving grammar and mechanics.

Research indicates that providing access to a large number and wide variety of books in a classroom library improves reading (Biancarosa, 2005). In this setting, five bookshelves

filled with modified/multi-leveled and regular novels and textbooks, many in languages other than English, line the walls in the back and side of the classroom to provide books that differentiate instruction of multileveled/range readers from 6th – 8th grade. Various genres of books fill these shelves of the teacher's classroom library, especially Young Adult Literature, contemporary collections of short stories, *Reader's Digest* magazines, Western classics, pictorial dictionaries (Arabic, Spanish), encyclopedias, and teen magazines that can be checked out by students.

The middle school, English language learner resource. The class population for this research consisted of 4 males and 5 females with a variety of language backgrounds: 56% Hispanic, 11% African, 11% Arabic, 11% Chinese, and 11% Palestinian. Student survey indicated that English is their additional language; first languages for this group included Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and African heritage languages. Students spoke a variety of different languages yet shared an interest to learn more English and speak better English.

Background information about the English language learners included test scores in the four domains of English language arts is illustrated in the Table 3.1. The teacher-in-charge explained how his English Language Learner classes are formed. Students are annually tested by the state, and scored under reading and writing English language proficiency domains. For students to be released from *Limited English Proficiency* (LEP) classrooms, they must make a minimum score of 4.0 in both domains. At the time of this study, reading and writing scores for this group of participants ranged between 2.3 and 5.0 (mean = 3.0) and 1.9 – 4.2 (mean = 3.3) respectively. Thus, 56% of the student English language learners in this study were assessed as low in listening and speaking abilities, and

Table 3.1. English Proficiency Test Scores for English Language Learners

Student	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Overall	Comprehension (reading and listening)
1	6.0	3.9	2.9	4.2	4.2	4.2
2	3.7	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.4	3.2
3	2.4	3.2	2.3	3.5	2.9	2.4
4	3.1	4.4	5.0	3.9	3.9	3.9
5	4.2	3.9	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.6
6	5.0	4.4	2.3	1.9	2.8	3.1
7	3.8	3.9	2.6	2.7	2.9	2.9
8	4.2	6.0	2.6	2.4	3.1	3.1
9	4.2	4.4	3.2	3.9	3.8	3.6

89% were low in reading and writing abilities. Overall scores for the group consisting of listening, speaking, reading, and writing scores revealed a range of 2.8 – 4.2. Pertinent to this study, comprehension scores for the group were based on two domains: reading comprehension (70%) and listening comprehension (30%). Eleven percent met the required goal in one domain, 22% had the lower 2.0 scores, and the majority of the class (i.e., 67%) were in the 3.0 score range. Ranges were between 2.4 and 4.2, mean 3.3. Those English language learners with minimum scores below 4.0 for reading or writing are labeled *LEP*. Reading scores of 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 indicate that assistance is recommended, and those with a score of 4.0 and beyond need consultative services. Overall, the majority of the students in this current study had minimal fluency skills and low vocabulary knowledge, yet these same

individual students participated in the study from the onset to the culmination and demonstrated their commitment by signing a consent form (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). See English or Spanish forms in Appendices B and C. In addition, students' parents signed consent forms to allow their children to participate in the study (See Appendix D).

The middle school, English language learner teacher resource. Three types of read-alouds have been observed by this researcher in the middle school, English language arts classroom: teacher as reader (professional); computer (i.e., software, audio-books) as reader; teacher/students as readers, and peer-only as reader. Relevant to these types of read-aloud practices, the researcher observed the English language learner teacher using audio read-alouds where a tape recording of a story was played for students as they read along with a textbook. In these lessons prior to the study, learners also took turns reading stories aloud sentence-by-sentence in both dyads and round robin styles. Read-alouds were informal and interrupted with questions from the teacher for clarification. Each read-aloud was followed by teacher-led discussions, questioning, and writing assignments. Partner work using standard Q&A handouts and use of references to answer questions were two other practices employed by the teacher-in-charge prior to the intervention lessons by the researcher.

The English language learner teacher knew of the read-aloud but did not use it in daily practice and did not initially acknowledge its value beyond entertainment. The educator, a tenth year, bilingual teacher, served a variety of purposes for the learners—from teaching basic language concepts to assisting them with projects/assignments across content, to testing students for county tests, to serving as a translator for their caregivers in IEP meetings. The teacher participating in this study bridged individual background knowledge

from their first languages and the knowledge they needed for English language arts.

The teacher satisfied the basic criteria for this study: (1) Teacher must be active middle school educator in a system with at least three years experience; (2) Teacher must have sufficient English fluency skills to participate in audio taping; (3) Teacher must be the educator participating in all read-aloud sessions, interviews, or observations; (4) Teacher must have time management skills due to read-aloud time limits of 15-20 minutes (Hoffman et al., 1993); and (5) Teacher must make a full-time commitment to the study (Appendix A).

Section II: Data Sources

Instruments to collect qualitative and quantitative data for this mixed methods approach were used concurrently throughout the various stages of the study to provide this document with a broader view of the potential ways students comprehend and perform in assessments. Periodically, a *multilevel variant* was followed in the data collection (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007), where multiple quantitative and/or qualitative data were collected simultaneously. The teacher-in-charge provided qualitative data while the students provided both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. See Table 3.2 where these multiple sources of data were grouped into four types and used to converge, validate, and/or contradict data from the other. The table offers an overview of the section, the types of data used, when the data were collected in the course of the study and for what length of time (i.e., ongoing, after, before noted phases).

Type I: General Qualitative Data Sources

Type I included general qualitative data sources: (1) Observation information collected from general classroom and random read-aloud sessions; (2) Researcher field

Table 3.2. Collection Activity for Mixed Methods Read-Aloud Study

TYPE	PRELIMINARY	PHASE I Stories 1 - 9	PHASE II Stories 10 - 18	PHASE III Stories 19 – 27
TYPE I General Qualitative Data				
Fieldnotes	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Formal Observation	3 Times			
Informal Observation		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Formal Student Survey	Before			After
Informal Student Survey			Random	During
Audio-Recordings		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Archival Data	Intermittent	Intermittent	Intermittent	Intermittent
Scorecard Templates		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Secondary Artifacts	Intermittent	Intermittent	Intermittent	Intermittent
TYPE II Close-Ended Assessments				
Vocabulary Assessments	Before		During	After
TYPE III Mixed Assessments				
Final, Mixed Assessment				Ongoing
TYPE IV Concurrent Data				
Read-Aloud Protocol: Say-Something Annotations Comprehension Written Retellings Cloze-maze Assessments		Ongoing, Daily	Ongoing, Daily	Ongoing, Daily

notes describing and reflecting on classroom activities; (3) Student surveys regarding the read-aloud practice and overall research; (4) Audio-recordings of multicultural and classic read-alouds and read-aloud sessions; (5) Student artifacts of reading comprehension activities; (6) Researcher-created scorecards summarizing written retellings of the read-aloud story; and (7) All other secondary artifacts external to these described (e.g., emails, teacher handouts).

Researcher field notes and research memos. Researcher fieldnotes were taken during class times; research memos deduced from audio-taping of those same read-aloud sessions were taken during research preparation with recordings/artifacts from the current study. Both researcher field notes and research memos were transferred into the researcher's journal to succinctly describe the session in a comprehensive manner and document relevant information about students' behaviors or classroom activities and included (1) exact quotes, (2) pseudonyms to assure confidentiality and anonymity, (3) chronological sequence of descriptions, (4) synthesized researcher field notes and notes of the events, and (5) particulars (e.g., date, place, observation time) (Duke & Mallette, 2004; LeCompte et al., 1993; Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999). Phrases and statements reflected behaviors this researcher observed during read-alouds conducted by the teacher-in-charge and/or conducted or modified by the researcher (See Appendix L) (LeCompte et al., 1993). After each read-aloud session, field notes and research memos were aggregated by filtering out and organizing descriptions of events, relationships, activities and operationalizing terms in order to build upon prior data from other observations (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Schensul et al., 1999). Judgments, which could cause validity problems, were bracketed in these aggregation

periods (Duke & Mallette, 2004; LeCompte, 2000). Emerging patterns were noted.

Observations. Observations were carried out in a middle school classroom at the onset of the study and throughout the research. Immersion approaches were used to maintain close contact with the teacher-in-charge and English language learners (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Such tactics were the least structured, most interpretive, and relied on this researcher's insight, intuition, and creativity (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). A close interaction was maintained with the participants, and was vital to understanding the classroom environment, practices, and the students' behaviors that were observed during the implementation (LeCompte et al., 1993). Observation notes provided general data about classroom procedures and read-aloud sessions, with efforts to capture each learning event using the words/actions of English Language Learner, middle school students.

Student surveys. Three student surveys were used in the study (See Appendix F). The first was created to acquire general information regarding language, reading habits, the students' perceptions of the read-aloud practice, the read-aloud sessions, and the research overall. The second of the two surveys was designed based on content from the students' pre-survey data and covered such areas as read-aloud perceptions, knowledge of languages, reading interests, and comments about external reading practices. The final survey was offered to four random students and requested general information on the read-aloud practice (e.g. opinions). Two additional questions for all students were placed in a culminating game (i.e., *Let's Play Read-Aloud*) to further explicate information of the read-aloud.

Survey I was a researcher-created survey instrument issued to the students at the beginning of the study. The instrument was a 7-question survey with predetermined choices,

as well as open-ended questions. The first question sought to obtain information on the number of languages (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4+) English language learners spoke other than English (i.e., How many languages can you understand?). In the intermediate survey, this question changed to “Which languages do you speak?” to aid in special read-aloud story selections and further information for the class language profile of the participants.

To gauge the types of texts students were reading, the second question requested students to check all text examples (e.g., newspapers, magazines, internet,) that applied. A space was also provided for any other types of reading examples not covered in the list. In the intermediate survey, this list was revamped with those appropriate student responses from the first survey and reissued with two additions to the list: *my personal writings* and *diaries*. With the second list, English language learners were requested to rank their choices of reading materials by most to least important. A later open-ended question asked English language learners about the kinds of stories they enjoyed reading.

The next three survey questions delved into perceptions of read-alouds. The questions allowed students to generate their own answers, as well as choose from a list of choices: (1) “Do you like listening to your teacher read stories aloud,” which was followed by choices of *yes*, *no*, *sometimes*, or *never*. A follow-up question asked for reasons involving disliking teacher read-aloud. Another question asked the students to choose if they would rather read on their own or have someone read to them. This question was followed by a request for explanation on either one of the preferred choices (i.e., “Why?”). Survey I ended with an optional question allowing students to share any other comments/questions about reading aloud.

Survey II was carried out after reading 15 read-aloud stories. This survey contained 7 questions that acquired additional information about language and perceptions on reading and read-aloud practices. Outside of those questions addressed in the first survey, this survey asked about interests in the read-aloud stories. Students were provided with space to offer explanations on likes/dislikes of the stories. They also were asked about the practice of read-aloud. The last set of questions asked the English language learners to provide their favorite and least favorite read-aloud stories. As indicated with prior survey data, this question was used to further choose excerpts for final read-alouds (Stories 16-27). As in the first survey, Survey II ended with an open-ended question. See Appendix F for survey. Survey III was given to four random students. It asked one question focusing on perceptions of the read-aloud: “How do you feel about the read-aloud so far? Be honest.”

Additionally, two open-ended survey questions were placed in a culminating game that students played. One question asked for students to explain the read-aloud process: “What if you were a teacher and you wanted to read-aloud *Diary of a wimpy kid* to your students. Explain how you would do it.” The second asked for the students’ recommendations to be given to an authority figure: “The teacher/researcher has read-aloud 27 stories to you. What would you tell your principal about read-aloud?” Overall, these survey questions produced qualitative evidence from the learners by offering information on their understandings, interpretations, and perceptions of read-aloud (LeCompte, 2000).

Audio recordings. However, due to legal, confidentiality, and analysis problems of videotaping students, teacher, and overall classroom settings in the selected research location, this researcher selected audio recording. Audio-recording was selected over video-taping

due to parental consent needed for photos/video. (Duke & Mallette, 2004). Since the read-aloud and lessons in general were audio-recorded live, these sessions were a feasible way to provide accurate and retrievable records of the read-aloud sessions (Schensul et al., 1999) and capture “fast-moving events” (Duke & Mallette, 2004, p. 104). While visual interaction (i.e., body language) and paralinguistic behaviors (i.e., non-verbal, gestures) cannot be captured through audio-recording, this researcher was intentional in capturing these idiosyncrasies in researcher field notes. Each time this researcher performed or observed one of the 27 read-aloud sessions, the event was recorded. The recorder was positioned in the front of the classroom, and standard audiotapes were used and changed after each story.

Student artifacts and archival data. Examples of artifact data included the class work submitted by English language learners: pre-writing exercises (e.g., say-something, annotated exercises); comprehension activities (e.g., Venn diagrams, cluster maps); written retellings based on read-aloud sessions; and cloze-maze assessments.

Archival data included in the study were taken from standard course of study information and paperwork/information obtained from the teacher-in-charge.

Scorecard templates. Synthesized information from read-aloud sessions was collapsed on a 1 to 2 page scorecard template (See Appendix CC). These scorecards were researcher-created and each sheet consisted of a summary by the researcher of all activities and information describing each session. Each scorecard had the following: title and author of the read-aloud story, student data, and notes on the student’s class work for the activities before or after the read-aloud (e.g., say-something responses, research memo notes based on the comprehension exercises, retelling highlights, and cloze-maze assessment scores).

Scoring was used solely for purposes connected with quantitative questions guiding this study and not associated with students' grades. Scorecards were created and filed after each read-aloud story, and one copy was given to the teacher-in-charge for review, shared in special meetings involving the English language learners, and placed as records in the teacher's master study binder.

Secondary artifacts. Secondary artifacts were those documents (e.g., emails, schedules) external to those in the above categories or documents (e.g., handouts, newsletters, and school policy) offered to the researcher from the teacher-in-charge. Others were obtained while visiting the school site (i.e., office) or website (description of courses offered, mission statement, etc.). These documents were used to gather further information about the school and the various activities it afforded the student population.

Type II: Closed-Ended Data Sources

The collection of multiple assessments throughout the study was chosen to illustrate diverse ways English language learners were comprehending information, as well as provide evidence of their reading, vocabulary, and writing development. These multiple and varied instruments also featured those important aspects recommended by Pappamihel and Mihai (2006) that validate assessing the "abilities, strengths, and weaknesses" of English language learners in language arts classrooms (p. 35). See Table 3.3 which summarizes Pappamihel and Mihai (2006) features as they relate to the four assessments used in the course of this study. Five such features in this study included, first, a review of the proficiency ranks of English language learners. Next, the researcher based test designs on objectives and strategies practiced in the classroom. Third, visuals and graphics were available to English

Table 3.3. Features of Read-Aloud Assessment Instruments

Pappamihiel & Mihai's (2006) Features Conductive to English Language Learner Assessment	Qualitative Assessment 1 <i>Pre-, Inter-, Post-Vocabulary Assessments</i>	Mixed Methods Assessment 2 <i>Written Retellings</i>	Quantitative Assessment 3 <i>Cloze-Maze Modified</i>	Qualitative Assessment 4 <i>Final Mixed</i>
Knowledge of proficiency levels	√	√	√	√
Tests based on classroom activities, and strategies	√	√	√	√
Visuals and graphics	<i>n/a</i>	√	√	√
Accommodations (extended time, visual, read-aloud, use of heritage language)	√	√	√	√
Rubrics for fair scoring of writing/responses	<i>n/a</i>	√	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Appropriate answers accepted	√	√	√	√

language learners as accommodations in assessments (e.g., graphic organizers). Finally, a rubric (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009) was used for fair scoring of writing/information (See Appendix V). Four qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods assessments with diverse formats (Smith, 2003) were incorporated in this study to assess the English language learner:

(1) close-ended included the pre-, intermediate-, and post- vocabulary assessments; (2) opened-ended assessment; (3) quantitative-only included modified, cloze-maze assessment scores; and (4) mixed methods included the students' written retellings. Each assessment was based on ongoing information derived from biweekly read-aloud sessions and modified for individual or classroom needs. This wide range of such assessments used provided data on the ways the read-aloud protocol could contribute to reading comprehension. See Appendices CC – EE for explicit notes.

Taken three times throughout the study *Type II* sources included close-ended vocabulary assessment data sources, including pre-, intermediate-, and post- vocabulary assessments. These assessments were conducted after every ninth read-aloud session.

Vocabulary pre-, intermediate-, and post-assessments. To build vocabulary in English proficient students, August and Shanahan (2010) recommended a combination of strategic approaches including explicit instruction of vocabulary, immersion in language-rich environments with interactive reading, and teaching word learning strategies. These recommendations were used to construct a 27-statement, pre-, intermediate-, and post assessment to document and monitor student progress in areas such as vocabulary acquisition, which is based on the reliance of definition usage, and knowledge of word meanings, which goes beyond simple definition or declarative components to include procedural issue (Nagy & Scott, 2001). As explained in Nagy and Scott (2001), a reader who “knows” a word can (1) recognize it, (2) use it in context, and (3) use the word’s meaning with other forms of knowledge. In this assessment instrument, all these word skills were addressed where students had oral and written opportunities (i.e., practice) to recognize

words, explored or observed them used in context, and used the meaning of words in discussions, writings, and visual interpretations. For the English language learner student, these explanations are not given enough attention, which affects their reading comprehension overall (Tran, 2006).

The instrument was offered to the English language learners three times during the study: (1) before (i.e., pre-), (2) midway or after Story #14 (i.e., intermediate), and (3) after the 27 read-aloud sessions are completed (i.e., post-). To assess if the students were able to recall familiar words and statements from the read-aloud sessions, the same test was administered. Statements used in the assessment were extracted directly from read-aloud stories used in the study. Each statement was followed by four single-word choices. See Appendices Z and AA for full design particulars. Based on the design, students could eliminate inappropriate choices because of their knowledge or familiarity with words used in the choice group. Vocabulary words in the assessments would be encountered by English language learners several times in comprehension exercises, annotations, and/or in the read-aloud texts. The objective of using these methods is to optimize the students' chances of choosing the correct/appropriate word. The design of the assessment also offered insight into the student's comprehension. For instance, when the multiple choice format is used and the answer is incorrect, the "distracter" answer could identify a reason behind why the student chose the incorrect option (Mohamed, Eng, & Ismail, 2012). Students in this study were able to go back and forth between pages and as were given as much time as needed to complete the assessment, two testing practices recommended for English language learners (Ariew & Ercetin, 2004).

Type III: Mixed Assessments Data Sources

The *Type III* data source included a final, 10-question open-ended assessment (i.e., *Let's Play Read-Aloud*) that was separated into parts and administered after each of the final 9 stories (i.e. Stories 19-27).

Final, mixed assessment. The final assessment instrument was a researcher-created test featuring opened-ended/closed-ended questions. The assessment was designed to cover five broad areas of the read-aloud sessions: (1) accompanying tool(s); (2) student strategies and/or techniques; (3) listening skills; (4) general read-aloud techniques; and (5) vocabulary. It was presented to students as a competitive game titled *Let's Play Read-Aloud!* The competition totaled 50 points. Nine questions were open-ended and allowed the students to explain their level of knowledge in their own words and compete with other class members. A bonus section consisted of 20 multiple choice questions where the students encountered a picture and four words/phases to choose one as its match. This final informal assessment was considered a valid tool to use since it solicited input from the students to assure they had some understanding of the nuances of the study, as well as represented summative learning over the course of the inquiry (LeCompte, 2000). See Appendix BB for the final assessment and accompanying explanations.

Type IV: Concurrent Data Sources

Finally, *Type IV* included concurrent data, which were collected each session and composed the phases of the read-aloud protocol used in the study. The read-aloud protocol included multiple phases, including (1) say-something responses where students predicted, commented, questioned, or connected with read-aloud titles; (2) annotations, where students

explored languages of the read-aloud texts; (3) comprehension activities, which included a diverse group of activities directed at reading comprehension of the read-aloud texts; (4) written retellings, which were the only data source evaluated using qualitative and quantitative approaches; and (5) cloze-maze modified assessments, which were taken by English language learners after each retelling response writing. Each was written or completed by English language learners during read-aloud sessions.

The Read-Aloud Protocol - Accompanying Data Sources

From a synthesis of information, a read-aloud session protocol was created and used for this research. The read-aloud protocol involved 27 read-aloud sessions that consistently involved the following six-phase progression: *Phase I* of each read-aloud session was initiated with a school-wide-approved- and English Language Learner-teacher-recommended strategy called *say-something*, where students previewed the read-aloud title and practiced questioning, predicting, connecting, and commenting. *Phase II* implemented the *Stand up for the book* portion of the session where the teacher “pitched” the read-aloud text by offering students some information external to the text or the text topic. *Phase III* of the session promoted research-based, teacher-recommended, and researcher-created comprehension activities, including (a) student annotations, (b) cluster mapping, (c) graphic strips, (d) graphic displays, (e) read-aloud passage/phrase pullouts, and (f) dramatic scenarios. *Phase IV* consisted of an uninterrupted, teacher read-aloud. Written retellings comprised *Phase V* of the read-aloud session as recommended by Brown and Cambourne (1997), and *Phase VI* concluded the session with a cloze-maze assessment. Each phase in the protocol consisted of intricate parts that were designed to promote comprehension and widen

accessibility to improve reading comprehension. Students participated in these activities 2-3 times per week over an 11-week period.

Phase I: Say-something. *Say-something* is a researched-based, response strategy that was promoted at the school site of this study. It was utilized in each of the 27 read-aloud sessions to immerse students into four areas aligned with reading research practices: (a) predicting, which asks students to make a statement about what will or might happen in the future; (b) questioning, where a student asks for information in order to understand; (c) commenting, which reflects background knowledge or previous experiences with a topic or text, and (d) connecting, where the student shows some relationship with the text, such as how it relates to him/herself, family, etc. (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Merriam-Webster, 2012; Smith, 1997). A practice in this current study was to read aloud the title of the text excerpt and display the title on the board to have students practice one of these four strategies (See Appendix N). When students were allowed to think about a title, they had an opportunity to call attention to background information about a word or topic that could help them connect with the read-aloud for the day. To accomplish this choice, students were offered neon-colored stickies to write out their interpretations of what the title meant to them while performing one of the say-something strategies. They were instructed to choose the strategy they wanted to perform with the title, and offered daily encouragement to diversify their responses.

Phase II: Stand up for the book. To introduce the read-aloud, an activity called *standing up for the book* was built into the session to model for learners the ways of talking about texts. The purpose of this phase of the read-aloud session was to transmit information

to the students -- information that would potentially go unnoticed if the students were reading the book on their own. For example, the students would listen to the teacher talk about likes and dislikes about the book, interesting chapters in the book, or favorite characters. The students would also hear about interesting information about the book or the author.

Phase III: Comprehension strategies. Davis (1944) contended that the connection between comprehension and word knowledge is unequivocal. Comprehension is improved when students understand what a word means. Comprehension strategies described in read-aloud research (e.g., cluster maps, Venn diagrams, matching) (Beers, 1998; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009), as well as strategies that evolved in this current study (graphic strips, graphic displays), were used to connect students with texts prior to reading. See Appendices O – S for samples of comprehension strategies practiced in the read-aloud sessions, including annotations, pullouts (sentence/phrase), and dramatic scenarios.

Annotations. To prepare students for the upcoming read-aloud, the annotation activity was used before each read-aloud session by the teacher/researcher to expose high-level vocabulary words/phrases, or by the students to highlight confusing/unfamiliar words or phrases. Two types of vocabulary were the focus of these annotations: *listening vocabulary* (i.e., words the readers need to know to understand content they are hearing) and *reading vocabulary* (i.e., words the readers needs to know to understand content they are reading) (Sails, 2006). The annotations involved what Brown and Cambourne (1987) term "*shifts of focus*, where concentration is on the literal meaning of a word/phrase, and then progresses into the interpretation of the word or phrase in the context of the story" (p. 9). Students were guided first to visualize and hear the vocabulary word of importance and then further guided

to understand the way the author used the word in a sentence from the read-aloud excerpt. Students were directed to pencil in their personal take-aways from discussions or experiences and create their own sidebars to help them when, in the read-aloud moment, they encounter problematic parts of the read-aloud text.

Phrase, sentence, and passage pullouts. Passage pullouts were designed in this current study to offer opportunities to make meaning with a text *prior* to the read-aloud. However, instead of calling students' attention to only passage pullouts (i.e., large chunks of texts of interest to understanding the content) as was observed in the middle school classroom, the strategy was modified for these learner to add in phrase pullouts (i.e., phrases of interest to understanding the content) and sentence pullouts (i.e., sentences of interest to understanding the content). Students were instructed to highlight these varieties of pullouts on their excerpts to offer them an idea of how language “looks” and “sounds” and afford them familiarity in areas of importance to the upcoming read-aloud topic.

Dramatic scenarios. A *dramatic scenario* is an operationalized term for re-enactments or dramatic play where the teacher-in-charge/researcher, and/or random students re-enact or perform a phrase, sentence, or passage chunk from the read-aloud text. Dramatic scenarios can best be described as those physical actions in which students participate or witness a word or text through drama. These scenarios offer students opportunities to visualize actions and meanings of texts, as well as see their teachers and peers in a different light. Since these scenarios occur before the read-aloud, students have a preview of that section of the text before it appears in the read-aloud. These dramatic scenarios help bring the actions of word/phrase from the printed page directly into the live classroom setting.

Phase IV: Read-aloud. The type of read-aloud selected for this current research is the *teacher-only* read-aloud. The teacher-only read-aloud is uninterrupted by traditional questions or discussion during the read-aloud event. The purpose of this type of read-aloud is to balance the reading experience by fostering both efferent (listening for meaning, developing vocabulary, tapping experiential background, following the printed words) and aesthetic (i.e., joy of reading) concepts to decide its importance in reading comprehension. The sole voice of the teacher or facilitator is heard as he/she models fluent, oral reading and uses animation and expression, using texts specifically selected for the student population. The reader practices beforehand, and uses a variety of research-based practices for effective read-alouds (See Table 2.2). These include correct pronunciation, stress, intonation, direct speech and dialogue (Albright 2002; Fisher et al., 2004; Lloyd, 2004). While the read-aloud is in progress, students read along from their personal excerpt hardcopies and highlight any information that is interesting or confusing (Duke & Mallette; Gallagher, 2009).

Phase V: Retelling. In this study, the retelling phase of the read-aloud sessions was based solely on read-aloud text excerpts. These excerpts derived from 27 classic and culturally-relevant texts (See Appendices H - K) and were recommended by multicultural book lists, student input, county book lists, featuring classic and cultural books, and the teacher-in-charge. First, students participated in instructional scaffolding activities (Sawyer, 2006), including talking informally about texts; writing about the read-aloud title that prompted them to comment, connect, predict, or question the title of the excerpt (the Say-something exercise); completing diverse comprehension exercises and strategies; and understanding graphics, where students' attention was directed to the images embedded in

the texts (Tran, 2006, Gallagher, 2009). Next, the English language learners were instructed to respond in writing to a fixed prompt: *If your BFF (best friend forever) were absent from class today and did not hear the read-aloud, what would you tell her/him to help your friend pass the quiz that Mr. Jimenez would be giving tomorrow? Make sure that you offer your friend enough information that he/she will pass the test.*ⁱ Before students were allowed to reconstruct their individual retellings from the read-aloud story, they were encouraged to integrate any information evoked by the pre-reading/writing activities of the lesson building up to the read-aloud (e.g., discussions, drawings, comprehension exercises) (Stahl, 2009). These activities were based on content filtered from the read-aloud story of the day. Thus, these written retellings were the results of three intertwining aspects that made reading sensible to the students in this study (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009), including (1) evocations from the read-aloud story, (2) a student's personal interpretations of all the activities associated with the read-aloud story, including connections with vocabulary words/phrases, and (3) synthesis of a variety of information.

Written retellings provided a way to measure reading comprehension (Sudweeks et al, 2004). Written retellings were used to document small changes in students' understanding from basic surface elements of a story (e.g., characters, setting, and conflict) to ranks of comprehension of the story. Over the course of the study, English language learners had the opportunity to write 27 retelling writings.

Phase VI: cloze-maze assessments. To make inferences based on the English language learners' performance in reading comprehension (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Zhang, 2008) as it relates to the read-aloud practice and to connect with pre-established classroom

assessment strategies, a cloze-maze modified assessment instrument was used. In cloze testing, the test-taker must “reproduce accurately a part deleted from a ‘message’ (any language product), by deciding from the context that remains, what the missing part should be” (Ren, 2011, p. 15). In the current study, passages that were important to the overall meaning or theme (See Figure 3.1) of the read-aloud were provided, but with vocabulary words deleted (Smith, 1997). Further, these criteria were used to create cloze-maze tests: (1) no more than 6 words hidden from the passage to address short term memory capacity (Smith, 1997); (2) words that students were having problems with were deleted (Goodman & Goodman, 2009); and (3) one of the word choices was considered "a given" answer to promote further success. See Appendix Y for cloze-maze example.

These modified assessments were used to summarize and evaluate the English language learners’ performance in reading comprehension, to make adjustments to the read-aloud excerpts, and to relate the scores to other data (Biancarosa, 2005; Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000; Prater, 2009; Zhang, 2008). Formative assessments were offered throughout the study, occurred after each read-aloud, were informal in format, and enlisted students to work with only six vocabulary words per test (Biancarosa, 2005).

All the cloze-maze assessments in the current study were scored using two methods: (1) exact-scoring where the presumed answer was chosen and (2) acceptable-answer scoring, where the student chose an alternative that made sense, so was awarded points. The cloze-maze hybrid assessments were scored using a standard scale where each correctly filled blank was worth 17-points, e.g., 1 correct blank=17 points; 2 correct blanks =34 points; 3=51 points, etc.). If the answer sections were left blank or filled in incorrectly, that blank was

given no points. Each assessment provided information on particular readers (e.g., English language learners) and specific texts (e.g., classic and multicultural) (O'Toole & King, 2010). Such scoring practices are indicated in prior cloze-maze studies (Ren, 2011).

The Read-Aloud Protocol - Accompanying Materials

In order to obtain and document the best possible data from the students, each read-aloud session was accompanied with materials that were recommended by this researcher, in read-aloud research studies, or by the teacher-in-charge. Materials for these diverse comprehension strategies were useful to optimize comprehension in forthcoming read-alouds and to gather a wide array of information on the English language learners and their individual and group interactions with read-aloud text content and context. Four groupings of materials were used in various phases of the read-aloud to scaffold instruction at designated times throughout sessions.

- *Group One: Primary reading materials* (i.e., multicultural and classic texts);
- *Group Two: Pre-reading materials* (i.e., before the read-aloud), including graphic strips and graphic displays that students used to practice a variety of activities focusing on sensory indicators (Appendices T and U);
- *Group Three: Intermediate materials* (i.e., during the read-aloud), which included the read-aloud excerpt (Appendix M);
- *Group Four: Post-reading materials* (i.e., after the read-aloud), including writing prompt, cheat sheets, and, if needed, any materials used during the pre-reading phase of the lesson. Some materials were used throughout certain phases of the read-aloud session to make space for student differentiation purposes.

Group One: Primary Reading Materials

Group One includes *primary reading materials*, including 27 multicultural and classic texts used in the current study.

Teacher/student-recommended. Lesesne (2012) noted the importance of student-to-book connections: "...if young adults, who are going through enormous physical, emotional, and psychological changes, feel that a book addresses some of those struggles, they will give it their full attention" (p. 23). In addition, research indicates when students participate in their learning by selecting topics or are allowed to have choices in their learning; they feel autonomous and have better reading success (Arlington, 2011; Biancarosa, 2005). Newkirk (2009) suggests that allowing students into the process promotes optimal engagement with texts. Text topics important to the English language learners were used in the current study. The read-aloud text excerpts sought to immerse students in stories with characters who look like themselves, as well as sound and act similarly to them. Furthermore, the characters in the readings are involved in issues important to adolescent readers, including popularity, school perceptions, isolation, and discrimination (Darvin, 2009).

Thematic read-aloud texts. For organizational purposes, texts for the study were also classified by this researcher under the all-encompassing topic of *relationships* (See Figure 3.1). These relationships addressed in the read-aloud texts are among the most important in middle schoolers' lives (i.e., self, parents, friends, authority, nature) (Beam, Chen & Greenberger, 2002; Dykas & Cassidy, 2011). As noted in Figure 3.1, the read-aloud stories highlighted six thematic categories of relationships: (1) relationship with the self; (2) relationship with family; (3) relationship with authority; (4) relationship with friends; (5)

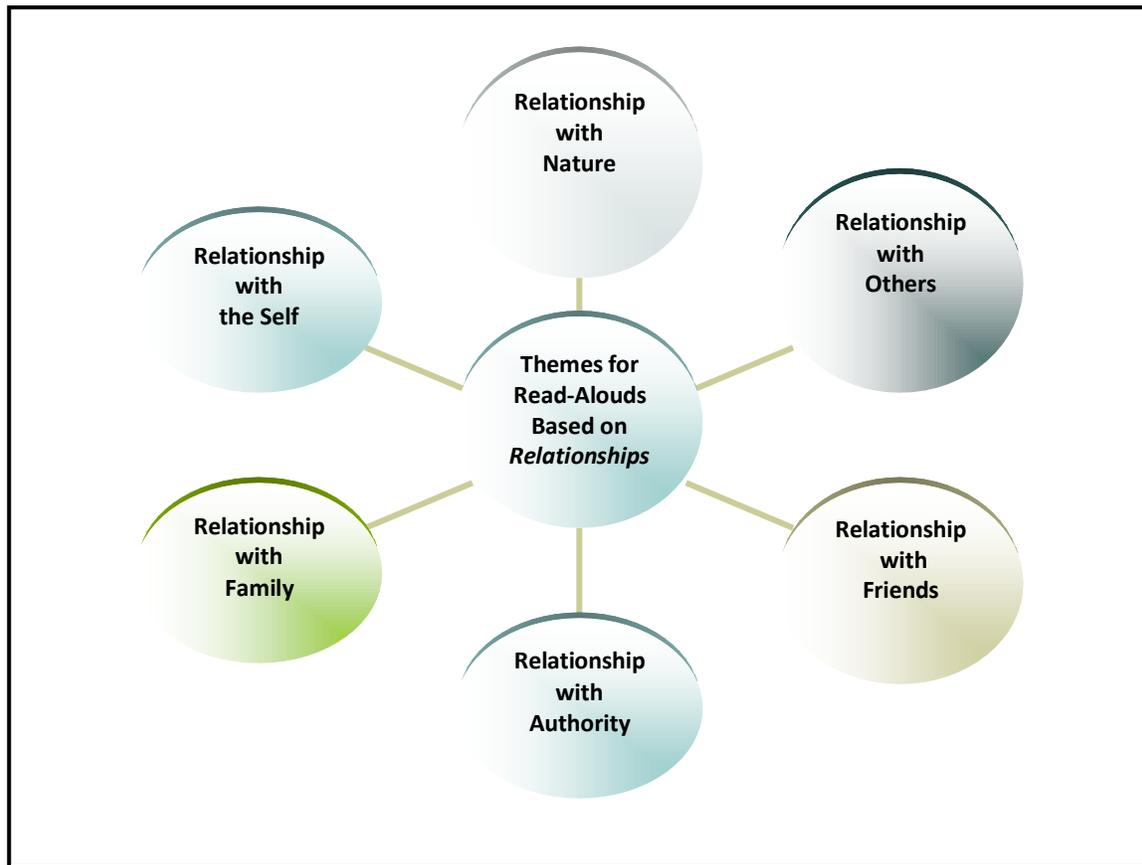


Figure 3.1. Relational Themes Governing Read-Aloud Stories

relationship with others; and (6) relationship with nature. For a list of themes on chosen texts included in each category, see Appendix G.

These read-aloud texts and those topics presented in them satisfied the research recommendations for appropriate (Fisher et al., 2004), interesting (Farris et al., 2004), and quality (Albright, 2002) text selections, as well as ones that could represent good sources for discussion and for read-aloud extension activities (Fisher et al., 2004; Lloyd, 2004). See overview of read-aloud stories and web-based summarizations in Appendices H - K.

Group Two: Pre Read-Aloud Materials

Group Two includes pre-reading materials used before the read-aloud event. The pre-read-aloud reading materials utilized by English language learners before the read-aloud included graphic organizers (e.g., cluster maps, matching, Venn diagrams) (See Appendices P - S for examples), graphic strips (Appendix T), and graphic displays (Appendix U) that offer students practice in using sensory indicators. *Graphic strips* and *graphic displays* are operationalized terms describing researcher-created materials used to help comprehension.

Graphic organizers. Graphic organizers were used as pre-reading materials, including cluster maps and Venn diagrams. Two types of mappings were used in the study: individual and group cluster maps. One cluster map was pre-drawn and printed by the teacher/researcher to be used specifically by the individual student. Each circle was labeled with a component of the 5WH strategy (i.e., who, what, where, when, why). These clusters were used as references for the students *while* writing a retelling. Another map was designed for individual/whole group comprehension activities and was assembled by students (See Appendices P - Q). Matching exercises and Venn diagrams were used in whole group settings to discuss vocabulary. These diagrams were also used with those texts where multiple excerpts were pulled for purposes of comparison/contrast exercises between two read-aloud texts.

Graphic strips/items. These visual materials “unfolded in the interaction” (Patton, 1997) during the planning phases of the read-aloud sessions. Graphic strips helped those at the lower pole of the English language learner class grapple with vocabulary. Research on vocabulary instruction recommends that readers need several encounters with words to have

measurable effects on their reading comprehension (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Chun & Plass, 1996). Having students visualize, hear, taste, smell, or touch concrete items from the read-aloud stories were used to build background knowledge or bridge schemata for those mental visualizations evoked during the read-aloud. See Appendix T for samples of graphic strips used as visual references.

Graphic displays. Graphic displays were setup in class during each read-aloud, along with concrete items that would be encountered in the read-aloud story. In these displays, items from the story were exhibited and the students could see, smell, taste, hear or touch actual items that the characters see, smell, taste, or touch in the read-aloud text for the day. See Appendix U for a sample graphic display used as a visual reference.

Group Three: Intermediate Read-Aloud Materials

Group Three describes the *intermediate materials* used during the read-aloud, mainly the read-aloud excerpts (See Appendix M). Each read-aloud excerpt was used to fulfill accessibility requirements of the study by giving students hard copies of the read-aloud. The difference between traditional accessibility and read-aloud accessibility is that, in the latter, students were allowed to mark up these excerpts with their individual problematic areas.

Read-aloud excerpt. Though Stahl (2009) recommended passage selection lengths from 100 – 400 words for internal coherence and consistency in readability, due to the use of dialogue and low readability in some of the texts, two of the excerpts reached an 800 ranking. Each read-aloud excerpt had a one inch margin space and was double-spaced for annotating activities. For research purposes, all readings were in similar readability levels. Each was retyped to fit the format described and copied on standard weight and bright white paper.

Characteristic across the excerpts were these formatting designs, as well as content focusing on standard 5-WH elements (i.e., who, what, where, when, why), a strategy filtering character(s), situation/theme, setting, and time period. The author and title headed each document, and the word count was located at the bottom of the sheet. There were no marks on the excerpts except for in those beginning lessons when the researcher modeled annotating using an imaginary student annotating a story. Each student would have his/her own individual sheet to uniquely mark (i.e., annotate) either before or during the read-aloud session. For a sample of a synthesized version of annotations, see Appendix O.

Group Four: Post Read-Aloud Materials

Group Four consists of *post-reading materials* used after the read-aloud, including writing prompt, individual student response sheet, cheat (i.e., reference) sheets, and, when needed, any prior materials used during the pre-reading phase of the lesson. Post read-aloud reading materials were those reference materials that helped students prepare for the retelling phase of the read-aloud.

Writing prompt. Students were given a copy of a fixed writing prompt after each of the 27 read-alouds. The prompt was based on helping a friend pass a test. The prompt was typed on neon pink/yellow paper and laminated for frequent use. The prompt helped students to be both prepared and aware of question expectations.

Individual student response sheet. Accompanying each read-aloud was a half sheet of neon colored, lined paper with the heading *My Retelling* in amusing fonts (e.g., comic sans, chiller, Broadway) which was used for students to record retelling responses to the read-aloud. The half sheet with lines represented a recommended English language learner

practice of accepting short answers (Keenan, Betjemann, & Olson, 2008; Nation & Snowling, 1997; Pappamihiel & Mihai, 2006) according to theories suggesting they aided in student comfort and success (Krashen & Terrell, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Reference “cheat” sheets. Reference “cheat” sheets in the students’ read-aloud packets were used by students if needed during the retelling phase of the read-aloud session. If students failed to remember the 5WH components or needed a cluster map model, these cheat sheets were available to them to reference or freely use at each read-aloud session.

Summary of Data Sources

By using multiple data sources such as observations, survey from participants, audio taping, researcher field notes, student products, and qualitative and quantitative assessments organized by a concurrent design, this inquiry reduced researcher bias and promoted triangulation (LeCompte et al., 1993). Surveys offered background and read-aloud perspectives of the students participating in the study. Observations described routines, problems, and meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) of the read-aloud practice in the lives of the students involved in the read-aloud sessions. Audio taping preserved the language used in the read-aloud sessions (LeCompte et al., 1993) and documented moment-by-moment activities. Researcher field notes documented this researcher’s interests and chronological accounts of what happened in read-aloud sessions. Artifacts (e.g., say-something responses, comprehension exercises, written annotation notes/symbols on the read-aloud excerpts, retellings, and cloze-maze assessments) provided reading comprehension information. Archival data (e.g., shared information, in-house mandates for English language learners) offered requirements demanded by the site or by the standard course of study specific to

English language learners (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Assessments offered a variety of ways to analyze the students' reading comprehension. These multiple representations were used to better understand the impact of read-aloud (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Smith, 2003).

Part III: Data Collection Procedures

In Jimenez's (1997) *The circuit*, the protagonist and his family travel from place to place searching for fieldwork where they make a living picking grapes, cotton, and strawberries at each circuit. When the crop from one circuit dries up, the family packs up its old jalopy and heads out to a more fruitful circuit to try their luck until the process begins all over again. Like Panchito's family, the procedures for this study on the read-aloud and face-to-face interactions among teacher, students, and this researcher were recursive in nature (Creswell, 2007; Duke & Mallette, 2004; Schensul et al., 1999). Collection of the data started mid February 2012 and ended in mid June 2012. The research qualified under a *purposeful sample* and took place in the classroom of a certified teacher for English language learners (i.e., sheltered instruction) with 9 English language learners, all middle school students (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Data for this study met guidelines of concurrent forms of mixed methods data collection procedures. Collection for both qualitative and quantitative approaches occurred at the same time and remained independent until the data analysis phase, where one approach was used to converge, validate, and/or contradict data from the other. In the event of the latter, the researcher abided by recommendations to provide transparency and entertain discussion.

Data were collected in a purposeful, organized fashion, beginning with direct observations, collection of student surveys, student prewritings, written retellings, vocabulary

assessments, and cloze-maze assessments, and ending with a mixed formal assessment. Audio recordings and researcher field notes were also used throughout these five primary circuits to record and authenticate data as it occurred during each read-aloud session (See Figure 3.2). Circuit I included description of pre-study activities and collection of

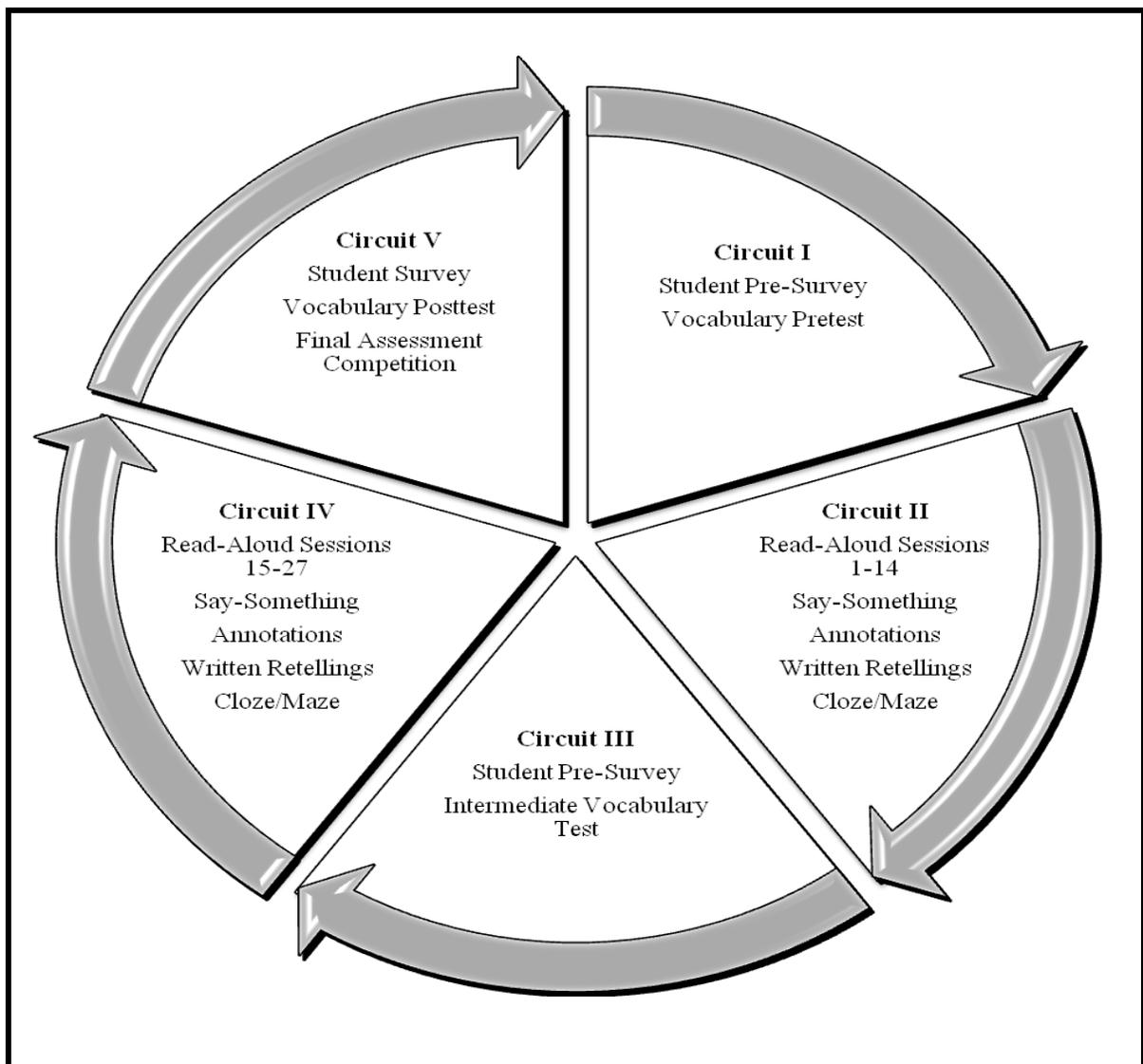


Figure 3.2. Five Circuit Data Collection for Read-Aloud Study

preliminary data (survey, pretest). The latter were collected three times during the study. Circuit II illustrates the artifacts and assessments from the first 14 read-aloud stories, which were collected at the culmination of each research. Memos were collected as well. The steps for collecting these data were planning, preparation, implementation, engagement and extension of activities. Each was organized under the 27 read-aloud sessions. Circuit III is a description of the qualitative data (survey) and assessments (intermediate test) used in the study. Circuit IV describes collected artifacts and assessments from the final 13 read-alouds. Circuit V details the ending of the study and collection of the final qualitative data (survey, and vocabulary posttest). A final open-ended/closed-ended assessment was collected once during this phase.

Planning for the research. The submissions to the Internal Review Boards (IRB) were brought to the principal of the school. A meeting was also set with the principal at that time. Further particulars were arranged at a meeting with the principal who made three classes available for the study. The one chosen was wide in diversity in the English language learner population. In this classroom, English language learners were already pulled out from their grade-level classrooms. Pullouts were designed for them to participate in intensive sessions designed for their special needs.

Preparation for the research. To initiate Circuit I, a meeting was set-up with the teacher and terms were agreed upon. First, the teacher-in-charge was amenable to incorporating read-aloud texts and interested in read-aloud strategies to use with his student population. The teacher and this researcher signed the consent form. The teacher also was requested to allow audio recording and observe/conduct multiple (27) read-aloud sessions 2-

3 times per week. Teacher read-aloud views were discussed and documented in researcher field notes. The researcher also spoke about the “meaningful” attributes of read-aloud (e.g., voice inflection, natural stressing of vocabulary, attention to pronunciation, body language). Informed consent from students and parents was necessary due to county standards. Consent forms were issued to the teacher for student signatures, and the teacher translated consent forms for parents (See Appendices C - D).

After the teacher committed to the study, preliminary data collection was initiated. The researcher went into the class on three separate visits in a two-week span and observed the setting and the teacher’s techniques. At the conclusion of observations, the researcher and teacher met to discuss the final particulars of the study and arranged the research schedule, and clarifications and revamps were made through emails. In that meeting, beginning text selections were discussed. Sixty-seven (67%) of the 27 texts were decided based on prior research of the read-aloud, county recommendations, classic and multicultural booklists for middle school students. The other 33% of texts were recommended by the teacher and based on students’ interests from survey data. The decision to read-aloud biweekly was made on, and both parties agreed at this final meeting to read stories. The teacher-in-charge agreed to read stories with multiple languages in them; the researcher read the traditional, as well as multicultural texts. Some texts were read by both teacher and researcher, especially those with heavy dialogue where multiple characters spoke. This researcher provided to the teacher the first 9 read-aloud texts in a binder titled *Read-Aloud Study*, which contained booklists of the approved county texts. The binder was used throughout the research to share materials and record student progress. Read-aloud readings

and lesson content were reflective of what the teacher-in-charge used and students experienced throughout the year in English language arts classes.

Before the study commenced, the researcher used one session to speak with students about read-aloud and to gain insight into their attitudes and experiences about the strategy. Students were informed about the study using an introduction script (See Appendix E). Establishing connections with teacher and students was a primary goal for the researcher. Both were considered key informants in this read-aloud study (LeCompte et al., 1993). The students had seen this researcher in the classroom during the observation period. Once they learned that the researcher would tell her personal “story” involving Hurricane Katrina, students quickly accepted her into the classroom. The researcher was informed about the languages, customs, and behaviors of the students due to classroom observations and informal conversations about them with the teacher (Duke & Mallette, 2004). However, though this researcher was familiar with middle schools and classrooms and could relate to what Marshall and Rossman (2011) explain as a *social ecology* of these learners (p. 123), the teacher, class environment, and read-aloud sessions were new (Duke & Mallette, 2004).

Implementation of repeated measures. In the next meeting, hardcopy pre-surveys (See Appendix F) were issued and completed by students. The first of three vocabulary assessments (i.e., pre-, inter-, and post-), which highlighted verbatim content from the forthcoming read-aloud stories, was also completed by the English language learners (See Appendix AA). The teacher was given one of three surveys to provide him opportunity to express information or opinions on the read-aloud or impending study. Input from students and the teacher was crucial to this study, and further read-aloud selections/information came

from these activities.

Engagement with read-aloud lessons. Circuit II consisted of delivery of the first 14 read-aloud sessions, which were aligned with county performance definitions and indicators for English language learners. The read-aloud format used in the research was provided in addition to the regular curriculum and did not comprise the whole classroom time (47 minutes). To ensure consistency in the read-aloud, each session was based on an explicit format and followed delivery practices and considerations for English language learners.

Before the beginning of the lesson, the students were issued a read-aloud folder holding four researcher-created and teacher recommended artifacts for each read-aloud session: (1) excerpts from multicultural/classic and recommended read-aloud texts; (2) laminated “cheat” sheets for students to reference through the different phases in the read-aloud session, including descriptions of the school-wide say-something activity provided by the teacher-in-charge and a retelling protocol to remind them of the oral writing prompt that followed each read-aloud (i.e., retell your BFF the story in order to have him/her pass a quiz); (3) special handouts/items for specific components of the read-aloud session, including graphic organizers, stickers, objects (e.g., penny, bug, fabric), and/or photos for that particular lesson; and (4) standard writing materials (colorful highlighters, pencils, and pens). These artifacts were used throughout the session and at different phases with the learners.

1. In each read-aloud session, students were offered content in multicultural/classic readings and county approved texts and participated in text annotations, vocabulary discussions, speaking (e.g., say-something), writing (e.g., say-something, retelling), listening, talking informally about texts, and maze/cloze assessments.

2. In say-something response exercises, students chose and practiced a reading strategy.
3. After each read-aloud, retellings were written by students.
4. Cloze-maze assessments were taken by students and incentives based on stories' content were given for the completion of the lesson.

All data were documented on a scorecard template, which evolved into a comprehensive data source (See Appendix CC). Field notes were also synthesized on each read-aloud session and used audio-recordings of the read-aloud session to corroborate or fill in any gaps that may have been left out of field notes and research memos (See sample in Appendix L). Recordings were used for backup purposes and to document read-aloud readings, then recordings were prepared to relinquish to the participating teacher for his audio read-aloud library. These recordings were not of the best quality to offer the teacher, so read-aloud books purchased from a local teacher's store were donated to the teacher's library.

Circuit III commenced with three activities: (1) read-aloud stories 10 – 18 with attention to qualitative and quantitative data collection; (2) collection of the second students' surveys; and (3) completion of a second of three vocabulary assessments (i.e., inter-vocabulary). Once each student in the study completed Stories 10 – 14 and scorecard templates were completed on each (See Appendix CC), the read-aloud sessions were paused to collect another survey from students that focused on their opinions of the read-aloud, story selections, and the students' overall views about the study (See Appendix F). A second retake of the 27-question vocabulary assessment concluded the circuit.

Circuit IV started with the final set of stories (Stories 15-27), some of which were taken from the books used in prior read-alouds due to their popularity among the students as

derived from survey data. Read-aloud sessions continued in an explicit fashion, and assessments and artifacts were collected from the students after each read-aloud session. After each read-aloud, students were awarded incentives based on the read-aloud stories (e.g., brain teasers, erasers, feather pens, quirky spectacles) for completion of the various parts of the read-aloud sessions.

The final circuit, Circuit V, culminated with a formal wrap-up by the researcher initiating a read-aloud competitive game (i.e., *Let's Play Read-Aloud!*), which consisted of 10 questions offered in the final two weeks of the study (See Appendix MM). Questions included (1) strategies English language learners practiced during the read-aloud, (2) information on the students' attitudes about the read-aloud, and (3) overall concepts derived from the 27 stories used throughout the study. The last day of the study included a ceremony where students received completion certificates signed by the teacher-in-charge and researcher and incentives (books, writing materials, frames and student drawings from two stories, *The story of my life* and *The circuit*). The culmination of the 14-week study using these collection activities, yielded three, 3-inch binders of literacy information, perceptions, and artifacts from participants.

Extension. A month after the completion of the study, the teacher-in-charge reported on end-of-the-year progress of students. Three months after the study, the teacher read preliminary findings from the research conducted in his classroom.

Part IV: Data Analysis

To organize and make the most of the data, analysis corresponded with the research questions guiding this mixed methods study and those recommended best practice procedures

for qualitative and quantitative measures occurring in one design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). A concurrent design of triangulation was followed (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Additional mixed data analysis was used to analyze retellings using quantitative and qualitative methods (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012).

Analysis Overview

Overall, analyses was *inherently mixed* (DeCuir-Gunby, 2012) to support the multiple qualitative and quantitative information collected to address the effects of using a read-aloud protocol as an instructional practice for middle school, English language learners. *Inherently mixed* describes how different analyses were used to summarize information, make sense of the large amounts of data, and/or develop themes that involve the research questions and sub-questions in this study. Two questions were addressed in the analysis, including (1) What effects does reading aloud *classic texts* have on the reading comprehension of middle school, English language learners; and (2) What effects does reading aloud *multicultural texts* have on the reading comprehension of middle school, English language learners?

Two tables are presented to describe the questions and subquestions, data sources, and analyses. Table 3.4 describes the multiple types of analyses used in this research, including constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965), accompanying coding practices (LeCompte, 2000), and descriptive statistics (Steinberg, 2008). Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method was used to validate other qualitative data in the study and converge with quantitative data in the integration stage of the research design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). LeCompte's (2000) analogy of a picture puzzle was used to perform coding practices. Steinberg's (2008) explanation of descriptive statistics to summarize data into percentages

Table 3.4. Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analyses for Text Types

Questions	Data Sources	Analysis
<p>Classic: What effect does reading aloud <i>classic texts</i> have on the reading comprehension of middle school, English language learners?</p> <p>Multicultural: What effect does reading aloud <i>multicultural texts</i> have on the reading comprehension of middle school, English language learners?</p>	<p>Written retellings of classic and multicultural read-aloud texts (27 writings per 9 students)</p> <p>Pre/Intermediate/Post Student survey data</p> <p>Raw scores for performance on vocabulary taken three times during course of study</p> <p>Cloze-maze assessments taken each read-aloud session</p> <p>Researcher reflections/field notes</p>	<p>Analyze using constant comparison (ongoing & iterative) to determine emerging themes and vocabulary usage written in retellings (Glaser, 1965)</p> <p>Rubric used by two raters; inter-rater reliability determined (Steinberg, 2008)</p> <p>Descriptive statistics to summarize (Steinberg, 2008)</p> <p>Notes reviewed for elaboration, confirmation, or refutation of other analysis results</p>

and means was helpful in the analysis for the multiple data produced by this read-aloud inquiry. Additional questions were addressed concerning the written retellings. Information for sub-questions derived from salient theme compilation from constant comparative analysis (See Table 3.5). To analyze the written retellings for the sub-question involving the effects of the read-aloud protocol on the written retellings of middle school, English language learners), constant comparative analysis, involving ongoing and iterative analysis,

Table 3.5 Sub-Question, Data Sources, and Analyses for Written Retellings

Question	Data Sources	Analysis
<p>What are the effects of the read-aloud protocol on the written retellings of middle school English language learners?</p>	<p>Written retellings based on multicultural and classic read-aloud texts (24 writings per 9 students)</p> <p>Reading comprehension exercises (i.e., annotations, Venn diagrams, cluster maps, researcher-created instruments) interpretive data</p> <p>Researcher field notes</p>	<p>Analyze using constant comparison (ongoing & iterative) to determine emerging themes and vocabulary usage</p> <p>Codes to (1) identify broad pattern/trends; (2) interrelate themes and (3) compile broad perspectives on data</p> <p>Review notes for elaboration, confirmation, or refutation of other analysis results</p>

and standard coding practices were used to establish codes, broad themes, and patterns (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; LeCompte, 2000; Saldaña, 2009; Schensul et al., 1999).

Comparatively, each analysis mentioned above offers step-by-step procedures and explanations to prepare and analyze information/data sources collected concurrently in the course of the study. To begin any analysis, the first step requires preparing data sources (LeCompte, 2000). First steps also included organizing and preparing data by setting up data sets for calculations. After preliminary review of the data was completed, insubstantial data were removed since incomplete data are problematic and can taint overall findings. Removal of data included one student not completing all stories in the final phase (Stories 19-26). Data from three read-aloud stories, one from each phase (Stories 5, 19, and 27), were also

excluded due to information missing from multiple students in those read-aloud sessions. Specifics of the analyses are discussed in detail below along with the data sources analyzed with each. Also see Appendices CC – DD for additional notes.

Constant comparative method. Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method recommends the use of predetermined information from prior research as well as the generation of preliminary themes. The method was used to search across the multiple data sources and organize and summarize the thick descriptions produced by the large amounts of data from this study. Data from qualitative data sources were routinely compared with other sources to locate differences and similarities between individual English language learners and the English language learner group and were constantly reviewed and refined for the final discussion. The constant comparative method was used in the analyses for the general qualitative data, including observations, field notes, student surveys, audio-recordings, student artifacts, say-something, annotations, scorecard templates, and secondary artifacts. The method was also used to analyze written retelling data, which was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative procedures.

Specifically used in studies where the researcher is concerned with generating and/or suggesting properties (e.g., causes, conditions, consequences) of a certain phenomenon, such as the read-aloud, Glaser's method allowed this researcher to use the same approach across a number of these qualitative sources. Qualitative information was generated from the constant comparative method to identify themes, the use of vocabulary featured in students' longer writings (i.e., retellings), and predetermined trends identified in prior literature. Primarily, the method was then employed to generate theoretical ideas and use implicit and

explicit coding established in prior read-aloud research. The method was used to develop themes iteratively from the ongoing collection of multiple data from each read-aloud session, including say-something writings and written retelling responses. Due to its systematic approach, flexibility, and traits of redesigning and reintegrating information, the constant comparative method allowed the researcher to 1) isolate different degrees of reading comprehension across participants and across time; 2) generate unanticipated insights as they emerged; and 3) identify those areas of read-aloud that posed problems for developing English language learners.

Coding practices. Additionally, traditional coding practices were guided by a number of qualitative procedures (LeCompte, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Saldaña, 2009) and by mixed methods procedures (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Coding was recursive and ongoing in order to chunk data into themes and categories and refine continuous data generated by the study. Codes were continually compared with other codes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Glaser, 1965). Data from the qualitative aspects of the study were analyzed through inductive and deductive coding processes. Inductive coding procedures produced researcher-developed constructs by organizing data until succinct and tweaking themes/patterns based on written work and observations of participants (Creswell, 2007). Deductive coding procedures were based on research (See Chapter II) and foundational theories (i.e., culturally relevant pedagogy and natural learning) discussed earlier in this document and were used to shape information (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2007; DeCuir-Gunby, 2012; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

To generate themes and categories after the first nine stories, a preliminary code log

was started for the written retellings. Emphasis was on any language in the students' retellings that indicated comprehension of the read-aloud text. After the final read-aloud stories, the codes were organized into domains, factors, and sub-factors and examined for any associations. Next, reoccurring themes in the data, including provisional descriptors, were generated using Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) analysis scheme (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Other codes that emerged were captured in field notes about daily contact and through multiple readings of the retellings. Once significant ideas, theories, and themes from the research were generated from these first set of codes, a master list was created.

After organizing and beginning coding practices, stabilizing data was the next part in the analysis (LeCompte, 2000). Re-readings took precedence in this aspect of the study and further data were removed when appropriate. Data were compared to the research question to further align each piece. The master list was condensed, and patterns were sought from ongoing preliminary codes based on the written retellings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These codes were continually revamped by using tacit and formative theories, which both guide behaviors and predict future events (LeCompte, 2000). Knowledge of tacit (professional experiences) and formative theories (i.e., culturally relevant pedagogy, natural learning, and cognitive theoretical issues) allowed the researcher to refine codes.

The final steps included pattern creation where information was clumped together in meaningful ways. Explanation, pattern finding, and coherence were vital areas of concern. This led to the final step, where the data were assembled into structures to be used to integrate (i.e., merge) data. These measures resulted in code formations describing both positive and negative issues of the read-aloud with this group of learners.

Additionally, vocabulary scaffolded used in the early phases of the read-aloud protocol (e.g., annotations, discussions, comprehension activities) were based on the use of these words encountered in later stages of the read-aloud protocol (e.g., retellings and cloze-maze). The coding process involved recognizing vocabulary important to the understanding of the read-aloud stories and encoding them before merging data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Vocabulary in the students' short writings (annotations, say-something responses) was merged with that in the longer writings (written retellings). Coding notes and logs of broad codes and tentative meanings, as well as changes in both, were utilized throughout the course of the study.

Vocabulary lists with preselected words from read-aloud excerpts were extracted from the 27 read-aloud stories. After data were collected on the final read-alouds, codes were furthered organized into domains and factors and examined for associations (Schensul et al., 1999). Such practices were used to organize and maintain data sources used in the current study.

Descriptive statistics. Additionally, descriptive statistics (Steinberg, 2008) were involved in summarizing assessment data connected to the qualitative and quantitative analyses. Three assessments used in the study were summarized with descriptive statistics: (1) written retellings, (2) cloze-maze, and (3) vocabulary assessments.

The first included written retellings, which were analyzed with a form of mixed data analysis that used the same type of data (i.e., retellings) (DeCuir-Gunby et al, 2012).

Descriptive statistics (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Steinberg, 2008) were used to summarize 192 written retellings and produce a score for each retelling and determine means

and percentages. Prior research was consulted to score retellings with rubrics, including defining boundaries to apply to the writing. Boundaries were defined and applied to the written retellings using Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) research-based features. To improve reliability measures, judgments about these writings were performed on retellings through the use of a rubric (See Appendix V).

Rubric features included the following: (1) the gist or main idea details, which describe the main point or part of the read-aloud; (2) story elements, including characters names, where/when the read-aloud story takes place, actions, and themes; (3) interpretive ideas, where students display their own connections to the meanings they take from the read-aloud story by identifying relationships, recognizing conclusions, and making assumptions; (4) generalizations, where a conclusion about the read-aloud is formed from examples/content from the read-aloud story or reading comprehension activities; (5) supplementations, where the student adds something "new" to extend or strengthen the retelling of the read-aloud; (6) coherence, which illustrates the student having an overall understandability of the read-aloud content; (7) additional information not in the passage, including insight, aesthetic/efferent information, and awareness; (8) elicited feelings, which demonstrate emotional responses to the read-aloud; (9) completeness [*sic*], where the collection of these components are evident in the retelling moment; and (10) linguistic and language conventions. Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) final component was not considered in this particular research due to the natural learning theory which recommends relaxing rules of grammar/mechanics to allow for the flow of better language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) (See Chapter II, *natural learning* of this document).

These ten features were built into the rubric that included components based on effective retelling characteristics identified in the research (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009), as well as on the audience, purpose, and context directly stipulated by the writing prompt used throughout the inquiry (i.e., tell your BFF about the read-aloud story). This was an appropriate scoring method to assess students' retellings. On the first reading of the data, Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) list of synthesized components that described reading comprehension of a text were used to evaluate and score the students' written retelling assessments. The second reading sought vocabulary and information connected to the reading comprehension activities used in the study. The scope of what to search for in the students' written retellings offered a picture of the array of content and comments provided by the students beyond simple recall of the read-aloud text (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Romero et al., 2005).

The written retellings were read by two readers to determine if students exhibited predetermined features in the retellings, and the rubric was used to indicate the presence (i.e., *evident in retelling*) or absence (i.e., *not evident in retelling*) of the features. Each component scored either 1 or 0, and scores ranged from 1 – 10, where a score of 1 represented *limited* features of the rubric, a score of 5 represented *average* features of the rubric, and a score of 10 represented *high* features of the rubric. A score of 1 was prorated to all retellings to compensate for the final component (i.e., linguistic/language conventions).

For reliability purposes, two raters scored each retelling. The 10-point rubric of features for effective retellings was used by an independent rater who was a teacher not involved in the study, and the researcher. They individually determined a score for each

retelling generating two raw scores and two sets of comments per retelling. The independent rater was given copies of the 10-point rubric, notes/descriptions on each, and student written retellings to evaluate. He was trained by the researcher to use the rubric for each of the students' written retellings. Inter-rater reliability was determined for the three phases of the read-aloud session (Stories 1-9, Stories 10-18, and Stories, 19-27). A mean score for each learner was established.

The method also generated unanticipated insights from the data, as well as those areas of read-aloud that could pose problems for these students. Ongoing data collection of retellings from phase one (i.e., Stories 1 -9) were compared to phase two retelling writings (i.e., Stories 10 -18) and those were further compared to phase three (i.e., Stories 19-27) to evaluate strengths and problems in specific areas, including comprehension and retelling best practices. Differences and similarities in the retellings were also sought. Cloze-maze assessments were scored on a 17-point scale and assigned one of six scores ranging from 0 – 102. Ongoing data collection of these assessments were compared and reported to support the research questions guiding this study.

Summary

Multiple types of analyses were inherently mixed for the data collected in this study. Table 3.6 offers an overview of this information. Analyses rendered multi-faceted areas of the read-aloud technique for this unique population. By separating and combining qualitative and quantitative analyses and using the guidelines of the mixed methods design, this researcher had a greater view of the “whole” of the read-aloud strategy (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Table 3.6. Overview of Analyses Used in Read-Aloud Study

Data Types Used in Analyses	Constant Comparative (Glaser, 1965)	Coding (LeCompte, 2000)	Descriptive Data (Steinberg, 2006)
TYPE I Open-Ended Data			
Student Survey	√	√	√
Researcher Fieldnotes	√	√	
Memos	√	√	
Audio-Recordings	√	√	
TYPE II Close-Ended Data			
Fixed Vocabulary Assessments			√
TYPE III Mixed Assessments			
<i>Let's Play Read-Aloud!</i>			√
Scorecard Templates	√	√	√
TYPE IV Concurrent Data (The Read-Aloud Protocol)			
Say-Something Responses	√	√	√
Annotation Exercises	√	√	
Written Retellings	√	√	√
Cloze-Maze Assessments			√

Part V: Confidence Factors

To strengthen confidence in this research on the read-aloud and the English language learner, a variety of measures were practiced, including the promotion of veracity and

trustworthiness in the collection and handling of the data, as well as the practice of comparability, validity, and reliability measures.

Veracity and trustworthiness. To guard the study from corruption and quick conclusions, Creswell (2007) and Duke and Mallette (2004) offer three best practices: (1) search for disconfirming evidence, (2) employ informant checking, and (3) consider location. To help this researcher in the initial stages of the observations, the procedures for searching for disconfirming evidence were practiced. Positive and negative evidence about the read-aloud practice could lead to the discovery of new patterns, as well as increase validity of the study (Creswell, 2007; Schutz et al., 2004). The researcher conducted multiple checks of data interpretations in order to disconfirm any biased, early, or favorite information about the read-aloud technique read-aloud. Scorecards and researcher field notes were revamped and rebracketed to filter out information based on personal experiences with the read-aloud strategy or other students (e.g., native English) (LeCompte, 2000). Secondly, informant or member checking was included to guard against faulty conclusions. Having participants share in “evolving interpretations” allowed for new perspectives. A final area involved “location,” where this researcher shared subjectivity in her approach of the research problem as indicated earlier.

Comparability. To establish comparability, this researcher used standard terms and noted concepts from the literature. Any operationalized definitions were explained in detail so to not cause confusion to readers of the document. Those definitions that derived from the teacher/English language learners in the study will be synthesized and explained in detail from the teacher/English language learners’ perspectives, as well as accompanied with

examples to make definitions succinct. Operationalization included ground up (i.e., inductive), top down (i.e., deductive), and midpoint inductive and deductive processes where both researcher based and research constructs were used (Creswell, 2007; Schensul et al., 1999). Sampling was also explained in the current research at appropriate places and in detail. Additionally, the characteristics involved in all aspects of the read-aloud sessions and the overall inquiry were identified in explicit terms in the current research as well and aggregated in the final writing (LeCompte et al., 1993).

Validity. A mixed methods approach has a high potential for validity issues (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Schutz et al., 2004). Validity refers to accuracy, dependability, and the degree that the researcher is reporting the phenomenon just the “way it is” (Duke & Mallette, 2004, p. 98; Schensul et al., 1999). There should be a match between researcher conclusions and the representation of reality (LeCompte et al., 1993). While authenticity can never be known with certainty (LeCompte, 2000), this researcher ensured validity by using more than one method and integrating theoretical data from others in the research area, as well as making transparent her personal reflection and introspective measures (Creswell, 2007; Schutz et al., 2004). She also used the process of triangulation, where a variety of data were collected and used to corroborate or refute other data (Duke & Mallette, 2004).

Reliability. Schensul et al. (1999) contend that reliability can only be approximated. While this study was carried out in a natural setting where change processes are hard to replicate and lessons may not occur the same way each time, all instances of the read-aloud lessons followed the explicit design of the established protocol and maintained similar or

equal comprehension activities throughout each read-aloud session. According to Schensul et al. (1999), external and internal reliability will not be problematic in a study of this nature if the following five areas are addressed: (1) researcher status position, (2) informant choices, (3) social situations/conditions, (4) analytic constructs/premises, and (5) data collection and/or analysis methods (p. 334).

Concerning the researcher's status position, conclusions from this study were qualified due to the appropriate social role the researcher possesses, which was clearly identified in the inquiry. The researcher succinctly described those key informants who provided data, as well as how they were chosen for the study. Social situations and conditions were specified earlier in the study, and observations were conducted at the middle school prior to the study and in the classroom where the final research journey commenced. Any read-aloud sessions that posed challenges were rescheduled at the discretion of the teacher-in-charge. Analytic constructs/premises were explained to the best ability of this researcher, and definitions accompanied terminology, especially those related to read-aloud and its use as an instructional strategy. Finally, data collection/analysis methods were detailed and carefully described, and when applicable, those who created terms or recommended information were referenced. By securing these aspects, external reliability was addressed and the content of the study was not compromised. Specifically, methods to address reliability in the retelling part of the current study included the researcher (1) identifying and addressing any source of inconsistencies and contradictions evident in the written retellings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Sudweeks et al., 2004); (2) assuring retellings are based on similar text excerpts, including appropriateness to student reading

levels; and (3) discussing any extenuating circumstances concerning the read-aloud when the retelling was written, and (4) using an independent external evaluator to rate retellings.

To address internal reliability as it related to this study, Schensul et al. (1999) were used to address low inference descriptors and recorded data. Observations of read-aloud sessions were audio recorded, which preserved all data in “unobstructed” ways (p. 340). In the event of a mechanical failure, field notes and artifacts collected from the read-alouds were used as backup information to reconstruct the lesson.

Ethical Considerations

First, loyalty belongs to the teacher and students studied, and all matters regarding ethics were communicated with the teacher at the signing of the consent form. In addition, since recording information could appear suspicious and intrusive (Schensul et al., 1999), care was taken to speak with the teacher-in-charge to make sure he was comfortable with the recording device in the classroom. Students were informed of the device that sat in plain view in front of the classroom. Also, since this research involved face-to-face interactions, confidentiality was assured both in verbal and written form for participants; their names were not divulged in this research and pseudonyms were used. Overall, the multiple data collected and analyzed were treated with those suggestions set forth in standard research designs, which focused on “show[ing] the positive aspects” of classroom activities (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 124).

Chapter IV Findings

The overall research question for this inquiry concerned what effects using the read-aloud protocol have on reading comprehension. Subquestions addressed comprehension in relation to the use of certain types of texts (i.e., classic and multicultural) within a protocol designed for middle school English language learners, and included what cloze-maze student retellings activities indicated about the reading comprehension levels. The learners in the study participated in reading and writing activities 2-3 times per week over an 11-week period. Throughout the inquiry, learners responded to multiple surveys, and completed multiple written response activities, three vocabulary assessments (pre-, inter-, and post-), and a final mixed assessment, packaged as a competition. Each of these activities was analyzed with mixed methods practices (i.e., constant comparative analyses and descriptive data) and produced qualitative and quantitative findings for this mixed methods research. From these data, Chapter IV presents two primary findings. The first finding attends to increased reading comprehension for this group of learners and illustrates evidence of the read-aloud protocol aiding participants' ability to extract information and use it in written retelling activities (Snow, 2002). The second finding addresses the types of texts (i.e., classic and multicultural) used during the read-aloud protocol and provides results of how the text types influenced reading comprehension for this group of English language learners.

Part One Finding I: Impact on Reading Comprehension

The first finding to address the research questions concerns the use of the read-aloud protocol and how it aided reading comprehension for this group of students. Presentation for this finding highlights two areas with multiple sections that were supported by qualitative

and quantitative procedures: (1) writings (i.e., say-something responses, written retellings) and (2) assessments (i.e., written retellings, cloze-maze assessments, vocabulary, and *Let's Play Read-Aloud* competitive game) based on or derived from the read-aloud protocol and activities occurring throughout the study. Each will be presented with the reading comprehension definition (i.e., Snow, 2002) and constructs (e.g. reader, text, activity) undergirding this research (See Chapter II, Section II).

The first two of five sections feature qualitative results of the students' writings that demonstrated an impact on reading comprehension. *Section I* describes findings for students' say-something responses with regards to four areas: questioning, predicting, commenting, and connecting. The next sections include open-ended and closed-ended assessment activities performed after each read-aloud, concurrently, or intermittently throughout the study. These assessments documented the extent of their reading comprehension of the texts they read. *Sections II* through *Section V* present findings based on mixed methods procedures from multiple assessments, including closed-ended information from written retellings, cloze-maze assessments, a fixed vocabulary test, and open-ended information from *Let's Play Read-Aloud*, the final competitive game.

Section I: Results of Say-Something Response Strategies

Section I describes findings for this group of students' say-something responses with regards to four areas: questioning, predicting, commenting, and connecting. The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group provided the opportunity to respond to the title of the read-aloud excerpt before the read-aloud event by (a) predicting, which asks students to make a statement about what will or might happen in the upcoming read-aloud text; (b)

questioning, by the students for information, which serves as a test of the student's knowledge of the read-aloud texts; (c) commenting, which illustrates students' background knowledge or previous experiences with a topic of the read-aloud text, and (d) connecting, where the students show some relationship between the text and some newfound or background knowledge (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Merriam-Webster, 2012; Smith, 1997). Students were instructed before listening to the read-alouds to select their own strategy among the four practices. Data included which strategies were selected most often, when in the course of the study they were selected, and the substance of the response. Because say-something strategies are not inherently hierarchical, constant comparative analysis of their responses across types of strategies was performed to determine the quality and depth of their say something responses. Found were the learners' use of questioning, predicting, connecting, and commenting in important ways that aided their reading comprehension.

Overall, these responses revealed an impact on reading comprehension due to the students progressing from surface-level questioning/predicting types of say-something responses to expanding their repertoire of responses to include deeper connections to the read-aloud texts and commenting on the texts. As indicated by Table 4.1, the use of strategies for connecting and commenting increased from the first 9 stories to the last 9 stories, while the questioning and predicting strategies decreased. Questioning was selected 3% on average through the three phases of the study and mainly offered surface/literal questions regarding the read-aloud titles. For example, one student wrote, "Why is it called 'The adventures of Tom Sawyer?'" For the story *My insufferable cousin*, a student wrote,

Table 4.1. Percentages of Say-Something Strategies Selected by Participants

Phase and Thematic Relationship	Questioning	Predicting	Connecting	Commenting
1 (Stories 1-9) <i>Self and Family</i>	6%	48%	9%	37%
2 (Stories 10-18) <i>Authority and Friends</i>	3%	34%	41%	22%
3 (Stories 19-27) <i>Others and Nature</i>	0%	15%	38%	47%

“My question is is the story about cousins or something Lik thsat?” [sic]. Another wrote, “I am just going to ask a question that I don’t know what is the story about. Sorry (sad face drawing) [sic].”

In the beginning of the study, students struggled with understanding enough of the story to even be able to ask questions, while later they answered their own questions and were able to continue reading without having to stop and address lower level understanding.

Students made predictions only about the story titles, but did not predict what might happen as stories unfolded. Predictions from the title showed evidence of basic word recognition and what students thought might happen in the course of the upcoming read-aloud text. For example, one student made this prediction based on the story *The dreamer*: “I predict that it’s going to be about maybe a girl that she has a very good dream and it comes true.” For the story *Evolution, me and other freaks of nature*, two students predicted: “I

think this story is about a person who doesn't want to be with someone" [*sic*], and "I think it talk about snakes" [*sic*]. Predicting strategies initially started out as the most used say-something strategy selected by students and finished as the third most used say-something strategy. Predicting was used by students on average 32% of the time at the end of the study and revealed information about what got them on target or led them astray from understanding the title of the text.

The use of the connecting strategy, initially one of the least employed of the say-something strategies (9%), grew more than the other strategies over the course of the 27 stories, with 29% of students selecting it by the final phases of the study. In these connections, students illustrated relationships between the read-aloud text and themselves, between the text and their own experiences, and between the text and their family members. For example, for the story *My name*, a student wrote, "My connection is a song that I h[e]ard "My Name is Lary" [*sic*].

At the end of the study, commenting, which students used 35% of the time, was reported as the most used say-something strategy as students grew to understand how titles reflect content, how further reading addresses questions that arise early, and how they could draw upon their background to understand the stories. For example, for the story *The circuit* (2nd reading), one student wrote, "The story is about a family who is looking for work so that they could eat, drink, and live" [*sic*]. For *Story of my life* (2nd reading), a student wrote, "This story is about Helen keller She was bline and dealth but she can still learn she spells out things" [*sic*].

Of the four say-something strategies, three strategies revealed results related to

reading comprehension: (1) prediction strategy practices, based on comprehension of single-words and use of background knowledge, (2) connection strategy practices, especially text-to-self, and (3) commenting strategy practices, which evidenced the strongest display of reading comprehension due to previous experiences with topics or read-aloud texts. (Some selections were taken from the same novels, e.g., two selections from read-aloud *The dreamer*). These say-something strategies revealed *how* readers interacted with the read-aloud texts in their efforts to understand. No data illustrated that text type influenced the say-something strategy that students selected.

Results of Use of Prediction Strategy

Say-something strategy data indicated that most students used prediction strategies when encouraged to say something about the read-aloud texts. Analysis of the content of these predictions revealed the ways that the students shaped material, ways they comprehended the texts, and the processes they used to comprehend content (Snow, 2002). Patterns for prediction included (1) general use of single-word predictions, where a specific word/name in the title was used as a springboard to say something about an idea; and (2) use of background knowledge as a deeper context in predictive efforts to help them figure out feelings and events encountered in the texts.

Single-word predictions. While reading comprehension studies do not delineate between single word and multiple word predictions, this study highlighted single word predictions due to the problems that occurred with this group of learners where one word either hindered their reading comprehension or acted as a gateway for their background knowledge to surface. For English Language Learners, more so than native language

readers, single words are often not known or are misinterpreted and can lead to reduced comprehension. Operationalized for this research as *single-word predictions*, the students' say-something responses based in the first set of stories (1-9) demonstrated that a single word/name in the read-aloud title was being used as a springboard to comprehend the story. Students did not use single-word predictions after reading was underway—beyond the title. Under the umbrella of this prediction type were those say-something responses to read-aloud titles where 48% of the students explicated the literal meanings of words (i.e., surface meaning) and used those meanings to make sense of the content before them (See Snow, 2002). For instance, in the case of the title *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 89% of the students' say-something written responses zoomed in on the character's name and/or the word *adventure* and used it to offer predictions about the upcoming read-aloud. Such examples from Story #8 included one student stating “The adventures of Tom Sayer is Like something about life or what thing happened to Tom Saywer, or what his adventures” [sic]. Another noted, “I want to be and adventures like Tom sawyer make my on [own] adventure with my friend and my adventure going to be about me and my friends.”[sic].

The second set of read-alouds (Stories 10-18) focusing on authority figures and friends continued this pattern of single-word predictions based on story titles, where 34% of students relied on literal meanings of words in the titles. The last nine read-alouds (19-27) prompted 15% of students to make single-word predictions based on literal meanings about the title. Overall, when titles were too short or so lengthy so that the students had no concept of a word in the title, they produced say-something response predictions 32% of the time that seemed unrelated to the read-aloud text.

Background knowledge. The use of the say-something response predictions frequently reflected how the students' background knowledge hindered or helped them with comprehension. Through Phase 1 of the study, 48% of the responses demonstrated that students used their background knowledge in their say-something writings in order to correctly comprehend the stories. For instance, in Phase 2 using the read-aloud title *Eleven*, the students' had background knowledge about "...having a birthday," "having a birthday party," and "... turning eleven" and this was displayed by multiple learners who used the prediction strategy in the say-something phase of the session to help them comprehend the setting of the story. In Phase 2, 34% of their responses reflected use of background knowledge, and by Phase 3 of the study, 15% used their background knowledge to comprehend the text titles. Such percentages illustrated an initial lack of background knowledge that led to correct reading of the texts. As the study progressed, the students were (1) experiencing new vocabulary in the titles used for these say-something responses (e.g., *The loud silence of Francine Green* and *My insufferable cousin*); (2) were experiencing complicated titles with unknown vocabulary (e.g., *Mercy on these teenage chimps* and *Evolution, me and other freaks of nature*); and/or (3) were experiencing problems in comprehension due to confusion about the function of words (were the words nouns or verbs, for example). This word function confusion is indicated in this example from Phase 2 with title *Mercy on these teenage chimps*: "I think is the author Teenage Chimps Are describe something About Mercy...The Mercey is one the These" [*sic*]. In Phase 3 with title *Sounder*: "This story might be about a person Who went to the south ane explore" [*sic*]. In the final phases of the study, the lack of background knowledge posed vocabulary challenges and

overall comprehension for this group of learners.

Additionally, some students indicated background knowledge of literary genres (e.g., diary) which helped them interpret the read-aloud stories. These genres were not specifically requested for the retellings, but the learners chose to write about them on their own. The majority of these learners indicated an understanding of the genres used in the read-alouds. For instance, students explained that diary writing is for telling what a person “feels” and that it is a place where you can write “everyday” and put “all your secrets in it,” such as getting “bolyed” [bullied] and having a place to write about it. Others described a diary as a place to write your “feelings” and a place to help you “remember what happened to you when you grow up” [*sic*]. Further, most had a basic, if not sophisticated, understanding of “story” as narrating an important event and having characters.

Reader Response Theory purports that readers make vital connections with texts while in the process of reading (Rosenblatt, 1994). This occurs even when the reader encounters only a small piece of information (e.g., story title) (Brown & Cambourne, 1987). Following Brown and Cambourne’s (1987) recommendation to use story titles for making such connections, students in the current study were offered titles of read-aloud texts to obtain from them information on traditional “text-to” strategies, including connections involving *text-to-self*, *text-to-text*, and *text-to-world* connections (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Santoro et al., 2011). Of the three, text-to-self connections emerged as the most employed. Text-to-text connections were based on two areas, where learners connected to texts from other reading/listening experiences (e.g., “On my honor first when I heard it i thought it was a song because I know a song named on my honor, on my honor sounds like

hope, sadness...” [sic]) and where they recalled earlier exposure to the same text in a different read-aloud lesson (e.g., three different stand-alone selections from *The circuit* and two different stand-alone selections from *The story of my life* and *The dreamer* were used).

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the percent of students who used the three types of text connections across their say-something responses to the 27 stories: 38% of the responses across the text-to connections were used to connect the read-aloud titles to another text (e.g., referring to songs, Young Adult Literature) and 1% was used to connect texts to the global world (e.g., to students’ heritages) (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Percentages of *Text-To* Connections across Three Phases

Text-To Connections	Phase 1 (Stories 1-9) <i>Self & Family</i>	Phase 2 (Stories 10-18) Friends & Authority	Phase 3 (Stories 19-27) <i>Others & Nature</i>	Cross-Analysis Percentages
Text-to-self	67%	41%	73%	60%
Text-to-text	33%	55%	27%	38%
Text-to-world	0	3%	0	1%

Text- to-world emerged as the least used connection; only 3% in Phase 2 and 1% over the course of the study represented information about their heritage (e.g., "I am Palistine" [sic]) in their responses. The *text-to-self* connection emerged as the most used where 60% of the students, over the course of the study, used this say-something strategy to connect texts to

their personal lives and experiences rather than to other texts or the global world/heritage. In their say-something responses were descriptions of immediate family relationships connected with read-aloud titles. In one say-something, a male noted about *The story of my life* (Keller, 1988), “My brother’s friends moms blind and I know somebody who was deaf but he had surgery and he is not deaf anymore and my brother can’t see well either” [*sic*].

Results of Use of Comment Strategies

The strategy of commenting entailed the student having background information on content and went beyond guessing. As reflected in researcher field notes and data descriptions, the use of commenting for these students was the slowest of the four say-something strategies to emerge across the three phases of the study. However, the strategy became important to understanding how students were comprehending their reading because these comments revealed what students recalled from other read-aloud stories, which indicated information about the recall and memory of this group of students. Thirty-five percent of students in this group used the commenting aspect of say-something strategy where 67 instances of commenting (over 27 read-alouds) were personal observations about previous texts external to the study or information based on prior read-aloud texts used in the current study. As mentioned, three excerpts with different topics were used throughout the study from the novels *The circuit* (read-aloud stories 7, 16, and 23) and *Mercy on these teenage chimps* (9 and 15). One student wrote in the second excerpt: “The circuit I think this story is about how people move from place to place” and “I think this story is about a boy who help his mother and they live in a house and this boy has to help his mom and dad” [*sic*]. From reading the final excerpt, two students wrote: “This story was like a story about a

boy who was turning 13 and he looked like a chimpanzee” and “I don’t remember but I think I guy who feels he was changing and thought he was turning to a chimpanzee” [sic]. These examples were considered to be in the comment type because they reflected newfound information from different excerpts from the same novels and occurred in different phases of the read-aloud study. As a result, students had acquired information from the first excerpts and were able to add information into say-something responses in the second or third time around from these read-aloud texts. After two different read-aloud excerpts from *The circuit* novel and prior to the final read-aloud of an excerpt from that same novel, one student noted:

The Circuit also sounds like a girl with her sister, brother and she finally figured how to read in school her teacher was like helping to the things she does not know when she come back school her little brothers and sisters were shouting and yelling. She though they were happy to see her, it turned out they were moving again [sic].

As a result of several encounters with the novel, this student had more to say/write before the final read-aloud. The majority of the learners recalled stories that were read-aloud approximately two weeks prior. Most were able to comment on the same characters as the characters encountered different circumstances in the novels. While such recollections could be classified as *text-to-text* connections, these texts were new to the students in this study and did not reflect external readings from other classes as indicated with the song and Young Adult Literature examples presented above.

Summary of Say-Something

The say-something strategies of prediction, connection, and commenting demonstrated how the students constructed meaning and used knowledge gained from the

reading protocol (Snow, 2002). From coding say-something responses, three patterns emerged for the strategies students most used were in order to comprehend the read aloud texts, whether or not these strategies lead to correct reading comprehension: (1) general use of single-word in the story titles to predict story content; (2) use of background knowledge to make predictions; and (3) use of combined strategies to aid in understanding, creating what is termed a *hybrid effect*, where learners either mixed two of the say-something strategies to create deeper meaning (operationalized as an *intra-relational say-something strategy*), or students connected the say-something strategy with the read-aloud graphic displays in the classroom environment (operationalized as an *inter-relational say-something strategy*).

Intra-relational say-something strategy. In the intra-relational say-something, students meshed two of the four say-something strategies into one creating a hybrid effect. Students used combinations of strategies (e.g., question/connect, prediction/question) within the say-something response to retrieve information. For example, one student responding to *The diary of a young girl* (Frank, 1947) combined a comment and a text-to-text connection: “The diary sounds really good...it reminds [*sic*] me of this book I read Diary of a Wimpy Kid.” One other student responding to *Before we were free* (Alvarez, 2002) combined a prediction and a text-to-text connection: “I think the story is about free people and then they weren’t free...it might be like the books that have people dying and polices” [*sic*]. Whether the student was considered a good or poor comprehender, the ability to take a risk was made evident through the student using a combination of say-something strategies rather than one of the strategies alone. Such combinations illustrated these students constructing meaning through interacting with the language and bringing in their abilities and experiences (Snow,

2002) beyond what was asked of them when using the say-something strategy.

Inter-relational say-something strategy. In the inter-relational say-something, students went beyond the designated strategies and used other aspects of the read-aloud session to form say-something responses. This pattern was illustrated with the combining and sharing of one of the say-something strategies with the classroom read-aloud environment (i.e., graphic displays). As mentioned in the description of the read aloud instruction, many posters, objects, food, and technology (music, video images) were used to set the physical environment for all read-aloud stories and were consistently used throughout the study. (See Appendix W for one example of a graphic display and further description in Appendix L, *May 17*). These displays exhibited read-aloud settings (e.g., playground, beach, court yard). They were changed for each read-aloud based on the story and were always front and center in the class. Concrete items that students would encounter in the read-aloud story (e.g., water pump, a swollen wiener, nature, character's dwelling) were represented in the displays. Instead of using internal thoughts about the title, students began to connect their responses to these graphic displays. In one display, a 7-foot backdrop of an ocean scene was tacked on the wall. In front of the drop were clothes descriptive of what the characters were wearing (trunks, red tee-shirt) and swimming goggles. One student responded before hearing the read-aloud story: "She need to learn how to swim and learn to teach some person...they need to learn how to swim" [*sic*]. Another wrote: "I predict the story is about friends and they are in the beach. They like to go swimming in the beach" [*sic*]. These relational patterns occurred in response to the story title before hearing the read-aloud story and influenced subsequent reading comprehension.

Results from these students' say something responses revealed that reading comprehension was accomplished when the students used the title, classroom environment (i.e., graphic displays), and background knowledge to begin interacting with the read-aloud text. See Appendices FF-GG for additional say-something findings.

Section II: Results of Written Retelling Assessments

The read-aloud instructional strategy provided students the opportunity to respond to the read-aloud content by retelling the nonfictional or fictional texts heard during the sessions. As noted earlier, written retellings were analyzed with both qualitative and quantitative procedures. Section II highlights the assessment area by presenting quantitative findings, scores for the retellings based on the rubric. Each retelling was examined by two raters using a ten-point rubric instrument with features described in effective reading comprehension (Appendix V) (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). Some items in the rubric are aimed at higher levels of reading comprehension, such as the abilities to add supplementations, interpret, and write a "complete" retelling, which reflects inclusion of all rubric features. Other rubric items were aimed at the basics of getting the gist of the plot. (See explicit descriptions of each component in Chapter III, *Part IV*.)

Three tables depict scores on student retellings from three phases (8 stories per phase) of read-aloud sessions and offer individual and group means for each set, which produced 64 – 72 retelling scores per phase, thus 208 scores. (From each phase, one story was deleted due to incomplete information/activities for some students. See Chapter III for data preparation.) Scores 0 – 4 indicated low levels of rubric features (e.g., gist, supporting details, and basic interpretation) in the retellings; while scores 5 – 10 indicated average (proficient) to high

reading comprehension features (e.g., using all features of the rubric indicating a *complete* retelling) (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009).

Results from these retellings revealed that most students showed proficient reading comprehension in each phase; most participants produced average (at least score 5) to high (scores 6 -10) writing scores on retellings based on read-alouds. In Phase 1 (Stories 1 - 9), which focused on characters grappling within themselves or with a family member; 61% of the scores on the students' written retellings illustrated average to high scores. Phase 2 (Stories 10 - 18), which focused on relationships among the character, authority figures, and friends, reported 56% of the scores with average to high scores. Phase 3 (Stories 19 - 27), which focused on a character's relationship with others involved in his/her world and with nature, produced the highest score percentage, where 78% of the students' scores were in the average to high range. The percentages used in this portion of the study served to corroborate student written retelling evidence gained from the qualitative approach.

Read-Aloud Stories 1 – 9. Table 4.3 illustrates the first eight stories which produced a group range of 3.7 – 5.8 for retelling scores. Individual scores ranged from 2.4 to 6.5. Overall, the mean was 5.1, indicating that 61% of the students' retelling scores featured components of effective retellings for this phase and scored between average to high on content involving these read-alouds. Fifteen percent (15%) of the scores focused on the highest level of rubric features, such as exhibiting coherence, adding information not in the read-aloud, and/or illustrating a complete understanding of the read-aloud story plot by score well on at rubric features 5-10 ("complete" retellings). The read-aloud story resulting in the highest group mean (5.8) for retelling was *The circuit* (Jimenez, 1997) about a migrant boy

Table 4.3. Retelling Scores for Set One: Read-Aloud Stories 1 – 9

Student	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 6	Story 7	Story 8	Story 9	Individual Mean
1	6	3	7	2	8	10	8	5	6.1
2	10	7	8	5	5	4	3	8	6.3
3	1	1	1	1	6	2	2	5	2.4
4	4	7	8	5	7	8	6	7	6.5
5	8	7	6	4	4	4	6	3	5.3
6	3	6	7	2	6	5	5	3	4.6
7	4	5	1	5	9	9	3	6	5.3
8	3	4	5	5	3	4	6	4	4.3
9	5	7	6	5	3	6	4	7	5.4
Class Mean	4.9	5.2	5.4	3.8	5.7	5.8	4.8	5.3	5.1

Note: Story #5 was removed due to incomplete data.

attempting to learn English and satisfy his duties to his family. The lowest group mean (3.8) referred to *The diary of a young girl* (Frank, 1947), a county-recommended classic about a visually impaired girl and her stories of learning to read with her teacher. For the 72 student written retellings in this phase, the percentage for agreement between raters was at 68%.

Read-Aloud Stories 10 – 18. Table 4.4 depicts the second set of eight stories (72 retellings) continuing under the patterns of relationship with family members and ending with relationships with authority figures. Due to incomplete data, one read-aloud story was deleted from the set (i.e., Story #17). These read-aloud stories produced a group range of 4.2 – 5.7. Individual scores ranged from 3.6 to 6.8. The mean was 5.0, indicating 56% of the retelling scores featured components of effective retellings for this phase and demonstrated

Table 4.4. Retelling Scores for Set Two: Read-Aloud Stories 10 – 18

Student	Story 10	Story 11	Story 12	Story 13	Story 14	Story 15	Story 16	Story 18	Individual Mean
1	3	7	7	8	6	5	5	7	6.0
2	9	5	2	3	8	3	5	4	4.9
3	5	7	4	1	3	2	3	4	3.6
4	6	7	9	7	7	7	5	6	6.8
5	4	3	9	5	4	2	3	5	4.4
6	5	4	5	6	3	4	7	3	4.6
7	4	6	5	3	7	3	5	4	4.6
8	4	5	6	3	2	4	3	3	3.8
9	8	6	5	3	4	8	7	7	6.0
Class Mean	5.3	5.5	5.7	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.7	4.7	5.0

Note: Story #17 was removed due to incomplete data.

between average to high on comprehension of story content. This is compared to 61% achieving this level in the first set of retelling scores. This is a 5% decrease from the first to second sets of retellings.

With the second set of retellings, 10% of the students reached higher scores, which highlighted reading comprehension features such as supplementations based on relationships with authority figures and completeness, which exhibited larger numbers of rubric features in the retellings. Selected as a teacher-recommended read-aloud text, *My insufferable cousin* (Apte, n.d.), a story of a tween girl who despises her cousin, only to find that the cousin respects her to the utmost, produced the highest class mean at 5.7. The percentage for agreement between raters for this phase also averaged at 68%.

Stories 19 – 27. Table 4.5 represents the final set of eight stories. This set of stories began with the theme of relationship with friends and concluded with relationships involving

Table 4.5. Retelling Scores for Set Three: Read-Aloud Stories 19 – 27

Student	Story 19	Story 20	Story 21	Story 22	Story 23	Story 24	Story 25	Story 26	Individual Mean
1	6	8	6	9	7	7	7	8	7.2
2	1	3	7	5	10	4	9	8	5.9
3	1	7	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.6
4	7	9	7	7	7	8	7	3	6.9
5	2	7	9	6	2	7	6	3	5.3
6*	7	7	7	8	8	4	8	6	6.9
8	3	5	5	5	1	7	2	4	4.0
9	5	6	6	6	9	6	10	5	6.6
Class Mean	4.0	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.1	6.0	6.8	5.0	5.9

Note: Due to confounding circumstances, Student 7 was removed from this phase of the study. Story #27 was removed due to incomplete data.

nature. These read-aloud stories produced a class score range of 4.0 – 6.8 for retellings.

Individual scores for retellings ranged from 4.0 to 7.2, indicating that 78% of scores illustrated effective retelling features. This is a 6% increase from the first set of retelling scores and a 22% from the second score set. By the third set of stories, 23 % of the students reached higher levels of the rubric, which highlighted reading comprehension features such as additional information and completeness. The highest class mean of 6.8 was connected to Cisneros’s (1984) *Our good day*, a county-recommended text about a sassy character named

Esperanza and her purchase of a bicycle with three other newly acquainted friends. The lowest group mean of 4.0 was for the text *Sunder* (Armstrong, 1989), about a tween boy's encounter with a teacher who befriends him. The percentage for inter-rater reliability for this phase averaged to 75%. Results from these retelling responses revealed that participants were able to produce average to high retelling scores, based on the rubric with features related to effective reading comprehension (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009).

Summary of Results of Students' Written Retellings

While score percentages dropped 5% in the middle of the study, the scores based on the read-aloud stories over the course of the entire study illustrated average to high percentages of reading comprehension. Such a drop could be attributed to the students acclimating to the elements of a story (i.e., Who, What, When, Where, Why, How), embedding in their retellings scaffolded information or new vocabulary from the pre-reading activities, or shifting their writing techniques/styles. Of the 208 scores, 65% exhibited those features warranted in effective retelling writings. On the lower end of the rubric, gists or main idea details illustrated student descriptions of the main points of the read-aloud. Story elements, including characters names, actions, and themes were noted. Interpretive ideas, where students displayed their own connections of the meanings they took from the stories by identifying relationships, making assumptions, and critiquing characters' actions were evident in large percentages of the retellings. Generalizations were offered in students' retellings, as well as attempts to extend or strengthen retellings with supplementations from reading comprehension activities performed before the read-aloud events.

However, higher scores of 8-10 were not reached by a large amount of these writers.

Only 16% of the scores across the study reached the highest areas of the rubric, including elicited feelings and completeness, which are problematic for developing writers regardless of first or second language learners (August & Shanahan, 2010; Snow, 2002).

The read-aloud instructional protocol provided students many opportunities to respond to the read-aloud content, especially by retelling the fictional or nonfictional excerpt heard. In these retellings, students showcased a broad range of writing skills, story understanding, and vocabulary knowledge, as well as displayed individual interpretations and suppositions. These retellings indicated adequate comprehension for most of the students.

Section III: Results of Cloze-Maze Assessments

Section III continues the areas of assessment with closed-ended information from cloze-maze assessment data. The purpose for cloze-maze testing was to utilize formative testing to plot students' performance based on read-aloud instruction. According to O'Toole and King (2010), cloze procedures that connect particular groups of readers with specific texts are useful, and the use of multiple cloze tests (at least five) could yield dependable estimates of reading comprehension. The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group of students provided students the opportunity to exercise their knowledge of the vocabulary used in the read-aloud story by choosing from 6 words in a word bank and filling in an appropriate or acceptable answer to a passage filtered from the read-aloud story of the day. In the cloze-maze assessments, students were able to exhibit knowledge of vocabulary as well as display their comprehension by rearranging a chunk of the read-aloud story using provided vocabulary. Based on a 17-point scale, scores from these close/maze assessments revealed that most students improved in reading comprehension. Overall, cloze-maze

assessments yielded group, individual, and cross-analysis information as displayed in Table 4.6. Class means increased from 72% comprehension as determined by the Cloze-maze test (Phase 1=8 read-alouds) to 76% (Phase 2=8 read-alouds) to 81% (Phase 3=8 read-alouds), indicating that as the study progressed through 24 read- alouds, learners’ scores increased.

Table 4.6. Individual, Group, and Cross Analysis of Cloze-Maze Means

Means	Phase 1 <i>Self and Family</i>	Phase 2 <i>Authority and Friends</i>	Phase 3 <i>Others and Nature</i>
Individual	67%, where 6 of 9 learners performed above the mean	56%, where 5 of 9 learners performed above the mean	50%, where 4 of 8 learners performed above the mean
Group	63%, where 5 of 8 scores for 8 read-alouds went above the mean	50%, where 4 of 8 scores for 8 stories went above the mean	63%, where 5 of 8 scores for 8 stories went above the mean
Cross-Analysis Individual		56% of experienced individual score increases (5 of 9) from Phase 1 to Phase 2	88% of learners experienced increases (7 of 8) from Phase 1 to Phase 3 50% experienced increases (4 of 8) from Phase 2 to 3
Cross-Analysis Group		Class mean increased by 4% (from 72 to 76) between Phases 1 and 2	Class means increased by 9% (from 72 to 81) from Phase 1 to Phase 3 Class means increased by 5% (from 76 to 81) from Phases 2 to Phase 3

Individually, 58% of the overall sample experienced an increase in reading comprehension scores at the final phase of the study, performing average to high on 177 of the 208 cloze-maze assessments. In Phase 1, 67% (6 of 9) of the students performed above the mean on stories about the inner self and family life. In Phase 2, 56% performed above average, where 5 of 9 students performed above the mean on stories about authority figures and friendships. In Phase 3, 50% performed above the mean (4 of 8). Cross-analysis of individual means demonstrated that 56% of students experienced individual score increases (5 of 9) from Phase 1 to Phase 2, and 50% of them experienced increases (4 of 8) from Phase 2 to Phase 3. Overall, 88% of students experienced significant increases (7 of 8) from Phase 1 to Phase 3. Of those who experienced an increase in reading comprehension scores, some students experienced increases between 6 points at the onset of the study and 19 points by its completion.

As a group, 59% of the overall, average to high reading comprehension scores produced by this group of students at the final phase of the study ranged from 79 – 94 for the 177 cloze-maze assessments. For Phase 1, 63% of the scores for 8 read-aloud stories (5 of 8) were above the mean. In Phase 2, 50% of the scores for 8 other read-aloud stories (4 of 8) were above the mean. By Phase 3, 63% for 8 additional stories were above the mean. Cross-analysis of the group showed an increase in the class mean by 4% (72 to 76) between Phases 1 and 2 and by 5% (from 76 to 81) from Phases 2 to 3. Overall, class means increased by 9% (72 to 81) from Phases 1 to 3. Overall, class means indicated that cloze-maze scores steadily progressed over the course of the study and revealed a 4-point gain in the first half of the study and a 5-point gain in the latter. Illustrated in Appendix X are individual and group

means over the progress of the study.

Cross analysis revealed that 56% of the students experienced individual score increases (5 of 9) from Phase 1 to Phase 2, and 50% of students experienced increases from Phase 2 (4 of 8) to Phase 3. Eighty-eight (88%) of students experienced increases from Phase 1 (7 of 8) to Phase 3. Class mean increased by 4% (from 72 to 76) between Phases 1 and 2 and from Phases 2 to 3 increased by 5% (from 76 to 81) and 9% (from 72 to 81) in Phases 1 to 3.

Taking into consideration the two text types highlighted in the study, Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the differences between cloze-maze scores for the multicultural and classic texts. The overall cloze-maze group mean for multicultural texts across the three phases is 80 and 70 for the classic texts, a 10-point difference (See Table 4.9). Further differences in these scores are represented in Table 4.10, which shows scores based on the 17-point scale used in scoring the cloze-maze assessments. Seventy-five (75%) of the total cloze/ maze scores for the multicultural content was reported at the highest scores (i.e., 85 - 102). The classic cloze-maze scores were at 38%, which is 37% lower than the multicultural scores. Lowest scores, where students correctly answered zero, one (score 17), and two (score 34) statements correctly on the cloze-maze assessment, shows 21% earning low close/maze scores on classic content, while 12% of low scores were earned on multicultural content.

Drawn from these findings based on descriptive data, cloze-maze testing may be an indication of reading comprehension skills. Mean scores revealed reading comprehension due largely to 65% - 75% of the participants' producing average (score 68) to high scores (85-102) on content involving vocabulary knowledge and main ideas of the read alouds.

Table 4.7. Multicultural Individual and Group Cloze-Maze Scores

	Multicultural Cloze-Maze Raw and Mean Scores									Class Mean
	S#1	S#2	S#3	S#4	S#5	S#6	S#7	S#8	S#9	
R-A Story 1	102	51	34	102	102	102	102	102	102	89
R-A Story 2	68	34	68	102	102	102	34	102	102	79
R-A Story 6	85	34	102	102	68	51	68	102	102	79
R-A Story 7	102	51	51	68	102	68	85	102	102	81
R-A Story 9	102	68	102	102	68	102	51	51	102	83
Phase 1	92	48	71	95	88	85	68	92	102	82
R-A Story 10	0	68	51	102	102	85	51	102	102	74
R-A Story 11	51	34	68	102	17	102	34	68	102	64
R-A Story 12	102	34	102	102	102	102	34	102	102	87
R-A Story 13	68	17	51	68	51	102	34	68	68	59
R-A Story 14	68	34	102	102	102	68	51	51	102	76
R-A Story 16	102	85	102	102	102	102	51	102	102	94
Phase 2	65	45	79	96	79	94	43	82	96	76
R-A Story 20	102	102	102	68	102	68	**	17	51	77
R-A Story 21	102	51	68	102	102	102	**	85	102	89
R-A Story 23	34	68	102	102	68	68	**	68	102	77
R-A Story 25	102	51	17	102	68	102	**	102	102	81
Phase 3	85	68	72	94	85	85		68	89	81

Table 4.8. Classic Individual and Group Cloze-Maze Scores

	Classic Cloze-maze Raw and Mean Scores									Class Mean
	S#1	S#2	S#3	S#4	S#5	S#6	S#7	S#8	S#9	
R-A Story 3	68	68	51	68	102	68	17	34	102	64
R-A Story 4	34	34	51	68	68	68	68	85	51	59
R-A Story 8	68	51	34	68	51	34	34	34	34	45
Phase 1	57	51	45	68	74	57	40	51	62	56
R-A Story 15	68	34	51	102	102	68	102	102	102	81
R-A Story 18	51	51	51	85	102	85	68	34	102	70
Phase 2	60	43	51	94	102	77	85	68	102	76
R-A Story 19	102	68	85	102	102	102	**	34	102	87
R-A Story 22	68	68	34	85	68	102	**	51	102	72
R-A Story 24	68	34	68	102	102	102	**	102	68	80
R-A Story 26	102	17	102	68	17	102	51	102	102	76
Phase 3	85	47	72	89	72	102	0	72	94	79

Table 4.9 Percentages of Multicultural (M) and Classic (C) Cloze-Maze Scores

Type	Score 102	Score 85	Score 68	Score 51	Score 34	Score 17	Score 0
M	52%	4%	19%	13%	8%	3%	1%
C	32%	6%	27%	13%	17%	4%	0%

Section IV: Results of Vocabulary Tests

The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group of students provided students three opportunities -- before, during, and after the study -- to respond to a multiple choice instrument that highlighted vocabulary from the 27 read-aloud stories. *Section IV* presents general findings from this pre-, intermediate-, and post-vocabulary assessment, as well as additional descriptive information on vocabulary. The test was considered *fixed* due to the use of the same test in three instances of the study and was used to evaluate performance with read-aloud vocabulary and overall comprehension abilities. (See limitations in Chapter V regarding the fixed assessment used in the study.) Scores from these three assessments revealed vocabulary knowledge as it is related to reading comprehension of these texts, and how the knowledge of such vocabulary aided the students in interacting with information and successfully using the information to complete the tests.

Figure 4.1 illustrates vocabulary increases for this group. Overall, the vocabulary assessment generated a wide range of scores from the lowest of 22% in the pre-test to a highest of 89% in the intermediate- and post- tests demonstrating gains in vocabulary featured in the 27 read-alouds. The pretest generated a range of scores between 22% and 70% and resulted in an average score of 43%. Of the pretest, 67% of the students performed in the 30-40 percentiles. The intermediate vocabulary test revealed an increase in range from 30% to 89%, where scores scattered among the 30-50 percentiles and 3 students experienced scores in the 70-80 percentiles.

The posttest further revealed progress for 78% of the students where scores ranged from 52% to 89%. Scores balanced out between the 50-80 percentiles, and 44% of students

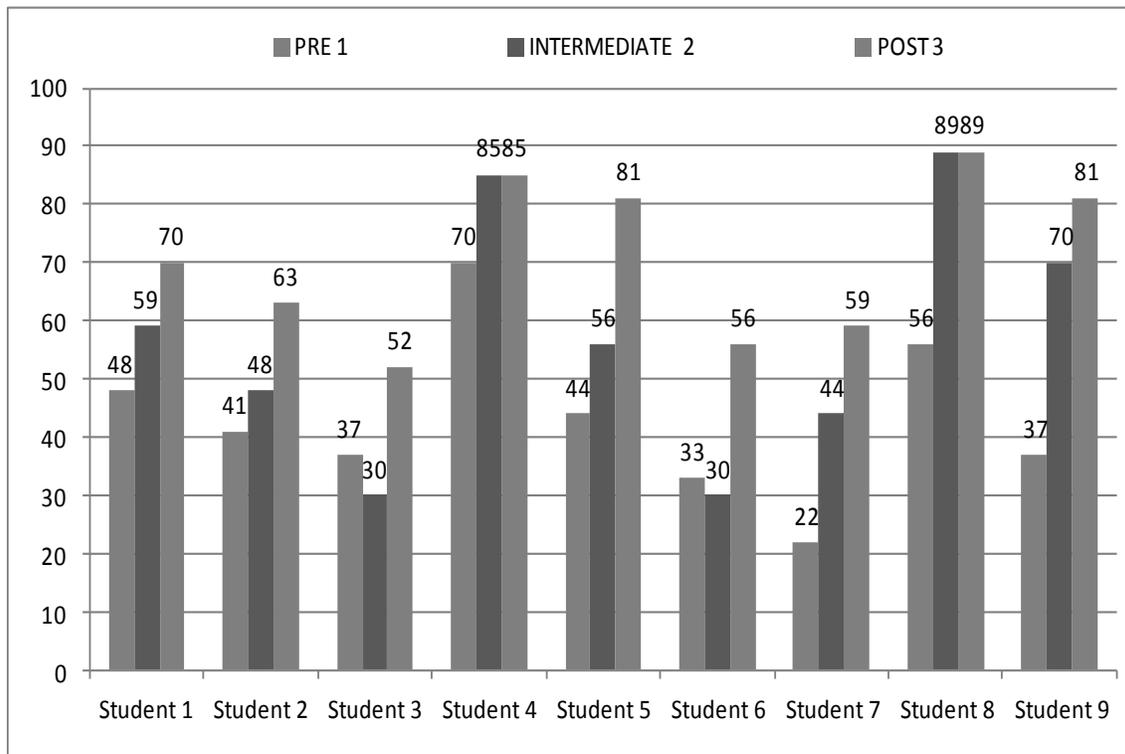


Figure 4.1: Chart Representing Scores from Three Vocabulary Assessments

reached the 80th percentile. Overall, 78% of these learners steadily gained between a 7% to 33% increase in vocabulary understanding that was directly derived from the read-aloud texts. This is an important result due to the relationship between understanding vocabulary and understanding content (Snow, 2002).

Additional Vocabulary Results

Using descriptive statistics (Steinberg, 2008), other relationships were considered due to the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension especially for English language learners. These relationships focus on (1) gains and losses of vocabulary test scores across

the three assessments and (2) the number of times it took for the students to connect the read-aloud vocabulary word with the content from which it was derived. These relationships revealed additional information about the students’ comprehension levels.

Gains and losses. Indicated in Table 4.10, students’ scores revealed gains and losses across the three assessments that were administered before read-aloud stories 1-27, after stories 1-14 and after read-alouds 15-27. A small number of students (22%) experienced loss

Table 4.10. Percentages of Vocabulary Assessment with Gain/Loss Details

Student	Pre Test*	Intermediate Test**	ELL Gains (+) and Losses (-)	Post Test***	ELL Gains (+) and Losses (-)	Overall Gain Or Losses
1	48%	59%	+11%	70%	+11%	+22%
2	41%	48%	+7%	63%	+15%	+22%
3	37%	30%	-7%	52%	+22%	+15%
4	70%	85%	+15%	85%	>0%	+15%
5	44%	56%	+12%	81%	+25%	+37%
6	33%	30%	-3%	56%	+26%	+23%
7	22%	44%	+22%	59%	+15%	+37%
8	56%	89%	+33%	89%	>0%	+33%
9	37%	70%	+33%	81%	+11%	+44%

in assessment scores from 4% to 7%, while 78% of the students steadily gained between a 7% to 33% increase. Posttest scores produced gains between 11% - 26%. As a result of the multiple vocabulary assessments, students experienced increases between 15% - 44%. This demonstrates the wide differences these students have in vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary and attempts. Vocabulary words from read-aloud texts were further analyzed to uncover how many attempts it took before students understood the vocabulary word from the read-aloud texts. In their first attempt of the pretest, 63% of these students were able to choose the correct vocabulary word. For the second vocabulary test, (i.e., intermediate), scores revealed a 30% increase where students selected the correct vocabulary word. By the posttest, results revealed a 7% increase for this group of students in selecting the appropriate answers. The overall percentage of students choosing appropriate answers was 74% , with 26% of students unable to select correct or appropriate answers even though they took the fixed assessment three times. See Appendix KK for additional percentages.

Summary of Vocabulary Results

Descriptive statistics (Steinberg, 2008) were used to produce the following results: The vocabulary pretest generated a range in accuracy from 22% to 70%. The intermediate vocabulary test revealed a range increase from 30% to 89%. The posttest further revealed progress in 78% of the students where scores ranged from 52% to 89%. Results from these 3 assessments before the 27 read-alouds, after 15 read-alouds, and at the end of the study revealed correct reading comprehension for 70% of the participants. These students comprehended the read-aloud texts by extracting denotative and/or connotative information from read-aloud passages and correctly understanding the vocabulary from read-aloud texts.

Section V: Results of *Let's Play Read-Aloud* Mixed Assessment

Section V ends the assessment area with open- and close- ended information from *Let's Play Read-Aloud*, a comprehensive competitive game based on various areas of the read-aloud studies (e.g., tool usage, strategies, listening, and vocabulary) to assess student understanding of the processes involved in reading aloud. Students answered 10 questions each read-aloud session for 10 days. Each student had 10 separate answer sheets to submit their individual written responses over the course of the final read-alouds. See Appendices MM - QQ for particulars and overall results. One part of the competition, Question 10, highlighted 20 visuals and accompanying vocabulary words to evaluate selected vocabulary used throughout the study, and produced a number indicating that understanding. For this final category of the game, *vocabulary*, 75% of the group received 10-15 points. Overall, scores illustrated that 89% of the students mastered the assessment and revealed their understanding on a wide range of information connected to the read-aloud. One area revealed that 67% of the participants understood the images associated with the vocabulary words, and 56% understood what good comprehenders do when they are reading (i.e., connect, predict, question, comment). Results from this comprehensive assessment revealed reading comprehension for 75% of the participants due to the group's ability to identify pertinent vocabulary and connect it with accompanying graphics from 27 read-alouds.

Summary for Finding I

The first finding addressed how the use of the read-aloud protocol for this group of students revealed that most had adequate reading comprehension. Qualitative and quantitative data analyses indicated reading comprehension based on or derived from the

read-aloud protocol and activities occurred throughout the inquiry: (1) writings (i.e., say-something responses, written retellings) and (2) assessments (i.e., written retellings, cloze-maze assessments, vocabulary, and *Let's Play Read-Aloud* competitive game). Each area illustrated how participants exhibited reading comprehension by extracting and constructing meaning from the read-aloud texts throughout the various sessions.

Part Two Finding II: Preference of Multicultural Content

The first finding of this study is that the read-aloud protocol aided comprehension in reading for participants in this study. The second finding concerns how comprehension was affected by the type of texts used. Findings also indicate a preference by students for multicultural texts. These findings are based on data from three areas: (1) multiple student survey responses; (2) multicultural and classic assessment scores (i.e., written retelling and cloze-maze scores); and (3) three vocabulary tests. Each was examined in relation to what elements (i.e., reader, text, and activities) of reading comprehension were exhibited (e. g., Did readers merely extract the basic plot of the read-aloud? Did vocabulary activities aid or hinder comprehension? Did students offer interpretations of the text, make inferences, and/or apply situations to their lives, etc.?).

The first section features qualitative results of three student surveys that document student preference for multicultural texts. *Sections II* and *III* present rubric-based scores for retellings and scale-based scores from cloze-maze assessments administered after each read-aloud session. Scores from these assessments support the students' partiality for the multicultural read-aloud texts over the classic. *Section IV* presents data taken from three vocabulary tests created from content of the multicultural and classic read-aloud excerpts.

Section I: Student Survey Results

The first section features qualitative results of multiple student surveys that contain areas involving student preference of multicultural texts. Surveys were conducted at the beginning of the study, midway (i.e., after read-aloud Story 18), and at the end (i.e., after read-aloud Story 27). The first survey acquired general information regarding language, reading habits, students' perceptions of the read-aloud practice, read-aloud sessions, and the study overall. The second survey covered such areas as read-aloud perceptions, knowledge of languages, reading interests, and comments about external reading practices. In this intermediate survey, students suggested types of texts that interested them. These suggestions were used to decide which kinds of texts to select for the remainder of the read-aloud stories. The final survey requested general opinions of the read-aloud and the study. See Appendix F for questions and students' responses.

Multicultural texts used in the current study were cited by 11% - 50% of the students as ones they enjoyed reading. Students also requested comic books (67%) and graphic novels (22%) as potential read-alouds, but these were not employed in the study. Students' final comments cited author/story examples that they encountered through the read-aloud sessions. Specific multicultural texts/authors were cited by 89% of the students as favorites. Information from these multiple surveys indicated overall interest in the texts used in this study that were classified as multicultural-typed texts.

Section II: Rubric-Based Retelling Scores

Section II features rubric-based scores from written retellings based on classic and multicultural texts. Retellings were written by students after each read-aloud and examined

by two raters using a ten-point rubric instrument (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009) that had been used in prior research to describe essential features of effective reading comprehension (e.g., gist/main idea, story details/elements, interpretive ideas, generalizations, supplementations, coherence, completeness, additional information, and elicited feelings). Scored and documented after each read-aloud session, these assessments support the students' partiality for the multicultural read-aloud texts over the classic. This section focuses on results derived from ratings of the written retellings. Two tables depict scores for 7 of the 27 written retellings over three phases (8 stories per phase) of read-aloud sessions. The tables report individual and group means. Scores 0 – 4 indicated low levels for retellings, meaning that the retellings did not exhibit many of the essential features for good reading comprehension (e.g., gist, generalizations, and supporting details). Scores 5 – 10 indicated average to high features in the retellings, meaning that more of the features of good comprehension (e.g., supplementations, completeness, and elicited feelings) were evident in written retellings. Descriptive evidence used in this portion of the study served to corroborate retelling evidence gained from the qualitative approach and support research questions regarding the writing of this group of learners. Inter-rater reliability ranged from 68% - 75% across the three phases and 70% overall. See Appendix W for sample retellings.

Classic type retellings. Table 4.11 represents scores of 7 retellings of classic read-aloud stories representing all the phases of the read-aloud sessions. These classic read-alouds produced a class score range of 3.8 – 6.4 on the 10-point rubric. Individual means ranged from 2.7 to 6.7. The class mean was 5.0. Selected as a county-recommended read-aloud, the highest class mean score (6.4) was from the county-recommended text *The loud silence of*

Table 4.11. Retelling Scores for Classic-Only* Read-Aloud Stories

Student	Story 3	Story 4	Story 8	Story 18	Story 19	Story 22	Story 24	Individual Mean
1	7	2	8	7	6	9	7	6.6
2	8	5	3	4	1	5	4	4.3
3	1	1	2	4	1	5	5	2.7
4	8	5	6	6	7	7	8	6.7
5	6	4	6	5	2	6	7	5.1
6	7	2	5	3	7	8	4	5.1
7	1	5	3	4	**	**	**	3.3
8	5	5	6	3	3	5	7	4.9
9	6	5	4	7	5	6	6	5.6
Class Mean	5.4	3.8	4.8	4.8	4.0	6.4	6.0	5.0

*Scores from classic read-alouds #5, #17, and #27 were removed due to incomplete data.

**In Phase 3 of the study, Student 7 was removed.

Francine Green (Cushman, 2006), which focused on the friendship of a witty, yet shy tween and her opposite, newfound friend. In these retellings were strong features of reading comprehension, which indicated a *complete* retelling that that successfully addressed all items in the rubric (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). The lowest class means of 3.8 and 4.0 were connected to *The diary of a young girl* (Frank, 1947) which featured the self in turmoil with the concept of war, and *Souder* (Armstrong, 1989), which featured a male tween's quest for education. Due to the small sample, statistical analysis was not conducted on these means.

Multicultural type retellings. Student survey data revealed evidence of partiality for multicultural texts. As a result, additional multicultural texts were selected for this group of learners. This created an imbalance among the numbers for the two text types during the

analysis phase of the study. To fairly compare text types for this section of the study, the data were cleaned to shorten the multicultural list. Table 4.12 represents 7 multicultural read-aloud stories selected across all phases of the read-aloud sessions after data preparation. Scores on the retellings of the multicultural read-aloud stories ranged from 4.8 - 6.8 on the 10-point rubric, a higher range of scores when compared to the classic retelling score range of 3.8 - 6.4. Individual means ranged from 3.9 to 7.1, an increase in range compared to the classic range of 2.7 – 6.7. The class mean for retellings of multicultural texts was 5.7 compared to a lower mean of 5.0 for classic read-aloud texts retelling scores. The highest mean score of 6.8, indicating scores of average to high on retellings, was based on Cisneros's (1984) *Our good day* about three newfound friends making a slick deal to purchase a used

Table 4.12. Retelling Scores for Multicultural-Only Read-Aloud Stories

Student	Story 10	Story 11	Story 12	Story 14	Story 16	Story 20	Story 25	Individual Mean
1	3	7	7	6	5	8	7	6.1
2	9	5	2	8	5	3	9	5.9
3	5	7	4	3	3	7	5	4.9
4	6	7	9	7	5	9	7	7.1
5	4	3	9	4	3	7	6	5.1
6	5	4	5	3	7	7	8	5.6
7	4	6	5	7	5	*	*	5.4
8	4	5	6	2	3	5	2	3.9
9	8	6	5	4	7	6	10	6.6
Class Mean	5.3	5.6	5.8	4.9	4.8	6.5	6.8	5.7

bicycle. Close behind was *The diary of Latoya Hunter*. Both stories used informal language and featured strongly opinionated, female characters—one Latina and the other African-American. The lowest means was 4.8 for the Young Adult Literature novel *The circuit* (Jimenez, 1997), an excerpt about a migrant tween who wants more than anything to learn English, and 4.9 for Johnson's (2001) *Any small goodness*, a teacher-recommended read-aloud where Hispanic students make a pact to demand correct pronunciations of their names. As with classic texts, the means were not statistically compared due to the small sample.

Assessments for this group of students indicated that more gains were made in written retellings of multicultural texts when compared to classic texts. Class retelling means based on classic texts ranged from 3.8 to 6.4 (2.6 variation), while means for multicultural texts ranged from 4.8 to 6.8 (2.0 variation). Individual retelling means based on classic texts ranged from 2.7 to 6.7 (4.0 variance), while individual means for multicultural texts ranged from 3.9 to 7.1 (3.2 variation). The overall class mean for retellings based on classic texts was 5.0, and the class mean was 5.7 for retellings based on multicultural read-alouds.

Results revealed:

- Individual scores showed the widest score range, where students scored differently from one another with a 4.0 variation for retellings based on classic texts and 3.2 variation for retellings based on multicultural texts.
- Group mean variations illustrated minimal difference (2.0) among the multicultural scores and a wider difference with the classic scores (2.6), illustrating this group of students scored closer to each other with the multicultural texts by having more features indicating better reading

comprehension when compared with the classics.

Overall, for stories 1 – 27, a 7-point variation was shown between classic and multicultural retelling scores, with retelling scores of multicultural stories receiving the higher scores.

Section III: Scaled-Based Cloze-Maze Scores

Section III presents scale-based scores from cloze-maze assessments using classic and multicultural texts. The cloze-maze assessments were scored using a standard scale where each correctly filled blank was worth 17-points, e.g., 1 correct blank=17 points; 2 correct blanks =34 points; 3=51 points, etc.). Scored and documented after each read-aloud session, these assessments support the students' partiality for the multicultural read-aloud texts over the classic. This section presents results of descriptive evidence for this group of students' cloze-maze assessments based on 27 read-alouds. Cloze-maze scores based on multicultural texts were higher than for classic text scores.

The three sets of stories producing the highest group mean on cloze-maze assessments in Phase 1 of the study (i.e., read-alouds 1 – 9) included three multicultural stories: Cisneros's (1984) *My Name*, Soto's (2007) *Mercy on these teenage chimps*, and Jimenez's (1997) *The circuit*. Three additional excerpts from multicultural stories in the second phase of the study (i.e., read-alouds 10 – 18) produced high group means, including Apte's (n.d.) *My insufferable cousin*, a second read from Soto's (2007) text *Mercy on these teenage chimps*, and Jimenez's (1997) *The circuit*. While three classic stories, Cushman's (2006) *The loud silence of Francine Green*, Armstrong's (1989) *Souder*, and London's (1903) *Call of the wild*, produced high means in the third phase of the study (i.e., read-alouds 19 - 27), the majority of the high scores were connected to multicultural content.

Of the 27 stories read-aloud, the three highest cloze-maze scores for the class were based on a multicultural texts, including *The circuit* with a class mean of 94; stories *My name* and *Evolution, me, and other freaks of nature* with a shared mean of 89; and teacher-recommended *My insufferable cousin* with a mean of 87. Read-aloud stories with the lowest class mean in each phase were based on a majority of classic texts, including Twain's (1876) *The adventures of Tom Sawyer* with a class mean of 45 in Phase 1 and *The loud silence of Francine Green* with a mean of 72 in Phase 3 of the study. Of the 27 stories read-aloud in the study, students' cloze-maze assessments resulted in low scores for the majority of the classic stories, including *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The diary of a young girl* (Frank, 1947), and *The loud silence of Francine Green*. Low scores connected to the classic text content, where 34% of the scores were between 0 – 51, and high scores connected to multicultural text content, where 75% of the scores were between 68 – 102, revealed that cloze-maze scores for the students in this study may correlate to the type of story (e.g., multicultural, classic) read-aloud to students.

Section IV: Vocabulary

A fixed, multiple choice assessment to test vocabulary was given to students three times during the study. Predetermined vocabulary words from each of the 27 read-alouds used in the study were given in the context of the sentence from which it was taken. As reported earlier, the vocabulary assessment generated a wide range of scores from the lowest of 22% of correct answers in the pre-test to a high of 89% of correct answers in the intermediate- and post- tests, demonstrating gains in vocabulary derived from the 27 read-alouds. Using descriptive statistics (Steinberg, 2008), other relationships were considered

due to the importance of vocabulary in overall literacy, especially for English language learners. One of these relationships is how many attempts a reader makes in order to correctly identify vocabulary associated with multicultural or classic content, and how the numbers are similar or different for the two text types. In this study, the vocabulary test comprised key vocabulary selected across all stories that the students would be reading, and the same test was administered three times.

Data from these multiple assessments revealed that for the pretest based on the classic read-aloud texts 37% of the students were able to choose the correct vocabulary word derived from classic texts. The intermediate test scores revealed 62%--a 25% increase--of students selecting the appropriate answers. By the final test, 70%--an 8% increase from the intermediate test-- was noted. At the completion of the study, 71% of the students appropriately selected the correct answers on the test about classic texts.

In comparison, the multicultural data revealed higher percentages and illustrated an 11% difference in scores by the end of the study. In the first attempt, 47% of students selected the appropriate answer on the pretest as compared to 37% for classic texts. At the second with the intermediate test, 26% more of the students were able to select the correct answer 14 stories later. By the third attempt, an increase of 9% was noted with the multicultural texts, 2 points higher than the classic scores. At the culmination of the study, 83% of the students were able to select correct/appropriate answers for those statements pulled from multicultural read-aloud texts as compared to 71% for the classic texts.

Overall, final results for the number of attempts students made to get the correct answers for both text types indicate that vocabulary from the multicultural text type was less

challenging. Eighty-three percent (83%) of this group of students was able to choose appropriate answers. In comparison, the number of attempts made for selecting the correct answers for vocabulary from classic texts revealed that 71% was able to choose appropriate answers. The most problematic vocabulary, where 44% to 56% of students answered inaccurately, occurred with the vocabulary words *waver*, *pew*, and *registering* which were derived from classic texts. Such old-fashioned, unusual words (for the students in this study at least) did not appear in the multicultural texts, suggesting that vocabulary was not a hindrance to reading comprehension of multicultural texts. See Appendices KK - LL for classic-specific and multicultural-specific vocabulary, attempt percentages, and limitations when using a fixed assessment tool (Chapter V).

Chapter IV Summary

Chapter IV was divided into two parts and presented two primary findings from qualitative and descriptive data used in this study regarding the read-aloud protocol and its effects on the reading comprehension of English language learners. Findings derived information from two analyses: constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1965) and analysis of descriptive data (Steinberg, 2008). The first finding in this study on the read-aloud indicated that reading comprehension for the participants was supported by the read-aloud protocol, based on both qualitative and quantitative data. Presentation for this finding included two areas of focus. One presented shorter, say-something responses, and longer retelling writings using qualitative procedures. The other focused on multiple assessments based on or derived from the read-aloud protocol, including retellings using quantitative (descriptive) procedures, cloze-maze scores, multiple tests of vocabulary, and sections from a *Let's Play Read-Aloud*

competitive game.

The second finding in this study on the read-aloud highlighted the partiality of the English language learners in the multicultural text type over the classic. Presentation for this finding highlighted multiple areas based on or derived from the read-aloud protocol: (1) multiple student survey responses; (2) multicultural and classic assessment scores (i.e., written retelling and cloze-maze scores); and (3) vocabulary data. Data were explicated in an effort to find those areas where students exhibited a preference for one text type over the other. Results showed that students were partial to multicultural texts. Further, the relationship between text type and reading comprehension was examined. Findings for this group of students indicated that they made more gains in reading comprehension, as determined by scores of the retellings, for the multicultural texts when compared to classic texts.

Chapter V Discussion

This research concerns the effects of using read-aloud as an instructional practice for middle school students who are classified as English language learners. Guiding this inquiry were two questions, which were answered using qualitative and/or quantitative data:

(1) What effects does using a read-aloud protocol have on reading comprehension when *classic texts* are used with middle school English language learners? Sub-questions included:

(a) What do cloze-maze assessments indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading classic texts?

(b) What do student retellings indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading classic texts?

(2) What effects does using a read-aloud protocol have on reading comprehension when *multicultural texts* are used with middle school, English language learners? Sub-questions included:

(a) What do cloze-maze assessments indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading multicultural texts?

(b) What do student retellings indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading multicultural texts?

The study addressed the read-aloud quantitatively by focusing on assessments and scales conducive with read-aloud practice (e.g., multiple choice tests, cloze-maze tests, scores on retellings). The study addressed the read-aloud qualitatively by focusing on student retellings, where patterns were identified. The quantitative inquiry answered those questions

concerning assessment of the read-aloud practice while the qualitative inquiry widened the scope of the analysis of the read-aloud data gathered from the students as they studied the English language arts of reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

Research Intention

After collecting qualitative and quantitative data at roughly the same times and throughout the study, data were prepared, explored, analyzed, and represented using a concurrent triangulation design, where both approaches were employed to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings (Creswell et al., 2003). The purpose of these activities was to corroborate or refute the findings of qualitative themes with the results from the quantitative findings. The researcher looked across the data focusing and reflecting on those areas that could best create a *coherent facsimile* of the read-aloud (LeCompte, 2000, p. 147). These activities produced this discussion in this study where efforts were made to gain the best understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007).

As suggested by mixed methods procedures (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007), the intention of this chapter is to focus discussion on the questions guiding the inquiry and point out similarities and differences of the qualitative and quantitative forms. Context for these mixed methods centered on the read-aloud as a mediator that offered accessibility to complex language styles found in the classic and multicultural texts that provoked rich responses, and on the practices in effective read-alouds that opened doors to reading comprehension.

Research Focus on Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is complex, crucial, and strategy-dependent (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Snow, 2002), yet definitions for it are often implicit, especially in read-aloud

research on the middle school level. Smagorinsky (2009) calls out researchers who gloss over concepts such as *reading*, *literacy*, *reading instruction*, and *understanding* for not making space to outline just what these constructs mean. Due to multiple definitions from reading aloud instructions (see Albright & Ariail, 2005; Rees, 1976) to variations of it as a practice (See Chapter II), read-aloud is rooted in multiple constructs. As Rees (1976) notes, when read-aloud is done well by a trained teacher or professional reader, it can build comprehension and be more accepted, understood, and appreciated as an instructional strategy. This research interprets a well done read-aloud as one applying those practices most descriptive of good comprehenders: resolving unknown vocabulary, monitoring comprehension, connecting prior knowledge, inferring and drawing conclusions, and self-questioning (Jimenez's et al., 1995, 1996). These practices were included in the reading protocol developed for this study.

The read-aloud protocol embeds literacy practices to optimize reading comprehension by considering Snow's definition of reading comprehension as a *phenomenon* that involves "...the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (p. 11). Internal in the process are three vital elements. First is the *reader* who is performing the comprehension tasks. Not only is this reader bringing a myriad of information with him/her to the text, including capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences, but shaping and interacting with the information. Second is the printed *text* that is to be comprehended, which entails more than meaning extraction but the construction of various representations noted in the content, including exact wording and represented ideas. The third is the *activity* in which comprehension is a

part, which illustrates the purposes, processes, and consequences involved in reading comprehension. Such an inclusive definition undergirding the read-aloud protocol sets the context to adequately answer the research questions guiding this inquiry and the mixed methods shaping it.

The comprehensive question guiding the study was: What effects, if any, does the reading aloud protocol have on the reading comprehension? Analysis of data determined four themes for the overall effects:

- 1) **Multiple Literacy Effects.** The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group of English language learners revealed positive effects of the read-aloud protocol on three main activities of literacy: reading comprehension, writing performance, and vocabulary knowledge.
- 2) **Broad Literacy Effects.** The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group of English language learners revealed wide variations among English language learners regarding individual reading comprehension of the texts, but overall growth for the group in reading comprehension.
- 3) **Text Type Effects.** The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group of English language learners revealed that students preferred the multicultural text type over the classic text type, and that their reading comprehension was greater for multicultural texts than for classic texts.
- 4) **Broad Assessment Effects.** The read-aloud instructional strategy for this group of English language learners revealed that the cloze-maze assessment is useful as

an indicator of reading comprehension in that it was corroborated by other qualitative and quantitative measures.

Research Question One

What effects does using the read-aloud protocol have on reading comprehension when *classic texts* are used with middle school English language learners?

Classic texts are commonly used in American education were selected because they are seen as helping to broaden historical and political perspectives of students (Hollander, 2012). However, many readers, especially reluctant readers, shy away from classic texts because they do not comfortably connect with them (Lesesne, 2012; Newkirk, 2009) or because the texts do not “speak” to them (Lesesne, 2012). However, with proper preparation involving explicit reading comprehension skills and read-aloud aesthetics, the content in classic texts has the capability to hold readers’ attention and engagement just as well as other texts. Due to the read-aloud protocol and its attempt at a well-conceived and well-constructed design (Hoffman et al, 1993), the findings in the current study indicated that the vocabulary in the classic texts hindered reading comprehension for these students but that individuals did score well on their comprehension of classic texts.

Classics and cloze-maze assessments. Past studies reported the read-aloud to be “inconsistent” in improving performance on testing (Meloy et al., 2002). However, Dolan et al. (2005) extended the notion that the read-aloud is useful in assessment situations, and Meloy et al. found that all levels of students could use the read-aloud strategy as an accommodation when assessing reading skills. Cloze-maze means for reading comprehension in the current study steadily increased over the course of the study for all text

types. Group scores revealed a 4-point gain in the first half of the study and a 5-point gain in the latter. However, those assessments connected to classic texts were lower and illustrated 10 – 20 point differences in comparison to the multicultural texts. Speculatively, the difference in responses might be related to areas of the read-aloud protocol leading up to the cloze-maze assessment, and to the cloze-maze instrument itself.

In order to heighten the opportunity for reading comprehension, one phase of the protocol made room to explore vocabulary, and those vocabulary words were used in several areas of the protocol (discussion, annotation, comprehension exercises). Before the read aloud event, students were engaged in comprehension strategies on classic texts, such as understanding vocabulary used in the titles and generating questions about what the titles suggest. During the read-aloud session, students were able to explore in context the language of the classic texts that was problematic to them. While these practices were implemented in every read-aloud session, students still exhibited comprehension problems with classic texts and their outdated, formal, and denotative vocabulary . (See Appendix II for samples of the language in these texts). As indicated by score reports of the cloze-maze assessments, understanding of the content for classic texts was lower than for multicultural texts.

In order to satisfy reading comprehension constructs, the printed text of the cloze-maze assessment had to first be comprehended (Snow, 2002). As indicated by Nagy and Scott (2001), a reader who “knows” a word can (1) recognize it, (2) use it in context and (3) use the word’s meaning across contexts. The difficult language in the classic texts made the process of comprehending problematic for some of the students in the study. As a result, some of these classic texts that the reader needed to understand in order to score well on the

cloze-maze assessment activity hindered reading comprehension. While generalizations cannot be made due to the small sample, educators should pay close attention to overall vocabulary when using classic texts.

Walczyk's et al (2007) study that found that using certain instructional practices, such as looking back at information and troubleshooting certain areas, lessens confusion for learners and helps them make gains in activities such as the close/maze assessment used in this study. Other problems for students' lower comprehension of classic texts might have resulted from the tests themselves. The cloze-maze test used verbatim, short passages from the read-aloud story, and drew from the vocabulary word bank test that offered the students word choices. Because vocabulary and language in the classic readings were more difficult and had somewhat higher readability ratings over multicultural texts, the students' scores could be lower because the test passages based on such difficult texts.

As noted, reading comprehension is a phenomenon that involves simultaneous processes (Snow, 2002). Students who participated in this study were performing a number of reading comprehension tasks throughout the read-aloud protocol that research warrants for middle school students and English language learners, including extracting, constructing, and shaping meanings and information (Snow, 2002). Average to high scores made on cloze-maze assessments promoted through the design of the read-aloud protocol aligned with components promoted in reading comprehension, which included the activities of vocabulary knowledge. Scores from this group of students based on classic content indicated that a read-aloud designed with reading comprehension elements based on the reader, texts, and activities influences multiple literacy areas but extra care should be considered when

selecting texts. As noted in Snow (2002), difficulty or ease of texts depends on the inherent factors in a text, as well as what knowledge the reader brings to the text and what activities he/she can carry out with the content of the text. Needless to say, these areas affect reading comprehension. Snow makes the vital point that the presentation of difficult texts, such as classic texts, along with these interrelated factors (i.e., reader and activity) could interrupt the reader's knowledge base and experiences he/she is bringing to the texts. As a result, "optimal comprehension" cannot occur (p. 14). Such a precaution of text selection is noted in prior middle school research involving the read-aloud and read-alouds for the English language learner (See Chapter II, section II) and reiterated through this current study.

Classics and written retellings. The qualitative data in this mixed methods study concerned the following: What are the effects of the read-aloud protocol on the written retellings of middle school, English language learners? Snow's (2002) definition is helpful to answer this question because it considers the reading comprehension activities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing used in the study. Middle school read-aloud research (Lloyd, 2004) promotes some form of writing activity to include in the read-aloud experience. The structured read-aloud protocol used in the current study incorporated writing and then the writing samples were used as assessments. Before the read-aloud, students responded to the title of each of the 27 read-alouds in writing by using the say-something strategy. As a result of these writings, this group of students produced 208 responses that offered information on the practical and complex ways they applied strategies such as predicting, connecting, commenting, and questioning texts. Prior to the read-aloud, students also participated in comprehension exercises that involved the practice of writing,

including annotating, cluster mapping, and filling in Venn diagrams. Analysis of these artifacts from students from over the 27 read-aloud sessions revealed reading comprehension information regarding the students' strengths and challenges in activities in the read-aloud protocol.

Oral forms of retellings have been strongly recommended as ways to measure reading comprehension for English language learners (Sudweeks et al, 2004); however, in this study, written forms were used to document reading comprehension efforts. Students' written retelling responses offered deep information on the reading comprehension strengths and challenges regarding participants' writings based on the read-alouds. In regards to the classic text and these retelling writings, challenges included areas where literacy skills and abilities were challenged in regards to syntax and vocabulary usage and the basic elements (e.g., main idea, paraphrasing) were nonexistent in retelling writings (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Snow, 2002). Students written retellings did not always align with accompanying strategies; that is, student-generated information based on their background knowledge and newfound information from the read-aloud that were placed on graphic organizers were not transferred to retellings. As a result, qualitative analysis revealed weaker writing products as based on those researched attributes of needed in stronger retellings (e.g., main idea, suppositions, generalizations), and descriptive data from retelling assessments supported this with decreases in mean scores and unsatisfactorily responses in the retellings. Information based on the open-ended aspects of the qualitative findings and the closed-ended results of the quantitative evidence revealed areas in the students' writings that teachers of English language learners must consider to strengthen writing skills.

Summary of Research Question One

The read-aloud protocol and its connection with classic texts indicated that the classic text type produced information conducive of reading comprehension in cloze-maze assessment scores and written retelling. The difficulty with the classic text type regarding its language and vocabulary weakened cloze-maze assessment scores and features in written retelling scores and/or writings when compared to scores and writings based on multicultural counterparts, which will be discussed in the next section.

Research Question Two

What effects does the read-aloud protocol of this study have on reading comprehension when *multicultural texts* are used with middle school, English language learners?

The second question guiding the study focused on what effects, if any, does the reading aloud protocol have on the reading comprehension of middle school, English language learners when multicultural texts are involved. Specifically, effects of reading aloud and multicultural texts included stronger traits of reading comprehension, effects of the read-aloud protocol on written retellings, and effects on overall writing skills exhibited by students when writing about multicultural texts. The findings in the current study indicated that students in the study performed better in reading comprehension activities the majority of the time when multicultural texts were involved.

The Read-Aloud Protocol and Multicultural Texts

The multicultural text type was chosen because these texts celebrate the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices of minority students (Paris, 2012) and reflect a wide array of realities in our society (Burroughs, 1999). One overall area of importance was noted when

multicultural texts were connected to the read-aloud protocol: Students in the study fared better on reading comprehension activities connected to multicultural content, including cloze-maze assessments and student written retellings. Student activities indicated reading comprehension in written expressions and scores across activities when the read-aloud protocol was connected to multicultural texts. Stronger reading comprehension features in the written retellings increased speculatively due to better engagement and connection with scaffolded information from annotations, class discussions, and graphic organizers (Barrentine, 1996; Fung et al., 2003; Peck & Serrano, 2002; Sawyer, 2006). In both instances, reading comprehension involving reader, text, and activity illustrated strong collaborations in these activities than seen with classic writings and assessments.

Read-aloud protocol and cloze-maze assessments. What do cloze-maze assessments indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individuals and groups reading multicultural texts? Individually, 58% of the overall sample experienced an increase in comprehension scores at the final phase of the study performing average to high on 177 of the 208 cloze-maze assessments. Descriptive information indicated that students in the study illustrated reading comprehension components in both multicultural and classic assessments but fared better on individual and group assessments connected to multicultural content. Individual scores between multicultural and classic cloze-maze scores showed a 26 point difference in the first set of read-alouds and a 3-point difference in the final set of read-aloud scores. Overall, scores over 24 read-alouds indicated a 10-point difference in scores across the overall study where multicultural scores were higher than classic scores. Score data, which reflects connection with the content, indicated that students comprehended the

multicultural text and the majority was able to perform well on the assessment activity associated with the content.

Read-aloud protocol and written retellings. What do student retellings indicate about the reading comprehension levels of individual and grouped English language learners under multicultural read-aloud texts)? Due to survey data where English language learners requested certain stories, an overwhelming support emerged for stories that were classified as multicultural. Class means for retellings of multicultural texts exhibited a higher range in scores when compared to the classic retelling ranges. When multicultural texts were involved, the English language learners in this study produced retellings with stronger retelling features, as well as information transferred from the read-aloud protocol.

Ten features recommended as must-haves in student retellings included gist/main idea, story details/elements, interpretive ideas, generalizations, supplementations, coherence, completeness, additional information, and elicited feelings) (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). Among students' retelling samples were such areas where content from students' written retellings exhibited those skills and abilities and satisfied these features. As a result of the high number of features seen in the retelling writings based on multicultural text content, a number of patterns indicating strengths were determined, including personal interpretations, elicited feelings, and insight. Written retellings related to the multicultural texts also revealed areas of personal interpretations. These included additional information not in the read-aloud passage, as well as elicited feelings about experiences related to the content in the read-aloud stories. Personal insight and awareness about a character or character trait, relationship, or situation were also present in these retellings. In addition, multicultural texts revealed

features where students practiced synthesizing information that made the read-aloud reading sensible and personal to them. These traits indicated strong reading comprehension where the reader, text, and activity were in sync during read-alouds with multicultural content.

Students' written retellings also illustrated information about the read-aloud protocol where an increase in the use of scaffolded information from the different phases of the read-aloud protocol (e.g., say-something, annotations, discussions) was included in retellings connected to the multicultural texts. As noted, the read-aloud protocol included phases that allowed these English language learners to explore and identify words, phrases, or sentences that could hinder comprehension. These included pre-reading and writing activities (e.g., discussions, annotations, group work, and graphic organizers, including Venn diagrams and cluster maps, and reading comprehension exercises) about those words, phrases, or sentences prior to the actual read-aloud event (Jimenez et al., 1996). Such activities build comprehension and vocabulary (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Gersten & Baker, 2000). Additionally, as students reconstructed versions of the content from the read-aloud event, they were encouraged to integrate vocabulary or information evoked by the story (Stahl, 2009). According to Pretorius (2006), an important component of the reading comprehension process is the reader's ability to connect current information with information mentioned previously. The written retellings in this current study highlighted the diverse writing skills and vocabulary capital of the participants, and those with the broadest knowledge capital (i.e., background knowledge) stood out in the qualitative and quantitative measures as indicated by the research (August et al., 2006; Duke & Mallette, 2004; Gallagher, 2009).

Speculatively, information from these activities transferred (i.e., spilled over) (Gallagher, 2009; Tran, 2006) to retelling writings in both text types. However, for the hub of retellings based on multicultural writings, stronger writings from this group of students were exhibited. Information from scaffolded activities from multiple reading comprehension activities became a part of their writings. As a result, qualitative and descriptive data based on those retellings reflected increases in those named features of strong retellings (e.g., additional information, and elicited feelings) (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009) and the scaffolded information transferred from earlier phases of the read-aloud protocol, including say-something strategies and annotations. Overall, these retellings illustrated a synthesis of those three elements of reading comprehension (i.e., reader, text, and activity) producing artifacts and writings that exhibited understanding of these texts (Goda, 1998; Snow, 2004).

The read-aloud protocol and its connection with multicultural texts indicated that the multicultural text type produced stronger information conducive of reading comprehension in multiple activities, including cloze-maze assessment scores and written retelling discussed. In these multiple assessment and writing opportunities that the read-aloud protocol provided, students in this study demonstrated effective reading comprehension when interacting with both text types (i.e., classic and multicultural). However, in all instances, multicultural scores and activities produced stronger reading comprehension. In these activities promoted through the read-aloud protocol were multiple literacy effects promoting variations of reading comprehension. Such effects indicated that a read-aloud lesson designed with reading comprehension elements based on the reader, texts, and activities influence broad and multiple literacy areas of the developing, middle school English language learner.

Corroborations of Text Types

Both classic and multicultural read-aloud texts produced information about the reading comprehension of this group of English language learners. Fruitful reading comprehension activities involving the reader, text types, and activities were produced from the multicultural texts and on other days, classic texts had similar, but mainly lower amounts of by-products. With both types, the design of the read-aloud protocol tapped into that myriad of information students bring with them into texts, including capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences, as well as those ways they shape and interact with the information (Snow, 2002).

Research notes that English language learners have a number of important issues regarding their learning of the language. Their background knowledge has not transferred from their heritage languages (Prater, 2009). Some are constantly grappling with limited capacity with the English language (Stahl, 2009). Others have few too many experiences with English texts (Short & Fitzsimmons). The read-aloud strategy in this study offered students accessibility to specialized text types (i.e., classic, multicultural) and genres (diary, drama, narrative, fantasy) and applied multiple strategies and modifications to address the issues of these learners.

The protocol for this study incorporated three entities that are entailed in reading comprehension: the comprehending reader, who brings and takes information from the text; the printed text excerpt used in each read-aloud; and the multiple pre-reading activities used to reduce linguistic barriers and offer insights (Fung et al., 2003; Snow, 2002). As a result, three takeaways emerged from using both text types. First, classic and multicultural texts

promoted interest in the content where main characters encountered situations in their relationships with close family members and best friends forever (BFF). Second, classic and multicultural texts offered challenging vocabulary that went beyond the students' level of knowledge but not out of reach in regards to their general understanding. Finally, classic and multicultural texts prompted wide exposure to the language used in the text types and reading comprehension for this group of students. The read-aloud protocol promoting classic and multicultural texts used for this group of middle school learners enhanced the students' ability to gain knowledge of two text types, exercise vocabulary relevant to two text types and experience assessment gains in reading comprehension.

Gaining knowledge of two text types. The first take away from the read-alouds involved text selection. In the *planning* phase of the read-aloud protocol, the researcher chose interesting, appropriate, and quality texts for the student audience (Albright, 2002; Fisher et al., 2004; Lloyd, 2004) that were recommended by a host of entities (teacher, county, read-aloud advocates), as well as the students' themselves. Texts were previewed and practiced by the read-aloud reader (the teacher or the researcher) to set the tone of the text, model fluent/oral reading practices, use animation and expression at appropriate times, and activate background knowledge of words or phrases prior to the read-aloud (Albright, 2002; Farris, 2007; Fisher et al., 2004; Gibson, 2008; Lloyd, 2004; NCTE, 2012). This group of learners, unfamiliar with these 27 classic and multicultural texts, was able to begin generating knowledge of these texts important in classic and multicultural circles.

Indicated in student survey data was the students' ability to talk about likes and dislikes concerning read-aloud texts, as well as name specific titles of texts that were

appealing and unappealing. Discussions, which gave practice in dialogue (Block & Paris, 2008; Dyson, 2000; Fung et al., 2003), revealed further reasons behind their likes and dislikes for the texts used in the study, reasons including anything from disliking the main characters to liking the ways the characters handled particular situations. Providing students with the widest opportunities in reading, coupled with a read-aloud protocol that considered elements that prompted English language learners to participate reading instruction (i.e., background knowledge), allowed students to display a wide range of background knowledge and expertise (Gallagher, 2009; Peck & Serrano, 2002). In the current study, cooperative learning, partnering, and group interaction were noted ways built into the read-aloud protocol that help students expose background knowledge and develop expertise (Fung et al., 2003; Peck & Serrano, 2002; Sporer & Brunstein, 2009). The teachers of these learners should remember that the term *background knowledge* for the English language learner involves a world of conceptual knowledge and literacy skills in the first language, as well as that represented in the text (Prater, 2009). Whether the students "...hated it, Ms. Was-son!" or "Liked it!," these students were able to have thumbs-up or thumbs-down opinions or general dialogue regarding these texts due to the read-aloud protocol that invested in time to talk, extensive opportunities for structured practice (Anderson, 1985), and the experience of different types of genres. The use of a read-aloud protocol through the text types (i.e., classic and multicultural) allowed for those theoretical perspectives undergirded in this research and purported through Snow's (2004) triad of reader, text, and activity.

Exercising vocabularies of two text types. Classic and multicultural texts challenged language learners and exercised their vocabularies. The second take away

concerns how learners, who were low on vocabulary capital in the English language according to state test score reports, connected to a variety of vocabulary from classic and multicultural texts. Snow (2002) noted that classic texts have complex vocabulary and linguistic structures that are problematic to students; however, this study exhibited that multicultural texts also have much complex vocabulary with their flavorful phrases and intense images that call for students to visual Student annotation activities, which Gallagher (2009) describes as framing the text prior to reading, revealed a myriad of vocabulary that featured contemporary, abstract/ metaphoric language and author-specific words (i.e., author's style) that the students found confusing or unfamiliar in the multicultural texts, as well as outdated/old-fashioned words in the classic texts. Through the course of each read-aloud session, vocabularies from both text types were addressed, as is promoted in the research (August & Shanahan, 2010; Nagy & Scott, 2000; Schmitt, 1998).

Common in the research on the English language learner is the critical role of vocabulary knowledge, what Stein (1990) described as the *currency of communication*. Research informs us of the importance of oral vocabulary (i.e., words recognized during listening and speaking), as well as reading vocabulary (i.e., words recognized in print). When vocabulary is known and understood, overall comprehension is improved and communication areas involving listening, speaking, reading and writing follow suit, especially for the English language learner (LeLoup & Ponterio, 2005; RAND, 2002; Stanovich, 1986). Speculatively, The practice of scaffolding vocabulary, highlighting it on assessments, and having students locate vocabulary that was individually problematic to them, made the difference for these students in comprehension.

One major influence of the English language learners' vocabulary acquisition was the practice of multidimensionality embedded in the read-aloud protocol, where students learned vocabulary through a variety of ways (Nagy & Scott, 2000; Schmitt, 1998). The approach to building the students' basic vocabulary involved an intense mix of activities. Students identified basic vocabulary words/phrases problematic to them individually, and had explicit vocabulary instruction for those words/phrases through annotating and comprehension exercises (Phases 2 and 3 of the protocol). Nagy and Scott (2001) reiterate and further suggest that teachers of English language learners promote metalinguistic awareness where students have time to reflect on and manipulate word features. Appropriate materials at appropriate readability levels were also used to enhance vocabulary. A safe space was provided to students to help them orally acknowledge words they did not recognize and discuss those words in a natural, conversational way (Terrell & Krashen). The students, as well as the teacher, explained words to the class to strengthen the connections between the language they were learning and the culture from which they learned their first language. (i.e., metalinguistic awareness) (August & Shanahan, 2010). Such activities helped students refine phonological representations, stabilize lexical meanings, and make content more accessible (Tabor & Snow, 2001). By incorporating the concept of multidimensionality through the read-aloud protocol to offer students a variety of opportunities in these areas, the read-aloud protocol allowed language learners to display their understanding of both classic and multicultural texts (Nagy & Scott, 2001; RAND, 2002).

Both qualitative and quantitative results from this study revealed the diverse levels of word knowledge displayed by this group of English language learners, including gradations

of (1) unknown words that the student had never encountered the word; (2) some knowledge of the existence of a word when the word may have been heard before; (3) partial knowledge of the word when there was a vague understanding of the word in a particular context; and (4) complete knowledge, where the student can use the word in both speech and writing activities (Dale, 1965).

Both qualitative and quantitative data revealed that students were grappling with the outdated words in the classic texts and the contemporary language, sometimes esoteric words, in the multicultural texts. The read-aloud protocol gave students space to build, exercise and add words to their vocabulary capital. They listened to the sounds/emotions of the vocabularies in appropriate tones and inflections during the read-aloud, and heard these words in discussions where they were used in natural, conversational ways by expert others (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Additionally, they visualized vocabulary in action by drawing and connecting images to words (Alexander & Nygaard, 2008; August & Shanahan, 2010; Gersten & Baker, 2000); explored vocabulary through comprehension activities with expert readers (teacher, researcher, other students) (Hoffman et al., 1993; Nagy & Scott, 2001; Santoro et al., 2008; Tran, 2006), as well as used (or attempted to use) those newfound vocabularies in their written retellings of the classic or multicultural read-aloud texts.

From the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) and descriptive data, emerged information regarding vocabulary exercises in both the classic and multicultural texts. Students' annotations revealed problems with the language of the two text types that caused reading comprehension issues. Through the read-aloud session, vocabulary words were taught directly in the activities embedded in the read-aloud lesson and indirectly through the

read-aloud practice. During the annotation phases of the protocol, students were guided through word consciousness (Krashen, 1989) where they skimmed read-aloud excerpts to search for words they had not encountered before, located context clues in the excerpts, and heard definitions from experts (i.e., other students, teacher, researcher) (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Words were both gained and taught on different levels in order to offer students in the study multiple opportunities to hear the word, see it in context, and physically touch, smell, or taste it, if possible, in order to strengthen the possibility of it becoming one they could use in speaking or writing (Scott et. al., 2008).

Problematic in the annotating exercises, as noted earlier, were the old-fashioned/outdated vocabulary/syntax of the classic texts and the contemporary, and the flavorful vocabulary/syntax of the multicultural texts. Due to the Matthew effect where the lack of word identification can lead to problems in reading situations (e.g., less reading, automaticity) (Stanovich, 1986), the researcher's concern was ensuring that students were familiar with the outdated/old-fashioned and unfamiliar/confusing words found in the classic texts. English language learners had problems with these words and much discussion and exchanges went into discussing the nature of the language styles in both texts. Without explicit instruction (e.g., annotating, dramatic play, discussion), those language issues in both text types could have been ignored by the students in the course of the reading and caused them to misunderstand the text. With explicit instruction using student-focused strategies, where the English language learner and his/her barriers, perceptions, and mental processes were considered important to comprehension, potential problems with the texts were addressed before the read-aloud ensued (Garcia, 1991; Jimenez et al., 1995, 1996).

Experiencing assessment gains in two text types. Lesesne's (2006) article on using the read-aloud in testing situations challenged the research community to study the read-aloud strategy in a vibrant, robust way. This study addressed the read-aloud quantitatively by focusing on assessments and scales derived from prior read-aloud studies that were conducive with read-aloud practice (e.g., cloze-maze and scored retellings). Classroom tests and grading practices as an examination of reading comprehension were an interest in this study due to the role assessment plays on the middle school level (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). Both qualitative and quantitative data from classic and multicultural texts indicated reading comprehension in regards to assessments. Dhaif (1990) allocated reading comprehension to scores based on comprehension activities, where they became measurements "obtained by the students in reading comprehension exercises rather than by the degree of enjoyment derived from what they read, or by their ability to discuss it intelligently" (p. 463).

Prior research involving the importance of text selection for read-alouds (Arial & Albright, 2006; Floyd, 2004, NCTE, 2012) and student survey data from this study support the importance of text selection. The multicultural text type was requested by this group of learners for additional read-aloud sessions. As indicated by data, the students in this study performed better on cloze-maze assessments when multicultural texts were used. The relationship could be due to the English language learners in this study having a voice in text/topic selections for some read-alouds. They may have also identified with characters close to themselves, or their interest levels were piqued by the characters and/or familiar situations in these stories (Delpit, 2006; Sporer & Berstein, 2009). The effects of both texts on this group of English language learners indicated reading comprehension on assessments;

however, cloze-maze scores connected to multicultural texts, rather than classic texts, exhibited higher scores. Cross analysis revealed that while a mixture of classic and multicultural texts was connected to the high cloze-maze means, multicultural texts were *consistently* connected to higher cloze-maze scores.

The Read-Aloud Protocol and Text Types

Overall, two questions guided this inquiry on the effects of the read-aloud protocol on the reading comprehension of middle school, English language learners specifically when classic and multicultural texts are involved. One asked: What effects does using a read-aloud protocol have on reading comprehension when classic texts are used with middle school English language learners? The second asked: What effects does using a read-aloud protocol have on reading comprehension when multicultural texts are used? As indicated by the results (See Chapter IV), the current study found that while the classic texts produced reading comprehension from qualitative and quantitative perspectives, students performed better in comprehension and assessments the majority of the time when multicultural texts were involved. Undergirding such a finding, a final discussion is warranted: What produced comparable results from both text types, though the multicultural text type produced richer content and higher scores from the students participating in the study? Such a discussion argues that the multiple activities embedded in the read-aloud protocol benefited the reading comprehension of the students involved in the inquiry.

During each read-aloud session, students were offered many activities and assessments recommended and guided by multiple perspectives including culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and natural learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). All these

theories of learning purport that knowledge is socially constructed; all value elements of background knowledge; all suggest modifications for the marginalized reader. Numerous activities in the six phases of the read-aloud protocol exercised the students' skills in multiple processes involving reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Table 5.1 represents the six aspects of the protocol and its adherence to these elements and the three-part construct of the reading comprehension definition used in this study.

First, in *Say-something* response exercises, which prompted students to connect (Herold, 2012; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997), question (Baker & Beall, 2009; Barrentine, 1996; Leslie & Caldwell, 2009), comment (Biancarosa, 2005; Goldstein et al., 1992), and predict (Raphael et al., 2009) before and during reading, students retrieved and exercised background knowledge through writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. Such activities promoted the social interaction that these students needed, as recommended in the natural learning perspective, and offered structured practice to foster automaticity in those skills used by good comprehenders (Goodman & Goodman, 2009; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Next, the *Stand Up For the Book* phase offered interesting information about the classic and multicultural texts, and provided space for students to listen and speak about the title of the book, as well as touch and observe the actual book (Lehr & Thompson, 2000; Lesesne, 2012; Pappamihel & Mihai, 2006). As students heard information external to the text, they were targeted in two different ways. As noted by Ladson-Billings (1994), the selection of the texts by the researcher and the students capitalized on those themes in culture that are most interesting to middle grades students (e.g., youth culture, music culture, pop culture). Students were also involved in the construction of knowledge due to the use of

Table 5.1: The Read-Aloud Protocol and Traits of Reading Comprehension

READ-ALOUD PROTOCOL	THE READER	THE TEXT	THE ACTIVITY
Say-Something Responses	Writes about the classic or multicultural title using background knowledge	The title evokes background information and/or interests	Writing Reading Speaking Listening
Stand Up For The Book	Listens/Talks about titles of classic or multicultural texts	Offers interesting information about the classic or multicultural text	Listening Speaking Touching Looking
Annotation	Explores the language of the classic or multicultural text	Language is either traditional or contemporary	Writing Skimming Exploring Drawing Sketching
Comprehension Exercises	Analyzes the classic or multicultural read-aloud text	Based on the content of the classic or multicultural read-aloud text	Writing Reading Analyzing Skimming
Read-Aloud	Listens to a classic or multicultural text	To model reading behaviors with fluency, expression, animation, and middle school practices	Listening Reading Subvocalizing Annotating
Student Written Retelling	Writes to his/her BFF about the classic or multicultural text	Content capable of evoking writings that are efferent and aesthetic	Writing Reading Referencing
Cloze-maze Assessment	Reproduces a portion of the classic/multicultural text using vocabulary bank	Easily adjustable for cloze-maze formats	Reading Writing

discussion after this phase of the protocol and before the reading of an excerpt from the book. Discussion helped students connect more effectively with each other and with texts before the read-aloud lessons (Burroughs, 1999; Lloyd, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1984; Santoro et. al., 2008).

Annotation activities and comprehension exercises helped these English language learners explore the traditional or contemporary language of the classic or multicultural text, and students were allowed to practice writing, skimming, exploring, drawing, and sketching. These paper-pencil activities offered students a chance to analyze the classic or multicultural read-aloud texts (Alexander & Nygaard, 2008; Brown & Cambourne, 1987; Goodman and Goodman, 2009; Snow, 2002). By scaffolding information through the use of annotations, discussions, and reading comprehension exercises (e.g., annotations, visualization), students moved beyond the literal understanding of texts and the difficult language in them and towards better understanding (Gallagher, 2004; Sawyer, 2006). These exercises were directly connected and based on the content of the classic or multicultural read-aloud texts. Having students complete these exercises before the read-aloud allowed students to practice writing, reading, analyzing, and skimming.

Afterwards, the read-aloud commenced and students listened to a classic or multicultural text read by a teacher who modeled reading behaviors with fluency, expression, and animation, while the students followed along in a print copy. Such a read-aloud allowed students to listen to various text types, read along, subvocalize by mimicking words as the teacher read, and annotate during the read-aloud to highlight personal interests. Students practiced those skills of good comprehenders while the teacher monitored their

understanding through discussion, Q&A, annotation activities to deepen their reading comprehension (Gallagher, 2004).

During the read-aloud, students listened to content based on real world issues and immediately after wrote retellings (Gallagher, 2004). The content of these texts evoked writings that were both efferent and aesthetic as students wrote to an appealing audience (BFF) about the classic or multicultural texts. These writings were valuable artifacts of the study due to their consistent documentation of the students' writing skills, their practice with applying comprehension strategies, and their gradual improvement in comprehension (Anderson, 1985; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1994). The use of written retellings derived from cognitive strategy instruction and further indicated reading comprehension (Dole et al., 2009).

The final phase of the read-aloud allowed for assessment where students completed cloze-maze tests to reproduce a portion of the classic/multicultural text using a relevant vocabulary bank. Such assessments featured the students' skills in writing, reading, and referencing. Pedagogically, the read-aloud protocol offered learners these opportunities to first access the basic language, which led to better on reading comprehension.

Harris and Duibhir (2011) argued for the impossibility of an "ideal curriculum" design for teaching situations (p. 16). The read-aloud protocol used in this study was based on such an ideal sequence of lessons that considered both parties in the teaching-learning relationship: First, teachers must be familiar with their students and a wide range of proven strategies for helping them gain reading skills because students learn differently (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; Harris & Duibhir, 2011; International Reading Association, 2000). Second,

a vital concern in teaching reading is achieving an appropriate balance between instruction and assessment.

The read-aloud protocol addressed both teacher and learners to illustrate that reading comprehension can be achieved by integrating the read-aloud protocol introduced in this study. This protocol took the best elements of how the read-aloud had been used with elementary students and integrated them with research-based reading comprehension strategies (Albright, 2002; Ariail & Albright, 2006; Fisher et al., 2004; and Lloyd, 2004), defined as effective for middle school students. Further, the protocol used materials built on the content of special young adult texts that interested students (Zehr, 2010), and applied research-based strategies conducive to thinking and learning (Snow, 2002).

In this study, students achieved results that exhibited the strengths of pedagogical factors for the teacher and strengths of students' strategies for reading comprehension, which encompasses multiple reading skills and a composite of abilities working in unison (Prater, 2009; Snow, 2002).

Summary

The discussion focused on the multiple ways of looking at reading comprehension including text selection (classic/multicultural) and activities (student retellings, cloze-maze assessments of classic/multicultural read-aloud texts). As Snow (2002) noted, reading comprehension is a *phenomenon* that involves many processes that must operate simultaneously and requires much interaction among the reader, the text, and the classroom activities. This study offered descriptive evidence of what is problematic and positive in the English language learners' reading comprehension, as well as qualitative information to

describe their exact deficiencies and strengths. However, with the use of both approaches, the design disclosed similarities and differences in reading comprehension for this group of learners. In the reading, writing and listening activities exercised in this study, results from general qualitative data illustrated within-group differences for the reading comprehension. This difference was evident from qualitative-only (e.g., student surveys, say-something) and open-ended data (e.g., retelling writings) as well as descriptive data from the participant information and quantitative assessments (e.g., retellings, cloze-maze).

Limitations

Several limitations of the study exist. First, data were collected at one school site in one classroom of only 9 English language learners. The behaviors, values, and beliefs that were included in this study cannot be used to generalize outside of the middle school sociocultural contexts where they occurred (Duke & Mallette, 2004). Such a small sample posed generalizability issues on the middle school level and with English language learner populations.

Second, the study employed excerpts from fictional and nonfictional, multicultural and classic prose texts. Other forms (poetry, drama) could have been implemented in the study, especially popular graphic novels or a single novel/novella read aloud across multiple lessons. While the study narrowed the readings to classic and multicultural read-alouds, uninterrupted by questions and discussion and read aloud by a teacher, such texts offered the gist of what is both traditional and contemporary in the English language.

In addition, the vocabulary assessment used was fixed, where the same test was administered three times during the study. This could pose validity issues because the

students may have improved due to administration of the same test over the duration of the study.

Finally, with the use of the mixed methods design, the overall study could be misinterpreted due to scholars having bias and/or limited expertise in the mixed methods approach (Ambert, Adler, & Detzner, 1995; DeCuir-Gunby, 2007). In addition, the use of a concurrent design can be problematic when attempting to study one phenomenon using two different methods (Creswell et al., 2003). However, the researcher determined that a mixed methods design could be utilized to explain what the two approaches could not accomplish separately. The researcher discussed guidelines and implemented ways to surmount difficulties when discrepancies or contradictions occurred. While it is beneficial to know limitations before the onset of the study, the gain of what a mixed methods design held for this read-aloud research on the middle school level and with an English language learner population outweighed the limitations discussed here.

Implications

The International Reading Association (2000) states "...no single strategy or single combination of strategies can successfully teach children to read" (p. 3). Duffy and Hoffman's (1999) assert that teaching reading effectively does not lie with a single program or strategy. Harris and Duibhir (2011) argue the impossibility of an "ideal curriculum" design for each class or teaching situation (p. 16). Moreover, prior research findings indicate that certain instructional are beneficial to English language learners and may be necessary for their growth in reading comprehension (Swanson et al., 2005). This study provided *one* example of a "well-conceived and well-constructed..." read-aloud instructional strategy with

a unique protocol and sequence (Deville & Frisbie, 2004; Gibson, 2008; Hoffman et al., 1993; Lesesne, 2006; Meloy et al., 2002). It was implemented with middle school students and modified for the English language learner (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). Three implications emerged regarding read-aloud: (1) This study confirmed that read-aloud is a viable instructional approach to teaching reading if it is embedded with sequenced instructional strategies for improving comprehension; (2) This study provided evidence of specific, reliable, and valid assessments that can be applied to using the read-aloud approach; and (3) This study addressed issues raised in prior research that used either qualitative or quantitative methods by employing a mixed methods approach. The mixed methods approach extended traditional methods and has special implications for studying diverse groups of learners.

The National Literacy Panel found that English language learners often matched native language users in areas such as phonological awareness, spelling, and decoding skills, yet these students rarely were equivalent in reading comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2010). Middle school teachers need to recognize the role read-aloud plays in the reading comprehension of the English language learner. Therefore, shifting the read-aloud practice and its purpose from a happenstance event used mainly for entertainment to one practiced with instructional purpose and centered on interconnecting processes in language arts should be a priority for those educators teaching students who are developing in the double work of reading the language while learning the language (Snow, 2002). Literacy content should be as diverse as the students it seeks to edify, concentrating on building background knowledge, embedding a balance of cultural literacy, employing factual information, and

broadening vocabulary. All have their places in an instructional practice that considers the reader, text, and activities. The fluidity of the read-aloud protocol used in this study makes it one that addresses those unique problems in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that change with each new class of developing students.

A second recommendation from this study is in the area of testing. Accountability is required for teachers who must assure that their students master the four strands of reading, writing, speaking, and listening to succeed in the world as productive citizens. However, many tests and purposes associated with the English language arts underestimate the reading comprehension of marginalized groups such as English language learners (Garcia, 1991; Snow, 2002). Formative assessments, which could be practiced in open-ended and close-ended formats as noted in this study with retellings and cloze-maze assessments, are one way that the teacher can ensure that students progress in their learning. Such assessments offer a fuller picture of the students' skills and abilities, as well as those areas needing refinement or further development. These assessments based on idiosyncrasies of the classroom can offer better information (Snow, 2002) than does one yearly assessment tool. This study employed a variety of well-placed assessments to reveal the literacy skills, not just the deficiencies, of English language learners.

Finally, the mixed methods design used to shape this study in read-aloud research offered a broader view of the students and their skill levels in a fairly short amount of time. Separating qualitative and quantitative methods to capitalize on their particular strengths, and in the end, merging the two approaches, opened a new way of reporting and analyzing the participants' skill levels, as well as the read-aloud strategy itself. Read-aloud researchers

who have reported mixed findings due to qualitative-only or quantitative-only approaches should develop more mixed methods studies to further provide information on the read-aloud strategy at the middle school level or replicate this study on a broader scale than in this research.

These implications could not only inform the educator inside the classroom and the researcher in the field, but could further the ways special populations—such as middle school students, above- and below-level comprehenders, and English language learners—are approached and supported in language processes and assessments.

Future Directions

Researchers interested in pursuing read-aloud research should first consider larger scaled and longitudinal studies. Tailored protocols for language learners should also be considered to further modify protocols such as the one used in this inquiry and could be tailored for different learners. In addition, different text types, especially graphic novel or longer works of literature (novel, novella) could be considered, rather than shorter pieces as used in this research. Finally, specific, innovative lessons could be utilized in experimental designs with treatment and control groups to gain further insight into the read-aloud and how it can assist in reading comprehension.

Conclusion

The shift from not knowing to knowing is incremental. Returning to Hoffman's (1989) autobiographical statement describing her shift from the use of one language to the use of another seems fitting. She speaks of learning new words and expressions and how those words mean different things once translated. For her, the new language world where

she found herself was drained of significance, and her existence and connection to that world was incoherent (See Chapter I for full quote). Hoffman goes on to add:

I don't know. I don't see what I've seen, don't comprehend what's in front of me.

I'm not filled with language anymore, and I have only a memory of fullness to

anguish me with the knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don't really exist.

(pp. 106-08)

She describes acquiring a new language and a new culture as disjointed. She has lost the fullness of memory (i.e., background knowledge) that was present in her heritage language.

The construction of reading comprehension is much the same as learning a new culture, and with it comes similar feelings of not knowing, not being accepted, and feeling and being made to feel different. In that uncertain space is the English language learner on a quest for the slippery construct of reading comprehension that propels him/her to reach, not only for the language that promotes the positives of Hoffman's statement (i.e., power of the signifier, words meaning what they intend to mean, connection, and fullness of memory), but for an identity in a literate world. This group of English language learners under this read-aloud study *experienced* reading comprehension, which goes beyond *achieving* comprehension. Each experienced what it felt like to be a reader—and that is what reading comprehension promotes—not only for the English language learner population participating in this study, but for anyone. Especially in the world we live in, everyday is an experience in reading comprehension.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent for Participating Teacher

North Carolina State University

Teacher Informed Consent Form For Research

Title of Study: Teacher Read-Aloud Practices in the ESL/ELL Middle School Classroom

Principal Investigator: Tanya E. Watson, North Carolina State University

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Ruie J. Pritchard, North Carolina State University

What are some general things you should know about research studies? You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate; however, no such risks are a part of the nature of this study. In this consent form, you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form, it is your right to ask the investigator for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the investigator(s) named above. (Contact information follows.)

What is the purpose of this study? The purpose of this study is to add to the limited research on the ESL/ELL reader and delineate effective strategies for his/her learning by (1) evaluating the Read-Aloud strategy for its effectiveness in helping English Language

Learner/ESL read and comprehend texts written in English; and (2) illustrating the educational and pedagogical value of multicultural and classic Read-Aloud lessons that embed text discussions, reading strategy instruction, and writing for learning English.

What will happen if you take part in this study? If you agree to participate in this study, you will participate/supervise in read-aloud (R-A) lessons and complete three (3) *surveys* regarding Read-Aloud.

Risks No risks or discomforts are expected from participation in this study.

Benefits Participant will gain a better understanding of the Read-Aloud strategy and its effects on the ESL/ELL.

Confidentiality The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law, and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you give written permission to do otherwise. No reference to these data will be made in oral or written reports which could link you, your students, your school, or school district, to the study, unless you give written permission to do otherwise. Measures to protect the security of different data sources are detailed below:

All interview data, teacher/student surveys and student class work will be stored securely on password-protected servers and in a locked cabinet for hardcopy data. These data will be gathered without names, and will be reported descriptively. Pseudonyms will be used for any student/teacher name appearing in the study. Classroom recordings of the Read-Alouds will be relinquished to the participating teacher for an audio library along with any artifacts/handouts based on those readings.

Compensation The participating teacher will receive an incentive for participating. By agreeing to participate, you will allow the investigator to report ways the Read-Aloud could foster better comprehension for the ESL/ELL.

What if you have questions about this study? If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the investigator or faculty sponsor:

Ruie Jane Pritchard, Ph.D.
 Box 7801, 402c Poe, NCSU
 Raleigh, NC 27695-7801
 919-515-1784 work
ruie_pritchard@ncsu.edu

Tanya E. Watson, M. Ed.
 North Carolina State University
 919-515-1397 work
 919-854-4681 home
tewatson@ncsu.edu
 OR royal5626@yahoo.com

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant? If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NC State University Campus, Raleigh, NC 27695-7514. (919-515-4514).

Consent To Participate “I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Middle School, English Language Learner Consent Form

Dear Student Participant:

Hello, my name is Tanya Watson. I am from New Orleans, Louisiana and I am attending North Carolina State University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project for me. This project is about reading aloud and whether or not it is a good strategy to use in the school.

This study aims to have you listen to diverse texts—texts about people from a long time ago, texts about people you know, and texts about what is happening in the world today. If there are texts that you would like to hear read-aloud or books that you want to suggest, please feel free to tell your teacher about them or write them down on this paper to give to your teacher.

Your teacher is the leader of the study and I will be coordinating the study. That means that I will be in your classroom taking notes while your teaching is reading aloud and teaching.

You will not be asked to do anything except your regular schoolwork since these readings are from your school's booklists and your teacher's lesson plans. If you choose to participate, your teacher will ask you to complete two surveys about the read-aloud. You will take an online survey on a site called *SurveyMonkey*. It will give me an idea if you, as a middle school student, liked or disliked the stories you heard, liked or disliked your teacher reading aloud, and your overall opinion about reading aloud. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions for the surveys and your grade will not be affected.

All data collected (surveys, assignments, and my notes will be kept confidential). Data will be stored in secure cabinets in my office. The only people who will see these raw data are your teacher and I. I will use code numbers to label and organize any notes. I will not use your name or identifying information in any public reports of my research. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to refuse to be surveyed. You may change your mind about your participation in the research study at any time.

I want to thank you for participating in this study. Many times researchers do not always go into schools to find out what students like or dislike when reading. By participating in this study, you could change the way teachers use the read-aloud in classes with students just like you, and your participation could change the types of texts/books they bring into your classroom.

If you have any questions later about the study or if you have any comments, please feel free to contact Tanya Watson either by e-mail royal5626@yahoo.com or by phone (919) 854-4681.

If you agree that you will take part in my research project about reading aloud, please return a signed copy of this form to me as soon as possible. You will receive an incentive. You may keep the other copy for future reference. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and have a productive school year!

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Student Consent Form in Spanish

Formulario de consentimiento de estudiante de secundaria

Estimado alumno participante:

Hola, mi nombre es Tanya Watson. Soy de Nueva Orleans, Louisiana y estoy asistiendo a North Carolina State University. Le gustaría invitarlo a participar en un proyecto de investigación para mí. Este proyecto trata de leer en voz alta y si es o no es una buena estrategia a utilizar en la escuela media.

Este estudio tiene como objetivo que escuchar textos diversos: textos sobre personas de un largo tiempo hace, textos sobre personas que conoces y textos sobre lo que está ocurriendo en el mundo. Si hay textos que le gustaría escuchar leer en voz alta o libros que desea sugerir, no dude en contar tu profesor sobre English Language Learners o anotar en este papel para dar a su maestro.

El profesor es el líder del estudio y estará coordinando el estudio. Eso significa que será en el aula tomando notas mientras está leyendo en voz alta su enseñanza y la enseñanza.

No se le pedirá hacer nada excepto su trabajos escolares regulares desde estas lecturas son de booklists de su escuela y planes de lección el profesor.

Si decide participar, su profesor le pedirá completar dos encuestas sobre la lectura en voz alta. Usted tendrá una encuesta en línea en un sitio llamado *SurveyMonkey*. Me dará una idea si usted, como estudiante de secundaria, gustó o no le gustaba las historias que escuchó, le gustó o no le gustaba el profesor leyendo en voz alta y su opinión general sobre la lectura

en voz alta. **T aquí es una respuesta bien o mal a las preguntas de las encuestas y no se verá afectado su grado.**

Todos los datos recopilan (encuestas, asignaciones y mis notas serán confidencial). Datos se almacenará en armarios seguras en mi Oficina. Las únicas personas que verán estos datos son el profesor y yo. Voy a utilizar números de código para etiquetar y organizar las notas. No voy a utilizar su nombre o información de identificación en los informes públicos de mi investigación. Su participación en esta investigación es **voluntaria**. Usted es libre de negarse a ser encuestados. Puede cambiar de opinión acerca de su participación en el estudio de investigación en cualquier momento.

Quiero darle las gracias por participar en este estudio. Muchas veces los investigadores no siempre salen en las escuelas para averiguar lo que gustan o disgusta al leer estudiantes. Al participar en este estudio, podría cambiar la manera de profesores utilizan la lectura en voz alta en clases con estudiantes como tú, y su participación podría cambiar los tipos de textos y libros que traen a su aula.

Si tienes alguna pregunta más tarde sobre el estudio o si tiene algún comentario, no dude en ponerse en contacto con Tanya Watson por correo electrónico royal5626@yahoo.com o por teléfono (919) 854-4681.

Si usted está de acuerdo en que tomarán parte en mi proyecto de investigación sobre la lectura en voz alta, vuelva una copia firmada de este formulario para mí tan pronto como sea posible. Usted recibirá un incentivo. Puede mantener la otra copia para referencia futura. Gracias de antemano por su colaboración y tener un año escolar productivo!

Estudiante firma _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Parental Consent Form in Spanish

Formulario de consentimiento del padre

Estimado padre/tutor:

Hola, mi nombre es Tanya Watson. Soy de Nueva Orleans, Louisiana y estoy asistiendo a North Carolina State University. Me gustaría invitar a su niño a participar en un proyecto de investigación para mí. Este proyecto trata de leer en voz alta y si es o no es una buena estrategia a utilizar en la escuela media.

Este estudio pretende tener a su hijo escuchar diversos textos: textos sobre personas de un largo tiempo hace, textos sobre personas que pueden conocer y textos sobre lo que está ocurriendo en el mundo. Si hay textos que su hijo le gustaría escuchar leer en voz alta o libros que desea sugerir como padre, no dude en decirle al profesor sobre English Language Learners o anotar en este papel.

Maestro de su hijo es el líder del estudio y estará coordinando el estudio. Eso significa que será en el aula de su hijo, tomando notas mientras que la enseñanza es leer en voz alta y la enseñanza.

Su hijo no le pedirá hacer nada excepto sus trabajos escolares regulares desde estas lecturas son de booklists de la escuela y los planes de lección del maestro. Si desea permitir que tu hijo a participar, el maestro le pedirá para completar dos encuestas sobre la lectura en voz alta. Su hijo tendrá una encuesta en línea en un sitio llamado SurveyMonkey. Me dará una idea si su hijo, como estudiante de secundaria, le gustó o no le gustaba las historias escuchó, le gustó o no le gustaba el profesor leyendo en voz alta y su opinión general sobre la

lectura en voz alta. **T aquí hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas a las preguntas de las encuestas y grado de su hijo no se verán afectado negativamente.**

Todos los datos recopilan (encuestas, asignaciones y mis notas serán confidencial). Datos se almacenará en armarios seguras en mi Oficina. Las únicas personas que verán estos datos son el profesor y yo. Voy a utilizar números de código para etiquetar y organizar las notas. No voy a utilizar el nombre de su hijo o su hijo la identificación de información en los informes públicos de mi investigación. La participación de su hijo en esta investigación es **voluntaria**. Es libre de negarse a ser encuestados. Puede cambiar su mente acerca de escuchar las historias en cualquier momento. Mayoría de las historias se tomarán de booklists de la escuela para estudiantes de mediados.

Quiero darle las gracias por permitir que su niño a participar en este estudio. Muchas veces los investigadores no siempre salen en las escuelas para averiguar lo que gustan o disgusta al leer estudiantes. Al participar en este estudio, su hijo podría cambiar la forma de profesores utilizan la lectura en voz alta en clases con estudiantes de escuela intermedia y los tipos de textos y libros que traen a las bibliotecas de aula privada. Si tienes alguna pregunta más tarde sobre el estudio o si tiene algún comentario, no dude en ponerse en contacto con Tanya Watson por correo electrónico royal5626@yahoo.com o por teléfono (919) 854-4681.

Si acepta que su hijo puede participar en mi proyecto de investigación sobre la lectura en voz alta, por favor devolver una copia firmada de este formulario al profesor tan pronto como sea posible. Su niño recibirá un incentivo. Puede mantener la otra copia para referencia futura. Gracias de antemano por su colaboración y su hijo tenga un año escolar productivo!

Padre firma _____ Date _____

Appendix E

Student Script for Introduction of Read-Aloud Study

Hello, my name is Tanya Watson. I am from New Orleans, Louisiana and I am attending North Carolina State University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project. This project is about reading aloud and whether or not it is a good strategy to use in the middle school. Who knows how to listen? What are ways that you listen? Well, this study aims to have you listen to diverse texts—texts about people from a long time ago, texts about people you know, and texts about what is happening in the world today. If there are texts that you would like to hear read aloud or books that you want to suggest, please feel free to tell your teacher about them or write them down. Your teacher is the leader of the study. I will be coordinating. That means I will be in your class taking notes while your teacher is reading aloud and teaching. You will not be asked to do anything except your regular schoolwork since these readings are from your school’s booklists and your teacher’s lesson plans. At the end of the study your teacher will ask you to complete a survey about read-aloud. It will give me an idea if you, as a middle school student, liked or disliked the stories you heard, liked or disliked your teacher reading aloud, and your opinion about reading aloud. **There is no right or wrong answer for the survey.** I want to thank you and your teacher for participating in this study. Many times researchers do not always go into schools to find out what students like or dislike when reading. By participating in this study, you could change the way teachers use read-aloud in classes with students just like you, and your participation could change the types of texts/books they bring into your classroom. Do you have any questions?

Appendix F

Survey Used For Student Participants

The survey was used to gauge the students in terms of reading attitude, the read-aloud, and areas concerned with self-reading as opposed to another person reading. The tool consisted of ten (10) multiple choice/open ended questions: four (4) for generic background purposes; one (1) on mediums [i.e., print (as paper-and-print) and books; four (4) on reading aloud, two of which are open-ended; and one (1) for residual thoughts.

Multiple Choice

1. How many languages can you understand? (1, 2, 3)
2. What do you read? Check all that apply. (Textbooks, Library Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Recipes, Television Closed Caption, Comic Strips, Graphic Novels, My Personal Writing, Plays, Internet, Email, Other: _____ -
_____ list other things you read)
3. Do you like listening to your teacher read stories aloud? (Yes, no, sometimes)
 - a. [Follow-up Question if needed - What did you dislike about the reading?]
4. Would you rather read on your own or have someone read to you? (I prefer reading on my own; I prefer someone reading to me)

Open Ended

5. How do you feel about people reading to you?
6. Which story/passage from your ESL/ELL class do you remember or like the most?
7. Will you please share any other comments/questions about the Read-Aloud?

Appendix G

Six Relationships Supported in Read-Aloud Texts

Relationship with the self. *My name* (Cisneros, 1984), *A summer life* (Soto, 1990), *The loud silence of Francine Green* (Cushman, 2006), and *The diary of a young girl* (Frank, 1999) were used to provoke thoughts about the student's interests in themselves and their personal feelings about subjects such as free speech, crime, friendship, and war.

Relationship with the family. The content of these stories centered on those important relationships in a middle schooler's life featured Jimenez's (1997) *The circuit* and its roots in family and friendships; Soto's (1990) *Mother and daughter*, that focused on the rocky relationship of a mother and teen daughter; Ryan (2010) *The dreamer* and its look into a verbal/physically abusive relationship between a father and son and a caring relationship between a brother and brother; and a loving relationship between a mother and son in Soto's (2007) *Mercy on these teenage chimps* between, sister and sister in Alvarez's (2002) *Before we were free*. Twain's (1876) classic *The adventures of tom sawyer* illustrated the humorous relationship between adventurous Tom and his poor Aunt Polly.

Relationship with authority. These read-alouds highlighted characters who were met with the sometimes bitter behaviors of the authority figures in their lives (e.g., teachers, pastor). Writings presented English language learners with characters who are metaphorically powerless, such as Cisneros (1991) with her *Eleven* character who has words for her teacher-once she gets them out; Johnston's (2001) mixture of five characters in *Any small goodness* wanting the teacher to pronounce their Hispanic names correctly; and Soto's (2007) *Mercy on these teenage chimps* examining the adult mistreatment and/or favoritism.

The circuit (Jimenez, 1997) and *The story of my life* (Keller, 1954) explore the positive teacher-student dynamic, while Twain's (1876) text pokes fun at the pastoral authority in *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Relationship with friends. Noted as one of the more important relationships in 'tweens' lives, these text excerpts focused on male/male or female/female duos in literature. Whether the characters are making or breaking friendships, being advised by friends, attempting to impress them, or finding themselves in trouble, these excerpts highlighted the valuable BFF relationship in both classic and multicultural literature. Cisneros (1984) *Our good day*, Jimenez's (1997) *The circuit*; Cushman's (2006) *The loud silence of Francine Green*, and Bauer's (1986) classic about a death of a friend, *On my honor*, all focused on the matters of friendships.

Relationship with others. These excerpts explored those insignificant associations in a student's life, where the characters come in contact with some other person who affects them or whom they affect. Hunter, a teenage writer, conveys her feelings about how she is unimpressed with her teachers in *The diary of Latoya Hunter*, while Anne Frank (1999) conveys her feelings about adults and their unwavering nature in *The diary of a young girl*. In Hughes' (1996) classic, *Thank you, m'am*, the character encounters a Mrs. Luella Mae Washington, a person in whom he has no interest, as evident in his actions at the beginning of the story (i.e., stealing).

Relationship with nature. These excerpts focused on a young character's relationship with nature. Stories with nature as an important theme were plentiful. Ryan and Sis's (2010) *The dreamer* teases with the power of imagination evoked by nature. London's

(1903) *The call of the wild* is the only animal-centered excerpt chosen to satisfy some of the blood-and-guts stories the students requested in the surveys. *The adventures of tom sawyer* (Twain, 1876) offered many opportunities to explore nature, both human and insects.

Finally, a revisit to *Mercy on these teenage chimps* (Soto, 2007) described the development of a young boy and his chimpanzee-like features.

Appendix H

Verbatim Web-based Summaries of Read-Aloud Texts Used in the Research

1. My name by Cisneros. Esperanza ponders the meaning and pronunciation of her name, which means "hope" in its English translation from Spanish. She is named after her great-grandmother, who was also born during the Chinese Year of the Horse. Although she never met her, she would have loved to get to know the wild woman who was her namesake, who never wanted to marry or be tamed, until her grandfather carried her off as his object. Esperanza does not like the way people pronounce her beautiful Spanish name at school and likes to keep it whole - without a nickname - like her sister Magdalena (Nenny). She secretly wants to baptize herself under a new name more suited to her private personality, for she does not like the mumbled English sounding name of Esperanza. **Source:** <http://www.bookrags.com/notes/hms/PART4.html>
2. A summer life by Soto. In this autobiographical narrative Soto vividly recreates the guilt felt by a six-year-old boy who steals an apple pie. Through Soto's reminiscent he has taken us on a journey of his guilt, paranoia, and redemption through the usage of tone, allusions, and imagery. Since Soto knows stealing the pie is a sin his guilt is amplified when he ignores his knowledge. Soto's guilt is emphasized through the tone of the story, "my sweet tooth gleaming and the juice of my guilt wetting my underarms... I nearly wept trying to decide which to steal." By Soto's tone towards the pies over exaggerating on which one to steal shows that he is nervous and anxious. **Source:** <http://www.oppapers.com/essays/A-Summer-Life-Rhetoric-Analysis/405833>
3. The loud silence of Francine Green by Cushman. Francine is a good girl who always follows the rules. She makes a new best friend, Sophie, who attends Catholic school with her. Sophie is outspoken and stands up for what she believes, and questions what she is told. Francine would rather just be accepted. **Source:** <http://goawayreadsomereads.wordpress.com/2011/02/13/the-loud-silence-of-francine-green-2/>
4. The diary of a young girl by Anne Frank. On her thirteenth birthday, Anne Frank's parents give her a diary. She's excited because she wants someone, or something, in which to confide all of her secret thoughts. Even though she has a rich social life, she feels misunderstood by everyone she knows. Anne starts writing about daily events, her thoughts, school grades, boys, all that. But, within a month, her entire life changes. As Jews in German-occupied Holland, the Frank family fears for their lives. When Anne's sister, Margot, is called to appear before the authorities, which would almost surely mean she was being sent to a concentration camp, Anne and her family go into hiding. They move into a little section of Anne's father's office building that is walled off and hidden behind a swinging bookcase. Anne's adolescence is spent hidden from the outside world. She's cooped up in tiny rooms, tiptoeing around during the day and becoming shell-shocked from

the sounds of bombs and gunfire at night.

Source: <http://www.shmoop.com/diary-of-anne-frank/summary.html>

5. **Mother and daughter by Soto.** This is a story about a girl and her mother who try to make ends meet. Yollie and her mom, Mrs. Moreno, are poor and it is hard for Mrs. Moreno to get her daughter everything she wants. A parent sacrifices everything they have to make their children happy. Throughout the story Mrs. Moreno sacrifices by buying her daughter a desk, dyeing her summer dress black and giving her daughter all of her monthly saving to get a new outfit to make her happy.

Source: <http://www.writingmatters.org/node/27005>

6. ***The circuit by Jimenez.*** Francisco Jimenez, also known as Pancho, is a young boy who lives with his family in a small pueblito in Mexico called El Rancho Blanco. The family dreams about living in a place where Papa will earn good money and they can live in a house with electricity and running water. Papa decides that his family will cross la frontera, the border between Mexico and California, so the family can have a better life.

Source: <http://www.pcpa.org/circuitstudyguide.html>

7. ***The adventures of tom sawyer (Chp. 1) by Twain.*** The novel opens with Aunt Polly scouring the house in search of her nephew, Tom Sawyer. She finds him in the closet, discovers that his hands are covered with jam, and prepares to give him a whipping. Tom cries out theatrically, “Look behind you!” and when Aunt Polly turns, Tom escapes over the fence. After Tom is gone, Aunt Polly reflects ruefully on Tom’s mischief and how she lets him get away with too much.

Source: <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/tomsawyer/section1.html>

8. ***Mercy on these teenage chimps by Soto.*** Out to woo a girl on his friend’s Joey's behalf, the protagonist lives out the friendship, understanding, and the painful insecurities of being thirteen.

Source: http://books.google.com/books/about/Mercy_on_These_Teenage_Chimps.html?id=79bVwBmOXh4C

9. ***The dreamer by Munoz.*** Neftali Reyes is a delicate boy with a huge thirst for adventure and knowledge. A solitary boy, Neftali spends much of his time dreaming and seeking the magic and wonders around him – in shinny mud puddles, a lost glove, the music of birds and the rain that sneaks into his room. Unfortunately, his domineering father doesn’t tolerate “stupid” fantasies and tries to make him stronger by forcing him to walk into the ocean even though Neftali can’t swim. The boy’s one escape is writing, which his uncle (his stepmother’s brother) encourages. Neftali goes to work at his uncle’s newspaper and soon becomes aware of the plight of the indigenous Mapuche, who are being pushed out of their homeland by the town’s businessmen (friends of his father). Neftali is finally free of his father’s rule when he goes away to college. There he takes on a new name – Pablo Neruda – and with his lucky sheep at his side, takes on the world.

Source: <http://www.latinabookclub.com/2010/07/book-review-dreamer-by-pam-munoz-ryan.html>

10. ***Before we were free* by Alvarez.** Novelist Julia Alvarez introduces young readers to the Torres, a close-knit family that grapples with their political ideals in a country where secret police "disappear people" who disagree with El Jefe. And the Torres disagree. Anita de la Torre is like most 12-year-old girls. She's inquisitive, talkative, and irritates her older sister daily. A native of the Dominican Republic, she attends an American school and quickly learns that the greatest difference between the two countries is freedom.

Source: <http://www.bookreporter.com/reviews/before-we-were-free>

11. ***My insufferable cousin* by Apte.** [This short piece is a teacher-recommended text. The story is about a middle school girl whose cousin is visiting town. The cousin is from the City and with her comes city-like attitudes ("stuck-up") that the protagonist hates about her. The protagonist begins the story disliking her cousin, but once her cousin takes up for her and says how smart she is, the protagonist finally begins to like her city cousin.]

12. ***Eleven* by Cisneros.** Rachel displays [an] advanced maturity in her thoughts. The only dialogue in the story is between Rachel and her teacher, Mrs. Price. Every conversation is the same, Mrs. Price does not listen to Rachel and dominates their conversations. Rachel associates being right with being older, so she lets Mrs. Price have her way. Mrs. Price is so dominating Rachel can respond with what she calls her four-year-old voice. She stumbles for a reply, eventually saying only, "Not mine, not mine." Rachel is helpless and feels sick inside as she is forced to wear that sweater. So much emphasis is given to what Rachel is thinking, but the dialogue can show her outward personality. Rachel is non-confrontational, timid, and shy. Rachel desperately wants her terrible day to be over. She wants to be one-hundred and two, because then days like this one would be far behind. After she is brought to tears and reluctantly she puts on the sweater and even though she did not have to wear the sweater long, she is changed. She realizes facing challenges is at the foundation of experience. Her old self floats away like a balloon. Sandra Cisneros's "Eleven" uses point of view, diction, dialogue, and symbolism to characterize an eleven year old's coming of age.

Source: <http://schoolworkhelper.net/2011/05/sandra-cisneros'-eleven-summary->

13. ***Any small goodness* by Johnston.** Los Angeles is a place of movie stars and fast cars and people who are too rich and people who are too poor. An area of freeway chases and drive-bys and death. But there's another L.A., one where warmth and humor and humanity pervade. Where a tacqueria sign declares: "One cause, one people, one taco." This L.A. is a place where random acts of generosity and goodwill improve the lives of the community. *Any Small Goodness* is a novel filled with hope, love, and warmth.

Source: http://books.google.com/books/about/Any_Small_Goodness.html?id=2OCYwloAVCwC

14. ***Mercy on these teenage chimps* by Soto.** On his thirteenth birthday, Ronnie woke up

feeling like a chimp--all long armed, big eared, and gangly. He's been muddling through each gawky day since. Now his best friend, Joey, has turned thirteen, too--and after Joey humiliates himself in front of a cute girl, he climbs a tree and refuses to come down. So Ronnie sets out to woo the girl on Joey's behalf. After all, teenage chimps have to stick together. Acclaimed author Gary Soto tEnglish language learners a fun and touching story about friendship, understanding, and the painful insecurities of being thirteen.

Source: http://books.google.com/books/about/Mercy_on_These_Teenage_Chimps.html?id=79bVwBmOXh4C

15. ***The circuit* by Jimenez.** The family finds the journey to California difficult. The train is loud and noisy and the ride lasts for several days. Eventually they reach la frontera which Pancho is surprised to find is “no more than a gray wire fence where there were armed guards.”

California is not what the family imagined. The family works all day in the strawberry fields. When strawberries are out of season, they must move and find work in other fields. Instead of a house with plush carpet, the Jimenez family lives in a tent. In between work, Pancho finds time to befriend a boy named Miguelito. Sadly, Pancho loses his friend when Miguelito has to move away from Tent City because his family needs to earn more money. Nothing is permanent when you live in Tent City.

Source: <http://www.pcpa.org/circuitstudyguide.html>

16. ***The story of my life* by Keller.** The extraordinary account of Helen Keller's struggle to overcome the challenges of being deaf and blind--a masterpiece of modern biography.

Source: http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Story_Of_My_Life.html?id=e53tBGXg5kgC

17. ***Sounder* by Armstrong.** A landmark in children's literature, winner of the 1970 Newbery Medal, and the basis of an acclaimed film, *Sounder* traces the keen sorrow and the abiding faith of a poor African-American boy in the 19th-century South. The boy's father isa sharecropper, struggling to feed his family in hard times. Night after night, he and his great coon dog, Sounder, return to the cabin empty-handed. Then, one morning, almost like a miracle, a sweet-smelling ham is cooking in the family's kitchen. At last the family will have a good meal. But that night, an angry sheriff and his deputies come, and the boy's life will never be the same.

Source: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/sounder-william-h-armstrong/1100616502>

18. ***The diary of Latoya Hunter* by Hunter.** In 1990, Latoya Hunter, a twelve-year-old girl whose family had moved to this country from Jamaica some years earlier, began her first year of junior high school in the Bronx. She also began keeping a diary. What made the diary unusual was that it had been specially commissioned by a book editor who had read about Latoya in an article in *The New York Times*. *The Diary of Latoya Hunter* is primarily a diary, a book of days in a young girl's life.

Source: <http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=97806797460>

19. ***Evolution, me, and other freaks of nature* by Brande.** [This] story of Mena, a freshman who finds herself in a very uncomfortable position at the beginning of her high school career. Mena grew up in a religious household and within the shelter of a close-knit religious community. But the beginning of her freshman year finds her ostracized by her community and her parents barely speaking to her. So Mena starts the school year not in a happy place. Things get worse as her biology class becomes the center of a community controversy because the teacher has evolution on the syllabus and refuses to teach intelligent design or answer any questions that are not of a scientific nature. Mena's former youth group is largely behind the protests. And Mena, knowing that just months ago she would have been among the protesters, finds herself in an uncomfortable position as she struggles to reconcile her faith with science. Yes, her faith. Despite the fact that she is shunned by her church (her pastor has told her that she is not welcome there), her parents, and the world that she has always known, Mena does not lose her faith.

Source: <http://www.blogger.com/book-review-evolution-me-other-freaks-nature?page=0.0>

20. ***The loud silence of Francine Green* by Cushman.** Summary: Francine is a good girl who always follows the rules. She makes a new best friend, Sophie, who attends Catholic school with her. Sophie is outspoken and stands up for what she believes, and questions what she is told. Francine would rather just be accepted. The nuns give Sophie a really hard time, and she is tormented for standing up for herself, especially when she stands up against the war. She believes that a nuclear bomb will do no good for anyone, but others look at her as a communist. Francine eventually begins to think for herself, but only after she lets people run all over her best friend. She finally apologizes but it's too late. Sophie moved away to avoid the watchful eye of the FBI investigating her father for being a communist sympathizer.

Source: <http://goawayreadsbooks.wordpress.com/2011/02/13/the-loud-silence-of-francine-green-2/>

21. ***The circuit* by Jimenez.** Soon, Pancho is more comfortable in class and starts to understand more and more English. One day, Miss Scalapino announces that Pancho's picture of the butterfly has won first prize at a children's art exhibit. Later that afternoon, Pancho notices that the class caterpillar is breaking out of its cocoon. Pancho opens the jar and everyone watches the butterfly fly away. After school, Curtis asks if he can see Pancho's picture. Curtis tells English language learners Pancho that he is a good artist. Pancho gives Curtis the picture as a sign of friendship.

Suddenly, immigration guards arrive at Pancho's school. Mr. Sims announces that Pancho and his family are being deported back to Mexico.

Source: <http://www.pcpa.org/circuitstudyguide.html>

22. ***Our good day* by Cisneros.** Esperanza sacrifices her friendship with Cathy by pitching in for a bike that she will share with her two new friends, Lucy and Rachel. Cathy does not want Esperanza to have anything to do with Lucy and Rachel, explaining that they "smell like a broom." Lucy and Rachel are Chicana sisters whose family is from Texas, and

they are more similar to Esperanza than Cathy is. Esperanza is embarrassed to tell her new friends her name, but they don't laugh at it or find it unusual. Esperanza knows she eventually must share her friends and bike with her sister Nenny, since she took money from Nenny to help pay for the bike, but for now, she decides to wait and keep her new friends to herself. The three girls ride their new bike together around the block, and Esperanza describes the geography of the neighborhood.

Source: <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mangostreet/section2.rhtml>

23. ***On my honor* by Bauer.** In the summer between 6th grade and 7th, Joel and his long-time friend Tony go on a bike ride to an area park. Tony, who is ever reckless, goes into the forbidden Vermillion River; forbidden because of its strong currents and sink holes, and drowns. Joel deals with his guilt at not keeping his word to his father to go only to the park, and in daring Tony to swim to a sandbar, not realizing that Tony could not swim, and with his anguish over his friend's death.

Source: <http://bookangles.com/OnMyHonor/tabid/208/Default.aspx>

24. ***Thank you, m'am* by Hughes.** In the short story Thank you, Ma'am tEnglish language learners a story about a young boy who tries to steal a woman's purse. When he thought he had it, he thought wrong because he tripped and fell on the lady. The lady asked him if she let him go would he run, he responded yes so she didn't let him go. The lady saw that the boys face was dirty, and she didn't want him going home like that. What she did was that she brought him home with her and she fed him food. She asked him why he wanted to steal her purse, and the boy said it was because he wanted blue sued sneakers. Later on, the lady gave him ten dollars and walked him out of the house. The boy wanted to thank the lady but before he did, the lady closed the gate.

Source: <http://chrisbloggy.blogspot.com/2008/11/thank-you-maam-by-langston-hughes.html>

25. ***The dreamer* by Munoz.** Neftali Reyes is a delicate boy with a huge thirst for adventure and knowledge. A solitary boy, Neftali spends much of his time dreaming and seeking the magic and wonders around him – in shinny mud puddles, a lost glove, the music of birds and the rain that sneaks into his room. Unfortunately, his domineering father doesn't tolerate “stupid” fantasies and tries to make him stronger by forcing him to walk into the ocean even though Neftali can't swim. The boy's one escape is writing, which his uncle (his stepmother's brother) encourages.

Source: <http://www.latinabookclub.com/2010/07/book-review-dreamer-by-pam-munoz-ryan.html>

26. ***The call of the wild* by London.** Buck, a physically impressive dog, is living the good life in California when he gets stolen and put into dog slavery. For him, this means pulling a ridiculously heavy sled through miles and miles of frozen ice with little or nothing to eat and frequent beatings. As the definition of a domestic dog, Buck is out of his element until he begins to adapt to his surroundings, and learn from the other dogs. Buck also starts having strange dreams about the primitive days of dogs and men, before the advent of cities

or houses or culture. There are no rules or morality here (interesting, since Buck's first owner was a judge), save for what is called "the law of club and fang," a kill-or-be-killed, ruthless way of thinking. Buck becomes involved in a struggle for power with another dog, Spitz. They end up fighting and Buck wins, taking over as leader of the sled dog team. The team changes human management (new drivers) and the new people don't seem to be very competent. They're bad drivers and end up killing everyone, including themselves. Fortunately, Buck is saved by a kind man named John Thornton, moments before the group death in an icy river.

Source: <http://www.shmoop.com/call-of-the-wild/summary.html>

27. ***The adventures of Tom Sawyer by Twain.*** Twain's novel about Tom Sawyer is an adventure story. The young protagonist gets involved in one adventure after another, often bringing heartache to his guardian Aunt Polly. Every time, Tom gets away with fooling her, she is stricken by her conscience for not doing a better job of raising her nephew. When Tom has played yet another of his innumerable tricks on her, she decides to take action and punish him. His punishment is to whitewash the fence. Tom very cleverly tricks his friends into doing the work for him while he has a wonderful, idle time watching them labor.

Source: <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmTomSawyer06.asp>

Appendix I

Overview of Read-Aloud Classic and Multicultural Stories 1 – 9

Phase One: Stories 1 – 9					
Themes: Relationship with Self & Relationship with Family					
R-A Title and Order of Presentation	Author	Topic	Comprehension Strategy	Readability level	Word Count of Read-Aloud
<i>My Name</i>	Cisneros	Names	Annotation only	870L	327
<i>A Summer Life</i>	Soto	Stealing	Graphic Display, Scenarios	990L	462
<i>The Loud Silence of Francine Green</i>	Cushman	Free Speech Friendship	Annotation, Graphic strip	750L	452
<i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>	Anne Frank	War Time	Annotation, Graphic Display	1240L	429
<i>Thank you, M'am</i>	Hughes	Stealing	Annotation, Graphic Display, Cluster map, Venn diagram	900L	448
<i>Mother and Daughter</i>	Soto	Mother/ Daughter Relations/	Annotation, Graphic Display, 5WH “cheat” sheet	830L	462
<i>The Circuit</i> (excerpt one)	Jimenez	Friendship	Annotation, Graphic Display, Scene Drawing	880L	376
<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> (Chap.1)	Twain	Stealing	Annotation, Graphic Display	990L	349
<i>Mercy on These Teenage Chimps</i>	Soto	Growing Up	Annotation, Graphic Display, Group cluster map, Phrase pullouts	780L	364

Appendix J

Overview of Read-Aloud Classic and Multicultural Stories 10 – 18

<p align="center">Phase Two: Stories 10 – 18 Themes: Relationship Family and Relationship with Authority</p>					
R-A Title and Order of Presentation	Author	Theme(s)	Comprehension Strategy	Readability level	Word Count of Read-Aloud
<i>The Dreamer</i> (excerpt one)	Ryan and Sis'	Abuse Brother/ Brother	Annotation Graphics Strips	650L	363
<i>Before We Were Free</i>	Alvarez	Sister/Sister Relationship Secrecy	Annotation Visual Activity	890L	404
<i>My Insufferable Cousin</i>	Apte	Cousin/ Cousin Relationships	Annotation Cluster Map Letter To BFF		336
<i>Eleven</i>	Cisneros	Adults treatment of kids	Annotation Graphic Strips Class Project	870L	789
<i>Any Small Goodness</i>	Johnston	Importance of Name	Annotation Names Tags	600L	483
<i>Mercy on These Teenage Chimps</i>	Soto	Friendship School Life	Annotation Matching Individual Cluster Maps	780L	479
<i>The Circuit</i> (excerpt two)	Jimenez	Learning	Matching Individual and Whole Group	880L	408
<i>The Story of My Life</i> (excerpt one: 3/3/87)	Keller	Learning	Annotation Display Graphic Strips Scenario	1090L	498
<i>The Story of My Life</i> (excerpt two)	Keller	Learning	Display Story Frames Matching Sight Word List	1090L	329

Appendix K

Overview of Read-Aloud Classic and Multicultural Stories 19 – 27

<p align="center">Phase Two: Stories 19 – 27 Themes: Relationship Others and Relationship with Nature</p>					
R-A Title and Order of Presentation	Author	Theme(s)	Comprehension Strategy	Readability level	Word Count of Read-Aloud
<i>Souder</i>	Armstrong	Learning to Read	Annotation References Graphics strips	900L	567
<i>The Diary of Latoya Hunter</i>	Hunter	School Life/ Growing Up	Annotation Display 3 level cluster	690L	464
<i>Evolution, Me & Other Freaks of Nature</i>	Brande	Friendship	Annotation Personal Dictionary Letter Writing #2 Envelop Prep	800L	385
<i>The Loud Silence of Francine Green</i>	Cushman	Learning/ Friendship	Annotation References 5WH Cluster Map Whole Group Venn	750L	431
<i>The Circuit</i> (excerpt three)	Jimenez	Friendship/Rich & Poor	Compare & Contrast Drawing	880L	381
<i>On My Honor</i>	Bauer	Death	Annotation Display W/ Backdrop 5WH Cluster Map	750L	829
<i>Our Good Day</i>	Cisneros	Friendship	Annotation Display Small Group Drawing	870L	511
<i>The Dreamer</i> (excerpt two)	Ryan & Sis	Imagination/ Fear	Annotation Class display Graphic strips	650L	506
<i>The Call of the Wild</i>	London	Friendship	Annotation Sentence writing Visuals & Video	1120L	418

Appendix L

Samples of Researcher's Field Notes

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2012: Today was The Loud Silence of Francine Green story. I was a little bit nervous about the text because on one hand I want the students to enjoy the readings but on another I want them to have access to stories that may not be that interesting to them. I went ahead and stuck to my schedule and read the story. For preparation, I made a red sign with THERE IS NO FREE SPEECH HERE—something one of the characters said in the story excerpt. One of the students saw it on the floor—as it is in the story—and read it outloud! I also made picture cards of four words I pulled from the text and had students attempt to find those words. We talked about these words as well, and I pushed the students to attempt to figure out meanings. The teacher added in a comment about context clues, so we are both pushing that skill. I re-explained about the say-something skills that readers have and talked about the importance of the students understanding the information for themselves. I questioned students on these four skills and asked them to memorize them. Students were given treats for their participation. I made better time today. The consent forms are not all in.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2012: Today was The Diary of Anne Frank. I brought in vegetables and lettuce seed for the students to go with the story. I still find myself discipline the class before beginning. The lesson goes smooth after that. We started this time with a mini-lecture about prefix/suffix and went straight into annotations. I had the students come to the board to fill in a prepared cluster map about WAR to as a preview to the read-aloud. After reading the story, the students were given the retelling. I let the students keep the papers and found that they copied, so that will not be done anymore so that I will get the gist of what they heard. Two students are still “stuck” in what they are going to do as opposed to doing it, so I am hoping that more of the 5WH strategy will help them. A couple of others are unmotivated, which may change after I give awards for the best retellers and cloze-maze scores after the 5th read-aloud. Every other lesson I will attempt to bring in a strategy.

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2012: Today was *Mother and Daughter*. The teacher granted me all the class time so I was able to begin with a mini lecture about the 5WH strategy. I preprinted little cheat cards and went over two particular areas: the 4 strategies we have been doing with the titles of the story (i.e., comment, question, predict and connection) and 5WH because if they could internalize these two areas they will have a better chance when they read to know how to do some of these strategies. During the annotations phase, I began working with students on highlighting. I timed them on skimming the read-aloud stories for words that would be heard in the read-aloud story and seen in the cloze-maze test at the end of the lesson. My hope is that by seeing and hearing these words their memories would be jog with the vocabulary. Therefore, I pronounced and spelled each word and when a student found the word, he/she called and I told them how much time it took. We went from 45

seconds to less than 2. Afterwards, I repeated so everyone had all the words highlighted and then time was given to do their own annotations/drawings. I also was able to bring in items from the story. I used two shirts—one black, the other white and demonstrated to students what Yollie's mother did as she dyed her daughter's dress from white to black while the students orally retold the story in whole group. It was exciting to stand there and act out the motions (e.g., stirring the dye with a pencil, dipping the dress slowly in the dye) as the students retold what they had heard from the read-aloud, as well as have them fill-in-the-blanks of what happened in the story. Students called out what the characters were doing, as well as commented on how they felt about how she felt about the incident of her dye dripping from her dress. Other items from the story were Avon perfume, tub for the dye, a mirror, and bobby pin.

THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2012 - Today the students started their EOGs so the teacher and I decided to modify one of the lessons. I chose *The circuit* and decided to split it and turn it into a two-day lesson: (1) drawing lesson and (2) a comparison/contrast lesson. In the first half (Thursday) of the lesson, the students completed a say-something response about the title. In front of the classroom, a display consisting of grapes, strawberries, cotton items (socks, towels), the novel, two frames: one with a face sheet and the excerpt. The students then listened to a previously read read-aloud about where the character and his family lived. Afterwards, a half sheet of paper with 11 bulleted phrase pullouts and sentences were read-aloud. These bulleted items described the place where the character lived: holey roof, termite-eaten walls, worm-populated floors. Each description was read to the students and they were instructed to draw the picture based on the bulleted descriptions. Supplies included: markers, colored pencils, drawing paper, frames for completed projects. I explained that the pictures would be graded based on the reading (11 items will be looked for in each illustration) and that the photos would be displayed in the library.

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2012 – Today we returned into *The circuit* to complete the excerpt on the main character and his best friend Carl. In front the classroom set a live display of strawberries, grapes, the novel, a cigar box full of coins, blue folder (all indicated in the story) and the excerpt used last time we visited the book. Students were given the read-aloud folder, penny with different years, new excerpt from the same book, a comprehension exercise handout with two columns: (1) descriptions of the main character's home (i.e., worm-populated floor, holes in walls, and mattress in corner of room) and (2) lines to write out the details of Carl's home. Students were also given their drawings back and a light review commenced on what should and should not have been part of the drawings (1st, 2nd, 3rd Place will be given after both the participating teacher and I review the drawings). After I stood up for the book, I directed the students to annotate those areas that compared/contrasted with the main character's home (soft rug, soothing light, own bed and desk, etc.). I also passed around my cigar box full of coins, and the class talked about the various money/coins they have from other countries. I guided the first two of the details and then went on to read the story without interruption. Afterwards, we talked about the coin collecting in the story.

Appendix M

Typical Format of Excerpt Used in a Read-Aloud Session

The format of the read-aloud excerpt was a one-pager, 350 – 550 words in length. Harris and Duibhir (2011) note that traditional approaches in second language reading instruction promote the use of short/extended texts to expose students to vocabulary and phrase.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Mark Twain

‘TOM!’

No answer.

‘TOM!’

No answer.

‘What’s gone with that boy, I wonder? You TOM!’

No answer.

The old lady pulled her spectacles down and looked over them about the room; then she put them up and looked out under them. She seldom or never looked THROUGH them for so small a thing as a boy. The spectacles were her state pair, the pride of her heart, and were built for ‘style,’ not service. She could have seen through a pair of stove lids just as well. She looked perplexed for a moment, and then said, not fiercely, but still loud enough for the furniture to hear:

‘Well, I lay if I get hold of you I’ll —’

She did not finish, for by this time she was bending down and punching under the bed with the broom, and so she needed [to catch her] breath to punctuate the punches with. She resurrected nothing but the cat. ‘I never did see the beat of that boy!’

She went to the open door and stood in it and looked out among the tomato vines and ‘jimson’ weeds that constituted the garden. No Tom. So she lifted up her voice at an angle calculated for distance and shouted:

‘Y-o-u-u TOM!’

There was a slight noise behind her and she turned just in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight.

‘There! I might ‘a’ thought of that closet. What you been doing in there?’

‘Nothing.’

‘Nothing! Look at your hands. And look at your mouth. What IS that truck?’

‘I don’t know, aunt.’

‘Well, I know. It’s jam — that’s what it is. Forty times I’ve said if you didn’t let that jam alone I’d skin you. Hand me that switch.’

The switch hovered in the air — the peril was desperate.

‘My! Look behind you, aunt!’

The old lady whirled round, and snatched her skirts out of danger. The lad fled on the instant, scrambled up the high board fence, and disappeared over it. His aunt Polly stood surprised a moment, and then broke into a gentle laugh.

Appendix N

Say-Something Reading Strategy Handout

Preview and **Skim** the title and reading excerpt that will be read-aloud to you today.

Draw a **circle** or **highlight** words from the story that are unfamiliar to you-- words you do not know or cannot recall or pronounce.

Choose at least one of the *say-something* activities.

Ask a question

Make a prediction

Make a connection

Make a comment

Record your answer.

Share your choice.

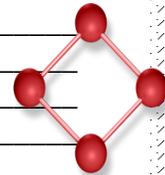
Ask ONE question



Make ONE prediction



Make ONE connection



Make ONE comment



Appendix O

Sample Annotation Exercise

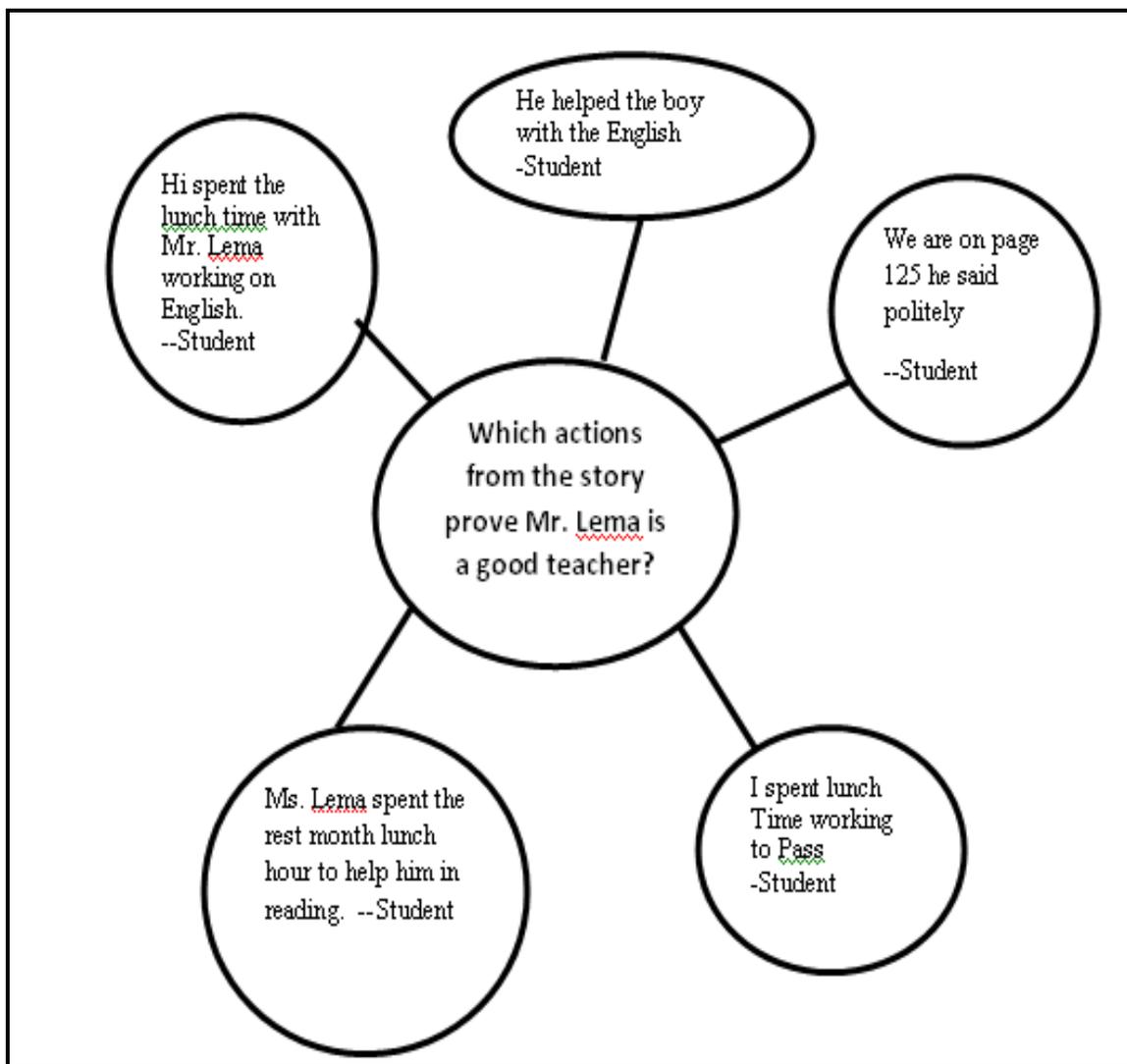
<p><i>Cluster Map</i> Question: How Mr. Lema is a good teacher</p> <p><i>Cluster Map</i> Question: How the boy is a good student</p> <p>Student 1 response →</p> <p><i>angrier:</i> Vocabulary word problematic for most of group</p> <p><i>Class discussion areas</i> Student 3 preoccupied w/ names; asterisks used</p> <p>to be nice – Student 1</p>	<p>Excerpt from <i>The Circuit</i> by Francisco Jimenez</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★</p> <p>After taking roll, Mr. Lema gave the class the assignment for the first hour. "The first thing we have to do this morning is finish reading the story we began yesterday," he said enthusiastically. He walked up to me, handed me an English book, and asked me to read. "We are on page 125," he said politely. When I heard this, I felt my blood rush to my head; I felt dizzy. "Would you like to read?" he asked hesitantly. I opened the book to page 125. My mouth was dry. My eyes began to water. I could not begin. "You can read later," Mr. Lema said understandingly. For the rest of the reading period I kept getting angrier and angrier with myself. I should have read, I thought to myself. [Why was he angry?]</p> <p>During recess I went into the restroom and opened my English book to page 125. I began to read in a low voice, pretending I was in class. There were many words I did not know. I closed the book and headed back to the classroom.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★</p> <p>Mr. Lema was sitting at this desk correcting papers. When I entered he looked up at me and smiled. I felt better. I walked up to him and asked if he could help me with the new words. "Gladly," he said.</p> <p>The rest of the month I spent my lunch hours working on English with Mr. Lema, my best friend at school.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★</p> <p>One Friday during lunch hour, Mr. Lema asked me to take a walk with him to the music room. "Do you like music?" he asked me as we entered the building. "Yes, I like <u>corridos</u>," I answered. He then</p>	<p>Student 9 response</p> <p>exciting – Student 1</p> <p>Student 6 response</p> <p>hesitantly – demonstrated to students; Student 4 wrote "to stop"; Student 6 – "to pause"</p> <p>⊗ – Student 1</p>  <p>Students 5 and 7 responses</p> <p>Student 4 response</p>  <p>Student 6 response</p> <p>Drawing by</p>
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<p>Researcher's note: Students have problem with -ly.</p> <p>Demonstration of corridos by teacher</p> <p>happy – Student 2</p> <p>“Co-ree-dos, Ms. Watson”: correction by one of the students</p> <p>shack- problematic word for students</p>	<p>picked up a trumpet, blew on it and handed it to me. The sound gave me goose bumps. I knew that sound. I had heard it in many corridos. “How would you like to learn how to play it?” he asked. He must have read my face because before I could answer, he added; “I’ll teach you how to play it during lunch.”</p> <p>That day I could hardly wait to get home to tell Papa and Mama the great news. As I got off the bus, my little brothers and sisters ran up to meet me. They were yelling and screaming. I thought they were happy to see me, but when I opened the door to our shack, I saw that everything we owned was neatly packed in cardboard boxes.</p> <p>Underlined by Student 1</p>	<p>Student 2</p>  <p>Student 6 response</p> <p>Demonstration</p> <p>Drawing from Student 1 Neatly: Student 3 wrote “in a neat Way”</p> <p>□ □□ □□□</p> <p>Drawing by Student 2</p>
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Appendix P

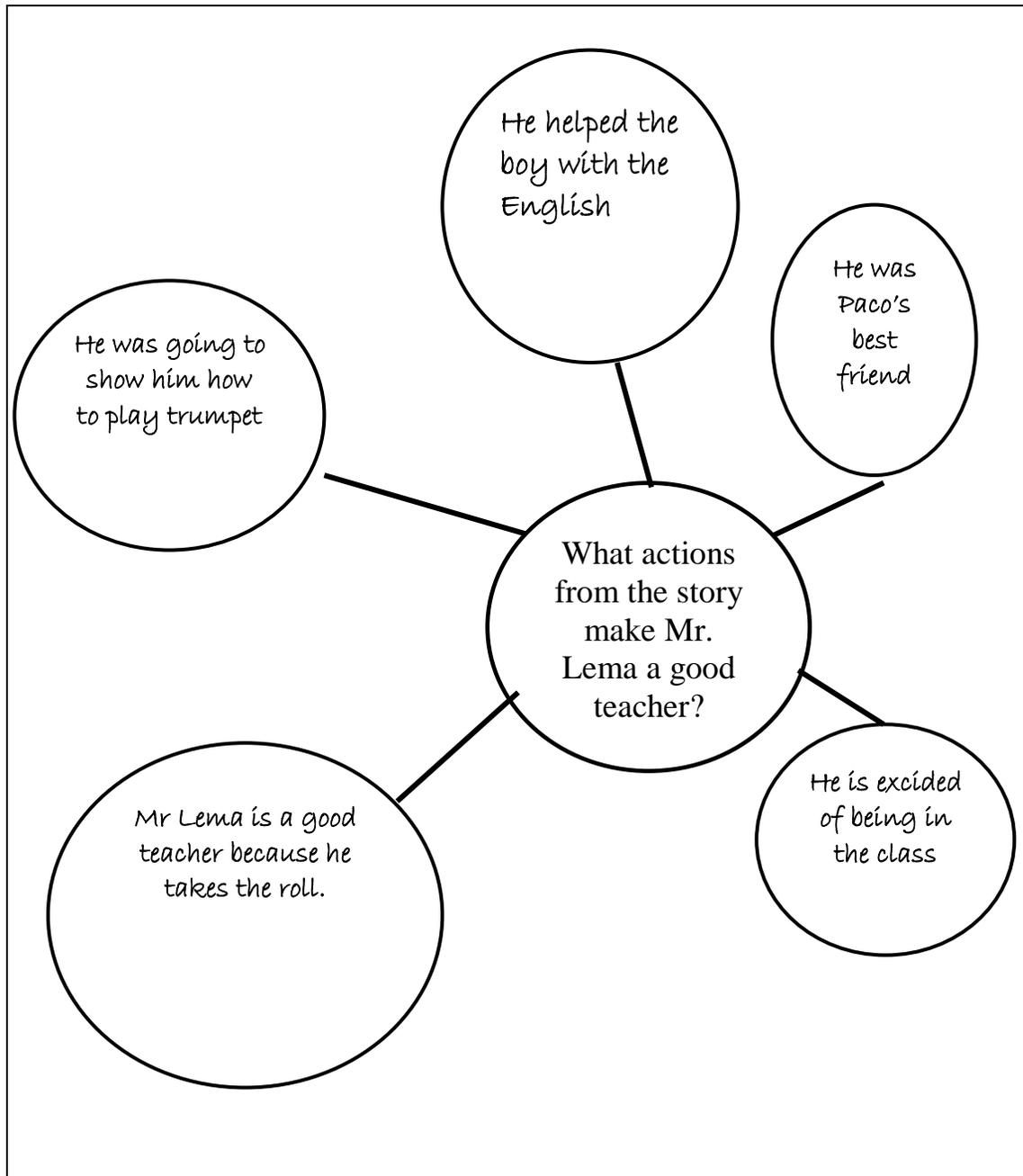
Example of Whole Group Cluster Map B From Jimenez’s (1997) *The circuit*

Each student’s read-aloud packet included a pre-cut circle to record responses to a predetermined question (Albright, 2002). Students then taped individual responses to a master cluster map during the comprehension exercises phase of the read-aloud session.



Appendix Q

Example of Individual Cluster Map From Jimenez's (1997) *The Circuit*



Note. Each student chose his/her best answer to use for the master cluster map during group time.

Appendix R

Example of Matching Exercise used for Comprehension Activity

Column A

Column B

quickly
object
act
quality
frame
arrange
pinafore
earnestly
illustrate
plodding

beauty, loveliness, ugly, awesome, confidence
apron
to put into the correct place or right order
challenging
fast
to show, usually with pictures
to walk
I can see it, smell it, taste it, touch it or hear it!
Usually has a square shape
walking, talking, dancing, laughing, crying, singing

Column A

Column B

quickly
object
act
quality
frame
arrange
pinafore
earnestly
illustrate
plodding

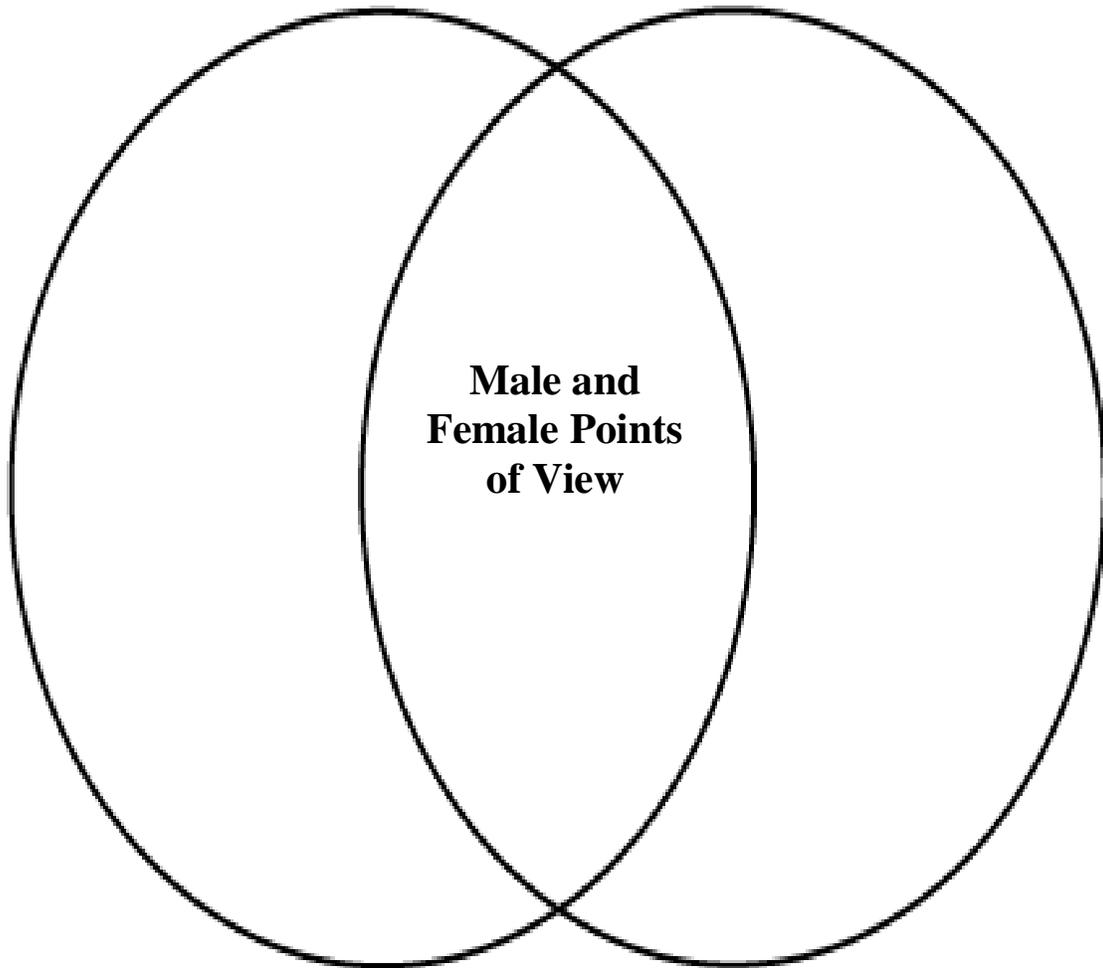
beauty, loveliness, ugly, awesome, confidence
apron
to put into the correct place or right order
challenging
fast
to show, usually with pictures
to walk
I can see it, smell it, taste it, touch it or hear it!
Usually has a square shape
walking, talking, dancing, laughing, crying, singing

Appendix S

Sample of Group Venn Diagram Used With Hughes' *Thank You, Ma'm*

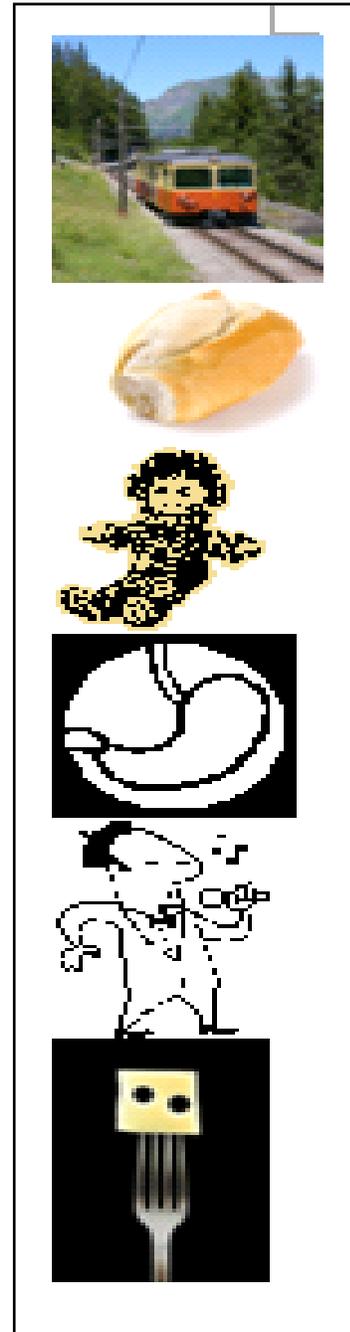
Male Point of View

Female Point of View



Appendix T

Samples of Graphic Strips and Display Used During Four Read-Aloud Sessions



Note. Graphic strips were used in read-aloud lessons based on Cisneros' *Eleven*, Keller's *The story of my life*, and Ryan and Sis' *The dreamer*.

Appendix V

Leslie and Caldwell (2009) Rubric Used to Score Retelling

Components*	Evident in Retelling	Not Evident in Retelling
Gist or main idea		
Details story elements		
Interpretive ideas		
Generalizations		
Supplementations		
Coherence		
Completeness		
Additional information not in the passage (i.e., aesthetic/efferent info, insight, awareness)		
Elicited feelings		
Linguistic/language conventions**	1	n/a

***Each component scored 1 or 0; score range 1 – 10.**

****Point automatic due to exclusion of grammar/mechanics in this study.**

NOTE: Description of each component included the following: (1) the gist or main idea details, which describe the main point or part of the read-aloud; (2) story elements, including characters names, where /when the story takes place, actions, and theme; (3) interpretive ideas, where students display their own connections to the meanings they take from the story by identifying relationships and making assumptions; (4) generalizations, where a conclusion about the text is formed from examples/content from the read-aloud story or comprehension activities; (5) supplementations, where the student adds something “new” to extend or strengthen the retelling of the read-aloud; (6) coherence, which illustrates the student having an overall understandability of the content; (7) linguistic/language conventions, which were not stressed in this particular; (8) additional information not in the passage, including aesthetic/efferent information, insight, and awareness; (9) elicited feelings, which show an emotional response to the read-aloud; and (10) completeness, where the collection of these components are evident in the retelling moment.

Appendix W

Sample Student Written Retellings*

My Retelling 1. I would tell my BFF that the story is about [starter sentence] this boy that went to school and his teacher Mr. Lema was going to teach him how to play the trumpet so when he went home her went in side and every thing that thay had was Packed in boxes.

My Retelling 2. the story about a person the teacher ask him in the class to read but his but his mouth was dray and his egs was going to cray then the teacher smaill in his face and he told him he can teache him music.

My Retelling 3. I would tell my BFF that the story is about [starter sentence] This story was about a guy who like corridos and hi like playing trumpet. They was happy because her sister meet him in the bus.

My Retelling 4. I would tell my BFF that the story is about [starter sentence] I would tell her that it was about a boy who went to school and they were reading and the teacher asked him to read and he was nervous. Then he asked Mr. Lema if he could help him And then he was going to show him how to play the trumpet.

My Retelling 5. He they asked him to read he could go for recess he entered the bathroom and opened his English book to read then he asked the teacher for help.

My Retelling 6. this book is about him was in school the class room Mr Lema told him to read Page 125 and he can't and in the resess him was angrier and ask MrLem a for help and him got better and then. they go to music Mr. Lema none teach him the trumpee but him got [illegible handwriting]

My Retelling 8. He is Learning english and he is spending his Lunch hours with his english teacher.

My Retelling 9. I would tell my BFF this story is about a boy who began school and he was learning english and Know he has to move to a nother house

My Retelling: This story is about a girl named Esparanza was with her Bff name Cathy but 2 girl said If you give me five dollars I will be your friend forever. So Esparanza

went to the house and she got 3 dollars and she got some from Denny. The girls name is Lucy and Rachel. They were Best friends and Cathy went home because she doesn't want her friend to be with those girls. They were riding the bikes together and they pass her house and they were in mango street and they were riding their bike in a crooked ride back. They were best friends forever.

My Retelling: This story is about a girl who like dumb her old friend Cathy then went and bought a bike then found two new friends. why? because she wanted a bicycle. Where on mango Street. their new bicycle then it become her Good day.

My Retelling: Not done... first, when I heard on my honor I thought it was a song. Anyway it's two friend Tony and Joel. What it was about it was about Swimming. Where it was, it was around the bluffs. JaGWhy? Joel friend Tony could not swim.

My Retelling: Dear BFF, Let me tell you about the time when my insufferable cousin Anita came to visit me. Her cousin thinks that she's cool and she's smart and she live in the city and she called her Friend a Pain-in-the-neck and that is something bad. Your friend,

My Retelling: who: Espranzand Rachandh Lucy and Cathy
 what: They buy a bike
 when:
 where: mangostreet
 why: They want to buy a bike
 They want to buy a bike From Tito.

My Retelling: I would tell my BFF that the story is about a girl named Helen
 who: Hellenkeller
 what: She Was Learn how to read
 when: 1887
 where: well-house
 why: to Learn and talk because she was deaf and blind and she couldn't talk and hear, she said that she was eager to Learn and so am I.

***No corrections have been made. The retellings are represented in their original forms.**

Appendix X

Individual and Group Cloze-maze Scores

	Cloze-maze Raw and Mean Scores									Class Mean
	S#1	S#2	S#3	S#4	S#5	S#6	S#7	S#8	S#9	
R-A Story 1	102	51	34	102	102	102	102	102	102	89
R-A Story 2	68	34	68	102	102	102	34	102	102	79
R-A Story 3	68	68	51	68	102	68	17	34	102	64
R-A Story 4*	34	34	51	68	68	68	68	85	51	59
R-A Story 6	85	34	102	102	68	51	68	102	102	79
R-A Story 7	102	51	51	68	102	68	85	102	102	81
R-A Story 8	68	51	34	68	51	34	34	34	34	45
R-A Story 9	102	68	102	102	68	102	51	51	102	83
Phase 1	79	48	62	85	83	74	57	77	87	72
R-A Story 10	0	68	51	102	102	85	51	102	102	74
R-A Story 11	51	34	68	102	17	102	34	68	102	64
R-A Story 12	102	34	102	102	102	102	34	102	102	87
R-A Story 13	68	17	51	68	51	102	34	68	68	59
R-A Story 14	68	34	102	102	102	68	51	51	102	76
R-A Story 15	68	34	51	102	102	68	102	102	102	81
R-A Story 16*	102	85	102	102	102	102	51	102	102	94
R-A Story 18	51	51	51	85	102	85	68	34	102	70
Phase 2	64	45	72	96	85	89	53	79	98	76
R-A Story 19	102	68	85	102	102	102	**	34	102	87
R-A Story 20	102	102	102	68	102	68	**	17	51	77
R-A Story 21	102	51	68	102	102	102	**	85	102	89
R-A Story 22	68	68	34	85	68	102	**	51	102	72
R-A Story 23	34	68	102	102	68	68	**	68	102	77
R-A Story 24	68	34	68	102	102	102	**	102	68	81
R-A Story 25	102	51	17	102	68	102	**	102	102	81
R-A Story 26*	102	17	102	68	17	102	51	102	102	83
Phase 3	85	57	72	91	79	94	**	70	91	81

Note: *Due to missing data, read-aloud stories #5, #17, and #27 were removed.

**Student 7 was removed from this phase due to incomplete cloze-maze scores.

Appendix Y

Cloze-Maze Example from *A summer life* by Gary Soto

WORD BANK		
pie	porch	muttered
licked	quick	wavered

"No one saw," I _____ to myself, the pie like a discus in my hand, and hurried across the street, where I sat on someone's lawn. The sun _____ between the branches of a yellowish sycamore. A squirrel nailed itself high on the trunk, where it forked into two large bark-scabbed limbs. Just as I was going to work my cleanest finger into the pie, a neighbor came out to the _____ for his mail. He looked at me, and I got up and headed for home. I raced on skinny legs to my block, but slowed to a _____ walk when I couldn't wait any longer. I held the _____ to my nose and breathed in its sweetness. I _____ some of the crust and closed my eyes as I took a small bite.

Appendix Z

Vocabulary Assessment Question Design

The following examples illustrate vocabulary words students could eliminate as inappropriate choices because of their knowledge or familiarity with words used in the choice group.

Example 1. The correct word choice used in the read-aloud story, for example,

delighted:

Whenever anything _____ or interested me, Miss Sullivan talked it over with me just as if she were a little girl herself. (Keller, 1954)

 blinded delighted existed porch

Example 2. Second, a completely erroneous word from the read-aloud, for example,

porch:

Whenever anything _____ or interested me, Miss Sullivan talked it over with me just as if she were a little girl herself. (Keller, 1954)

 blinded delighted existed porch

Example 3. A word from the six-grade Dolch word list (offered to students in the classroom for practice purposes), for example, *lied*:

Then Mrs. Luella reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth_____. (Hughes, 1996)

 lied rattled gripped combined

Example 4. A lower level, incorrect word, for example, *paws*:

The old lady pulled her _____ down and looked over them. (Twain, 1876)

 beetle spectacles vagrant paws

Appendix AA

Full Vocabulary Assessment Used Thrice in Read-Aloud Study

Read-Aloud Pretest/Intermediate/Post

DIRECTIONS: Circle the best vocabulary word that fits into the sentences below.

1. Papi is giving him extra _____ by taking him to work the days we aren't in school.

money **stretch** **responsibility** **wrong**

2. To Yollie's surprise, the dress came out shiny black. It looked brand-new and _____, like what people in New York wear.

ash **sophisticated** **careful** **damp**

3. I am young and strong and am living a great adventure; I am still in the midst of it and can't _____ the whole day long.

sole **interest** **grumble** **swing**

4. Older people have formed their opinions about everything and don't _____ before they act.

carry **cherish** **approach** **waver**

5. Mrs. Price sees that I've _____ the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk.

thought **shoved** **it's** **meter**

6. He had never seen dogs fight as these wolfish creatures fought, and his first experience taught him an _____ lesson.

striking **unforgettable** **warning** **easy**

7. Papa _____ the holes in the walls with old newspapers and tin can tops.

exchanged **roof** **plugged** **sweat**

8. For the rest of the reading period I kept getting _____ with myself because I did not read in front the class.

dry **angrier** **polite** **dizzy**

9. Sophie and I weren't friends or anything, although she lived only a block down from me on Palm View Drive, in a pink stucco _____ a lot like the one I lived in.

automobile **school** **bungalow** **nod**

10. Father wants us to read books to _____our minds.

dull **bore** **improve** **serious**

11. The dirt floor, _____ by earth worms, looked like a gray road map.

populated **sleep** **termites** **cleaned**

12. Joel started to walk back, pushing through the water _____, as though it were a crowd holding him back.

cold **impatiently** **bounce** **likely**

13. I have _____my grandmother's name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

wondered **forgiven** **waited** **inherited**

14. To give up my name...it's to give up my family...to let myself be _____ to chalkboard dust.

tangled **erased** **sharp** **painted**

15. Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that "m-u-g" is *mug* and that "w-a-t-e-r" is water but I _____ in confounding the two.

strange **teach** **joy** **persisted**

16. Whenever anything _____ or interested me, Miss Sullivan talked it over with me just as if she were a little girl herself.

blinded **delighted** **existed** **porch**

17. "No one saw," I _____ to myself, the pie like a discus in my hand, and hurried across the street, where I sat on someone's lawn.

clawed **muttered** **guilt** **finished**

18. Then Mrs. Luella reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth_____.

lied **rattled** **gripped** **combined**

19. “When Father blows the whistle, get back to the train_____so that he does not have to come looking for you!

immediately **exciting** **advice** **mushrooms**

20. Neftali jumped at the voice and looked up to see his Father _____over him.

morning **looming** **doing** **something**

21. The old lady pulled her _____ down and looked over them.

beetle **spectacles** **vagrant** **paws**

22. Once the unhappy dog _____ the beetle, its drooping tail lifted and wagged.

barked **spied** **called** **prayed**

23. I sit on the back seat and Rachel is skinny enough to get up on the handlebars which makes the bike all _____ as if the wheels are spaghetti.

forever **wobbly** **broom** **tugging**

24. I could see Mom _____ in her mind that I was no longer a kid.

sliding **hesitating** **registering** **proud**

25. I poked the swollen wiener with a stick and _____ it in a plastic trash bag.

inquired **glad** **deposited** **swelled**

26. It is hard to believe that this is the day I have ___and looked forward to for such a long time.

disappointed **tradition** **fitted** **anticipated**

Appendix BB

Final Assessment Questions and Descriptions

Questions #1 and #6. Worth 5 points totaled, multiple-response *Questions #1 and #6* (i.e., What is a cluster map? What do you use a cluster map for? Draw a cluster map; The questions *What is an excerpt? Why is an excerpt important?* were asked to assess students' knowledge about two of the accompanying tools used in the study. Such tools were modeled by the teacher/researcher and used by English language learners throughout the study to offer them practice in annotating relevant information for retelling purposes. The two questions sought to assess the students' general knowledge of the tools, their definitions, and purposes.

Questions #2, #3 and #8. To assess strategies and techniques modeled for students and practiced by them in each read-aloud session, three questions (# 2, 3 and 8) with multiple-responsesub-questions, totaling 9 points, were utilized: *Question #2* (What does “annotations” mean? How would you tell someone HOW to do annotations? Please annotate the following sentence: *The crimson bug was on the table in a jar.*); *Question #3* (What are four things good readers/good comprehenders do? Give ONE example for the following title: *The treasure of Lemon Brown*); and *Question #8* (What does *skim* mean?). This trio of questions was designed to have students explain those strategies used before, during, or after the read-aloud. Annotating carried out by students before and during the read-aloud highlighted those confusing/unfamiliar words/phrases important to understanding the read-aloud. The say-something strategy, served as prewriting practice in this study for each title before the read-aloud was carried out. The technique of skimming was vital to the overall process of teaching students ways to annotate and quickly filter out confusing/

unfamiliar words problematic to his/her understanding or lack thereof of the overall texts.

Questions #4 and #5. These two questions were used to evaluate those internal actions students were participating in while listening to the read-aloud. Both questions (*What should you do when listening to a read-aloud?* and *What are other things YOU could do when you are listening to a read-aloud?*) were asked to gain further information on those internal processes students were using during the read-aloud and what metacognitive strategies were a part of their thinking. Both questions were assigned three points each.

Questions #7 and #9. Worth 10 points total, *Question #7* (*What if you were a teacher and you wanted to read-aloud Diary of a wimpy kid to your students. Explain how you would do it.*) and *Question #9* (*The teacher/researcher has read-aloud 27 stories to you. What would you tell your principal about read-aloud?*) were created to compare final responses to pre-survey responses/comments concerning general read-aloud information, as well as formulate a general understanding of how the students perceived the read-alouds.

Question #10. The final question of the competition, *Question #10*, was used to highlight confusing words/phrases noted throughout the students' annotations and to assess their visual capability of words/phrases encountered in the 27 read-aloud stories. Students were issued a sheet of 20 visuals. Beside each picture was a vocabulary word/title from a read-aloud used in the study. Students were directed to circle the correct word or read-aloud title that corresponded to the visual. Pictures were computer-generated photos or replica photos of real items used in the read-aloud sessions. Some pictures were accompanied with alternative answers to provide students with a double chance of choosing a correct vocabulary word or story title.

Appendix CC

Explicit Notes on Qualitative Data Analyses

Researcher fieldnotes. To offer transparency, researcher fieldnotes provided exact quotes, chronological sequence of descriptions, and the researcher's summary of the events (Schensul et al., 1999). After each read-aloud, fieldnotes were aggregated by filtering out and organizing descriptions of events, relationships, terms, and activities in order to build upon prior data from other observations and established patterns (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Schensul et al., 1999). Researcher reflections/fieldnotes were constantly reviewed for elaboration, confirmation, or refutation of other analyses results. Researcher fieldnotes were used to converge or validate both qualitative and quantitative data and/or provided additional information to explain contradictory data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Observations. Observations for this study were carried out in a middle school classroom three times before the beginning of the study and varied throughout the research. Such a strategy was the least structured, most interpretive, and relied on this researcher's insight, intuition, and creativity (LeCompte et al., 1993; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Constant comparative method was used to organize and shape the information (Glaser, 1965) that was dispersed in various areas of the results section and overall final discussion. Observational data were also used to converge and validate data from other qualitative sources (researcher fieldnotes, surveys) (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). To address validity, notes from observations for this study were crosschecked with researcher fieldnotes taken during those observations. Fieldnotes from lesson observations and the teacher's words were used to refute or corroborated data (i.e., participant

corroboration) (LeCompte et al., 1993).

Student surveys. Student surveys/questions were used in the study to acquire information regarding language, reading habits, the students' perceptions of the read-aloud practice, the read-aloud sessions, and the research overall. Constant comparative method was used to organize the information (Glaser, 1965). Survey data were converged with other qualitative and quantitative information (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Opened-ended questions from survey data were used to generate information to fashion profiles of the English language learner taking part in the study, as well as build a generic profile of good/bad English language learner comprehenders for use in the qualitative aspect of the research. Responses from final survey questions that were placed in a culminating game at the end of the study (i.e., *Let's Play Read-Aloud*) were compared to pre-survey data responses. These pre, intermediate, and post student surveys were reviewed for elaboration, confirmation, or refutation of other analysis results.

Audio-recordings. Audio tapes of the read-alouds were used to corroborate observational data and fieldnotes, capture conversations during the comprehension phase of the read-aloud session, and serve as documentation of the live read-alouds. These sources were used as supplements to fieldnotes since notes cannot capture conversations and interactions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; LeCompte et al., 1993). Taping of the sessions strengthened reliability and ensured dependability of the final results (LeCompte et al., 1993).

Student artifacts. In literacy research, artifact and archival data act as physical evidence to "instruction, learning, or practice" (Duke & Mallette, 2004, p. 106). Information

was gleaned from student artifacts (e.g., *say-something* responses, annotation notes and symbols on the read-aloud excerpts, comprehension exercise handouts, student written retellings, and cloze-maze assessments) on a daily basis and used in triangulation with other qualitative and quantitative data. These data sources offered a wealth of information to the results sections and information from them were useful in corroborating students' reading and writing efforts and blunders specific to this group of English language learners.

Archival data. Included under this heading was information pertaining to English language learners that was shared by the teacher-in-charge or required by in-house mandates for English language learners. Archival data were useful in profiling the students in this class of English language learners.

Say-something. Due to their short answers (less than two sentences), the say-something responses were immediately typed into separate taxonomies. With each read-aloud, say-something responses were reviewed and categorized into themes. Constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) was continual until succinct patterns emerged. Say-something responses were used to formulate patterns for the types of strategies English language learner writers use when approaching a classic or multicultural text, to provide information for categories of student specific problems and interests seen in the pre-writings, and used to illustrate the students' use of the four practices that research has shown are practiced by good comprehenders (i.e., question, comment, prediction and connect).

Student annotations. Symbols such as drawings, doodling, language examples other than English, organizational charts, and legends were used by students in their annotations

during the first phase (Stories 1-9) of the read-aloud session. A separate log of symbols was generated. Constant comparative analysis was used to produce relevant themes for the final discussion. Traditional coding was used to track symbols and practices students used during annotation phases of the read-aloud. Themes were produced describing students’ unique words, unfamiliar phrases, problematic passages, and student-created pictures. The student annotations were constantly reviewed until enough symbols generated interesting categories and themes that offered information about the reading comprehension of the students (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The annotations revealed comprehension problems with areas that first language learners commonly face and their metacognitive awareness (e.g., what the brain is doing while the reader is reading) (Cao & Nietfeld, 2007). Information from annotations was used to discuss those cognitive processes that occur while students are in preparation for or in the act of reading.

Scorecard templates. Synthesized information (e.g., say-something, comprehension exercises, retelling highlights, and cloze-maze assessment scores) from read-aloud sessions were summarized on a scorecard template sheet. Scorecard templates were used during data analysis to validate both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Sample Score Card of Story 10: Ryan & Sis’s *The Dreamer*

S T U D E N T	S#1	S#2	S#3	S#4	S#5	S#6	S#7	S#8	S#8
S A Y	2= Prediction: I predict that it’s going to	2= Prediction: I predict	2= Comment: Make	2= Prediction: I think	5= No response	2= Prediction : The	5= No response	2= Prediction: I	2= Prediction: I

<p>S O M E T H I N G</p>	<p>be about maybe a girl that she has a very good dream and it comes true.</p>	<p>(student was writing “predict ion” here!) that the story about a boy who dream a lot and he just dream with a Food like brid (bread) and cheez and orange and a lot of food.</p>	<p>your Dreamer and somethin g you forgot your Dreamer and you can remembe r and you try to remembe r your Dreamer. (NOTE: Capitaliz ation: spillover from board/bo ok cover at front of room)</p>	<p>the story is about a boy who dreams about a lot of things.</p>		<p>dreamer I think is something About somebody write A story About what A people dream About.</p>	<p>onse</p>	<p>think it’s about a dreamer that dreams all the time</p>	<p>think that this story is about a person who dreams about havin g food becau se he was poor</p>
<p>A N N O T A T I O N S</p>	<p>-Highlighted majority of words (5/7) from picture exercise -No rules highlighted (0/5) -Very talkative/ playful in class</p>	<p>- Highlighted all of words (7/7) from picture exercise -Rules highlighted (3/5) -Excited about locating story rules in writing -Phrases highligh</p>	<p>- Highlighted all of words (7/7) from picture exercise -Rules highlighted (4/5) -Other annotations evident (phrases, words) (NOTE: more eye</p>	<p>- Highlighted all of words (7/7) from picture exercise -Rules highlighted (4/5) -Other annotations evident (phrase) -Notes on characte</p>	<p>- Highlighted all of words (4/7) from picture exercise -Rules highlighted (2/5) - Irrelevant details -Other</p>	<p>- Highlighted all of words (7/7) from picture exercise -Rules highlighted (3/5)</p>	<p>- Highlighted words (5/7) from picture exercise - Rules highlighted (1/5) - Very</p>	<p>-None</p>	<p>- Highlighted all of words (5/7) from picture exercise -All of rules highlighted (5/5) -Other annotations eviden</p>

		ted -Read- aloud one of the rules in the class	contact from student)	rs' names taken	annota tions eviden t (phras e)		talka tive/ playf ul in class		t (phras e)
R E T E L L I N G	-Completed starter sentence -Inference -Not much comprehensio n -No gist -Vocabulary from Read- Aloud used (jam, train)	- Improve d again! -Starter sentence done on her own!!! - Audience consider ed; -Gist -Rules in retelling -Mostly efferent -Some aesthetic - Spillover r from discussi on -Text details noted	-Starter sentence done on her own!!! -Some improve ment in comp evident - Inference - Vocabula ry from Read- Aloud used AZ- Literal meaning -Text details noted - Spillover from discussio n	- Audience consider ed; -Used terms from writing prompt -Gist; - Deeper understa nding -Purely Efferent - Vocabul ary from Read- Aloud used (train) -Using 5WH	- Proble ms comple ting starter senten ce - Effere nt -Not much gist/co mp of readal oud - Vocab ulary from Read- Aloud used (singi ng) - Detail s used but does not offer enoug h infor matio n	- Improv ed - Audien ce conside red, but repeate d starter sentenc e; -Gist - Compa res the two brother s; shows differ nces - Spillov er from discuss ion - Improv ed compre hensio n of the story - Vocab ulary from	- Audi ence consi dered , but repea ted starte r senten ce; - Most ly gist, but probl ems with term ("viti vol abuse d") - Effer ent - Spill over from discu ssion	-Some gist - Conce ntratio n on secon dary charac ter -No conce pt of audien ce	- Audie nce consid ered; -Used terms from writin g promp t -Gist - Purely effere nt - Vocab ulary (train) & suppo rting details from Read- Aloud used

						Read- Aloud used (train)			
C L O Z E	0/102 (F)	68/102 (C)	51/102 (D)	102/102 (A)	102/1 02 (A)	85/102 (B)	51/10 2 (D)	102/1 02 (A)	102/1 02 (A)

Secondary artifacts. Secondary artifacts were those documents external to those in the above categories (e.g., emails, schedules) or documents (e.g., handouts, English language learner newsletter, policy letters). They were used to validate other qualitative data (i.e., fieldnotes) (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007) and add vital information to the introductory and results chapters.

Appendix DD

Explicit Notes on Qualitative Data Analyses for Assessment

This appendix offers notes on the analyses of the two qualitative assessments used in the study: vocabulary and final opened-ended assessments. Sources of data used to describe the impact of the read-aloud and validate other qualitative data were derived from 3 pre-, inter-, and post-vocabulary assessments and a final, mixed assessment (competitive game) were used (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Descriptive data of the pre-, inter-, and post-vocabulary assessments (Creswell et al., 2003) and constant comparative analysis (Creswell, 2007) of the final assessment were used to summarize and confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate any qualitative information with the quantitative findings in the study.

Vocabulary assessment. A 27-statement pre-, inter-, and post-vocabulary test prepared by the researcher was offered to the students before, midway, and after the 27 read-aloud sessions as a repeated measure. Descriptive data were used to report these data. The three raw scores from vocabulary assessments were used to explain gains in and loss of information for each student.

Final, mixed assessment. The final assessment instrument was a researcher-created, open-ended and closed-ended test designed as a competitive game (i.e., *Let's Play Read-Aloud*) to cover areas important to the phases of the 27 read-aloud sessions (e.g., tool(s) use, strategies, listening skills, vocabulary). Responses were analyzed with constant comparative analysis and inductive and deductive coding process (Schensul et al., 1999; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Categories of the English language learners perspectives of the read-aloud as an instructional strategy were reported in the results section.

Appendix EE

Explicit Notes on Analyses of Mixed Methods Assessment

Multiple types of analyses were used for student written retellings in order to obtain qualitative and quantitative information. This appendix describes the constant comparative analysis, descriptive data, and coding procedures used for these data.

Qualitative analysis of student retellings. Information for sub-question one (i.e., *What effect does reading aloud classic and multicultural texts have on the reading comprehension of English Language Learner, middle school readers?*) derived from salient theme compilation that comes from constant comparative analysis. To analyze the student written retellings for qualitative one sub-question (i.e., *What are the effects of the read-aloud protocol on the written retellings of middle school students, English Language Learner?*), constant comparative analysis, involving ongoing and iterative analysis, and coding were used to establish codes, broad themes, and patterns (Schensul et al., 1999; LeCompte, 2000; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Saldaña, 2009).

After Step 1, which included organizing and preparing data (i.e., tidying up), which included counting data and setting up data sets for computer calculations (LeCompte, 2000). Step 2 promoted preliminary coding practices. To generate themes and categories after the first nine stories, a preliminary code log was started for the student written retellings. Emphasis was on any association that illustrated comprehension of the read-aloud text through the students' written retelling. Retelling writings were analyzed through inductive and deductive coding processes (Creswell, 2007; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Schensul et al., 1999). After the final read-aloud stories, the codes were organized into domains,

factors, and sub-factors and examined for any associations. Reoccurring themes in the research, including provisional descriptors, were generated using Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) analysis scheme (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Other codes emerged through daily contact and multiple readings of the retelling data and included various strategies of comprehension and instructional strategy usage. Once significant ideas, theories, and themes from the research were generated from these first set of codes, a master list was created.

After organizing and beginning coding practices, stabilizing data was Step 3 of the analysis (LeCompte, 2000). Re-readings took precedence in this aspect of the study and further data were removed when appropriate. Data were compared to the research question to further align each piece. The master list was condensed, and patterns were sought from ongoing preliminary codes based on the students' written retellings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These codes were continually revamped by using tacit and formative theories, which both guide behaviors and predict future events (LeCompte, 2000), were used. Knowledge of tacit (professional experiences) and formative theories (i.e., culturally relevant pedagogy, natural learning, and cognitive theoretical issues) allowed the researcher to refine codes (LeCompte, 2000).

Step four included pattern creation where information was clumped together in meaningful ways (LeCompte, 2000). Explanation, pattern finding, and coherence were vital areas of concern. This led into step five where the data were assembled into structures (LeCompte, 2000) to be used in the final area involving the integration (i.e., merging) of data. These measures resulted in code formations describing both positive and negative issues of the read-aloud with this group of English language learners.

Constant comparative was also used to analyze retelling data. Ongoing data collection of student written retellings from phase one (i.e., Stories 1 -9) were compared to phase two retelling writings of English language learners (i.e., Stories 10 -18) and those were further compared to phase three (i.e., Stories 19-27) of the study to evaluate strengths and problems in specific areas (including reading comprehension and retelling best practices). Differences and similarities in the student written retellings were also sought. The method was a useful tactic to develop themes in an iterative fashion (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

While the constant comparative method is inductive, a deductive measure was also used with the retelling for evidence of valid retellings as outlined in the research literature. These included not only Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) ten characteristics of valid retellings (e.g., gist or main idea, details story elements, linguistic/language conventions, etc.), but those areas identified from the students' written retellings, including self correction efforts and information extracted from the read-aloud session and used in the retelling writings. Constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) was also used to organize information gathered from the student written retellings. See discussion under general qualitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis of student retellings. These same student written retellings were also analyzed under a quantitative approach using descriptive statistic to evaluate the student written retellings. Plus (+) and delta (-) symbols were used by two readers to indicate if students exhibited predetermined features in the student written retellings. Plus (+) symbols were calculated to produce a raw score that ranged from 0 – 10. Inter-rater reliability percentages were determined for the three phases of the read-aloud session (Stories 1-9, Stories 10-18, and Stories, 19-27). Three stories overall, one from each phase, were

excluded due to a missing data from multiple English language learners in those sessions. The deltas opposing retelling writings describe the open-endedness of them and both difficulty of scoring them and the large amounts of time to score them (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). Research has offered better ways to score retellings with rubrics. Other methods include deconstructing or breaking texts into semantic proposition (i.e., predicate plus argument); measuring recall as a percentage; or defining boundaries to apply to the writing (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). Defining boundaries by applying to the student's retellings Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) research-based features for retellings (See Appendix AA) was an appropriate scoring method used to assess students' retellings for the quantitative data needed to describe relationships in this current study.

On the first reading of the data, Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) list of synthesized components that described reading comprehension of a text were rubricated to use in student written retelling assessments for scoring. The rubric (went beyond simple recall of the read-aloud text and included the following categories: (1) gist or main idea, (2) story element details, (3) interpretive ideas, (4) generalizations, (5) supplementations, (6) coherence, (7) completeness, (8) linguistic/language conventions, (9) any additional information not in the passage (i.e., aesthetic/efferent information), and (10) elicited feelings. Students received 1 point each for indication of these characteristics. Each retelling was read by two readers, and the rubric was used to indicate the presence (i.e., *evident in retelling*) or absence (i.e., *not evident in retelling*) of these characteristics. The scope of what to search for in the students' written retellings offered a picture of the array of content and comments provided by the students beyond simple recall (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009; Romero et al., 2005).

Appendix FF

Researcher Notes For Four Practices in Say-something strategy

Questioning Practices. In Phase One (Stories 1 – 9), those English language learners squeamish in the prewriting areas of the read-aloud attempted to stay in their comfort zones and practice only those areas of say-something strategy they understood. The act of questioning a text, for instance, was a favorite through the first 9 read-aloud stories. Surface questions from these English language learners basically followed the phase, “Why did the author title the story *The loud silence of Francine Green*” or “Why did the author title the story *My name*.” However, the learners began to gain confidence, appropriate questions emerged. One of the last students venturing away from literate questioning asked the author of *Thank you, ma’m* (Hughes, 1967), “Why does the male character take the lady’s bag?” As the study progressed, surface level questions decreased.

Prediction Practices. Of the say-something strategies, prediction practices were the most common. Other areas of consideration from the English language learners’ prediction responses included the following: a word in the read-aloud title used as a springboard to say-something strategy problematic; a word in the title used to make a judgment on a character via his/her name; use of a personal pronoun (e.g., *my*) in the say-something strategy.

Connection Practices. While the *text-to-self* *text-to-text* and *text-to-world* connections were noted in the English language learner say-something strategies, the text-to-self connection emerged as the strongest.

Comment Practices. Commenting waned in the first phases of the read-aloud, but picked up pace in subsequent phases, from which interesting findings were noted.

Appendix GG

Explicit Notes on Intra-relational and Inter-relational Say-something strategy

Intra-relational say-something strategy. A small number of the English language learners were indicated in researcher notes as “risk takers” early due to their use of a hybrid of say-something strategy. One student commented and questioned by asking why the title was “...called The diary of a young girl” and took the risk to comment that the “story is about a girl who is young and has a diray.” Even the most struggling reader took a risk in her writing when she commented and questioned Hughes *Thank you, ma'm*: “...a boy who style the women is bag by my question is why did he stoll it?” These instances illustrated not only the English language learners’ developing ability to take risks but to exhibit for this researcher the onset of those cognitive routines that were activated before a story was read aloud. Whether the student was considered good or poor comprehenders, the ability to take a risk was made evident through the say-something strategy.

Inter-relational say-something strategy. Another pattern filtering through the English language learners’ say-something strategy depicted an inter-relational hybrid effect in the say-something responses where English language learners combined say-something strategy strategies with the read-aloud environment (i.e., graphic displays). Graphic displays, which set the physical environment for the read-aloud stories, were consistent throughout the study. They were always front and center in the classroom and displayed read-aloud settings (e.g., beach, playground, courtyard) and concrete items that the English language learners would encounter in the read-aloud story (e.g., water pump, nature). Instead of using internal thoughts about the title, English language learners began to connect their thoughts to these

graphic displays that accompanied the read-aloud sessions. Such a pattern emerged faintly in the first set of read-aloud, strongly in the second set of the read-aloud study (Stories 10-18) and continued to grow.

In the second set of stories (10-18), graphic displays were used to transform the front of the classroom and pull English language learners into a classic read-aloud. For *The story of my life* (Keller, 1988), the classroom became a watershed and a spouted coffee pot was used as a water pump. For Cisneros' (1991) *Eleven*, English language learners were able to see items that were sitting on the character's desk including an ugly sweater and ruler. One student's pre-writing connected the title and the sweater "cascading off" the graphic display desk: "I think this story is about a person that is eleven years old and they celebrate the persons birthday and they turn 11 and brought them a sweter." One struggling student noted: "I predict that the story about a boy who dreem a lot and he just dreem with a Food like brid (bread) and cheez and oreng and a lot of food," referring to the graphic display of food from Ryan and Ses's *The dreamer*. Frequently, visuals were illustrated by the teacher, or graphics were projected on the Smartboard to stimulate the English language learners' say-something strategy responses. These, too, were folded into students' predictions. For example, in bold, 300-font lettering on the board were the letters *S-I-M* and under them, in parenthesis, *Servicio do Inteligencia Militar*. After having a conversation regarding decoding words, one student noted in her say-something strategy for *Before we were free* (Alvarez, 2002), which illustrated a young girl looking out the window behind bars: "This book might be like the books that have people dying and polices." From Brande's (2007) text *Evolution, me and other freaks of nature*, a two-headed snake was shown to the group from a classroom issue of

National Geographic magazine to represent a freak of nature. From this visual, the student predicted: “I think it talk about snakes.”

The third set of stories (19-27) produced similar patterns. Copies of the ead-aloud books, from which the excerpts were pulled, were also a part of these graphic displays, and English language learners frequently used the book jackets to write predictions. In Armstrong’s (1989) *Sounder*, English language learners may have used the text sitting inside the graphic display, which illustrated a boy, gun, and hound dog looking out in the distance of an open field, to write their say-something response: “I think the story about hunters” and “This story might be about a person Who went to the south ane explore.” A visual of a beach backdrop was used to set the environment for Bauer’s (1986) *On my honor*. From this backdrop, English language learners folded the visual into their say-something strategy responses. One student predicted: “I predict the story is about friends and they are in the beach They like to go swimming in the beach.” The use of the graphic displays inside the English language learners’ say-something strategy responses illustrated the importance of setting the environment for the read-aloud since learning can come from visuals in the natural setting of the classroom, as evidenced in this research. Such graphic displays made for lengthier and environmentally sensitive say-something responses that have not been considered in the research of past read-aloud studies.

Appendix HH

Researcher Notes on Annotations

Textual annotations, which included definitions, pronunciations, and illustrations were highlighted and expounded upon in modeling sessions with the English language learners during the annotation phase of the study. Definitions and pronunciations of words, terms, and patterns were modeled for English language learners, and they were able to practice annotating while the teacher/researcher was modeling and describing those appropriate items to highlight or circle. Illustrations from the English language learners' annotations included sad faces when the student heard an emotionally sad story and happy faces when some humorous or happy event occurred. Designs/doodles with non-specific functions were also illustrations in the English language learners' annotations. Contextual annotations, which included extra/background and visual information, were noted in the English language learners' annotations. Extra/background information included adverbs that students did not recognize, especially those ending with suffix *-ly* (e.g., *peacefully*, *majestically*), as well as adjectives that offered extra information about a word or phrase. Visual information appeared in the margins of the excerpts where English language learners' drew objects representing an interesting part (e.g., heart = love) or object (e.g., frisbee = drawing of a pie) in the story. The researcher modeled ways to annotate, including highlighting definitions, paraphrasing a definition, or drawing the words/phrases in the appropriate place in the margin. After a few modeling sessions with the students, were allowed time to practice annotating on their own before the actual read-aloud.

Of those annotations, the most common visual/textual annotations used student-

created drawings, which for the most part, cut across cultures. Drawings where the reader felt emotionally sad (sad face) or happy (happy face) about some piece of text were evident in many of the margins of the English language learners' annotations. The second set of stories (10-18), *The circuit* (Jimenez, 1997) produced good quality pictorial annotations. One student drew in her margin the phrase "neatly packed in cardboard boxes," where three boxes were positioned in pyramid form. Another drew two: One of a crying face with puffy, big eyes for "my eyes began to water" and an arm with hairs sticking up representing "...gave me goose bumps." The teacher drew on the board a professional-looking horn representing corridos ("...co-reee-dos, Ms. Watson") music and played a song after the read-aloud session; another student copied the horn and added in her margin music symbols trailing off the page. Some English language learners drew 1 figures of what they thought the characters looked like. Some of these drawings were impressive, offering a description of how the English language learner readers perceived characters in their heads. In *My insufferable cousin* (Apte, n.d.), one of the characters "Anita" in one drawing was meek and mild in her stance and had friendly facial features, while the complaining cousin "Shona" was depicted as mean-faced with her hands on her hips and a sinister look in her eyes. In the margins of Bauer's (1986) classic *On my honor*, a story where two boys go out to swim and only one returns, another English language learner drew a scene where one character is on a cliff looking over the water, while the other is midway under a cliff with waves flowing over his stick figure. His eyes are marked out.

Appendix II

Ten Preliminary Codes Produced From English language learner Annotations

Code 1 featured words that were above the English language learner reading levels. Examples included a host of sub-codes, including general words (e.g., *cavern, spectacular, bungalow, sentiment*) that were not only hard to pronounce, but were not evident in the reading levels of the English language learners. Second and third categories included hyphenated words (e.g., *bark-scabbed, rubbery-dolphin, brow-backed*) and compound words (e.g., *underarms, underfoot*). Inclusive terms (e.g., *free speech, individuality, responsibility*) were also highlighted by a significant number of these English language learners.

Code 2 included annotations that featured outdated/old-fashioned words with which the English language learners were unfamiliar. Words such as *pinafore, well house, hearth, wardrobe, porridge, bobby pin, kerosene lamp, and lad* were among those highlighted.

Code 3 was created for those annotations involving a hub of complex/multiple suffixes, including (1) homonyms (e.g., *buy-by; their- there*); (2) single suffixed words (e.g., *able*); (3) combined prefix/suffix words (e.g., *prefabricated*); and (4) double suffixed words (e.g., *despairingly, cheerfulness, majestically*).

Code 4 included those passages where 2-3 full sentences were underlined by the student.

Code 5 described those annotations that were language/literary/author/content-specific in the English language. These included (1) abstract language (e.g., *breathed in its sweetness*); (2) personified language (e.g., *fat-faced chocolate*); (3) writer's style, which included language specific to authors (e.g., *populated by earthworms; plugged the holes*); (4)

content specific words (e.g., scientific words/phrases: *diets, life spans, carnivores*; and (5) colloquialisms/idioms (e.g., *lump in my throat, exchanged a few words*).

Code 6 were language-specific to the English language learners' second language. At any occasion one could find Arabic writing, Chinese symbols, and Spanish words in the margins.

Code 7 described those miscellaneous words outside the ones covered during modeling of annotations. These words were pertinent to the read-aloud stories, including proper nouns, esp. names (e.g., *Panchito, Sullivan*) and information pertaining to the 5WH strategy (i.e., who, what, when, where, why).

Code 8 were those words unrecognized at sight, i.e., sight words, common nouns (e.g., *stomach, chair, precious, frame, mattress, jam, switch*) and verbs ending in the -ed.

Code 9 included those personal interests or comments (i.e., *red shoes, trashy girl*) that had no relevance to the gist of the read-aloud story.

Code 10 described those informal/slang language including internet chatting terms (e.g., *LOL*) and universal terms (e.g., *WOW*).

Appendix JJ

Uses for Annotating

Annotating helped English language learners visualize phrases, sentences, and whole passages from the read-aloud texts, which were assessed for reading comprehension.

Pattern 1: Annotating is effective for filtering out those words, phrases, sentences and passages that are both unfamiliar and confusing for English language learners. A review of the codes noted in this section reveals the wide array of need-to-know information that was problematic for this group of English language learners. While this researcher thought herself more than capable of filtering out what these English language learners needed to know to familiarize them with the upcoming read-alouds, once students were given the freedom to annotate on their own, they highlighted, circled, scribbled, and crossed out many areas this researcher had not selected. These English language learners conveyed through the language of annotating a wide array of information that revealed the multiple levels of their reading needs that require consideration when preparing for reading activities. While this phase of the read-aloud was nestled in the read-aloud session as a 5-minute skimming activity, student needs overrode time limits and time was spent scaffolding the information that would have been a given for native English students, but was a necessity for these language learners.

Pattern 2: Annotating is a good exercise to help English language learners identify context families. From the code involving abstract terms, a result specific to the educator emerged. Some terms that were above the comprehension level of the English language learners carried with them a host of information (e.g., *free speech, individuality,*

Catholic). However, Phase 2 (i.e., the second nine stories) produced one of those words that carry information, yet was predicted to be an appropriate word for this level: *rule*. Exploring this one word in the context of Ryan and Sis' (2010) *The dreamer* yielded good evidence to reveal the value of using annotations with read-alouds. The examples trace the use of annotations into the retelling writing of the read-aloud session. As a result, this finding emerged: A good use for the annotation exercise is to help English language learners identify context families.

In several of the phases and over the course of annotating, English language learners were able to find related words/phrases/sentences in the course of usually 300 to 500 words that helped them understand how words, phrases, and/or sentences are related. A question was asked in the one of the discussion phases of annotating: "What are some bad...problematic words we can highlight?" and later, "What are some bad things Rodolfo tEnglish language learners Neftali about?" English language learners began to call out and/or highlight what they considered (1) "bad" words: *bruises, mistake, winced*; (2) bad phrases: "*slathered with jam,*" "*heart sank,*" "*...you must follow his orders*"; and (3) bad sentences: "*Do not get underfoot of the workers,*" "*And do not talk to the workers unless they talk to you first,*" "*When Father blows the whistle, get back to the train...*" (Ryan & Sis, 2010).

After *The dreamer* excerpt was read aloud without interruption and the English language learners learned the reason the older brother tEnglish language learners the younger one the "rules," is because of a spanking the eldest brother receives when their Father finds him singing passionately in the woods during a working day. From that read-aloud, English

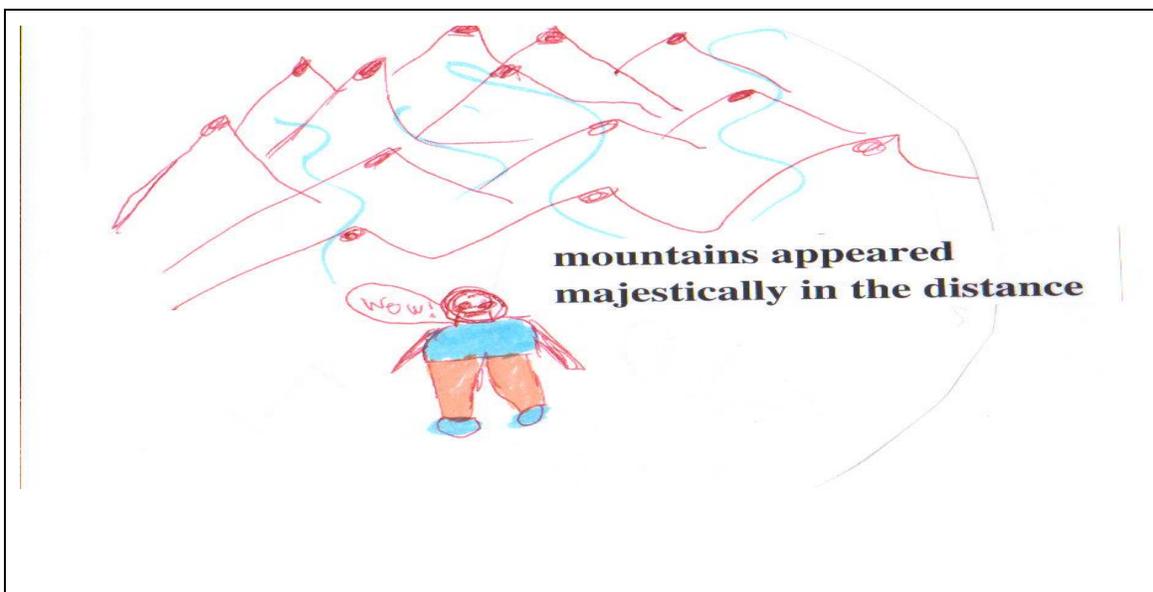
language learners' retellings captured those problematic aspects of the story that many of the English language learners may not have understood without scaffolding information about the word *rules*. The annotations produced the problematic context of the story and spilled directly over into the English language learners' retellings. In one retelling a student wrote the sad conclusion: "...at the end he realized he was singing." Another stated in the retelling: "...his fathe was a bad father Rodolfo still have the bruises of his father do it to Rodolfo." Another wrote: "...don't talk to the worker unless they talk to you First and do what ever dad told you todo because if you Not going to do dad is going to be abset [upset] and mad because his dad is sooo ungrey [angry]." A final English language learner summed it up in his retelling: "...let him follow the orders or you got A trouble." As a result of this father/son abusive relationship, survey evidence confirmed that Ryan and Sis' (2010) *The dreamer* was the most disliked story by the English language learners.

Two read-alouds later in the same phase, *My insufferable cousin* (Apte, n.d.) illustrated a pattern that helped English language learners identify context families with problematic versus positive words, phrases, and sentences. English language learners were asked to brainstorm for good/positive and bad/problematic content. A graphic organizer was drawn on the dry erase board with these opposites, and as responses orally flowed, they were written in appropriate columns. Student annotation artifacts also recorded problematic responses on the excerpts, where they circled, highlighted, or underlined bad/problematic (1) words: "*angry*," (2) phrases: "*pain-in-the-neck*," "*stuck-up girl*," and "*blood boil*;" or (3) sentences: "*I felt my cheeks burn*" and "*I grumbled*" (Apte, n.d.). For good/positive, English language learners annotated only one: "*Shona is cool*" since all the other ones found were

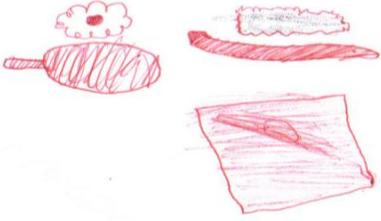
problematic. Annotating helped this group of English language learners identify context families, and these families made for better accessibility, comprehension and retelling of their read-aloud letters.

Pattern 3: Annotating is a good exercise to help English language learners visualize texts and draw out those visualizations. Multicultural texts Soto's *Mercy on these teenage chimps* (2007) from the first set of nine stories, Cisneros' (1991) *Eleven* from the second set of nine stories, and Jimenez's (1997) *The circuit* provided a wealth of descriptive writing that helped English language learners annotate and use those annotations to visualize phrases, sentences, and whole passages from the read-aloud texts. From these student-drawn visuals, a student's comprehension was easily assessed based on the sentence, phase, or passage and the students' interpretations. Take for instance the following samples from each of the three categories:

Example: Sample Interpretation of a Phrase Pullout from Jimenez's *The circuit*.



Example: English language learner Sample Interpretation of a Phrase Pullout from Soto’s *Mercy on these teenage chimps*

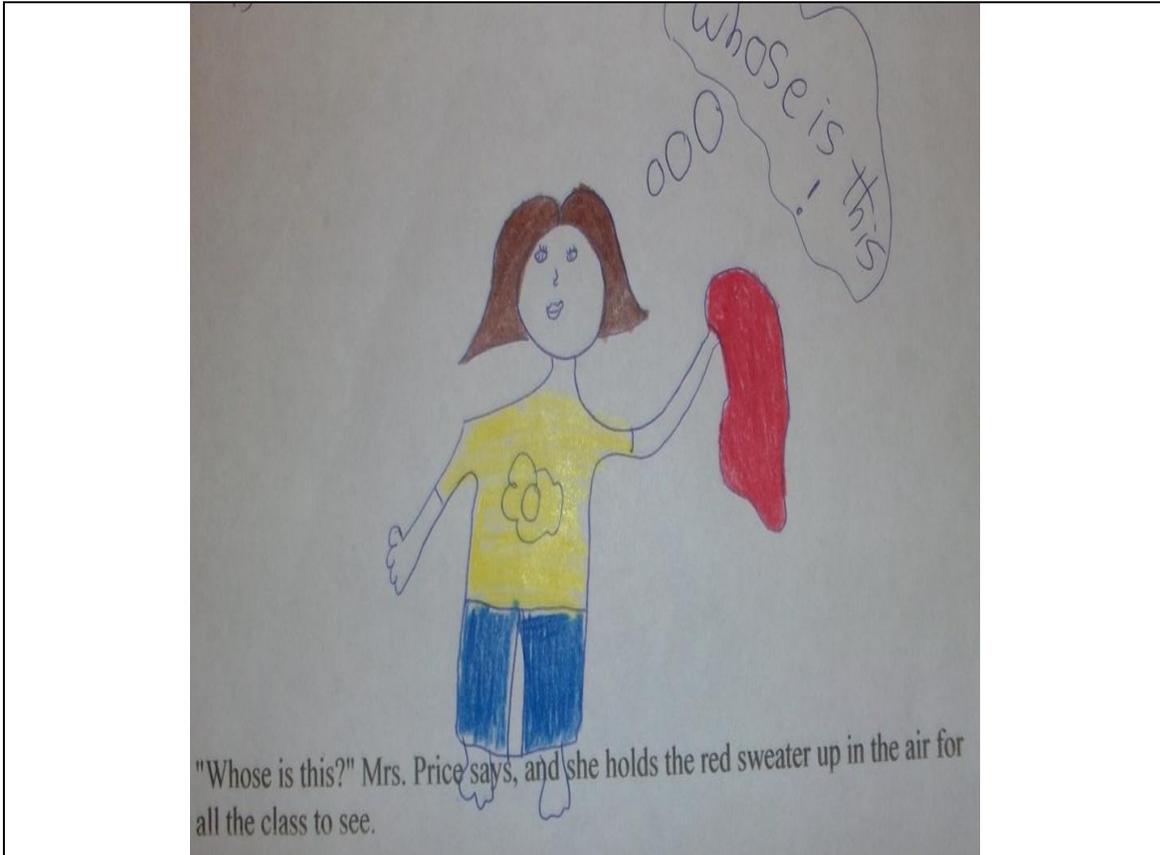
	
<p>Phrase: "...peachy fuzz on my chin..."</p>	<p>Phrase: "...eggs, bacon, and buttered toast"</p>

Example: English language learner Sample Interpretation of a Phrase Pullout from Soto’s *Mercy on these teenage chimps*

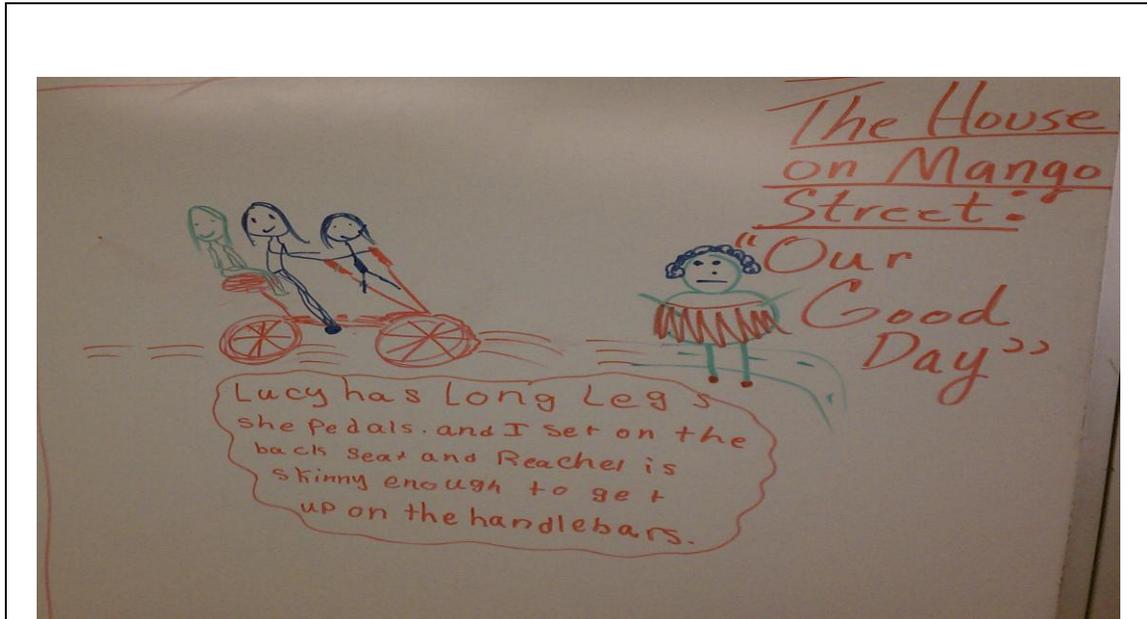

<p>Sentence: "I juggled three apples and a single orange."</p>

English language learner Sample Interpretation of a Sentence Pullout from Jimenez's

The circuit



“Whose is this?” Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. (Cisneros, 1991)



Example: English language learner Group Interpretation of a Passage Pullout from Cisneros' *Our good day*

But finally we agree to ride it together. Why not? Because Lucy has long legs she pedals. I sit on the back seat and Rachel is skinny enough to get up on the handlebars which makes the bike all wobbly as if the wheels are spaghetti, but after a bit you get used to it. We ride fast and faster. Past my house, sad and red and crumbly in places, past Mr. Benny's grocery on the corner, and down the avenue which is dangerous. Laundromat junk store, drugstore, windows and cars and more cars, and around the block back to Mango.

These pullouts stand on their own and reveal what annotating can eventually do to assist students in visualizing texts.

Appendix KK

Vocabulary Words and Attempts of Participants

A1 = Attempt 1 A2 = Attempt 2 A3 = Attempt 3 X = Incorrect

	Vocabulary Word	S#1	S#2	S#3	S#4	S#5	S#6	S#7	S#8	S#9
1	responsibility	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A3	A2	A1	A2
2	sophisticated	A1	A1	X	A1	A1	A1	A2	A1	A1
3	grumble	A1	A1	A3	A1	X	A1	A2	A1	A1
4	waver	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A2	X
5	shoved	A1	A1	A1	A2	A1	A1	A2	A2	A1
6	unforgettable	X	A2	X	A1	A1	X	A3	A1	A2
7	plugged	A1	A1	X	A2	A2	A1	A2	A2	A2
8	angrier	A1	X	A1	A1	A2	A1	A1	A1	A2
9	bungalow	A3	A2	A1	A2	A1	A2	A3	A2	A2
10	populated	A2	A1	A3	A1	A1	X	A3	A2	A2
11	impatiently	A1	A2	A2	A1	A2	A2	X	A1	A1
12	inherited	A1	A2	A3	X	A3	A3	X	A1	X
13	persisted	A1	X	X	A1	A2	A2	X	A2	A1
14	erased	A1								
15	improve	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	A2	A2	A1	A1
16	delighted	A1	A2							
17	muttered	A2	A1	A1	A1	A3	A3	X	A1	A2
18	rattled/gripped	X	A2	A1	A1	A2	X	A1	A1	A3
19	immediately	A1	X	A1	A1	A1	X	A1	A1	A1
20	looming	A2	A2	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	A2
21	spectacles	A2	X	X	A1	A1	X	A2	A2	A2
22	spied	A3	A1	A3	A2	A2	X	X	X	A3
23	wobbly	A1	A3	X	A1	A1	X	X	A2	A1
24	pew	A3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
25	registering/proud	X	A1	A2	A1	X	A3	A3	X	X
26	Deposited	A2	X	A2	A1	A2	A1	A2	A2	X
27	Anticipated	X	A2	X	A1	A3	A2	X	A1	A1

Appendix LL

First, 2nd, 3rd Attempts at Classic/Multicultural Read-Aloud Vocabulary

Classic

Vocabulary Word (Test Question #)	Attempt 1	Attempt 2	Attempt 3	Inappropriate answer After Three Attempts
impatiently (#11)	44%	44%	0%	11%
bungalow (#9)	22%	56%	22%	0%
persisted (#13)	33%	33%	0%	33%
delighted (#16)	89%	11%	0%	0%
spectacles (#21)	22%	44%	0%	33%
grumble (#3)	67%	11%	11%	11%
waver (#4)	0%	11%	0%	89%
improve (#15)	78%	22%	0%	0%
rattled/gripped (#18)	44%	22%	11%	22%
spied (#22)	11%	22%	33%	33%
pew (#24)	0%	0%	11%	89%
Overall %	37%	25%	8%	29%

Multicultural

Vocabulary Word (Test Question #)	Attempt 1	Attempt 2	Attempt 3	Inappropriate answer After Three Attempts
responsibility (#1)	11%	78%	11%	0%
sophisticated (#2)	78%	11%	0%	11%
unforgettable (#6)	33%	22%	11%	33%
immediately (#19)	78%	0%	0%	22%
anticipated (#27)	33%	22%	11%	33%
populated (#10)	33%	33%	22%	11%
inherited (#12)	22%	11%	33%	33%
registering/proud (#25)	22%	11%	22%	44%
deposited (#26)	22%	56%	0%	22%
angrier (#8)	67%	22%	0%	11%
wobbly (#23)	44%	11%	11%	33%
plugged (#7)	33%	56%	0%	11%
erased (#14)	100%	0%	0%	0%
muttered (#17)	44%	22%	22%	11%
looming (#20)	67%	33%	0%	0%
shoved (#5)	67%	33%	0%	0%
Overall %	47%	26%	9%	17%

Appendix MM

Overview for Final Assessment Questions and Scores

CATEGORY	AMOUNT	QUESTIONS WITH RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS
Accompanying Tools and Materials	2	<p>What is a cluster map? For what do you use a cluster map? Draw a cluster map. (3 responses)</p> <p>What is an <i>excerpt</i>? Why is an excerpt important? (2 responses)</p>
Comprehension Strategies and Techniques	3	<p>What does <i>annotations</i> mean? How would you tell someone HOW to do annotations? Please annotate the following sentence: <i>The crimson bug was on the table in a jar.</i> (3 responses)</p> <p>What are four things good readers/good comprehenders do when they read? Give ONE example for the following: <i>The treasure of Lemon Brown</i> (2 responses)</p> <p>What does skim mean?</p>
Listening Skills	2	<p>What should you do when listening to a read-aloud?</p> <p>What other things could YOU do when you are listening to a read-aloud?</p>
Vocabulary	1	<p>General matching of pictures with vocabulary (20 responses)</p>
General Read-Aloud Strategy	2	<p>What if you were a teacher and you wanted to read-aloud <i>Diary of a wimpy kid</i> to your students. Explain how you would do it.</p> <p>The teacher/researcher has read-aloud 27 stories to you. What would you tell your principal about read-aloud?</p>

Appendix NN

Final Assessment Scores

Student	Tool Use Questions 1 & 6	Strategies & Techniques Questions 2, 3 & 8	Listening Skills Questions 4 & 5	General Read- Aloud Questions 7 & 9	Read- Aloud Vocabulary Question 10	Total
	W=5pts.	W=9pts.	W=6pts.	W=10pts.	W=20pts.	W=50
# 1	2.5/5	6.5/9	0/6	3/10	13/20	25
# 2	2.5/5	3/9	6/6	4/10	9/20	24.5
# 3	0/5	3.5/9	0/6	7/10	11/20	21.5
# 4	3.5/5	7/9	0/6	9/10	18/20	37.5
# 5	3/5	5.5/9	6/6	3/10	14/20	31.5
# 6	3/5	4.5/9	4.5/6	2/10	14/20	28
# 7	0/5	0/9	0/6	0/10	8/20	8
# 8	4/5	6/9	6/6	3/10	0/20	19
# 9	4/5	2/9	6/6	10/10	16/20	38

W=Worth

Appendix OO

Tabular Table for Question #10 in *Let's Play Read-Aloud*

Picture	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Student 7	Student 8
1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	√
3	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√
4	√	X	X	√	X	√	X	√
5	X	X	√	√	X	√	√	√
6	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	X
7	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
8*	X	√	X	√	√	X	X	√
9	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√
10	√	√	X	√	√	√	X	X
11	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√
12*	√	X	X	√	√	X	X	√
13	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	√
14	X	X	X	√	X	X	√	√
15	√	X	√	√	√	√	X	√
16	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	√
17	√	√	X	√	X	X	X	X
18*	X	X	√	X	√	√	X	√
19	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	X
20	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√
TOTAL	65%	45%	55%	90%	70%	70%	40%	80%

*Note: 50% - 75% had problems with this visual.

Appendix PP

Screen Capture of Question 10 from “Let’s Play Read-Aloud” Competition

4		sandbar	crawl	honor	side stroke
8		A Spring Life	A Winter Life	A Summer Life	Thank You, <u>Ma'm</u>
3 12		ash	puddle	<u>Yollie</u>	circle
13		The Diary of Latoya Hunter	Before We Were Free	My Insufferable Cousin	Eleven
14		English	chandelier	diary	adventure
17	Characters Rat Nose, Raul, & Miss Pringle	sight words	Any Small Goodness	My Name	Story of My Life
18		juggle	straw	penil	stomach
19		plastic bag	swollen wiener	birthday	chimpanzee

Appendix QQ

Researcher Notes on Final, Mixed Assessment Competition

Accompanying tools. The use of specific tools was important in the read-aloud sessions. These tools helped English language learners interact with texts before they listened to the read-alouds. Of the questions used to evaluate if English language learners understood the tools, 78% of the English language learners appropriately answered the questions. Worth 5 points in total, Question #1 (i.e., *What is a cluster map? What do you use a cluster map for? Draw a cluster map*) and Question #6 (i.e., *What is an excerpt? Why is an excerpt important?*) evaluated the English language learners' knowledge about tool usage.

For Question#1, the cluster map tool was described as having a specific function. It was "...a map that you can put information," "show details," and one useful "...so that we could use [it] to answer questions...in a bubble like who, what, when, where, why." Other English language learners stated it "is where you can put your ideas" and "for thinking before you read something." The English language learners understood that a cluster map is something they could use to generate internal thoughts and organize ideas.

Question #6 asked English language learners about the excerpt tool used at every read-aloud session to give English language learners the opportunity to follow along with the reader, as well as identify/highlight words or phrases they considered confusing/unfamiliar. Responses from the English language learners understood the concept of an excerpt. It was a "pergraph from the stoy," "the story that you are going to read," "a story or text" and a "part of a story." The second part of Question #6 asked about the importance of the excerpt tool. Responses indicated that excerpts are important "so you can know what you are supposed to

do,” “because it teach you how to read good,” “because it helps,” and “you can learn what is it and you could read.” While the written responses on the importance of the excerpt were a bit muddled, the excerpt artifacts illustrated that English language learners used their excerpts to write notes or draw pictures in the excerpt margins (i.e., annotate) to assist them *during* the read-aloud event. These responses illustrated that tool use was something internally positive and that these sorts of manipulatives helped their reading and overall understanding in some constructive way.

Student strategies/techniques. To assess strategies and techniques modeled for English language learners and practiced by them during each read-aloud session, three questions with multiple sub-questions were designed to have English language learners explain those strategies. These questions represented 9 points in the competition overall. Question #2 asked: *What does “annotations” mean? How would you tell someone HOW to do annotations? Please annotate the following sentence: The crimson bug was on the table in a jar.* Question #3 asked: *What are four things good readers/good comprehenders do when they read? Give ONE example for the following: The treasure of Lemon Brown.* Question #8 asked: *What does “skim” mean? On using strategies and techniques such as annotating, say-something strategy, and skimming, 56% of English language learners’ responses indicated they understood the strategies and techniques and how to use them in the course of reading.*

Question #2 asked students to consider annotating practices. Before or during read-alouds, English language learners practiced highlighting information that was either interesting or confusing in nature. Therefore, annotating became a strategy one uses

“...when you tell what that thing is going to be about.” One other English language learner noted that annotating “is lik giving the shorter term and us[ing] short words.” On the answer sheet designed for this final competitive assessment, the use of the sentence, “*The crimson bug was on the table in a jar*” was offered as an example to have English language learners apply their annotation skills. For this part of the question, several English language learners highlighted the word *crimson*, and another annotated the sentence in picture form by depicting a bug flying inside a jar that was on top of a table. Another student simply paraphrased the sentence, a practice evident in many examples of the English language learners’ annotations where they “explain your words,” or translated content into their own words specifically for their use during reading.

Question #3 asked about the four strategies involved with say-something. Responses produced those activities that good comprehenders participate (e.g., connecting, predicting, questioning or commenting). Using the title *The treasure of Lemon Brown*, English language learners produced responses where they practiced the skills of good readers. Connections, predictions, questioning or comments included the following: “I predict that the story the treasure of lemon brown is about a treasure that a kid found and was rich;” “I think it is about a treasure and a captain called (captain lemon);” and “I think this story is about a boy named limon brown and he goes and discovers treasure and he told everyone about the treasure he had found.” English language learners conveyed the concept of the four strategies and used them accordingly in examples. Audio recordings revealed many times English language learners verbalized these strategies during the sessions.

The final question in this category asked English language learners about the strategy

of skimming. For Question #8, skimming was described by one English language learner as a task used “to look [at] important word,” “when you are looking at all pages and not reading it” and “when you go through the story and find things that you don’t understand.” These three strategies and techniques were used throughout the read-aloud lessons and English language learners had time to soak in their purposes and use them accordingly. The 44% of those English language learners who did not score well submitted incomplete questions. Reviewing their performance over the course of the study, this result had more to do with test taking skills rather than their lack of knowledge of the strategies and techniques.

Listening skills. Worth a total of 9 points, questions #4 and #5 were used to evaluate those internal actions English language learners were participating in while listening to the read-aloud. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the learners had an understanding of what he/she should do while listening to a read-aloud. Both questions (What should you do when listening to a read-aloud? and What are other things YOU could do when you are listening to a read-aloud?) revealed a combination of internal and external actions the English language learners participated in during the read-aloud. As the teacher or researcher read aloud, internal actions described one student attempting “to remember what else read” and “read along, listen, and be quiet.” Another “follow[ed] along and pay[paid] attention [to] do work in class.” Deeper metacognitive practices were revealed as well where one student attempted to “predict, comment, question, and annotate,” while another would “start to predict” while listening to the story. One reader simply “try [tried] to understand the words.”

Other English language learners responded to external actions of listening to the read-aloud. One female “...highlight[ed] to understand the words in the story,” (i.e., annotating).

Several learners responded with internal and external actions where they performed a combination of activities. One other student remarked, "...think about...when, where, what, why [and] underline the word i knew," while two others answered, "...highlight [with markers], predict, and follow along" or "highlight, draw the story." One student remarked that he "could read along and listen focusly."

General read-aloud. Of the 10 points designated for the general read-aloud questions, 33% of the learners conveyed appropriate responses. Question #7 (What if you were a teacher and you wanted to read aloud *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* to your English language learners. Explain how you would do it.) and Question #9 (The teacher/researcher has read-aloud 26 stories to you. What would you tell your principal about read-aloud?) revealed that 67% had problems explaining and evaluating the read-aloud practice. However, responses revealed the gist of the nature, attitudes, and benefits of the read-aloud.

While two English language learners stated they would merely "teach them [English language learners] to read" and "just start to read," the majority of the English language learners deepened their views of the nature of read-alouds and elements tied to effectively practicing it. When one is practicing read-aloud, one male stated he would "reads it out loud." Another stated that one should "knew [know] how to read really good." A female student "would go and look at my title and predict what the story is about" and then "read the story and the cluster map and then do the retelling [retelling]." One other stated she would have English language learners "listen to the story and ask question." Still another advised having English language learners "make a comment [comment]; make a prediction; make a connection; [and] make a question." Another student stated the practice should include

“...how to annotate, how to skim, [or] how to highlight.” One student summed the practice up: “I would tell the story to them by first reading them and then showed them the picture and if they don’t now [know] a word i would explain it.”

Attitudes of the read-aloud practice ranged from basic “i like it,” “it was fun,” “I love read aloud” and “awesome.” Benefits regarding the learning of individual English language learners shifted from “i understand better” to “it taught me a lot of things” to “we learn [learn] how to read” to “i learn more” or “that i learn a lot.” Other comments included “i learn about the story.” One student revealed an array of ways the read-aloud benefited his learning: “It helps you predict...it helps you keep reading...it is like a story you read then retell...to see who you read.”

Vocabulary. The final question of the competition, Question #10, highlighted confusing words/phrases noted throughout the English language learners’ annotations to assess their visual capability of words/phrases filtered from the 27 read-aloud stories. Worth 20 points in total, 67% of the group received between 10-15 points in this section of the read-aloud competition. Individually, English language learners scores ranged high from 55% – 90%, making up 75% of the sample, and low from 40% – 45%. A tabular table (See Appendix QQ) highlighted those areas of success and difficulty noted in the English language learners’ scores. Asterisked (*) in the tabular are 8 separate visuals from Question #10 that presented significant problems for 50% - 75% of the English language learners. Fifty percent of the English language learners had problems with assessment numbers 4, 8, 12, and 18, constituting 20% of the test. Number #4 depicted a swimmer swimming sidestroke, as in *On my honor* (Bauer, 1986). Choices included *sandbar*, *crawl*, *honor* and

sidestroke. Number #8 illustrated a pie visual from, *A summer life*, about the protagonist stealing a pie (Soto, 1990). Choices included one other read-aloud title (i.e., *Thank you, ma'm*) and a play on the seasons (e.g., *A spring life, A winter life*). Visual #12 included a picture of goulashes in a puddle of water marked with by arrow, where the word puddle was the appropriate answer. Remaining choices included words from *Mother and daughter* with the exception of the word *circle*. Choices included *ash* and *Yollie*. Number 18 depicted a diagram of a stomach used on one of the graphic strips. Choices included *juggle* and *peril* from two other read-aloud stories, an inappropriate answer (i.e., *straw*), and *stomach*.

Sixty-three (63%) of the English language learners had additional problems selecting appropriate answers for 3 of the assessment questions: 14, 17, and 19. Number 14 depicted a visual of a chandelier that many of the English language learners had in their homes. Choices included *English, chandelier, diary, and adventure*, all vocabulary words from various read-aloud stories. Number 17 featured names of characters from *Any small goodness* (Johnston, 2001). Choices included *sight words* and three read-aloud story titles: *Any small goodness, My name* (Cisneros, 1984), and *The story of my life* (Keller, 1988). Number 19 depicted a wiener on a fork tine. Choices included *plastic bag, swollen wiener, chimpanzee, and birthday*. See screen capture of Question 10 from the “Let’s Play Read-Aloud” competition in Appendix RR. One question from the competition yielded 75% of the English language learners selecting the incorrect response, #13. It visual two photos, one of a parrot and the other of a skirt, hence *parrot-skirt*, an article of clothing worn by the characters in *Before we were free* (Alvarez, 2002). Choices included the title and three other read-alouds titles: *The diary of Latoya Hunter, My insufferable cousin, and Eleven*.

Appendix RR

Additional Patterns from Retellings of Phases 1, 2 and 3

Retellings of Read-Aloud Stories 1 – 9

Three patterns emerged in Stories 1-9: Pattern 1, where English language learner retellings in this study exhibited skills and abilities warranted in retellings; Pattern 2, where English language learner retellings in this study indicated literacy skills and abilities that weakened retelling characteristics; Pattern 3, where English language learner written retellings in this study indicated a disconnect with accompanied (i.e., comprehension activities) strategies.

Pattern 1: English language learner retellings in this study exhibited skills and abilities warranted in retellings. In the first set of stories, written retellings indicated some control over a format (i.e., paragraph) and the written form of the language. Engagement with text was illustrated by the students grappling with the 5-WH strategy (i.e., where, who, what, when and why) to structure their retellings. This is important since such information indicates comprehension that addresses whole range of significant language processes, including literal recall of events (i.e., surface information), characterization, main ideas, and text structure (Brown & Cambourne, 1987). Appropriate attempts at (1) the main pattern of the read-aloud; (2) supporting details; (3) recognizing the audience based on a fixed prompt (i.e., BFF), and (4) emotional responses to the texts were least used, but nevertheless present in retellings. Such issues and attempts are problematic in all developing writers.

Pattern 2: English language learner retellings in this study exhibited literacy skills and abilities that weakened retelling characteristics. Noted through the retellings,

particularly in the first phase of the research, were expected problems, including partial or problematic comprehension, efferent writing, irrelevant detail usage, and plagiarism. The use of Leslie and Caldwell's (2009) levels attributed to such a pattern with their research on features of solid retellings (e.g., main idea, details, interpretive ideas, generalizations, supplementations, coherence, completeness, aesthetic/efferent information, elicited feelings, and linguistic conventions). Mechanics was a major issue, but not a factor in the retellings phase or in the entire study, for that matter, due to adherence of the natural learning theory supporting this study. The majority of the retellings in this phase and throughout the research study fulfilled the features (i.e., *evident in retelling*) of gist or main idea and story element details. Skills in summarizing and paraphrasing information ranged from frustrations of IDK (I Don't Know) to verbosity, but overall these areas were not problematic for this group of Students. In addition The Students' retellings illustrated a familiarity with those areas most desired in student retellings, but were weak in syntax to make a fair judgment. Through the use of descriptive data, features on the lowest end that were weak or seldom present (i.e., *not evident in retelling*) were elicited feelings, generalizations, supplementations, and interpretive ideas.

By the second phase of stories, modifications which involved Students seeing actual items from the story in an exhibit in front of the room (i.e., displays); (2) viewing boardwork, which highlighted spellings of words/phrases or patterns/topics written in the moments of discussion either by the teacher in charge or this researcher; and (3) using graphic strips that highlighted 2x2 pictures of nouns/actions from the story, better pictures of the students' ability to recall information, paraphrase the read-aloud, concentrate on main points, and

focus on certain characters or relationships with dual characters were noteworthy retelling moments. Completeness, which covered all the necessary parts of a solid retelling, was satisfied by a few of the learners at sporadic times throughout the study.

Pattern 3: Students written retellings in this study indicated disconnects with accompanying strategies. Harris and Duibhir (2011) noted what is problematic in reading strategy development: some language learners do not transfer strategies well. Their recommendation was similar to that in many of the English language learner middle schools studies: strategies must be explicitly taught. However, strategies must extend further than teaching and reinforced with practice. In the first phase of the read-aloud study, for example, tools such as the graphic organizers and reference “cheat” sheets were treated by the Students as separate “assignments” to complete. Students had a time connecting what one had to do with the other. Once the rationale regarding tool use was conveyed with modeling and repeated think-alouds (i.e., drill and skill), their practice time using the 5-prong cluster map or 5-WH strategies retellings helped them develop stronger retelling writings. Their writing first started as copying information from the tools verbatim and progressed to stronger retellings that were coherent and organized. Synchronizing the tools with their retellings made for writings they were proud to put on top the pile.

Read-Aloud Retellings of Stories 10 – 18

As the Students continued working through their individual issues during the say-something strategies and annotations, other aspects emerged about the writings of this group of learners. Retellings from Stories 10 – 18 produced three more patterns: Pattern 4, where student written retellings combined parts of the original story and parts of a story recreated

by them; Pattern 5 where they showed an increase in confidence in general language use. Pattern 6 where they took risks in their retellings.

Pattern 4: Some student written retellings in this study exhibited parts of the original story and parts of the story recreated by them. The pattern is somewhat problematic in the context of the classroom, but applauded in the research. Native English students in Brown & Cambourne (1987) research were found to accurately retell the story read to them by the teacher. The accuracy of retelling the read-alouds in the current study went beyond the scope of the excerpt, where some or all of the events and character traits were problematic for some of the Students to recall. In an effort to make sense of the text, students took liberties with some of the content in the read-stories. The prompt instruction is to re-tell the story, not re-make the story. However, the research indicates a high level of praise for re-making a story. Kenyon and Randall (1997) terms it *restorying*, an aesthetic process where a person, who in his/her own right has a story, and uses those personal attributes to remake a story through the power of the imagination. This literary process is the “product of the inveterate fictionalizing of our memory and imagination” that places the storyteller in a powerful position (p. 2). This process of restorying started in the first phase of the read-aloud and continued through the study.

Pattern 5: Student written retellings in this study exhibited an increase in confidence in general language use for these writers. Goodman et al. (1989) contended that confidence arises from connecting external reading experiences with those that occur internally, as inside the classroom. If Students cannot make connections with content they are reading, they cannot stand up to those challenges set before them in the literacy

classroom. As a result, confidence is forfeited. While the Students' and cloze-maze fluctuated in this phase, confidence increased in the student's written retellings. Researcher field notes documented students not referencing their "cheat" sheets as often, and writing times were longer for the majority of students. By the conclusion of the first phase of retellings (Stories 1-9) and continuing through this phase # (Stories 10-18), the Students retellings showed their confidence in a general use of the language. Excluding grammar/mechanics, which were not the focus of these retellings, confidence in the general use of the language increased from this phase to the conclusion of the study. Words from read-aloud stories were used in retellings. Sentence structures increased in length, and other students' paragraphs increased in areas including example use, information from graphic organizers, and affective areas where the story elicited personal feelings. Also, organization of the retellings adhered more to the 5WH strategy, and students met the basics of the retelling, including gist/main idea, story elements, coherence, and completeness factors.

Pattern 6: English language learners in this study began taking risks in their written retellings. Another pattern emerging from the English language learners' written retelling for this phase was the pattern of risktaking. Using read-aloud to break the obstacles that come with accessibility offered students the opportunity to take risks in retellings. Risktaking for these set of writers was an important asset to observe in the writings. They were able to craft retellings using a wide variety of tools at hand. Those who used the available cheat sheets (i.e., references) to organize their thoughts--whether they were described as good or poor comprehenders--raised the bar of the retelling. Risks were documented in their sentence structure, efferent information filtered from the read-aloud

stories, and their interests in areas beyond the prompt.

Read-Aloud Retellings 19 - 27

At the culmination of the study, retellings were improving and students' writings were shaping in areas and components important in retelling research. A pattern taking better shape in the final phase was self-correction, an activity least used in the first two phases of the study, but strengthened in the end. Additionally, retellings in the final phase included areas such as interpretation, coherence, and elicited feelings, and a better balanced retelling folding in efferent and aesthetic stance were noted.

Pattern 7: English language learners in this study began to exhibit self-corrective behaviors. Noted in the English language learners samples were areas of self correction. Students would scratch out words (i.e., scratchouts), even entire sentences, to get across their points. While parts of speech, particularly verb tense and confusing word (e.g., *there, their; to, too; quit, quite*) scratch-outs were noted sporadically, other scratch-outs revealed self-correction efforts in two main areas: word choice and general grammar/mechanics. Word choice scratch-outs, where one word did not adequately convey what the English language learner wanted to write, were noted in the retellings. Adding/changing adjectives to better describe nouns and insertions of better words/phrases were noted in retellings. This revealed a carefulness on the part of the English language learner to properly pattern words at the right moment in the retelling. Self-corrective behaviors were noted in grammar/mechanics, especially areas involving indecisions with spelling and capitalization. These self corrective behaviors illustrated thought processes involving grappling with English rules and revealed live mental activities where learners were thinking in the process of writing.

Endnotes

ⁱ To eliminate the need to copy information verbatim, the read-aloud excerpt was taken from students immediately after the read-aloud session to allow them to demonstrate their understanding of the text with limited information. While Stahl (2009) noted that retellings place high cognitive demands on the re-teller, these mental demands can be mitigated with strategically placed modifications prior to writing, such as scaffolding, graphic organizers, and comprehension activities. In the current study, the researcher decided that the student products from any modifications would remain with the students or in the classroom setting and the English language learners were free to write their retellings of the read-aloud using these modifications practiced with them throughout the read-aloud session.
