

How Does an Accomplished Teacher Use Read-Aloud Materials in a Linguistically-
Diverse First Grade Classroom?

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my family. To my mom and dad, Francis, May, Kevin, Angel, Pei-Yao, Sonia and Alan. Your encouragement, understanding and love helped make this dissertation possible. Thanks for always being there and assuming that the product would be wonderful. Especially to my brother for his taking care of the whole family when I was gone to pursue study in order to help students improve their learning.

ABSTRACT

The challenge today for teachers in English speaking nations worldwide is to teach English to speakers of other languages. Research findings support the use of storybook reading with linguistically-diverse students to improve their language and literacy development, including phonological awareness, concept of print, vocabulary, oral language and comprehension (Ghosn, 2010; Hancock, 2002; Kalia, 2007; Robert & Neal, 2004, Yang, 2009). Most of the research has used experimental designs and statistical analysis of students' academic achievement. There is less research focusing on how teachers select reading materials and how teachers present the texts to linguistically-diverse students. Therefore, I conducted a qualitative case study to see how one teacher uses picturebooks and other read-aloud materials to help linguistically-diverse students' learning.

In this study, I used purposive selection to choose an accomplished teacher in an elementary school. The setting for this research is one 1st grade class with linguistically-diverse students in an elementary school in the Midwestern United States. The participants in this study were a classroom teacher and her first graders in the elementary school. In the class I studied, there were 10 female and 13 male students. Among them five were native speakers and the other students spoke a language other than English at home.

The research findings showed that the books and read-aloud materials the teacher chose included a variety of types. The major factor the teacher took into consideration when selecting books was her current learning target. All these books and reading materials provided an opportunity for discussion. The teacher typically used them as a vehicle for introducing story elements and new information. Most of the read alouds were completed in a single session except for the chapter book and some longer books. The teacher usually chose books a little bit above the grade level, such as the 2nd grade level, or at the grade level.

While presenting the books, in addition to vocabulary instruction the teacher did a great amount of modeling, which is especially crucial for linguistically-diverse students. She demonstrated strategies to figure out unfamiliar words, comprehension strategies and

how to be a “fabulous reader.” The teacher guided students to talk and discuss the content by using graphic organizers, a KWL chart, and others. Most importantly, the teacher constantly provided language examples and supported students’ language development. She was able to pinpoint what students needed and what confused them and provide appropriate scaffolding. Her linguistically-diverse students were well equipped with a variety of valuable strategies that prepared them for their independent reading. After reading, students spent time in independent reading. The follow-up activities primarily focused on students’ responses to reading. Through the reader responses, the teacher was able to evaluate students’ learning and in turn inform her own teaching. Moreover, the teacher also guided students to create their own dictionaries and animal reports.

Read alouds are an important instructional activity for linguistically-diverse students. This teacher shows that there is much more teaching before, during and after read alouds in addition to reading to students. The choice of what and how to read are significant for linguistically-diverse students’ learning. Future research could examine how other read-aloud materials influence reading aloud and linguistically-diverse students’ literacy learning.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Could you please read the story again in Chinese?” students asked me after I read aloud an English picturebook about Halloween. That was students’ typical response to my occasional read alouds back in the time when I was teaching elementary school in Taiwan. I was puzzled by students’ responses and faced the dilemma of whether to retell the story in Chinese or insist on reading it in English. Their responses stimulated me to reflect on my teaching. I knew if I wanted to help my students try to read English books, there must be something more I needed to do in addition to the daily teaching. From then on, I started to wonder what I needed to do to help my students become better readers, and help them show their autonomy by choosing English books they liked and were able to read. Fortunately, my learning experiences in the United States have infused me with the current trends in English teaching and an understanding of effective instruction. I have thought about how I could apply what I have learned here to students in Taiwan. How do I modify instruction widely accepted here to meet the needs of students in Taiwan? What suggestions could I provide for teachers in Taiwan to teach English in a more effective and holistic way? I hope to be able to provide some guidelines for teachers in Taiwan and help students to be able to read English books they like for pleasure or for information. These goals have guided me to conduct this study.

The Trends and Challenges of English Teaching in Taiwanese Elementary Schools

In Taiwan, the government began long-term reform of the mediocre educational system, and English teaching begins earlier and earlier in the public schools. Students start to learn English in the elementary school years. Some students come into school knowing absolutely nothing in English and teachers start them on the basics, such as the alphabet and phonics. However, others have already learned some English words before they started formal schooling, because of the massive expansion of bilingual kindergartens. In addition, various private language schools provide a lot of resources to learn English outside of schools. Classes with mixed English ability students are one of the challenges teachers face in Taiwanese elementary schools.

Most of the English teachers in the elementary schools in Taiwan use textbooks designed especially for Taiwanese students, but there are still a few teachers who choose textbooks imported from other countries. These textbooks emphasize teaching fundamental elements, such as phonics, grammar, and sentence structures. Although these are very crucial elements that students need to acquire, the textbooks contain limited vocabulary and sentence structures in consideration of beginning learners' emergent English proficiency. Nevertheless, they are still beneficial for students in a certain way. For example, they include some culturally related events, such as the Dragon Boat Festival and the Moon Festival. Students might feel motivated to learn English vocabulary associated with these events because of their familiarity. The textbook open market policy gives teachers great autonomy in choosing their textbooks, but the simplified vocabulary and sentence structures in the textbooks could lead to students' limited English learning and contribute to a feeling of boredom. Students aren't using the language in a natural way. In addition, teachers need to try hard to fit all the content into a tight school schedule. Nowadays, people in Taiwan are eager to learn English in many ways. The learning goals for elementary students learning English are primarily to foster their motivation and inspire them to enjoy learning a new language and culture. The main focuses in higher level schools are to learn reading and writing to improve their test scores, so they can get into better high schools and eventually colleges.

My English Teaching Experiences in Taiwan

While I was teaching English in elementary school, I tried to help students maximize their English learning by exposing them to as many English reading experience as possible beyond the textbooks as well as teaching them the basic elements of language. I had a small classroom library that I filled with as many English books as I could. In doing so, I tried to increase students' access to books. Additionally, I worked with students to create their own small books and hoped to enhance their exposure to English books at home. They could read these books with their families. Most importantly, I tried to read books aloud for some special occasions, such as holidays like Christmas. These were good opportunities for students to learn to respect and foster positive attitudes toward different cultures while learning new languages. Research shows that students who are

exposed to multicultural books have positive gains in their openness toward diverse populations (Wham, Barnhart & Cook, 1996). Although students seemed to enjoy listening to the stories and seeing the vivid illustrations, their responses to my read alouds helped me realize that there were many things I needed to do ahead of time before I read an authentic English book aloud. Read alouds meant not simply reading a book aloud. Even though I pre-taught some of the key vocabulary in these books, students still had difficulties in comprehending the storylines and didn't benefit much from these read alouds. In fact, the scaffolding provided by adults should be consistent with the child's abilities. If the words in the book are beyond the child's comprehension even when read aloud, then the book reading cannot be expected to benefit the children (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, how to choose appropriate books within students' language proficiency but that were still intriguing for them became one of my questions.

In my six-year teaching experience in the elementary school, I recognized some drawbacks in our English education at the elementary level. For example, the English proficiency gap occurs not only between urban and rural areas, but also between schools and among classes. Compared to the students enrolled in the private English programs outside of school, the public school provides insufficient learning time. In spite of the birthrate in Taiwan falling rapidly, most of the class sizes are still in excess of thirty. It is a great burden for teachers with such a hectic teaching schedule to meet individual students' needs. Hence, the focus on skills in combination with limited learning hours, and mixed-levels in a large class result in students' limited English progress, especially for the lower-achievement students. Students struggle to pick up the new language, much less read authentic English books and become lifelong readers.

Learning Experiences in the United States

My interest in knowing more about English teaching and in improving the practice of the field spurred me to come to the United States for further study. After I started studying at the University of Minnesota, I had several opportunities to observe elementary teachers because of the course requirements. Observing these classes has been a valuable experience for me, enabling me to learn so much about teaching English with culturally diverse students. For example, I know working with small groups is very

rewarding because it has allowed teachers to get to know many of the students well and help them with their language development.

Read-Aloud Practices

Another important instruction widely accepted here is teachers' read alouds. In spite of limited numbers of visits and a small sample size, I realized that read alouds are crucial practices here. They are usually conducted on a regular basis in most of the classrooms. What I noticed first was there is usually a seat or a spot for a teacher in the corner or in front of the classroom. Some of them are fancy chairs, and others are more common ones. Teachers usually sit on the chair, hold the book up high, but sometimes they might stand, or other times walk around the classroom. Students sit on the rug quietly around the teacher and wait for the teacher's read alouds. At first, I was impressed by the cozy and quiet atmosphere before teacher's read alouds. Then I was amazed by different styles and practices of read alouds in the classrooms. For example, some teachers' reading was more spontaneous and they read smoothly with little interruption except for occasional comprehension checks. Others read with more specific learning objectives in mind. In some school districts, some teachers were even asked to read books aloud according to the requirements of curriculum. They were not allowed to have their own selection of read-aloud books and reading styles. Among these observation experiences, I remember on one occasion a fourth grade teacher even read a picturebook for her upper grade students. It helped me rethink my assumption that picturebooks are merely useful for younger children. I realized that there were a lot of high quality picturebooks even for eighth graders. Generally, teachers read in different ways. Their reading styles varied even when reading the same books. Moreover, picturebooks emerged as the most common reading material in these classrooms. Most importantly, students being read aloud were engaged in the literacy experience. They sat quietly and paid attention to the story during read alouds. They raised their hands and were eager to share their thoughts during or after teacher's read alouds. Those observation experiences stimulated me to realize there was nothing more important for students' learning than motivating them to read books by positive read-aloud experiences.

Linguistically-Diverse Students

Another phenomenon I found in the classrooms here was the growing number of linguistically-diverse students. It is natural to see students speak different first languages with each other in classes and at recess in some classrooms. You can hear Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Somali, and so on. Some students seem to speak fluent English; others speak a little or maybe do not speak a word of English. In one classroom I observed, there was one student who had just moved here and did not speak a word of English. He was so quiet but the classroom teacher was patient, provided one-on-one scaffolding, and tried to motivate him to write and draw instead of forcing him to speak. Teachers here work with students from various cultural backgrounds and with different language proficiencies. I believe the challenges teachers face here are nothing less than teachers in my country. Based on my experience in Taiwan and observations and learning in the United States, I found that teachers in both cultures emphasize the elements of reading including phonics, vocabulary and comprehension.

One teacher told me that one of her students was able to catch up and speak fluent English now although she was unable to speak a word of English at all one year ago upon entering the school. Later, I realized that there were a lot of cases showing similar dramatic progress. These linguistically-diverse students' amazing achievements stimulated my eagerness to learn more about how teachers here helped linguistically-diverse students. Teachers here regularly conducted read alouds for students, even for linguistically-diverse students with limited English proficiency. Their teaching was encouraging and stimulated me to think about the possibility and appropriateness of applying read alouds to Taiwanese students. There are still many cultural and structural differences, but I believe teachers in Taiwan can learn and gain insight from teachers' read-aloud practices here.

The Potential of Picturebooks

Picturebook reading to children is not popular and not even practiced in many cultures (Health, 1982; Mason, 1992). Take myself as an example; I did not have any experience being read any English books when I was young. Learning English for me was nothing more than memorizing vocabulary, sentence structures and grammar rules and taking quizzes on them. The purpose of reading an English article was to answer

after- reading multiple choice questions. There were very little authentic English book reading experiences in my middle and high school learning. I did not make obvious progress in my English until I started to read widely during my graduate study. I read a lot of novels, plays, and poems during that time. While enjoying reading literature, I gradually expanded my vocabulary and improved my comprehension of books. My improvement came unintentionally and naturally through reading a great amount and a variety of books. Therefore, I believe wide reading is a powerful means for English learning. In fact, research shows that wide reading is a powerful vehicle for vocabulary acquisition for older and more proficient readers (Stanovich, 1986). Nevertheless, beginning readers are limited in their reading to simple decodable or familiar texts (Beck & Mckeown, 2007). Without teachers' support and scaffolding, they are unable to access as many books as possible. Therefore, teachers' read alouds seem to fill the gap by exposing students to rich book language.

Read alouds do not directly contribute to all dimensions of literacy learning. Reading to children certainly does not teach them everything that they need to know in order to become literate. Although read alouds may not be necessary, they are certainly useful for most children (Teale, 2003). Inspired by my occasional visits in different classrooms, I realized that reading to children is more complex than it appears on the surface. Teachers need to decide how much to read, what to read, how to read, and where read alouds fit in a particular teaching situation. Conducting read alouds involves a variety of instructional practices. Researchers suggest that reading stories does not have a magical effect on literacy development; rather it is the quality of the interaction that occurs during reading that results in positive effects. Certain methods, attitudes, and interactive behaviors apparently enhance the potential of the read-aloud event for promoting literacy development (Morrow & Brittain, 2003). Although research provides a solid base for using read alouds, knowing what existing research shows us about high quality read alouds is one thing, and really conducting a read aloud by ourselves is another thing. Some teachers may think reading with their students is important. Even in Taiwan, there are absolutely some teachers who would like to read aloud with their students. However, they might be too overwhelmed with stress and daily tasks to allow

time for this activity. Similarly, I believe teachers here might feel a little bit overwhelmed by the expectations created by state and district academic standards. However, overall teachers here integrated storybook reading as part of their regular teaching practice, and used read alouds to broaden students' content knowledge, to model reading strategies and to share the enjoyment of reading with children (Morrow & Brittain, 2003). Therefore, it would be interesting to know how teachers conduct read alouds under constraints from schools and districts. I am personally more interested in knowing teachers' read-aloud practices with linguistically-diverse students because I feel connected to these students. Acquiring a new language at a younger age and learning new content with the language they were not familiar with is a big challenge for linguistically-diverse students. It is also challenging for teachers with linguistically-diverse students in the mainstream classrooms. Thus, a study exploring how teachers do read alouds would help me become more knowledgeable about read-aloud practice.

My Hope for the Study

There will never be a standard or formula for conducting read alouds. In fact, no one particular read-aloud style has proven superior to others, but some strategies seem to have greater benefit for children (Dickinson, 2001). My interest in knowing more about read-aloud practices with primary linguistically-diverse students led me to conduct this study. My goals for the study were to explore how an exemplary teacher uses read alouds as an instructional activity and scaffolds linguistically-diverse students' language, and further helps them apply their learning to their independent reading. I believed this would help me arrive at a better understanding of the effect of read alouds in order to promote read alouds in Taiwan. I also hoped this study would provide a little help for teachers working with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition to the expectation of language development, most importantly, I hoped to help students foster a craving for books and enjoy the pure happiness of reading.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review the research about the use of the picturebooks for elementary students, including English speakers and linguistically-diverse students. First, I focus on literature-based instruction in which literature is used to establish students' literacy. I synthesize the characteristics of literature-based instruction and review a range of programs to see how literature helps to improve linguistically-diverse students' literacy development. Next, I examine teachers' book selections and how different books influence students' learning. Then, I review the research and discuss how read-aloud materials impact students learning in terms of language development, reading development and comprehension. I also report additional research on reader response and various genres. Finally, I review research exploring how different teachers' read-aloud styles influence students' learning.

Literature-Based Instruction

Studies on the influence of children's literature and storybook reading instruction have been carried out in a number of first language contexts (Ghosn, 2010). The positive influence of stories on first language development is well documented in the literature. Similarly, literature can play a crucial role in immersing linguistically-diverse students in their learning of English (Vardell, Hadaway & Young, 2006). Linguistically-diverse students require ample opportunities to hear and use English in various authentic contexts that encourage and facilitate communication and social interaction in a non-threatening environment. Proponents of literature-based reading instruction recommend that literature be the primary reading material used in reading programs. Children's literature gives linguistically-diverse students the chance to learn English by providing comprehensible input. There are comparable stories and various genres that can be used as a foundation for linguistically-diverse students to arouse interest, activate prior knowledge and enhance understanding of the reading, similar to mainstream English speakers (Morrow & Gambrell, 2001).

My underlying theoretical framework is that texts can serve as "scaffolds" for students' learning. Scaffolds in the texts can come from many different features, such as

the pictures and words used (Hiebert, 1998). Text features can provide support for language and literacy development. For example, highly visual books help provide scaffolding when students start to read the pictures (Hadaway & Young, 2010). Text also introduces relatively rare, harder words to negotiate. Spoken interactions typically use fewer words, whereas written texts are lexically more varied. In addition, texts are more likely to introduce topics that would rarely appear in daily conversation (Temple & Snow, 2003).

Definition of Literature-Based Instruction

Literature-based instruction contains a wide range of materials and practices. A variety of literature is utilized as primary reading materials in the programs (Giddings, 1992). Current definitions of literature-based instruction emphasize high-quality children's literature. This usually means using trade books as the major instructional materials to support students' literacy development (Huck, 1977; Morrow & Gambrell, 2001; Scharer, 1992). Researchers have defined literature-based reading instruction based on their observations and research. Hiebert and Colt (1989) suggest that literature-based reading instruction involves various teacher and student interaction and includes the selection of literature so that children develop as thoughtful, proficient readers. They identified three patterns of literature-based reading instruction that blend different aspects of instructional format and literature selection: teacher-selected literature in teacher-led groups, teacher- and student-selected literature in teacher- and student-led small groups, and student-selected literature read independently. Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) define literature-based reading instruction as a process which primarily uses real books to teach and foster literacy. Zarrillo (1989) describes literature-based reading instruction as practices and activities using novels, informational books, short stories, poems and plays. He insists that the literature not be rewritten for instructional purposes and that it replaces rather than being a supplement to the basal reading textbooks.

A number of different programs adopt different formats for using literature (Hiebert & Colt, 1989). Teachers have various interpretations regarding the definition and implementation of literature-based instruction. They are diverse in overall design and specific implementation (Zarrillo, 1989). Some advocate children's self selections in their

programs. Others put students in groups to study the same books (Hiebert & Colt, 1989). According to Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland (1993), literature-based reading programs include the following features: A knowledgeable teacher who can guide students, an environment that encourages social interaction about books, a structure that allows students to make decisions to what they want to do with the books and the time and materials to allow students to read and respond. However, although researchers share different perspectives for using literature as part of instructions, their definitions can be combined to form a comprehensive literature-based reading program (Hiebert & Colt, 1989). The following characteristics are shared by the researchers' findings.

Basic Elements of Literature-Based Instruction

Use of natural text. The most significant feature of literature-based instruction is the use of high quality, full-length picturebooks as the instructional materials to support reading achievement (Huck, 1977; Morrow & Gambrell, 2001; Scharer, 1992). From a semiotic theoretical perspective, picturebooks are natural and appropriate for children since advocates assume that language is only one form of communication to construct meaning about the world. Picturebooks rely greatly on an illustrational sequence to convey meaning in addition to the words. All the features of picturebooks constitute sign systems (the words and pictures). Therefore, they suggest that all the parts and characteristics of picturebooks convey meaning: the size of the book, the choice of colors, typefaces, the layout, the relationship of the illustrations, and so on- all can function as signs. Learning to read picturebooks includes learning to read the visual text of the illustrations as well as the verbal signs (Sipe, 2008).

In Zarrillo's (1989) study, he argued that the reading materials in a literature-based program have to meet two criteria: The literature is not rewritten for instructional purposes, and the literature supplants, not supplements, the basal reading program. Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) also emphasized the use of children's literature written in natural, uncontrolled language. Generally, children's literature has greater richness of vocabulary, sentence structure, and literacy form than basal readers. It also has more plot complications, more character development and conflict. Holistic literature-based classrooms should be rich in a variety of books and print. These classrooms make little

use of materials written specifically to teach reading (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987; Koeller, 1981). Advocates of literature-based reading instruction argue that real books and literature should be used in reading instruction. Instruction should not begin with fragmented language but should employ complete forms of language such as stories, poems, and informational material (Gidding, 1992).

Read-aloud sessions. In literature-based instruction, teachers regularly spend time reading aloud to their students. Hoffman, Roser and Battle (1993) found that approximately eight of every ten K-2 classrooms they observed had a read aloud. In the read-aloud classrooms, 95% of them spent between 5 and 20 minutes on this activity. In Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, and Ro's study (1998), they showed that primary-grade teachers spent a moderate to considerable amount of time reading aloud to children.

In all of the studies reviewed, read alouds seems to be a must. Reading aloud to students is an excellent way to present new vocabulary, set up small-group conversations, model story structure, teach content knowledge, and motivate students to learn to read (Helman, 2009). In addition, research shows that daily reading aloud from enjoyable trade books has been the key that unlocks literacy growth for many disabled readers (Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989). In the L1 setting, research also indicates the value of reading aloud. Morrow, Tracey, Woo and Pressley (1998) listed reading aloud as a key type of reading experience provided in the cases of "exemplary" first-grade literacy instruction that they studied. Cochran-Smith's study (1984) provided great insight into children's construction of meaning during read alouds, and their comprehension strategy learning. Over the past decade, Dickinson's work has delineated specific connections between children's learning and teacher read-aloud practices (2001).

Similarly, read alouds facilitate language acquisition for students new to English. Through teacher read alouds, linguistically-diverse students receive frequent exposure to comprehensive input and quality language models. The inherent support provided by illustrations and authentic purposeful use of language contribute to language growth (Hadaway, Vardell & Young, 2002). The talk about books being read gives linguistically-diverse students opportunities to apply their common language learning strategies (Boyle & Peregoy, 1990). It allows linguistically-diverse students the opportunities to listen,

speak and write in the target language in a meaningful setting. The relationship between reading aloud and literacy development has been substantiated by research findings (Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999).

The use of literature across the curriculum. Literature can enrich all subjects across the curriculum. Textbooks tend to result in the accumulation of factual knowledge and overlook some topics, whereas children's literature has few restrictions and can provide readers with insight beyond factual knowledge. They also allow a wide range of ideas that stimulate readers' responses, personal connections, imagination, predictions and evaluation (Morrow, Gambrell, 2001; Smith & Johnson, 1994). Many teachers try to use children's books in not only the English language arts, but also in science, mathematics, social studies, art and music. They select children's books about those areas and use them as the texts through which students practice reading skills and content knowledge (Galda, Cullinan, & Sipe, 2010; Huck, 1977).

There are studies demonstrating that the use of children's literature enhances students' achievement in the content areas. For example, researchers found that students' understanding of difficult scientific concepts is enhanced through the use of literature (Moore & Moore, 1989). Smith, Monson and Dobson (1992) explored the effects of using historical novels in social studies. Compared to the control group of using basal readers and social studies texts, the treatment group used historical novels for reading and social studies instruction. The research results showed that students in the group using historical novels significantly recalled more details, main ideas and total amount of historical information than the students in the control group. Jones, Coombs, McKinney (1994) compared a literature-based themed unit approach to a traditional textbook approach for learning about Mexico. The research findings indicated that the literature-based group showed a significant gain in achievement as compared to the textbook group in the content knowledge about Mexico. Morrow, Pressley, Smith & Smith (1997) also showed that children in the literature/science group scored significantly better than the control group on standardized and informal written and oral tests.

Children's responses to books. Merely reading to children may not be sufficient for students' optimal literacy growth (Roser & Martinez, 1985). What teachers say and

do, the books they select and how they select them, and the tasks they set for students all affect students' response to the books (Galda & Beach, 2001). If teachers want students to think about what they have read, teachers need to provide time for students to respond to books in various ways which will make them more memorable and interest others in reading the stories. Students should have an opportunity to interpret books in ways which will take them more deeply into the meaning of the stories (Huck, 1977). Open-ended responses to books permit children to share their interests, questions and interpretations after reading a book (Zarrillo, 1989).

Effective teachers encourage students to interpret what is read to them and participate in a variety of response activities related to the readings. These may include discussion, writing, drama, and artistic expression. Self-selection can be a feature of this approach if students choose materials included in the unit (Giddings, 1992; Zarrillo, 1989). Researchers pointed out some important ideas that teachers need to notice. For example, Sipe (1998, 2002) argues that children's responses to the book help teachers to understand the ways that children comprehend the stories. Teachers can scaffold children's meaning construction through storybook read alouds. Because two thirds of the children's conversational turns in his study took place during the storybook read alouds, it was important to allow children to talk during the reading of the story. Galda and Liang (2003) pointed out that teachers often teach literature and use literature to teach social studies from an efferent stance rather than an aesthetic stance. Teachers' instruction affects which stance students adopt toward a text. Teachers need to encourage students to read fiction from an aesthetic stance. By doing so, students are more likely to make the connection with the story and create enthusiasm for reading.

Students' independent reading. Researchers suggest that there is a strong connection between time spent in reading and reading achievement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999). In order to stimulate students' interest in books, teachers need to provide a daily time for them to practice their reading skills by letting children read books of their own choice, at their own pace and for their own purpose (Huck, 1977). One way to see that all children have an opportunity to read widely is to provide a certain time for recreational or free reading. It is also called

individualized reading, self-selection and self-pacing programs (Zarrillo,1989). Some prefer to call this period sustained silent reading (SSR) (McCracken & McCracken, 1987). During this time, children read self-selected books. It is the time provided for students and teachers to read materials of their own choosing without interruption (Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989). Students who are given the right to choose their reading materials report reading more than other students (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). It is a good opportunity to reread favorite books or to read something new. It is the best way to give children the practice they need to apply their newly learned skills (Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989).

Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) found that the SSR adaptation can increase students' wide reading, metacognitive awareness and comprehension. Trudel (2008) switched to Structured Independent Reading (IR), in which the teacher provides guidance in the students' text selections, students keep records of what they read and reflect on what they read. Students are scheduled to engage in a 5-10 minute teacher- student discussion of what they are reading. Her research findings showed that there was an increase in overall reading attitudes and negative behaviors stopped altogether by the end of the study portion. Students were more frequently on task and were choosing more appropriate books during IR. In short, students need access to appealing texts and time to silently read books of their choice to attain high levels of literacy.

Projects and other output activities. After reading, teachers usually group students to work cooperatively to produce a variety of projects related to the topic of the book. Zarrillo (1989) found that some students completed response activities to books they read independently. Some students kept journals while others worked on written projects in personal writing folders. Most teachers placed this individualized period later in the day, usually accompanying sustained silent reading and journal writing time.

Literature-based reading instruction means different things to different people. The label "literature-based reading instruction" provides an umbrella for a myriad of practices (Giddings, 1992). Overall, there is a growing emphasis on using literature for reading instruction. A number of studies indicate that the use of children's literature in the teaching of reading has a positive effect on students' achievement and attitudes toward reading (Giddings, 1992). The reading programs reported in the following session

attempt to understand how schools and teachers meet the needs of linguistically-diverse students by using a variety of picturebooks, and their impact on linguistically-diverse students' reading development.

A Variety of Programs Using Literature for Linguistically-Diverse Students

In this section, I review and summarize some successful literature-based reading program, which focus especially on linguistically-diverse students in the primary grades.

Open Sesame Program

One successful literature-based reading program is the Open Sesame Program in New York City (Larrick, 1987). The Open Sesame program was initiated with 225 kindergarten students. Ninety-two percent of these children came from non-English-speaking family. The goal of the program was to offer children the opportunity to read in a low-pressured environment and to immerse students in children's literature. There were no basal readers, workbooks, activity sheets or practice books. Reading aloud to the children from the very simple books in the classroom library was a part of everyday activities. By the close of school the following June, all 225 kindergarteners were able to read their dictated stories and many of the picture books. In the following year, all 350 students in first grade were happily reading English. Sixty percent were on or above grade level. Only 3 of the 350 failed to pass district comprehension tests and these 3 had been in the United States less than 6 months.

Language to Literacy (LtL) Program

Roser, Hoffman, and Farest (1990) investigated the effect of literature-based instruction on K-2 L2 learners in a school district on the Texas/Mexico border, the Language to Literacy (LtL) program which was designed to develop children's literacy skills. They develop this program to infuse literature and related instructional strategies into a traditional reading/language arts setting. Research was conducted in six elementary schools and over the course of 18 months. Implementation of the program involved getting literature into the classroom, sharing books with the children, collecting and recording children's responses to books, encouraging writing, and developing reading fluency to help children grow in language, reading and writing as well as to discover their own connections with literature. After the literature-based program was in place, five of

the six schools in the study made statistically significant growth in their scores on the state-mandated test of basic skills. The results indicated that a literature-based program could be implemented successfully in elementary schools that serve elementary linguistically-diverse students.

Book Flood Program

An abundant supply of good quality books in the classroom can increase children's exposure to the language and provide an additional model of English for the students to emulate. Students can learn new language directly from the books, if teachers read to them and explain new words and phrases as they go along. The context of the story and the illustrations could assist students to work out meaning for themselves (Elley, 2000). Elley (1991, 2000) reported findings from his series of studies in the south Pacific and Southeast Asia. The language learning of two successive cohorts of class 3 children (8-year-old) on the small South Pacific island of Niue was compared. During the 1978 school year, all class 3 students in the six primary schools of Niue (N=114) followed the normal audiolingual Tate Syllabus with its associated readers. During 1979 all students in the same six schools in the following class 3 cohort followed an alternative language method called the Fiafia Program with a series of 48 small books per class. Each book contained a complete story with appropriate illustrations. The stories were designed to be interesting, with natural language, local themes, and an element of excitement or humor. Contractions and local expressions were freely used, and there was an absence of tight control over structures and vocabulary.

The main teaching approach used was the "Shared Book Experience Approach." This method has the teacher sharing the reading of the books with students over several days. Gradually, they join in reading with the teacher as they become familiar with the text. The method allows for a great deal of free-ranging discussion about the events in the story, the characters and any unfamiliar language. The research findings indicated that on all three language tests, the students following the Fiafia Program showed significantly and in some cases dramatically superior performance. Fiafia groups were well ahead, and in some cases the scores were doubled. In addition, the interview data showed considerably more positive attitudes toward the Fiafia Program on the part of the students.

This judgment was supported by the teachers, headteachers, and educational advisers. School-by-school analysis of the test results showed further that the differences were most striking in classes in which the teachers made extensive use of the shared-book method, and minimal when they did not.

After the first study, Elley found the similar results in another study during 1980-1981 (Elley, 2000; Elley, 1991; Elley & Gangubhai, 1983). He conducted a two-year evaluation of a book-based program in 12 rural Fiji schools in the South-West Viti Levu, using both the shared-book and sustained silent reading method. The research findings show that the book-based groups showed consistent and increasing superiority over those of the Tate program. Further analysis showed that the Book Flood groups gained in reading comprehension at approximately twice the normal rate of growth. The positive impact of good quality books used daily and constructively was clearly evident from the study. Similarly, built on the Book Flood Model, Elley (2000) developed and administered reading programs in different places, such as Singapore, Sri Lanka and South Africa. All the research showed significant difference in favor of the Book Flood Approach.

PEER Program

Involving students in picture book reading and treating them as active participants also helps to improve students' pragmatic competence. Kim and Hall (2002) investigated the connection between Korean children's participation in an interactive book reading program and their development of pragmatic competence in English by employing microgenetic observational methods. They selected seven books depicting the context of school in the United States. All these books were written by Miriam Cohen. They were selected because they have ample descriptions and good illustrations of the context. The reading session followed the same general pattern of PEER procedures. That is, teachers prompted (P) students with questions about the story and evaluated (E) and elaborated (E) upon students' responses by giving feedback on their answers to the prompts and developing their responses into longer, more elaborated utterances. Finally, teachers repeated (R) and connected students' responses to each other. They found that the interactive book reading sessions had an overall positive effect on students' development

of pragmatic competence in English. Their findings suggest that participation in such reading programs provides opportunities for the development of at least some aspects of English pragmatic competence.

STELLA Program

Similarly, Quiros, Lara-Alecio, Ton & Irby's study (2012) showed similar results. They investigated the effectiveness of structured story reading intervention, story retelling and higher order thinking for English language and literacy acquisition (STELLA). The intervention was delivered to 38 Hispanic English language learners placed in an enhanced transitional bilingual program over 2 years from first to second grade as compared with 34 control students placed in a typical practice transitional bilingual program during the same time period. STELLA storybooks were selected to address the diverse cognitive levels in the classroom. Fiction stories were introduced first in the larger longitudinal study in kindergarten, because this genre uses human characteristics related to students' everyday life experiences. Narrative-informational and expository books were introduced later in first grade. By second grade both narrative and informational books were used and each author's biography was made part of the lesson. Besides genre selection, vocabulary encountered in the stories played an important role in the selection of the story for the children. All six storybooks in their 6-week study were of interest to the children, and their illustrations were enticing, with many different types of art media to create effects that would assist linguistically-diverse students in making meaning from the text. Each book contained one story that was discussed during the 5-day lesson. The research findings show that students receiving intervention outperformed their comparison peers in all five story elements in English and Spanish of both stories. They showed stronger ability in their native language in four out of five story elements and performed at a higher level in the narrative-informational story than a narrative story in both languages.

Experience-Text-Relationship (ETR)

For the upper-elementary-grade linguistically-diverse students, research indicated the similar findings. Saunders and Goldenberg (1999) describe an instructional literacy program they developed specifically for Spanish-speaking students in grades K-5 who

were enrolled in a transitional bilingual education program in grades K-3. A unique feature of their program is the continued ESL support that is provided to students in the fourth and fifth grades who are no longer enrolled in the transitional bilingual education program. Although specific components of the elementary literacy program vary according to grade level, a constant throughout the program is the study of literature through the Experience-Text-Relationship (ETR) approach. In this approach, the teacher helps students to make connections between an assigned text, one or more themes, and students' personal experiences. They compared the pre- and post-story comprehension of four groups of students who were randomly assigned to participate in four types of instruction over a period of 10-16 days: literature logs, instructional conversations, combined literature logs and instructional conversations, and a control group. On the factual and interpretive questions, the students in the instructional conversation group and in the combined literature log and instructional conversation group significantly outperformed the other two groups.

Teachers' Selection of Reading Materials

An understanding of the influence of teachers' read alouds on students' literacy development needs to carefully take the content into account (Teale, 2003). Research shows that the selection of reading materials has an impact on students' learning. For example, in Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita and Goldstein (1997) study, they created three conditions for different types of text to be read aloud, including stories written by different writers, various stories by one author, and a series of stories written by one author. Research findings show that children being systematically read aloud to scored significantly higher on posttest measures of decoding, reading comprehension, and picture story telling than children in the control group. Among the three experimental groups, students who were read to from a series of stories showed the greatest effect on reading achievement compared to those who were read to from single-author books and from multiple-author books. Such research indicates that the choices of readings can have a profound influence on children's literacy learning. In addition, in a study examining alphabet letter learning by 30 to 36-month-old children in book reading interactions with an adult, they found that the children learned more letters with the relatively plain books

than with a book with manipulative features, such as flaps, levers, textures and other elements designed to elicit physical manipulation. The manipulative feature that was specifically designed to attract children's attention to the letters did not facilitate performance (Chiong & DeLoache, 2013).

Since the best way to learn and practice reading skills is to read more, the challenge then lies in selecting the right book for the right student at the right time. In Donovan & Smolkin's study (2001), they found that the reasons for teacher's selections included content, visual features, readability, and developmental appropriateness, as well as potential uses for the books that they selected. In teachers' stated reasons for selections, few specifically focused on genre, revealing underlying assumptions that science is boring, and that the information books are too difficult to read aloud. In another study that examines the nonfiction trade book use for primary students, researchers found that teachers were inclined to use fiction more. The factor that kept teachers from using more informational texts for students was that they were not aware of all that was available, which was the most serious hindrance to using age-appropriate nonfiction (Palmer & Stewart, 2003). Fisher, Flood, Lapp and Frey (2004) found that 25 expert teachers clearly selected the books based on the interests and needs of the students in the class. Teachers were consistently observed selecting high-quality children's literature for their read alouds. These books often were award-winning books, such as Newbery or Caldecott winners or books that had received notice in some way.

Teachers working with English language learners often have to deal with many barriers when it comes to selecting materials for their students. Some teachers are required to use the adopted basal readers and textbooks. Others use trade books and the adopted curriculum materials together. However, others have the freedom to use whatever materials they choose (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002). Teachers can use a variety of fiction and nonfiction trade books to supplement or substitute for content treated in textbooks. Much of the instruction students receive in school is driven by textbooks for science, social studies, math and so on. However, content textbooks rarely provide the appropriate input needed by linguistically-diverse students (Hadaway, Vardell & Young, 2002). With linguistically-diverse students, picture books and story

books which provide children with their first experience in art and literature must be selected with consideration of the needs of the individual child, and of the culture he or she belongs to.

Hudelson (1994) recommends carefully selecting texts for linguistically-diverse students, including those with a high level of interest, rich content with clear illustrations and a tendency toward some repetition of words. Helman (2009) suggested selecting texts with fewer words on the page and simpler syntactical structures. While choosing the books, teachers should always put themselves in the place of the audience. If they are engaged by the text and its information and not put off by the illustrations or formatting, then the material would also be attractive to students (Hadaway & Mundy, 1999).

As to the criteria for book selection for linguistically-diverse students, Hadaway and Young (2010) provided four criteria to guide book selections: “level of content familiarity, level of language, level of textual support and level of cultural fit” (p. 39). These criteria were accompanied with some guiding questions and then applied to fiction, poetry and nonfiction with examples of suggested books for K-6 English learners. However, teachers should notice that there is no accurate or fixed rule for the features in those books. Teachers need to help linguistically-diverse students to get involved in many and various texts with different genres as much as possible (Hadaway and Young, 2010).

Summary of Research on Using Read-Aloud Materials

Read alouds are instructional events that provide scaffolds to students by modeling language and story patterns through a pleasurable experience shared by teachers. Once integrated, these patterns provide the basis for comprehension of other stories. Teachers can help elaborate and expand on students’ use of language. In addition, learning is embedded within natural social interactions and as meaning is negotiated. As they read aloud, teachers facilitate students’ movement to the next level of development (Vygotsky, 1962). When students’ English proficiency is limited, teachers’ additional support during read aloud helps to increase students’ understanding of the text (Boyle, & Peregoy, 1990).

In this section, first I review research that compares literature-based instruction and basal skilled-based instruction. Next, I review studies of using picturebooks in terms

of students' language development, such as vocabulary and oral language; reading development, including phonics and concept of print; and comprehension. Then, I summarize studies of children's responses to literature and studies of different genres.

Comparisons of Literature-Based Instruction and Skilled-Based Instruction

Children's literature not only opens up new worlds to students, but it also influences students' achievement in various aspects of literacy development. A number of controlled studies have compared literature-based reading with basal reading instruction. Research findings favored the literature approach (Cohen, 1968, Cullinan, Jaggar & Strickland, 1974; Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986). For example, studies revealed that students in a literature-based program were more strategic readers than those in a skills-based program (Dahl & Freppon, 1995; Freppon, 1991). In addition, students taught using a literature-based approach viewed reading as a meaning-making process and had higher levels of metacognitive awareness than students in the skills-based programs (Freppon, 1991).

Language Development (Vocabulary)

Native English speakers. Cohen (1968) found that 285 second grade students increased their vocabulary base and word knowledge significantly in comparison to the control group after listening to stories daily and participating in follow-up activities. Similarly, Gunderson and Shapiro (1988) found that children in one U.S. first grade class, where story books were regularly used, developed vocabularies 18 times larger than what would be expected in a skills-based program. Furthermore, various studies have shown that repeated storybook reading results in increased vocabulary acquisition. For example, Robbins and Ehri (1994) found that hearing a word four times in the context of storybook reading greatly increased kindergarteners' learning of the new word. Senechal (1997) found that 3 and 4-year-olds who listened to repeated readings and who used new vocabulary to answer simple questions asked by the teacher learned more words than children who only listened to the repeated readings. Moreover, discussion of words found in the stories read can also lead to greater vocabulary learning. Students who were given explanations of targeted vocabulary words learned more words than did students who simply listened to the stories (Brett, Rothlein, & Hurley, 1996).

Linguistically-diverse students. Reading aloud develops vocabulary, both the vocabulary of the story and the vocabulary of the talk surrounding the story (Huck, 1992). Learning vocabulary from listening to stories is especially critical for linguistically-diverse students. Researchers examined the second language vocabulary acquisition of children who listened to stories. They found rapid growth in English language development for children with greater accounts of free reading exposure. For example, Brett, Rothlein and Hurley (1996) explored whether students with different ethnic backgrounds, aged nine to 11 years could acquire unknown words through listening to two stories under three different conditions: listening to stories with a brief explanation of the unfamiliar target words, listening to stories with no explanation of the words, and having no exposure to the stories or vocabulary. A total of 175 fourth graders from 6 classrooms in 2 urban elementary schools participated in the study. Students who listened to stories along with a brief explanation of target words learned significantly more new words and remembered them better 6 weeks later than students who heard stories with no explanation of the words and students in the control group.

Following a series of long-term studies in the South Pacific Islands mentioned above (Elley, 1991; Elley & Manguibhai, 1983), Elley (1989) conducted a series of three experimental pilot projects, using a single book. This book was read aloud to 9- to 11-year-old children in classes. The students were all Pacific Islands children who were learning English as their second language, after achieved initial literacy in their home language. Their understanding of words was tested before and after the readings using multiple-choice questions. The test used the target words in contexts different from the story context. Although these pilot studies were all conducted by one researcher, with one book and small samples, in all three cases, the gain in word knowledge was surprisingly large. Given three readings of the story over a week, without any explanation of the target words, the first class showed a mean gain of 19 percent in their understanding of words; given one reading, with brief explanation of target words as they were read, the second class produced a mean gain of 20 percent; and given three readings, as well as brief explanations, the third class achieved a mean gain of 33 percent.

Similar results can be found in the pre-schooling setting. One experimental study has demonstrated that preschool linguistically-diverse students can acquire English storybook vocabulary from interactive storybook reading coupled with focused vocabulary instruction in English (Robert & Neal, 2004). In Collin's study (2005) 70 preschool native speakers of Portuguese who were second-language learners of English were assigned to experimental or control groups. The experimental group was instructed using rich explanations of target vocabulary words in the story book. Research results suggested that the treatment effected significant gains in linguistically-diverse preschoolers' new vocabulary acquisition from storybook reading.

In fact, for building preschool children's early language and literacy competence, storybook reading is one of the most recommended practices (Roberts, 2008). Studies have shown that teaching family caregivers and daycare providers how to use high quality storybook reading has positive effects on children's language development (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994). Intervention that combined high-quality storybook reading on the part of family caregivers with classroom story book reading have had additional positive effects (Lonigan, & Whitehurst, 1998). Roberts (2008) examined how providing either primary- or English-language storybooks for home reading followed by classroom storybook reading and vocabulary instruction in English influenced preschool children's English vocabulary acquisition. The research included two 6-week sessions of home reading combined with classroom storybook reading. Research results indicated that children learned a substantial number of words from the combined home and classroom storybook reading experiences. Home storybook reading in a primary language was at least as effective as home storybook reading in English for English vocabulary learning.

Language Development (Oral Language)

Native English speakers. The use of interactive and analytic talk with children during book reading enhances language and vocabulary development in English-only children (Dickson & Smith, 1994). Dickinson (1989) found that the greatest strength of book sessions was the fact that they provided children opportunities to bring their world knowledge to mind while a book was being read. Book time provided children

semantically contingent language when objects and events were labeled and analysis comments extended discussion about them. These discussions were valuable for the children with minimal English proficiency, but of less value to the proficient language users because of the rather rudimentary words dealt with and the limited range of content covered.

When investigating the quality of primary school children's talk during story discussions, Strickland, Dillon, Funkhouser, Click and Roger (1989) found that children also developed competence in organizing their explanations, learned to modify their speech according to the purpose and audience, and developed analytical ability. Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance (2004) investigated how storytelling and story reading influenced the language development and story comprehension of young children from 3 to 5 years of age. Research findings showed that the storytelling group performed better on the retelling, when compared to the story reading group. Nevertheless, the story reading group performed better when creating the wordless picture book story. This indicated that storytelling and story reading are both beneficial to the development of oral language complexity and story comprehension in young children. The combination of the two approaches could provide powerful literature experience to influence students' oral language development and story comprehension.

Linguistically-diverse students. For linguistically-diverse students, research shows similar results. Kalia's (2007) study examined the role of Indian bilingual parents' book reading practices on the development of children's oral language, narrative and literacy skills in English, their second language. About 24 bilingual children from two preschools in Bangalore, India were tested in schools in English on receptive vocabulary, complex syntax, narrative expression, phonological awareness, and concepts about print. Parents provided information about their book reading practices at home through a questionnaire that asked them about the number of children's books they had at home and the frequency with which they read to their children and visited libraries. Research findings suggested that exposure to book reading in English is connected to bilingual children's oral language, narrative and literacy development in their second language.

While discussing the content with students after read alouds, teachers typically urge more reader response to literature; therefore, researchers advocate using authentic questions that encourage students to respond personally. Authentic questions will foster students' abilities in synthesis and evaluation that underlie critical thinking. Researchers usually conclude that teachers should talk less, and ask authentic questions. In contrast, the text-based talk or display questions, which elicit single-word answers rather than extended discussion, are presumed to encourage a lower level of comprehension. It is often assumed that these questions mainly assess whether students have absorbed content matter, whereas authentic questions ask students to provide their own evaluations and interpretations of the content (Boyd, 2006).

However, researchers (Boyd, 2006; Boyd & Rubin, 2002; Boyd and Galda, 2011) have had different research findings regarding teachers' questions. Contrary to the knowledge about literature discussion, structuring one's class around literature does not mean that the majority of class talk will be about literature. Using display questions is not necessarily detrimental to dialogic discourse. For example, Boyd and Rubin (2002) found that a teacher in an linguistically-diverse classroom read aloud a total of 14 picture books (fiction and nonfiction) and poems to the whole class. The shared read-aloud experience typically framed the classroom discourse. Based on observations in a selected fourth- and fifth-grade linguistically-diverse classroom over the course of an 8 week science unit on the subject of whale, they found the teacher routinely improved student contributions by using appropriate pronunciation or grammar in her clarification or elaboration requests. In this way, she phrased questions to scaffold student talk so they could indeed participate in class discussions. In their discussion of the content of pictures, Boyd found that display questions played a dominant role in teachers' contributions to the classroom discussion. Most important of all, these linguistically-diverse students were not discouraged from talking. They talked proportionately more than students in most U.S. classrooms. Results of the research indicated that display questions can also contribute to a flow of dialogic classroom communication. In addition, sometimes questions can appear authentic, but they function to close down student dialogues. Although teachers ask authentic questions, these questions may fail to build on what students have been

talking about. In contrast, display questions can further scaffold a deeper understanding of content and a more literate articulation of meaning, when the teacher takes students' responses seriously.

While structuring discussions, teachers usually follow the IRE pattern in their classroom practices. That is, teachers initiate a question, a student responds, and the teacher evaluates that response. However, Boyd and Galda (2011) found that instead of evaluating the third move turn, if a teacher follows up with a question or a comment, it can encourage further thinking and elaboration. They called such questions "contingent questions" (Boyd & Galda, 2011). By providing specific connections with what has been said, the teacher encourages a student contribution and extends students thinking. Contingent questions, even if not seemingly authentic or open, still can facilitate students' thinking and exploration.

Reading Development (Phonics and Book-Handling)

Native English speakers. Neuman (1999) examines the impact of an intervention targeting economically disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-old children that flooded over 330 childcare centers with high-quality children's books and provided 10 hours of training to childcare staff. Research findings showed that there were enhanced physical access to books, greater verbal interaction around literacy, and more time spent reading and relating to books. Children in Book Aloud scored statistically significantly higher than the control group on four of six assessment measures, including concepts of print, letter name knowledge, concepts of writing and concepts of narrative. Reutzel, Oda and Moore (1989) also found positive effects of literature-based programs on the print awareness and word-reading acquisition of kindergarteners. Dahl & Freppon (1995) reported that decoding and comprehension can be improved through literature. In the same way, Hoffman, 1982) also found in his case study that young children who have been read to frequently know how to handle books, recognize the front of a book, the print to be read and the direction for reading the print

Linguistically-diverse students. Hancock (2002) sought to determine if exposure to age-appropriate books in their native language would affect the pre-literacy skill development of language minority kindergartners. Fifty-two native-Spanish-speaking

kindergarten children were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: Their parents were provided with either Spanish-language books or English-language books to share with them. Students were given the pre- and post- test on a standardized measure of print awareness. This study discovered that native Spanish-speaking children exposed to books written in Spanish scored significantly higher on a test of pre-literacy skills than did their native Spanish-speaking classmates who were exposed to books written in English. These students also scored no differently than their native English-speaking classmates exposed to books in English. The results of this study suggest that sharing books with children in the native language is more helpful than sharing books in English if the goal is learning how print works at least in the early years.

In addition to improving the concepts of print, read alouds also show a positive impact on linguistically-diverse students' phonological awareness. Yang (2009) tested whether instruction using rhyme picture books improves non-native English speakers' phonological awareness and reading ability significantly more than sight word reading instruction. The results showed that using rhyme picture books for phonological awareness instruction helped students improve their phonological awareness. It also helped students to remember the words and sounds, and as a result, improve their reading ability.

Comprehension

Native English speakers. One of the classic studies done by Cohen (1968), which was discussed in the previous session, provides the results of a read-aloud program in second grade classrooms in New York City. Using an experimental and control design, the experimental classrooms read aloud every day. At the end of the year the experimental groups were significantly ahead of the control groups in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. Cullinan, Jaggar & Stickland (1974) replicated the study with kindergarten children and their research showed similar findings. In experimental studies carried out in school settings where children participated with their teachers in the reading experience, the children's comprehension and sense of story structure improved in comparison to those of children in the control groups (Brown, 1975; Morrow, 1985).

Pellegrini and Galda (1982) found that among the three training conditions, thematic fantasy play, adult led discussion, and drawing, the thematic fantasy play was the most effective facilitator of all measures of comprehension, particularly for kindergarteners. The role play seemed to have a direct impact on students' ability to retell stories. Researchers tested the effects of varying modes of active involvement in story reconstruction on comprehension. Role-playing significantly improved comprehension of story and story retelling ability. When role-playing stories, active involvement and peer interaction contributed to the children's increased performance.

Furthermore, in Morrow's study (1985), the results indicated that a single experience of retelling a story after listening to the story produced a small improvement in kindergarten children's comprehension and this effect could be increased by frequent practice and guidance in retelling. Gambrell and Jawitz (1993) investigated the effects of instructions to induce mental imagery and attend to text illustrations on fourth graders' reading comprehension and recall of narrative text. The major finding of this study was that comprehension performance was enhanced when students received instructions to induce mental imagery and attend to text illustrations.

Linguistically-diverse students. For linguistically-diverse students, research on the effects of storybook reading on comprehension also showed positive results. In Ghosn's study (2010), he collected data from 106 children (ages 9.5-11) in four schools. Schools were selected so as to represent typical Lebanese linguistically-diverse schools. Two classes were using an American literature-based reading anthology. The series features authentic literature, both fiction and non-fiction, mostly written by well-known children's authors, including many award-winning writers. The others used a 7-level communicatively oriented, content-integrated, worldwide marketed linguistically-diverse course. Research results showed that children in the literature-based language programs outscored their counterparts in the communicative linguistically-diverse programs. The differences between the two groups were statistically significant in general reading comprehension, mathematics vocabulary, science vocabulary and social studies vocabulary. Similarly, Hall and William (2010) studied five 1st grade teachers who read aloud two Caldecott Award-winning picturebooks to their diverse, urban students. They

found that students enjoyed the read-aloud practices and were able to retell the stories. Their findings support that students with diverse backgrounds can enjoy and comprehend complicated picturebooks in whole-class settings.

Storybook reading with discussion surrounding the text and other activities can have positive effects on students' comprehension (Morrow & Brittain, 2003). Iddings, Risko and Rampulla (2009) provide a detailed account of a literacy event involving teacher and peer interactions after reading *Curious George* aloud (Rey & Rey, 1969). The teacher guided a group of three linguistically-diverse students with beginning levels of English proficiency through the activity of discussing the text. Through the teacher's scaffolding for connecting with the text, clarifying misunderstandings, focusing on central text ideas, and broadening interpretations, the students demonstrated an expansion of their linguistic skills, of their knowledge about the text and of their understandings of the central concepts in the story. In addition, Garcia (1991) and Droop and Verhoeven (1998) suggested that the relationship between linguistically-diverse students' background knowledge and text content influences their comprehension. When linguistically-diverse students read texts with culturally familiar content, their comprehension improves. Teachers should consider such texts when they select texts for read alouds.

Additional Research on Reader Response and Various Genres

Reader response. Research on the impact of different types of text on readers has largely focused on children's responses to various narrative genres. McGee (1992) and Galda (1990) found that children responded to realistic fiction differently than they did to fantasy texts. Pappas (1991, 1993) and Duke (2000) have shown the importance of giving children experience with informational text during the preschool and primary-grade years. Shine and Roser (1999) found that children took stances of imagining, recognizing, knowing, and appropriating when responding to fantasy, realistic, information, and poetic picture books respectively. Children's language reflected the rhythms of the poetic books and the informational discourse suggested by the information books. Children's responses to all of the genres, personal associations to the characters, events, images, and topics seemed to form the basis for interpretation.

Tower (2002) describes ways in which a small group of preschool children responded to typical information books during read-aloud sessions. The findings suggested that children paid attention to both the illustrations and the text of these information books, though their attention was more often directed at the illustrations than at textual information. Children tried out the information book language during their pretend readings, often mixing typical information language features with more specific descriptions of illustrations.

Sipe and Brightman (2005) report on a study that explored the ways in which a class of first-grade children constructed meaning from the visual features of four picture storybooks that were read aloud to them. The research findings suggest the importance of visual interpretation in children's literary understanding of picturebooks, and highlight the power of text sets in developing these interpretive skills. Children used visual information to describe details of the setting and background of illustrations, to interpret story characters' appearance, actions, relationships, feelings, intentions, and motivations, and to predict and confirm the plot. They made comparisons between illustrations within the same book and also compared and contrasted visual features across the four stories.

Various genres. Most of the research explored the use of picturebooks with elementary level students. However, while conducted in a linguistically-diverse middle school classroom instead of an elementary school setting, Hadaway and Mundy's research (1999) revealed issues that many would argue are common across language learning contexts. Thus, I include their study in the following section.

Informational texts can be used in the classroom to help linguistically-diverse students develop background knowledge they may be lacking compared with English speakers (Vasquez, Lansen, & Smith, 2010). Informational text reinforces language through content concepts that students encounter outside the sheltered environment of the linguistically-diverse classroom (Hadaway & Mundy, 1999). Hadaway and Mundy (1999) discussed the use of children's informational picturebooks to help high school linguistically-diverse students build background knowledge about weather before having students tackle more complex reading material. Unlike some classroom texts, informational picture books are shorter in length, chunk information, and use graphics

and illustrations as comprehension aids. Their observation proved that informational picture books can help struggling readers and linguistically-diverse students in a variety of content areas.

However, researchers found that although reading professionals have called for greater attention to informational texts in the early grades for some time, fiction remains dominant in classrooms. Research finding showed there were relatively few informational texts included in classroom libraries, little informational text on classroom walls and a mean of only 3.6 minutes per day spent with informational texts during classroom written language activities (Duke, 2000). Palmer and Stewart (2003) suggested that what hindered some teachers from using informational texts was lack of knowledge of what is available and lack of access to quality non-fiction.

In addition to information books, folklore is also a powerful genre for linguistically-diverse students. For example, family folklore consists of the persistent behaviors, crafts, arts, and stories handed down by one family member to another. This folklore shares and defines the behavior, beliefs and customs of family members in ways that most people do not realize (Renner & Cater, 1991). Hadaway and Mundy (1992) started a reading project with the theme of family folklore. They guided a class of students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to study the theme. By reading aloud some nonfiction trade books, students were able to discuss the immigrant experience as related in the books. After the project, they found their students wrote more and with less anxiety, and the quality of expressions was excellent. When they utilized personal and relevant themes such as family folklore, it appears that all students became special. Students' cultures and backgrounds were validated, and they were motivated to participate actively in the process of learning and language development.

Teachers' Reading Styles

The ways in which teachers read to students have an impact on students' literacy development (Teale, 2003). A number of studies provided description about typical read-aloud practices. For example, Hoffman, Roser & Battle (1993) observed primary grade teachers on various dimensions of read alouds, such as frequency, selection of literature, distribution of time of reading aloud and discussion and use of response opportunities.

Based on their research findings, they question the quality of reading aloud and recommend the need to move from what they characterize as typical classroom read-aloud practice (the modal) to a type of practice that research has shown to be effective (the model), such as designating a legitimate time and place for read aloud, selecting quality literature, exploring interrelationships among books, discussing literature and offering response opportunities. Sipe (1998, 2000) described different types of scaffolding actions used by the teacher during storybook readings, such as reading of the text with pacing, and affective expression, controlling and modeling the discussion, clarifying by asking for more information or explanation and asking probing questions, speculating and interpreting with the students, and identifying and utilizing teachable moments. Beck (2001) described typical interactions in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. She questioned the ways in which background information was drawn upon and found that most of the questions asked by teachers provoked one-word answers.

Native English Speakers

In addition to teachers' read-aloud practice, there are studies that have examined the effects of different styles on children's learning and achievement (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Dickson & Keebler, 1989; Martinez & Teale, 1993). For example, research shows that reading styles are linked to children's story comprehension. Dickinson and Smith (1994) study the long term effects of preschool teachers' book readings on children's vocabulary and story comprehension; their research findings show that children in the performance-oriented classrooms revealed larger gains than those in the didactic-interactive classrooms on vocabulary and story comprehension. It proved that reading followed by extended discussion (performance-oriented) was more beneficial for children than children responding to questions about factual details and producing portions of the text in chorus (didactic-interactive). It revealed strong effects of child-involved analytic talk on vocabulary and modest effects on story understanding.

In Teale and Martinez's studies (1993, 1996), they explored the relationship between kindergarteners' story comprehension and their teachers' read-aloud styles. The research investigated six kindergarten teachers employed by two suburban school districts in a metropolitan area in south Texas and the children in their classes. The author

summarizes each teacher's storybook reading style, examines selected features of each teacher's reading storybook and relates them to the children's comprehension of the stories. They found that students in one of the teachers' classrooms performed significantly higher on the comprehension measures. The features of that teacher's storybook reading included an emphasis on important textually explicit information, discussion of both internal and external story elements, a consistent focus on important story information in every episode of story and a review of the story following reading.

Linguistically-Diverse Students

When students are not very proficient in English, providing them with English literacy instruction through the use of ESL techniques, such as speaking slowly, providing students with multiple ways to understand what is being said or read through hands-on experience and accompanying oral language with illustrations, videos and dramatizations, should help to make their instruction more comprehensible, (Garcia, 2003). In addition, research shows that linguistically-diverse students can benefit from different modes of storytelling. For example, Cabrera and Martinez (2001) investigated teachers' strategies to make the input comprehensible in reading/telling stories under two conditions: using linguistic adjustments and interactional adjustments. In linguistic adjustments, the teacher told the story with short utterances and simple syntactic structures. In interactional adjustments, the teacher told the story with repetitions, questions and comprehension checks and provided paralinguistic cues. They found that the children were able to follow the thread of the story told by a teacher only when children listened to the story with both linguistic and interactional adjustments.

Ulanoff and Pucci (1999) compared the gains made in second language vocabulary from two different implementations while reading aloud: concurrent translation and preview-review. Three third-grade classes in the Los Angeles area were chosen and randomly assigned to the control, concurrent translation and preview-review groups. Students in the control group listened to a story in English with no intervention or explanation of the story. Students in the concurrent translation group listened to the same story in English with the reader using the concurrent translation method (translating the story from one language to the other). Students in the preview-review group heard the

same story in English after having the teacher build background knowledge by previewing important points and difficult vocabulary in Spanish. They also reviewed the story in Spanish after the reading. All three groups were given the pre- and post- test of the vocabulary items to examine gains in scores. One week later students received the test again to examine gains in scores. Results indicated that not only did the students in the preview-review group score significantly higher than the control and concurrent translation groups, the concurrent translation group scored the lowest of all three groups and improved only slightly one week after treatment.

Uchiyama (2011) replicated the research of Trostle and Hicks which investigated vocabulary gains and comprehension using two story telling modes. One is Character Imagery (CI) in which a storyteller who reads aloud dresses and takes on the role of the protagonist. Another is Simple Reading (SR) in which a trained student reads stories aloud. As opposed to the original study conducted in an L1 setting, Uchiyama compared the effects of CI and SR on English comprehension and vocabulary development of a sample of 120 Japanese elementary school students in fifth and sixth grades in Tokyo. Participants' ages ranged from 10 to 12 years. Students were divided into two groups. In phase 1, group 1 listened to the story using SR. Group 2 listened to the story using CI. In phase 2, Group 1 listened to the story using CI. Group 2 listened to the story using SR. Pre- and post- vocabulary tests and a comprehensive test were administered. Research findings showed that while both modes were effective, CI was significantly greater in improving both comprehension and vocabulary development. Story telling was beneficial for students developing English proficiency.

Huang (1991) investigated whether or not comprehensive oral input using a multisensory approach scaffolded understanding of real literature reading with 129 sixth graders, aged 11 year olds by using two stories, *Ice Cream* and *Dragons and Giants*. Students were divided into three groups. The illustration supplement group (IG) read the text with illustrations. The study group (SG) used a multi-sensory approach through contextualized storytelling. The SG group listened to the story with a multi-sensory approach before reading the illustrated text. The control group (CG) read the text-only story without any illustrations or storytelling. The research results showed that there were

no significant differences on the word recall test among the three groups using. However, in the retelling story test, the mean score of the retelling test using the multi-sensory approach was significant.

Silverman and Hines (2009) compared traditional and multimedia-enhanced read-aloud vocabulary instruction. Eighty-five children across four grade levels participated in the study. Results showed that although there was no added benefit of multimedia-enhanced instruction for non-ELs, there was a positive effect for ELs on a measure of general vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, for children in the multimedia-enhanced group, the gap between non-ELs and in knowledge of instructional words was closed, and the gap in general vocabulary knowledge was narrowed.

The above research outcomes clearly indicate that how teachers read to students does make a difference. Read-aloud style relates to student learning and development. Teachers read in different ways but their individual read-aloud style is usually consistent across books and students' learning is developed by the way in which teachers read aloud (Teale, 2003). Indeed, teachers' teaching styles are significant in students' learning. However, no one particular read-aloud style has proven superior to others.

In short, research findings supported that picturebooks did help linguistically-diverse students improve their literacy development, including phonological awareness, concept of print, vocabulary, oral language and comprehension. Most researchers used the experimental research design and statistically analyzed students' academic achievement. Although there was some research focusing on how teachers guided linguistically-diverse students to talk about the story books by using content analysis or discourse analysis to explore teacher's use of questions, there is little research focusing on how teachers select the material for students to read and how teachers present the text features to linguistically-diverse students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

As noted in Chapter Two, few studies detail how teachers select reading materials and deliver read alouds for linguistically-diverse students. My goal in the current study was to take a descriptive approach to data collection, data analysis and reporting so that I could obtain an in-depth understanding of how an accomplished teacher selects reading materials for read alouds, how the teacher presents read-aloud materials, and what after-reading activities the teacher chooses for linguistically-diverse students. In this chapter, I first explain why I chose qualitative case study methods. Second, I describe my research purposes and research questions. Third, I depict the methods and procedures for data collection and data analysis. I also include a brief introduction and demographic information of the research site and participants. Finally, I discuss issues relating to the study's validity, reliability, and ethics.

Research Design

When selecting between an experimental or a non-experimental research design, such as a case study, Merriam (1988) proposes three elements for researchers to consider: the nature of the research questions, the amount of control, and the desired end product. That is, when researchers' questions focus on *how* and *why*, the research design is more open, and a holistic, intensive description is needed, then it will be appropriate for a non-experimental or descriptive research design. In my study, I was interested in seeing how a teacher presents reading materials during read alouds, and exploring why she chooses to use certain reading materials to help linguistically-diverse students. The aim of my research was to examine the teacher's instruction, which is embedded in the classroom context rather than investigating a cause-and-effect relationship. It was not necessary for me to control variables or manipulate treatments. I intended to investigate things as they were since it is impossible to separate the teacher's read alouds from their context. Furthermore, I hoped to gain an in-depth understanding of how the teacher chose and presented read-aloud materials in a linguistically-diverse classroom. The end product of this research should be an intensive and thick description and analysis on a specific case.

In short, the focus was “in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998; p.19). Therefore, a qualitative research design was appropriate to pursue my research interests.

I conducted my research in an elementary linguistically-diverse classroom in the United States in which using read-aloud materials to improve students’ learning had already been a crucial part of daily classroom instruction. Since qualitative research on the instruction of reading for linguistically-diverse students is relatively limited, I believed my research would provide readers with insight into the strategies that help linguistically-diverse students learn English more effectively. As Merriam (1998) suggested, “readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which lead to generalizations when new data for the case are added to old data” (p. 32). Readers participate in extending the knowledge produced by case studies to particular populations. Therefore, I also hoped to share my research findings to help students in similar situations. In my home country Taiwan, as opposed to teachers’ instruction in the U.S., English teachers’ teaching in elementary schools focus more on language skills rather than authentic reading due to the constraints of limited school hours and students’ mixed English ability. Although there are social and cultural differences between these two countries, there are still some similarities among students in Taiwan and linguistically-diverse students in the United States. For instance, they both encounter two challenges simultaneously, the academic content of the lesson and the acquisition of a second language. Both of them need some extra help, such as further explanations of the tasks in their first language and clearer explanations of the concept in English using concrete examples (Gersten, 1996). The research findings I found could provide teachers in Taiwan with a possible model of how to use reading materials for read alouds within the constraints of their curriculum.

Purposes

Four research purposes guide this study: first, to examine and characterize the read-aloud materials the teacher uses; second, to determine the criteria for the teachers’ selection of the content of the reading materials and identify the reasons why the teacher chooses a certain type of books or materials; third, to better understand how the teacher

presents stories for student understanding; fourth, to explore the kinds of after-reading activities the teacher chooses to help linguistically-diverse students.

Research Questions

To accomplish these purposes I asked the following four research questions:

1. What kind of read-aloud materials are chosen?
 - a. What type of books are they? What are their genres, levels and source?
 - b. What is the frequency of use for each book?
2. How does the teacher choose read-aloud materials for linguistically-diverse students?
 - a. What criteria does the teacher use to choose the content of read-aloud materials?
 - b. For what reasons and purposes does the teacher choose a certain type of reading materials?
 - c. What challenges and successes does the teacher encounter while using read-aloud materials?
3. How does the teacher present picturebooks or other read-aloud materials to improve linguistically-diverse students' learning?
 - a. How does the teacher conduct read alouds?
 - b. What strategies does the teacher use to help linguistically-diverse students to comprehend different reading materials?
 - c. How does the teacher support linguistically-diverse student' language development by using read-aloud materials?
 - d. How does the teacher scaffold linguistically-diverse students to read read-laoud materials?
4. What kind of after reading activities does the teacher guide linguistically-diverse students to do?
 - a. What activities can be used to extend linguistically-diverse students' learning?
 - b. For what reasons and purposes does the teacher choose this after reading activities?

Method

I selected a case study research design to help me answer these questions. My research purpose was to obtain in-depth information about the characteristics of one teacher's instruction when using read-aloud materials. My intention was to describe the

instruction rather than predicting future behaviors in similar settings without actually observing that behavior. I decided to choose a single-case design rather than a multiple-case design. Yin (2008) claimed that one of the rationales for single-case designs is “the representative or typical case.” The lesson learned from this case is assumed to be informative about the experiences of the average person or institution. I decided to choose a single case design because I desired to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday read aloud with linguistically-diverse students. An accomplished teacher’s instruction may represent a good typical case among many different read-aloud practices with linguistically-diverse students. Further, read aloud is an instructional activity that needs teachers’ pedagogical decisions, such as what to read, how much to read, and how to read, and the use of a range of teaching strategies. I believed that closely examining an accomplished teacher’s read-aloud practices would illuminate the complexities of read-aloud practices and provide rich descriptions and insightful explanations to answer my research questions, which is the most important consideration in qualitative selection decisions (Maxwell, 2005).

Sampling

In this study, I used purposeful selection to choose an accomplished teacher working with linguistically-diverse students in an elementary school. The reason I used purposeful sampling was because I wanted to select an “information-rich” case for study in depth (Patton, 2002, p.46) from which I could learn the most about read alouds. The selection criteria included the following qualities. First, the teacher must be a 1st or 2nd grade teacher, he/she had to use reading materials to read aloud on a daily basis, and importantly, he/she had to conduct read alouds in his/her own way rather than in a scripted way, and then he/she had to be recommended by principals or other teachers. Lastly, linguistically-diverse students need to be the majority in his/her class.

Research Site

The setting for this research is a 1st grade classroom composed mainly of linguistically-diverse students in an elementary school in the Midwestern United States. I selected this site because the classroom teacher was recommended by other teachers and the principal. The principal confirmed that the teacher had good achievement data and her

students made good growth. The first graders had shown improvement in their reading, math and writing between the fall and winter assessments. Based on their recommendations, I did a short classroom observation and talked to the classroom teacher to validate their recommendations before beginning data collection. The research site is a Pre-K to 8th grade public, urban charter school located in two buildings, a few blocks apart in the Midwest United States. The primary school serves grades Pre-K through 5th grade. The middle school serves 6th through 8th grade students. The school has a high level of economically disadvantaged families, most of whom speak a language other than English and have a high rate of illiteracy. Over the past nine years the percentage of school students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals has ranged from 83% to 97%. Many of the families served are transient, which causes disruption in students' academic progress. However, in the past four years the schools' fall enrollment showed over 88% returning students.

Participants

The case or unit of analysis in the study was the first grade classroom teacher, Ms. Walker, in the primary school described above. I focused on Ms. Walker's behaviors, but not the students. However, Ms. Walker's teaching could not be isolated from students' responses. I would observe and record not only Ms. Walker's teaching but also her interaction with students. Ms. Walker got her masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction and received dual state licensure: a) in first through sixth grade, and b) in K through eighth grade. Ms. Walker taught third grade linguistically-diverse students in another school in her first year of teaching. This was her third year of teaching first grade in the current school. In the class I studied, there were 10 female and 13 male students. Among them, five were native English speakers and the other students spoke a language other than English at home. The English learners' first languages included Hmong and Spanish. Prior to the beginning of the study, Ms. Walker used read-aloud materials on a regular basis, reading at least one story daily to her class. In addition, she felt that storybook reading was an important part of her instructional program.

Data Collection

I used four data collection techniques including observations, videotaping, interviews, and analyzing documents to triangulate my data. Patton (2002) pointed out that multiple sources of information are needed because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a complete perspective and validate findings. Thus, I first observed and videotaped what was going on before, during, and after Ms. Walker's read-aloud instructions; I talked formally and informally with Ms. Walker about them; and I examined documents and materials that were part of the context.

Classroom observations. Direct observation has the potential to gather more valid and authentic data. It helps to better understand and capture the context within which people interact. The researcher can get immersed in the firsthand experiences of participants and record information as it is revealed (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, I conducted classroom observations to understand firsthand Ms. Walker's teaching practices and capture an authentic portrayal of instruction. In order to understand Ms. Walker's classroom schedule, in the first month of observation I stayed the whole day in her classroom and observed the classroom three times a week regularly. Beginning in the second month, I decided to focus on Ms. Walker's read-aloud instruction including mini lessons and science lessons as well as after-reading activities in order to fully answer my research questions. In the read-aloud sessions, most of the read-aloud materials were completed in a single session except for one chapter book or some longer leveled books. Each presentation of read-aloud material was the first time the class had been read the book. As a non-participant observer, I did not interact with Ms. Walker and students during the lessons. I did not recommend that the teacher use or avoid any specific reading materials or instructional practices. Instead, while observing the classroom, I tried to remain unobtrusive during her read aloud and follow-up instruction.

While observing Ms. Walker's teaching, I took detailed field notes on her use of read-aloud materials. I also included my personal and subjective responses and interpretations of the classroom observation in the field notes. I applied the three principles recommended by Spradley (1980) in order to maximize the accuracy of the notes and facilitate later analyses while taking the field notes. First, I used the language identification principle. I noted whether it was the observer's or Ms. Walker's language

used. Second, I used the verbatim principle. Whenever possible, the language of Ms. Walker and students was recorded verbatim. Third, I used the concreteness principle. Interactions or events were recorded in concrete language rather than abstract jargon. In addition, I wrote up notes as soon after the event as possible in order to support accurate recollection of these events.

In addition, Saldana (2009) coined the term ‘analytic memo’ as a document and reflection of the researcher’s “coding process and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes and concepts” in the data (p. 32). I kept dated analytic memos to constantly reflect on and write about my code choices and their operational definition, the emergent patterns, categories, as well as themes and the connections among them. Figure 3.1 shows one sample analytic memo.

Figure 3.1 Sample Analytic Memo

<p>Date: 5/1/13</p> <p>Teacher’s evaluation</p> <p>While teacher was guiding students discussing and reviewing what they learned before, three teachers came in unexpectedly (The principal, the ELL leader and one unknown teacher). They stayed for the following teaching hours to observe and evaluate teacher’s teaching. After class, teacher talked about how stressed the evaluation made her felt. The three teachers decided to come together, because they wanted to make sure they were on the same page and to build the consistency for their evaluation.</p> <p>It would be very stressful if I was the one to be observed and evaluated by three teachers at the same time. It seems that teacher in the school was regularly observed and evaluated.</p> <p>3:00</p> <p>Problem solving</p> <p>While students were doing their independent work, Teacher reminded students that: “Ask your table if you don’t know. You need to ask before you do this.” “Ask Dennis who sits next to you.” “Ask your friend right now. What is the step one?” “Talk to your table. Don’t ask me.”</p> <p>One third grader came to help the first graders. He walked around and helped to answer their questions if they raised their hands and signaled that they need help. The third grader seemed to be in some trouble and his teacher asked him to come to help Ms Walker’s class. He was nice to ask Ms. Walker if he needed to shuffle the books on the shelf. Ms. Walker thanked his willing to help but did not let him to shelf the books.</p>

Videotapes. Videotaping provides much more detailed moment-to-moment information than can be captured by a human researcher (Bottorff, 1994). By using videotaping, most potentially useful information can be captured, including both verbal and nonverbal information. Thus, the researcher is able to gather more information at one

time (Latvala, & Vuokila-Oikkonen, 2000). In order to minimize selective bias and memory limitations, I videotaped Ms. Walker's instruction in addition to taking detailed field notes. For each lesson and after-reading activity, I set up a video camera and recorded the lesson from the time instruction began until the students were dismissed.

The purpose of videotaping was to obtain an in-depth understanding of Ms. Walker's instruction. Videotaping produces a rich source of data about what is going on in classrooms. I observed and videorecorded Ms. Walker's instruction in order to see how she presented picturebooks and other reading materials as well as how she modeled and coached students' learning by using these reading materials. While videotaping in the classroom, I focused on Ms. Walker's instruction, including how she read aloud the book, how she guided students to read the books on their own, and what features and elements of the books she emphasized. The videotaping helped me to ensure the descriptive validity of my observations. It was also used to stimulate recall and reflection while conducting my interviews with her. In short, this study included 39 videotaped episodes which totaled 10.8 hours.

Teacher interviews. Interviews can be useful for understanding what cannot be directly observed, such as feelings, thoughts, and intentions (Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985). I conducted formal teacher interviews for 20-25 minutes when Ms. Walker was available during her preparation time by making an appointment with her ahead of time. By interviewing her, I was able to explore how she chose the read-aloud materials, and the reasons and purposes of her selection. Twelve formal interviews were conducted in total. Some informal interviews also provided data for my study. All formal interviews were audio-recorded. It helped to fully capture the interview.

Documents. Three documents were collected to support my understanding of the case. They are as follows.

Photographs. I took photos to document the literacy environment in the classroom, such as Word Wall, anchor charts, daily learning targets, notes on the white board, and posters on the chart that Ms. Walker drew or wrote. They provided the resources in recalling details and support for observation and interview findings of the study.

Students' work samples. Students' artifacts demonstrate students' progress on their learning and are often used by Ms. Walker to deepen or modify her own practice. For this reason, I collected or photographed students' sample works to keep a record. Their work samples included reader responses, various kinds of worksheets, personal dictionaries, assessments, and animal reports.

Teacher's book selection. For read-aloud materials Ms. Walker chose, I kept a copy for each of them either by taking photos, purchasing the books or getting a hard copy of the book from the teacher for later analysis. Generally, I use "read-aloud materials" as an umbrella concept covering several types of books. I provide a short and brief definition for each type of book and reading materials as follow:

Picturebooks. People used the compound word to differentiate them from books with pictures or illustrated books. The words and pictures in picturebooks each carry as much meaning. Readers are unable to follow the story without the picture and they can generally find illustrations on every page. There are picturebooks with few or no words at all. In these wordless picturebooks, the visual images carry the narrative by themselves (Galda, Cullinan & Sipe, 2010).

Easy readers. An easy reader is consciously created to help build the skills of children who are just learning to read. It features simple vocabulary, large typeface and short sentences. It can be also called *beginning reader* or simply *reader* (Horning, 1997). Due to the age of target readers, easy readers are grammatically simple. Sentences are short and the language is familiar to this age group. It is appropriate to use a few difficult, unfamiliar words to challenge readers.

Printable books. A printable book is a mini book that can be downloaded from websites and printed into multiple copies. Most of them are downloadable and printable for free.

Chapter books. A chapter book is a story book intended for intermediate readers. Unlike picturebooks for beginning readers, a chapter book tells the story primarily through prose, rather than pictures. The name refers to the fact that the stories are usually divided into short chapters, which provide readers with opportunities to stop and resume reading if their attention spans are not long enough to finish the book in one sitting. They

include other characteristics such as simple vocabulary without too many surprising multisyllabic words, sentences that are relatively short and direct, and brief episodes, chapter or intervals (Horning, 1997).

Data Preparation

I used *Express Scribe* to transcribe all my recorded video and audio files. The free version of Express Scribe is a professional audio player software for PC designed to assist in the transcription of audio recordings. I transcribed all the interviews using Express Scribe. By using its variable speed playback with constant pitch, I was able to change and slow down the speed and listen to Ms. Walker's interview as many times as needed to make sure my transcription was accurate.

The professional version of *Express Scribe* supports video file transcription. I used this software to transcribe each of the video-taped lessons, including Ms. Walker's mini-lessons, science lessons, and follow-up activities. With the software's valuable features, such as different speed playback and playing video, I was able to review the same videotaped situation as many times as necessary. It helped me to get a much more detailed and complete view of the classroom instruction and capture some potentially useful information, including both verbal and non-verbal information. The transcription conventions can be found in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Merriam (1998) argues that data collection and analysis for qualitative research is a simultaneous activity. Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, and the first document read. Emergent insights and discoveries direct the following stage of data collection, which in turn results in the reformulation of questions. It is an interactive process throughout that allows the researcher to produce credible and trustworthy findings. Therefore, researchers need some system for organizing and managing data early in the study. In the following section, I first provide detail to show the criteria that I used to examine Ms. Walker's book selection, then I proceed to the process of coding and how different codes led to category construction.

Documentation of materials used. For each book Ms. Walker chose, I kept a hard copy or electronic copy. The entire book list can be found in Appendix B. For

examining these books and reading materials, I chose to use criteria suggested by Hadaway and Young (2010). As opposed to traditional tools focusing only on the texts, such as the readability formulas, they argue that the written word is just one part of the reading. The reader also influences the text selection process. Teachers also need to consider reader's abilities, knowledge, and so on. Therefore, taking research findings from studies on language acquisition and literacy development, Hadaway and Young (2010) claimed four criteria to guide book selection for linguistically-diverse students, including *level of content familiarity*, *level of language*, *level of textual support*, and *cultural fit*. While examining them, first, I classify these books and reading materials in terms of their book types, such as picturebooks, or easy readers. Then, I analyze them using the above four criteria recommended by Hadaway and Young (2010) if applicable.

Coding of lessons. Researchers use coding to organize and manage data (Merriam, 1998). Coding is “a procedure for organizing the text of the transcripts, and discovering patterns within that organizational structure” (Auerbach, & Silverstein, 2003; p. 31). It is to assign some sort of shorthand designation to different aspects of the data so that researchers can retrieve pieces of data easily (Merriam, 1998).

In this study, while observing mini-lessons and interviewing Ms. Walker, I informally wrote down and assigned primary codes to events I observed or passages I heard that related to specific research questions in the margins of my field notes or analytic notes. Once the data were transcribed, I started to develop a formal code list by identifying units of information that helped to define categories. Figure 3.2 shows part of primary code list.

Figure 3.2 Sample Primary Code List

Codes
Time duration
How Teacher does read aloud
Using storytelling techniques
Teacher adds or replaces words in the text while read aloud.
Background connection
Activating students' prior knowledge (Outside school vs reviewing)
Direct instruction in teaching vocabulary from texts
Locating and defining unfamiliar words
Figuring out the meanings of unfamiliar words
...

I used open coding which is the process of breaking down, examining the data, identifying important parts and assigning a name or code to each part. Depending on the nature of the data, it was sometimes necessary to code the data at the level of a sentence, a paragraph, or even code a document as a whole (Strauss, & Corbin, 1990). I developed a code list by using the computer program Dedoose, a web-based quantitative and qualitative data-analysis software. It helped me to efficiently store, organize, and retrieve the data. While I worked on coding, I was able to export my codes into a separate file as a code list by using Dedoose. Based on the code list, I created my own ‘code book’ (Saldana, 2009) to keep a record of my emerging codes. The code book was a compilation of the codes, their content descriptions or definitions, and the related excerpts from the text. Maintaining this code book provided an analytic opportunity to organize and manage the codes into major categories and subcategories.

While working on the coding, I constantly talked with my advisor about my coding and analysis as I progressed through them. Discussion with people not only provides an opportunity to articulate the thinking process, but also presents opportunity for clarifying the emerging ideas and construct new insights about the data (Saldana, 2009). After the first trial code and discussion with my advisor, we discovered some problematic coding, for example, some names within the codes were used incorrectly, some codes were too subtle or too detailed a distinction with too many subcodes. Additionally, some of the codes denoted behaviors that were not related to answering my research questions. Therefore, given these problems, in the following stages of data analysis the codes were constantly examined and edited based on our discussion. I revised the original codes to simplify and reduce the number of codes, so that I was able to maintain an accurate description of lesson events and Ms. Walker’s points of view about her teaching.

First cycle coding. The qualitative analytic process is cyclical rather than linear and step-by step (Merriam, 1998; Saldana, 2009). The refinement of codes is a back-and-forth and continuous process. Initially I used detailed, line-by-line coding. The goal of primary coding is to “remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data” (Charmaz, 2006, P.46). I tried to capture the complexity of lessons

and interviews completely and developed a primary code book for use in categorizing lesson events and teacher interviews. Lichtman (2006) claims that most qualitative research studies in education will generate 80-100 codes that will be revised into 15-20 categories. Eventually, they will synthesize into five to seven major concepts. However, there is no standardized or magic number to reach. The final number of major themes or concepts should be parsimonious to keep the analysis coherent (Saldana, 2009).

During the first round of coding, I categorized transcriptions on a lesson-by-lesson basis. I analyzed the transcripts using a system that emerged directly from the data. Since my research interest was Ms. Walker's read-aloud behaviors, I focused closely on instructional strategies utilized by Ms. Walker to see how she read books aloud and presented the content. I identified the behaviors that supported or fostered a richer use of language by linguistically-diverse students, and conducted a detailed analysis of the content of Ms. Walker's speech as well. I systematically coded the selections of relevant text for repeating ideas in each separate transcript by using the computer software Dedoose. Dedoose helped me to excerpt and code text documents systematically.

I started with a combination of basic coding methods as an approach to my data, but tried to remain open to modifying them if they were not generating substantive discoveries. I used "mixed and matched" (Saldana, 2009) various coding methods at the beginning because I intended to capture what was happening thoroughly. For example, I primarily used *In Vivo Coding* which uses the direct language of participants as codes rather than researcher-generated words and phrases, *Simultaneous Coding* which assigns multiple codes to the data's content since complex "social interaction does not occur in neat, isolated units" (Glesne, 2006, p.150). Further, I used *Nested Coding* which is put under a higher primary code, *Descriptive Coding* which summarizes the basic topic of a passage of data in a word or short phrase. Last, I used *Structural Coding* which is a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question used to frame the interview (Saldana, 2009). All these coding methods helped me to capture the complex processes or phenomena in my data.

Second cycle coding. During my first cycle coding, I generated 73 different codes for my data corpus. In the second cycle coding, I tried to recode the data if needed, and then categorized them according to similarity. So the second cycle coding is a “category-generating” process (Saldana, 2009). The whole category construction is a process of “breaking data down into bits of information and then assigning these bits to categories or classes which bring these bits together again” (Merriam, 1998, P. 180). Throughout this process, the researcher begins to discriminate more clearly between the criteria for allocating data to one category or another. Some categories may be subdivided, and others subsumed under more abstract categories (Merriam, 1998).

Thus, in the second cycle of coding, I moved beyond basic descriptions to the next level of analysis. The purpose was to “construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern” of the data (Merriam, 1998, P. 179). I tried to sort different codes into groups that had something in common, and constantly went back to my marginal notes and comments, which provided me with hunches and ideas about how to categorize these codes. In this phase, I also used “Mixed-and-Matched” (Saldana, 2009) coding methods. For example, I used *Pattern Codes* which identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation. It is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of themes or constructs. I also used *Axial Codes* which relate categories to subcategories and specifies the properties and dimensions of a category (Saldana, 2009). In total, through this process, I generated 20 categories under 4 main themes in my study.

Validity, Reliability and Ethics

All research is needed to produce valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. In the following section, I explore the issues of validity and reliability and then offer strategies that I used to deal with the ethical issues.

Internal Validity

Internal validity deals with the following questions: Are the research findings credible to the people we study and to our readers? Do researchers have an authentic portrait of what researchers are looking at? Do the research findings match reality? (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, I used the following strategies to enhance internal validity.

Triangulation. Triangulation means using multiple methods or data to strengthen a study. Different types of data provide cross-data validity checks. Triangulation helps to strengthen confidence in whatever findings are drawn. For example, what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check. It offers the opportunity for researchers to be aware of the selective perceptions of others (Pattern, 2002). In this study, I used different data collection methods to check out the consistency of findings. Observations, interviews, and document analysis further helped me check for alternative explanations and negative evidence. For example, interviewing revealed that Ms. Walker conducted read alouds by using picturebooks, but on-site observations showed that actually Ms. Walker used a variety of books and reading materials in addition to picturebooks. By using a combination of multiple data collection techniques, I was able to use different data sources to cross-check my findings.

Member checks. Member-checking is also a way to determine the accuracy of the research findings through taking the report or themes back to the participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate (Merriam, 1998). In my study, I frequently took the findings or themes I created back to the teacher in order to determine whether she felt my interpretations were accurate. It helped me to confirm or disconfirm my analysis and subsequent interpretations. Member checking was a continuous process throughout the study.

Long-term observations. Gathering data at the research site for a long period of time can reduce the observer effects and increase the validity of the findings (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that through prolonged engagement and persistent observation, the probability of credible findings will be enhanced. I spent four months at the research site. The developmental process of being engaged at the site was helpful for me to build trust with Ms. Walker and students. Moreover, through persistent observation, I had the opportunity to identify the features in the situation that were most relevant to the issue, and I was able to focus on it in detail to develop an in-depth understanding of the teacher's instruction.

Peer examination. One way to establish validity is to use the technique of peer debriefing. I found one of my friends to be the debriefer to play the devil's advocate. The

debriefing sessions helped me to test working hypotheses and also provided the opportunity to develop and test next steps in my research design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The process of peer examination helped me clarify my own assumptions and biases.

Researcher's biases. This means I needed to clarify my assumptions and theoretical orientation at the beginning of the study (Merriam, 1998). One way to reduce my bias was to write notes either during or immediately after the observation. It helped lessen my selective memory (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Another method I adopted was to remain in the site for a long time so that Ms. Walker and her students not only got accustomed to my presence, but also revert to their natural behavior.

External Validity

In qualitative research, a single case or small sample is chosen because researchers want to understand the particular situation in depth, and they assume that one cannot generalize and consider generalizability as a limitation of the method (Merriam, 1998). However, different researchers provide different perspectives on this issue. For example, Erickson (1986) argues that the general lies in the particular. That is, what we learn from a specific situation can transfer or generalize to similar situations subsequently encounter. Actually, it is similar to the "case-to-case" transfer (Firestone, 1993). "It is the reader who has to ask, what is there in this study that I can apply to my own situation, and what clearly does not apply?" (Walker, 1980, p. 34). Unlike traditional research, readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding. They participate in extending generalization to reference populations (Merriam, 1998, p.32) Therefore, it was my goal to help readers compare and contrast the case with their situations by providing enough detailed description within my study.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. If the study is repeated will it yield the same results? However, the term reliability in the traditional sense seems to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense. In other words, the data are consistent and dependable. The question then is

not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). “If we cannot expect others to replicate our account, the best we can do is to explain how we arrive at our results” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). Thus, in my study, I describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. In addition, I provide a detailed account with a lot of excerpts and quotations to present my research findings.

Ethics

Once I go into the classroom, my influence may not be neutral. With regard to the observer effects, I adopt the “habituation” technique (Cohen, et al, 2007, p.412). That is, I remain in the situation for such a long time that participants not only get accustomed to my presence, but also revert to their natural behavior. Therefore, during the first month of my observations, I spent three whole days per week in the classroom. On the one hand, through prolonged observations, I got familiar with Ms. Walker’s daily routine and classroom culture. On the other hand, the probability of credible findings was enhanced. Further, in order to reduce the threat of reactivity, I tried to videotape in the least obtrusive setting and I set the equipment in the least obvious place in the classroom in order to decrease its influence on students’ behavior.

Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be reported. If a study involved releasing information recognizable to others, the participants need to agree to the release of identifiable information. Moreover, this should be stated explicitly in a written agreement. The protection of the participants’ privacy by changing their names and identifiable features is an important issue in reporting (Kvale, 1996). In this study, I disguise the location and change the names of students and give them pseudonyms as a way of protecting their identities.

Limitations

Since I am not a native English speaker, the accuracy of transcriptions of all the videotapes and audiotapes may be limited due to my language skills. My advisor checked any questionable parts of the tapes. We jointly listened to uncertain parts in an attempt to understand what was said and what was meant. Only at this point were parts of the tapes that could not be understood labeled as inaudible in the final transcript.

In addition, because of my research design, this study did not indicate which types of books or reading materials and which of these strategies might be more effective than others. Therefore, this study was limited to providing general guidelines instead of promoting certain reading materials or strategies as more beneficial for linguistically-diverse students. Another limitation of my study was I did not document and categorize students' detailed responses to Ms. Walker's read alouds. Future research could examine how other reading materials, such as children's magazines or printable books, influence read alouds for linguistically-diverse students' learning, and analyze their responses to these reading materials. Another limitation was that my research findings are not generalizable. Since I was only in one teacher's classroom, the results are limited to this one particular setting.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

As noted in Chapter Two, less is known about how teachers choose books for students, especially for linguistically-diverse students. In fact, how teachers select appropriate texts requires a lot of pedagogical decisions and what books are chosen has great impact on students' learning. I was interested in exploring what type of books the teacher chose, what their features were, their genres and levels, the frequency of use for each type of book, and the reasons the teacher chose them. My research questions were, "What kind of read-aloud materials are chosen?" and "How does the teacher choose read-aloud materials for linguistically diverse students?" In the first section, I examine the read-aloud materials the teacher chose in terms of their level of a) content familiarity, b) language, c) textual support, and d) cultural fit (Hadaway & Young, 2010). Then, I explore the source and level of these reading materials. Finally, I describe the frequency of use for each book.

Read-Aloud Materials the Teacher Selected

During my observations, Ms. Walker was entirely responsible for selecting the read-aloud materials in her classroom, planning and delivering the lessons, and determining follow-up activities. She followed her normal daily teaching routine and conducted reading aloud in her typical manner.

Types of Read-Aloud Materials

The read-aloud materials Ms. Walker chose during the observation period consisted of a great variety of types including picturebooks, easy readers, printable small books, a children's magazine, a chapter book, a teacher self-made book and a personalized book. Table 4.1 outlines the books and reading materials Ms. Walker used.

Table 4.1 Types of Books and Reading Materials

Types of books	Picture-books	Personalized book	Easy readers	Printable small books	Children's magazine	Chapter book	Teacher self-made book
Names of the Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ella Sarah Gets Dressed •Hey, Little Ant •A Walk Through the Minnesota Zoo 	<i>When I Grow Up</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Catch Me If You Can •Snow Joe •A Mom like No Other •Splat the Cat: Good Night, Sleep Tight •A Snowman •Gulls •Big Bad Cats •More Spaghetti, I Say •From Eggs to Geese •Balls •Dick and Jane and Vampire •I'm a Caterpillar •The Robot •Never Say Never •Fancy Nancy Sees Stars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ocean Animals •Habits Logbook •Polar Habitats •Explore and Learn Arctic Animals •Arctic Life •Life Cycle of a Bumble Bee •Stages of an Egg 	<i>A Big Bird</i>	<i>Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal</i>	<i>Norway</i>
Amount	3	1	15	7	1	1	1

In the following section, I examine the books and reading materials Ms. Walker chose from four different perspectives: level of content familiarity, level of language, level of textual support, and level of cultural fit (Hadaway & Young, 2010). As teachers examine the content familiarity of texts, they need to take into consideration the fit of the conceptual level of the text with linguistically-diverse students' content knowledge or background knowledge. When students know about a concept in their own language, transitioning to a book in English about the same concept is not so challenging because they can build on their current knowledge base. Teachers can ask questions like, "What content and concepts are presented in the text? What is the English learners' level of background knowledge related to the content and concepts? Has the topic of the text been previously covered in the curriculum?" (Hadaway & Young, 2010)

The second criterion is level of language. To select appropriate books, teachers must judge how close a fit they are to students' vocabulary and syntactic knowledge and

their overall language proficiency level. Teachers can keep in mind questions like: “What is the vocabulary load of the text? Does the text present new vocabulary in meaningful contextual language? What are the syntactic structures of the text?” (Hadaway & Young, 2010) Third, textual support means that to select appropriate books for linguistically-diverse students, teachers need to find books with strong support within the text. When word knowledge is limited, readers need to rely on other clues to help them understand the meaning of a text. For example, “Are there visuals or graphic aids in the text? Are there graphic aids in the text? What types of text features are used?” (Hadaway & Young, 2010) Last, cultural fit means that teachers need to look for books that are culturally relevant to the lives of students. Teachers ask questions like, “Is the text culturally neutral, culturally generic, or culturally specific? How far removed is the story from current times? Is the main character the same gender as the reader?” (Hadaway & Young, 2010)

Picturebooks/Individualized books. Among the three picturebooks Ms. Walker used, two of them are literature and one is an informational text. The individualized book she selected was also literature. They are appropriate for Pre-K to second grade.

Level of content familiarity. *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003) depicts a girl named Ella who insists on wearing an unusual and special outfit of her own choosing. Students can easily identify with Ella since somehow they all have had a similar experience of insisting on their own choice no matter what anyone else suggests. Before the read aloud, Ms. Walker easily associated the main character, Ella, with her own daughter, Ellery, with whom students were familiar. *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose, 1998) describes an ant who is confronted by a child who intends to step on it. Although the message is about respecting all creatures and their right to live, every child might have the experience of squishing ants. “But all my friends squish ants each day, squishing ants is a game we play” (Hoose, 1998, p.17). Students can really identify with characters in the story. *A Walk through the Minnesota Zoo* (Hoff & Melich, 1994) portrays eleven animals that can be found in the Minnesota Zoo. It provides brief and general information about each animal. Since Ms. Walker read this book aloud the day before their field trip to the Minnesota Zoo, students might have especially connected to the content the book provided. The individualized book, *When I Grow Up* (Andrews, 1993), came from one of

the students. She received the book as a gift. The book uses the student's name, hometown, age and some other information to create a book in which the student has the leading role. Students can really identify with it since the book talks about what they want to be when they grow up. This was a topic that had been previously covered in school.

Level of language. In *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003), the author used limited words on each page and created a delightful refrain. Students could enjoy chanting along with Ella's repeated list of clothing. While reading aloud, Ms. Walker pointed out the repetitiveness of the language in the book and reminded students to notice the pattern of the language. The repeated phrases provided supportive and predictable text for students. *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose, 1998) was based on a song. Each sentence ended with rhyming words. The text structure of both stories is descriptive and easy to understand. *A Walk through the Minnesota Zoo* (Hoff & Melich, 1994) is an informational text. Compared to the two fiction books, the language load in this book is higher. It includes some challenging and unfamiliar vocabulary. Ms. Walker replaced some of the hard words with easy ones while reading aloud to help students comprehend the content of this book. For example, she replaced the word, *undulating* by *moving* and replaced the word, *arduous* by *hard*. In *When I Grow Up* (Andrews, 1993), the text is denser, but the language is familiar for students. Students especially knew key occupations, such as doctor, and community helper.

Level of textual support. In *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003), the illustrator portrays the story with vivid color and opaque shapes, which creates a delightful mood. In one of the spreads, the five images of Ella getting dressed with text placed next to each image helps students match the text to pictures. By putting other characters on the margins of the picture, students were able to focus on the main character, Ella. In *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose, 1998), each double-page spread is devoted to one character expressing his opinion. The illustrations emphasize the comparison between large and small, which helps students understand the character's point of view. Students were amazed by the full-page figures and illustrations. The bold words used help to draw students' attention to some key vocabulary. Ms. Walker used teachable

moments to introduce the functions of bold words. Ms. Walker guided students to discuss, “Why they make that word bold” (Interview, 2/20). Students were able to understand that these bold words were really important and that’s the reason why people made the text bold. *A Walk though the Minnesota Zoo* (Hoff & Melich, 1994) uses one-to-one correspondence of visuals to text. That is, for each spread, the right page is always the text about the animal and the left page is always the corresponding illustration for that animal. By using the same format, students were able to predict and expect what came next. In *When I Grow up* (Andrews, 1993), each page has a colorful illustration. Each picture clearly illustrates each occupation and helps students understand the content of the text.

Level of cultural fit. All of these three picturebooks and one individualized book are culturally universal. They do not focus on any specific group. Every child more or less would have the same experience with Ella or the little boy, love animals and want to be something when they grow up. *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003) describes a universal childhood struggle. Students will easily see themselves in Ella’s situation. Similarly, *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose, 1998) portrays a common experience. Every kid might have the experience of peer pressure and squishing ants. *When I Grow Up* (Andrews, 1993) describes some possible future occupations. Every child wants to be something when he/she grows up. All of these reflect the experiences all students have, no matter what cultural background, religion or gender they are.

Easy readers. Ms. Walker used 15 easy readers during the observation period. Among them, there were ten literature and five informational books. Most of these easy readers were level 1 and 2 for beginning readers. Among these books, Ms. Walker used one big book while reading aloud.

Level of content familiarity. Some of these easy readers introduce animals or insects, such as gulls, geese and caterpillars. Others have themes like outdoor camping in the middle of the night, experiencing the seasons with delightful activities, taking a trip to the planetarium, the close relationship between grandpa and grandchild, the bond that the mother and the daughter share, understanding likes and dislikes of others, being persistent and never giving up. Students might have experienced some of the happenings in the

stories. For example, while reading *A Mom Like No Other* (Taylor-Butler, 2004) aloud, Ms. Walker connected students with the experience of doing hair braids. While reading *More Spaghetti, I Say* (Gelman, 2003) aloud, Ms. Walker had students share one thing they liked more than anything. However, *Dick and Jane and Vampire* (Marchesani, 2010) describes two children who meet a creepy, cape-wearing vampire, which would be unfamiliar to students.

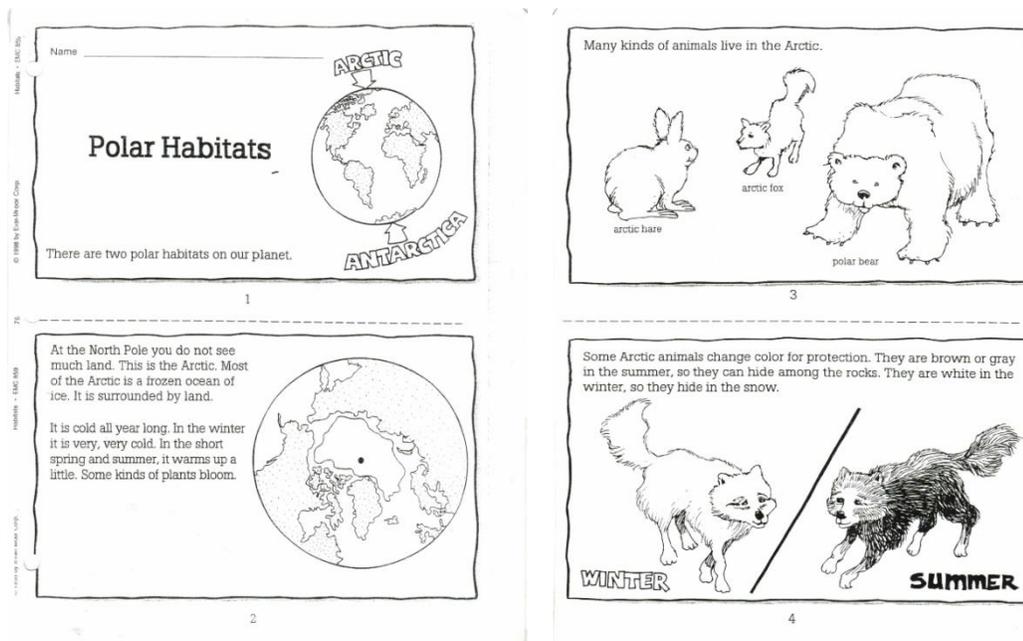
Level of language. In general, most of the books were simple and funny to read. The texts fit into the linguistically-diverse students' overall proficiency level. Some of them provided different language features for readers. For example, in *More Spaghetti, I Say* (Gelman, 2003), the entire book is set in rhyme. *Splat the Cat: Good Night, Sleep Tight* (Scotton, 2011) presents many words ending with 'igh' to give readers opportunities to practice some compound words. In *Fancy Nancy Sees Stars* (O'Connor, 2009), there are some fancy words that would be challenging for first graders, such as *alfresco, brilliant, constellation, fascinating, meteor, orbit* and *planetarium*. They might be hard to decode for first graders, even though the book is supposed to be used for early readers. Ms. Walker used the chance to demonstrate how to chunk the words and used context clues to figure out these words.

Level of textual support. The text of most of the books goes well with the lively illustrations and the combination of the two makes the stories more vivid. Reading and illustrations are great for beginning readers to follow along with. Most of the pictures are well done and some of the pictures make the story predictable. Students could guess the words before Ms. Walker got to them by using the picture clues.

Level of cultural fit. Almost every easy reader is culturally universal. Most of the main themes and characters are animals or non-humans, such as a snowman. There is one book, *A Mom Like No Other* (Taylor-Butler, 2004), in which two African Americans are the main characters. It describes how "She wears a short afro. I have lots of braids" and the little girl did not like the corn-rowing sessions. All of these descriptions of African American hair style are authentic to African American culture.

Printable books and teacher's self-made book. There were eight printable books. They were either printed from a website, or they were copies from books. Figure 4.1 shows some sample pages of a printable book.

Figure 4.1 Sample Pages of a Printable Book



Level of content familiarity. Within the eight printable books, Ms. Walker created her own book *Norway* to introduce Norway to students. All of the books were black and white copies and non-fiction. These books (except for *Norway*) were chosen under three main themes for their science lessons: *habitat*, *Arctic life* and *life cycles*. Most of the books talked about animals, such as ocean animals, polar habitats, Arctic animals, and so on. Some talked about insects, such as bumble bees. Ms. Walker was able to relate some of the content to students' lives, such as *Finding Nemo* and *Spongebob* in order to connect to their background knowledge. All of the content was new to students, but shared general knowledge about animals. Ms. Walker usually used two to three books for a theme to repeat concepts or information.

Norway introduced the capital, animals, weather, sports, schools, plants, and the flag in Norway. Although the content was new for students, the general information seemed understandable. Ms. Walker made connections between Norway and Minnesota where the students live.

Level of language. All of these printable books including *Norway* used descriptive structures with short paragraphs and simple sentence structures. Most of them had two to three sentences in a paragraph. There were two books with only one simple sentence per page. Most of books had simple or compound sentence structures. Some of the texts contained some unfamiliar vocabulary for students. One of the books provided hints for students to know how to pronounce the words, such as ‘cartilage’ (kar-tl-ij). For books with unfamiliar words, Ms. Walker would introduce 2 to 3 vocabulary during read alouds. Most of the words Ms. Walker introduced were words that students might encounter in other science reading, such as skeleton, lung, gill, and so on.

Level of textual support. All of these books provided visuals. Some of them had drawings and some photographs. All of them were black and white. All of them were clear and direct with one-to-one correspondence of visuals to text except for *Habitats Logbook*. In that book, Ms. Walker asked students to draw their own illustrations instead. In *Polar Habitats* and *Ocean Animals*, there were even some labels or captions for each drawing. In *Arctic Life*, each page went with headings to summarize the short paragraphs. All of the visuals provided helpful support for students to understand the content. For example, under the page saying ‘Many kinds of animals live in the Arctic,’ students could see three animals in the drawing, an Arctic hare, an Arctic fox and a Polar bear, and know they live in the Arctic. On one occasion, one student had no idea of what “snowmobile” was, and the picture of a snowmobile on this page provided some visual support for students to visualize what a snowmobile looked like.

Level of cultural fit. All of the printable books are culturally universal because they depicted nonfiction topics.

All of the above criteria might not apply to the magazine and chapter book, so for the following two reading materials, I generally explore their features instead of discussing them from the four perspectives.

Children’s magazine. The magazine Ms. Walker used was a Weekly Reader. It explored grade-appropriate nonfiction content and news stories. Ms. Walker ordered for the K-1 age group. They were based more on skills at the younger grade and reading levels. They provide four magazines in a month and come as a class set of up to 25-30

copies. Ms. Walker got the teacher's copy, the one big version and put it up the board. So students could see it from afar. Ms. Walker used the children's magazine to introduce penguins. In the double-page spread, it introduced two kinds of penguins with real pictures. It also included fun facts and photos with captions under them. The last page provided a compare and contrast chart for the two penguins and comprehension questions to check students' understanding.

Chapter book. In *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (Park, 1997), Grace and Junie B. Jones join Lucille's sleepover party at her rich nanny's big giant house. They can't wait to see all the rich stuff in that place. Junie B. Jones' babyish, immature grammar is authentic for a kindergartener. The language is purposely not always grammatically correct, because it is supposed to make it authentically sound like a seven year old. The sentences are short and simple to understand. It is appropriate for grade 1 to grade 4.

In short, Ms. Walker selected a great variety of read-aloud materials. However, the quality of these books varied; not all of her book selections were of equally high quality. She used some good picturebooks. Among them was one award winning book. Others were basic printable books without vivid and colorful illustrations and using limited language structures. Some easy readers are characterized by controlled vocabulary and simplified sentence structures.

The Source of Books in the Classroom Library

Most of the books Ms. Walker used came from the classroom library. She purchased them from garage sales or the Goodwill store. She also checked out books from the school library. During my observation period, Ms. Walker received some donated books from a woman. The site Ms. Walker used to download printable books was mostly from 'Reading A to Z.com,' because there were many leveled books. Typically, the topics about animals, flowers, and life cycles are easy to find in printable books for the younger grades. However, when they talked about 'civilization now and then,' 'comparing the past and now,' it was hard to find reading materials at students' levels. Similarly, the children's magazine was ordered from the website. Teachers could get four magazines in a month. They have different themes depending on that month. For

example, if it was a Black History Month, they might all have topics about Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Reading Level of Books Used

The school program provides a database, so Ms. Walker could type a book title and it would show the level of the book. If some books do not come up, she had to look at the content and decide the level by seeing what the pattern in the book was. For example, the 2Y books are the lowest level. They are books that have all the same sentence pattern except for the last word being changed. For example, “I like cats. I like dogs.” The 1G books have the same sentence patterns except for the first word instead. For example, “I like cats. You like cats. John likes cats. Cathy likes cats.” For 2G, it is the first and last word being changed. Then once students get to Level B, there are a number of factors to consider, such as syllables. Once students get into the 2B level, they started to read multi-syllable words.

While choosing books for read aloud, Ms. Walker usually chose books from 2R to 1B or 2B. The highest level that anyone was at was 2R, but a lot of time, Ms. Walker would choose 1B or 2B books because she thought the 1B and 2B books had just the right amount of story elements and big events to comprehend. Although they might be simpler for her students, they still had “a little bit of details” (Interview, 2/25). For example, for science lessons, Ms. Walker picked the easier books, like easy readers. The books were available at all levels for teachers. Although students in the class are more like a G or H level, Ms. Walker tended to pick books with a C or D level. She thought that, at the same time, the higher students were still benefiting because they got the content. If she picked out books at the G or H level, the lower students would be looking at them and not know what to do. Normally, when Ms. Walker finished reading aloud, some students would ask, “Can I read it?” “Can I take that book to read?” She felt bad in saying, “No, it’s too hard for you” (Interview, 2/25). So instead she tried to stick to easy books. Therefore, while choosing books, she at least knew that the students could read that book. Table 4.2 shows the spectrum for students’ reading levels which is from Independent Reading/Level Assessment Framework.

Table 4.2 The Spectrum for Reading Levels

PreK	Kindergarten		1			2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9& 10	11& 12
RTM	2Y	1G	2G	1B	2B	1R	2R	Wt	Bk	Or	Pu	1Br	2Br	Si	Gi

The Genres of Books

Ms. Walker thought it was really hard to find good non-fiction books, “just because a lot of them are too hard for the kids. So I just try to pick books that can be at their level.” (Interview, 2/13) Sometimes, after read aloud, students would ask to borrow the book; therefore, Ms. Walker tried to stick to easy books so students could read them. Fictions books were easier to find with topics that match students’ levels. So Ms. Walker usually chose short fiction stories. The only time she used non-fiction books was for science or for math. She would use non-fiction for pointing out what informational text books look like, what a fact is, or what an opinion is, and so on (Interview, 2/13).

However, although Ms. Walker thought non-fiction books might be too difficult for her first grade students, there exist many good non-fiction books published are not too hard and are at students’ grade level. The reason why she thought these books might be unavailable could be that her school did not have access to these simpler non-fiction books.

The Frequency of Use for Each Book

Most of the read-aloud materials were completed in a single session except for the chapter book or some longer picturebooks. When I observed, it was the first time the class had been read each book. As a non-participant observer, I did not interact with Ms. Walker and students during the lessons. I did not suggest Ms. Walker use or avoid any specific reading materials or instructional practices. Instead, while observing the classroom, I tried to remain unobtrusive during her read alouds and instruction.

The reason Ms. Walker did one different book every time was to ‘keep it varied’ (2/20). She would keep the book for about a week and students would pass it around because a lot of them liked to read the same one due to the familiarity of it. So they could read it and keep exploring it. Sometimes she would go back to the same book if they

changed the topic. For example, if they were talking about the characters, she might use one specific book. And if they were talking about the setting instead, she might come back to this book and have students think about the setting. Most important of all, Ms. Walker wanted to show students that “all these topics for teaching are cohesive with any book [they] read’ (2/20). Since a lot of students would say “I don’t have that book,” and “I was unable to do the reader’s response,” Ms. Walker just wanted to show them that they could pick any book they wanted and still answer questions about setting, characters, and so on.

The Criteria and Her Reasoning

In this section, I explore whether Ms. Walker used read-aloud materials because they were required by the district or for other reasons. Then I describe the criteria Ms. Walker used to choose read-aloud materials. Next, I examine the reasons why she chose them. I conclude with the challenges and successes Ms. Walker came across when using them.

The Requirements of the School Program

In this school, students were required to read two steps for thirty minutes a day at school. What teachers did was break their two steps up because a half hour is really a long time for first graders to read. Students do one of their steps for fifteen minutes in the morning. Ms. Walker did her 15 minute mini-lessons and students had 15 minutes to quietly read independently after the read aloud in the afternoon. In Ms. Walker’s mini lesson, she would read aloud books and other reading materials. Before the read aloud, she would meet with the special teacher to decide on the book they would use, since some lower students would be pulled out by the special teacher after students had finished their independent reading. By working together to choose books they made sure that all the students were learning the same content.

Criteria for Choosing Books and Reading Materials

Generally, while choosing books, Ms. Walker took into account students’ age, maturity level, and picture support. She always pre-read materials before reading them aloud, to make sure that “they [are] developmentally appropriate, and socially appropriate and culturally appropriate. It’s just like you have to keep all those things in mind.” For

example, Muslim students do not associate with pigs because they think pigs are dirty. They do not eat pork. So it would be inappropriate to read *If You Give a Pig a Party* to them. Students would feel offended and it would be a distraction for students' learning. So while choosing books for linguistically-diverse students, teachers need to make sure they are appropriate for "either age, just overall or location, or race, ethnicity religion. I mean you have to take all that in when you are doing that" (Interview, 2/27). Teachers always need to "pre-read it, or pre-listen to it, or pre-look at it" (Interview, 2/27).

Reasons for Books and Reading Material Selections

The major factor Ms. Walker took into consideration when selecting books was her current learning target. For example, she used *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003) to review settings and talk about main characters. There was more than one character, so she asked students how they knew that Ella was the main character, not the other girls. Sometimes the books chosen were related to the main themes they were learning. For example, Ms. Walker read a set of books whose topics were bees, butterflies and caterpillars in order to introduce the concept of life cycles. Sometimes, she chose simple and easy books intentionally because she wanted to show students that they could always read below their level. She demonstrated that reading books below their level could help to build their confidence. In short, all these picturebooks and reading materials provided a time for talking about learning targets and understanding the main themes. Ms. Walker typically used books and reading materials as a vehicle for introducing new information or demonstrating a task. In the following section, I describe reasons why Ms. Walker chose some specific types of books and reading materials with examples from my observations.

Picturebooks. Generally, the reason Ms. Walker would use picturebooks was because she believed that "picturebooks just help to put [vocabulary] in the visual." (Interview, 2/11) For example, she once introduced the vocabulary word 'shrug,' in the book. It happened to literally have a picture of a chick shrugging and its hands were out and shoulders up. She thought it was a nice way to visualize the word. The picture helped to build the concrete idea in students' heads.

Easy readers. In science, Ms. Walker used easy readers more because science books are so “vocabulary heavy.” (5/8). Students had a hard time understanding what the books were saying. Therefore, she used easy readers to help all students see and understand the vocabulary. By using easier books students had more time to focus on the vocabulary and less time to worry about sounding out words, and their fluency was more automatic. Otherwise, they would need to stop because they did not know the words. “They are not internalizing what they are reading and they will miss out on so much stuff.” (5/8). Thus, on some occasions Ms. Walker chose relatively easy books to reduce the language load and help students learn the concept. For example, while talking about setting, Ms. Walker read aloud a short book *Snow Joe* (Greene, 2011) that talked about winter and winter activities. Students had more or less experienced the same activities in winter. The language was fairly simple. For this reason, students could focus on the multiple settings in the story. This easy reader helped students to avoid distractions from unfamiliar content or unknown vocabulary in order to focus on the learning target. Students did not have to worry about the story as much as the places where they occurred. In the same way, she picked the book *Catch Me If You Can* (Most, 1999) intentionally because “it doesn’t specifically say desert, so I want them to use picture inferences to see if they can identify the setting without actually saying ‘in the desert’ in the book.” Similarly, she chose a simple easy reader *Gulls* (Tripp, 2007) to demonstrate how to determine the type of book, the main characters, character traits, vocabulary, and so on while modeling how to write the reader response after reading. She chose an easy book to demonstrate how to ask comprehension questions using the “Remembering Fan.” (This book is called *The Robot*. It’s short and simple. But it’s gonna help us with some of these comprehension questions. [Teacher showed the comprehension fans to students]; 5/13_2).

Among the easy readers, Ms. Walker used one big book during the observational period, because it was fun. Students might have thought of it as different and Ms. Walker could “stand in front of the class and not expect everyone to get really close and they can stay in their own desk and have their own book” (Interview, 2/11). While students were working on their animal report, Ms. Walker borrowed a box of books for students from the school library. They were a whole series of informational texts from a particular

publisher. The reason Ms. Walker chose these books for students was because “they are all consistent. So they are all the same format. They are all the same, even the covers, despite the animals, everything is the same. So you don’t have kids fighting over them. ‘I want that book because it has bigger pictures. I want that book because it is smaller. I want...’ So they literally are all the same, minus the fact of the animals” (Interview, 5/8). By choosing books with consistency, Ms. Walker tried to prevent distractions for students.

Printable books. The reason Ms. Walker chose printable books was because they were a good resource for informational texts at students’ grade level. She thought non-fiction was hard to find at the level of first graders. “They are challenging because clearly there are a lot of new vocabulary” (Interview, 5/2). “Informational text has so much vocabulary” (Interview, 2/11). Even if Ms. Walker found an appropriate non-fiction book, the problem was getting each student a copy of the book. Therefore, the printable books were a feasible solution. She usually did not have enough copies within her classroom library. By using printable books, she could teach the difference between informational text and literature. She could just print 23 copies of them and ensure that every student got a copy. “It is more meaningful when they can actually see it versus just hearing it” (5/8). Students “at least get to see something versus kind of being like ‘What’s that?’ looking from far away” (Interview, 5/8).

Students loved the printable books. With those books, they were able to easily follow along, highlight and make notes on the book. For example, after reading aloud and talking through the printable book *Ocean Animals*, students could highlight unfamiliar words directly in the book instead of using Post-It Notes. They could take them home. Ms. Walker thought that was a big factor. The black and white printable books needed color and students loved to color. That’s why students really liked having these books. The challenge for using printable books was that you can find some but they do not have them for everything. So then the result is Ms. Walker reads aloud or gets one book and makes a copy of the part that students can understand or finds a way to read or summarize everything for them in easier language.

Although Ms. Walker thought it was hard to find non-fiction books at her students’ grade level, there are many high-quality non-fiction books with simple texts and vivid

illustrations to help linguistically-diverse students master concepts. In fact, with access, teachers could locate a large number of non-fiction books for their linguistically-diverse students.

Children's magazine. The reason Ms. Walker used children's magazines was because she wanted to show students that they could read things other than books. Some of the children's magazines could be made as mini-books. Students could cut, fold and make a tiny book. "They get really excited about getting to bring them home and it is the biggest thing" (5/2). Ms. Walker can put the teacher version, the big cut out, on the board and point to it. Students had exactly the same small copy, so they had something to follow along with. What the teacher liked about the magazine was there were always activities in the back, and usually some comprehension questions. In addition, the magazine also provided a digital edition. Parents could go online at home and get more information about the topic. It provided some fun games that had to do with the content and offered a way to keep reading going at home. Sometimes, instead of reading aloud at school, the teacher had students take the magazine home, so they could have something new to read at home.

However, Ms. Walker thought the hardest thing about using magazines was to find the time to fit it into the day, because there were so many sections to read and it took a long time. There was so much information in non-fiction texts and some of them are so challenging and above students' level. It does take a lot of additional time to go through, compared to a short fiction story that students just listen to. The magazines were more interactive and they force teachers to stop and check to see if students are still following along as teachers read. So Ms. Walker may have just read one thing or read a part of it, or guided students to do the activities at the back together and then students could take them home and read the rest of it. They were also good for morning work. For example, students came into the class to read them first thing and then Ms. Walker read a couple parts to see what their favorite parts were.

Chapter book. The reason Ms. Walkerr used the chapter book was to demonstrate how to read it. She noticed a lot of students had been checking out chapter books from the school library. Some of them knew the right way to read the chapter book

but some did not, because they were not reading at a good pace and not thinking about it while they were reading. They were just reading to read. Therefore, Ms. Walker tried to show students that “the reason they are in chapters is they’re themes and you can read one chapter and stop and then go back to it” (5/9). So she wanted them to learn with chapter books, because they are longer, they contain more information that would make it harder for students to comprehend. Ms. Walker wanted them to set a goal for reading chapter books. For example, they could read one or two chapters, stop and then think about it.

Ms. Walker chose *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (Park, 1997) because it was silly and relatable. Students loved to read it. Students were very motivated to read it, but at the same time, it was really hard because grammatically it was sometimes incorrect on purpose. There were grammatical errors because it was supposed to sound like a seven year old talking. So students, especially linguistically-diverse students, might have struggled with it. Thus, Ms. Walker did not use it very often because she was afraid that her students might think that was the right way to talk. By reading a chapter book, Ms. Walker was trying to build students’ fluency skills and show them what a typical page looked like. The big struggle was how fast students should read it because if students read too slowly, they would get bored, but if students read too fast, they would not comprehend anything.

Teacher self made book. Ms. Walker made a book *Norway* for their Extended Learning Year (ELY) program. The reason she created the Norway book was because she could not find any books about Norway at students’ reading level. She wanted something that was at students’ level and that her students would not only be able to read but more importantly to understand. However, everything she found in the library was either really hard for students to understand or just too long. Since it was a short unit, she wanted “something that was literally to the point” (6/3). By making the book, she was able to adjust the language to meet all students’ needs and nothing was lacking. She knew she wanted students to talk about people, animals, weather and plants, so she put those specific things in the book.

Challenges and Success of Using Picturebooks and Other Reading Materials

Generally, Ms. Walker thought many of the read-aloud materials “don’t require a lot of background knowledge...in the lower grade, it’s really, it’s so basic and just teaching you and the topics in the stories are random” (Interview, 2/27). In contrast, the “higher level books require a lot more from the readers as far as prerequisite [knowledge].” So the younger books can really help everyone, because they are so basic. “They are so basic and um, explicitly explain everything simply, which is huge and helpful” (Interview, 2/27). The difficult parts while using read-aloud materials are vocabulary challenges and lack of the background knowledge. There are always some books with new words requiring students to understand things. Pictures help but there are always things that students need to learn by feeling, touching, or smelling. For example, there was one time when students were unable to imagine what ‘tar’ from her explanation: “the black stuff on the road is tar...the material they make it out of it is tar.” So Ms. Walker had to take her students outside at their recess time and tell them “the sidewalks are white, they are cement, that is the material. The road is black, that is tar, that is the material” (Interview, 2/27). “Looking at picturebooks, you only have the auditory version and the visual version. You don’t have the kinesthetic aspects of the *touching* and *feeling* and *actually doing* aspect. I feel like that is the hardest thing with picturebooks, but it is nice that the picturebooks have pictures, because it is really helping one more set of kids, the visual learners” (Interview, 2/27).

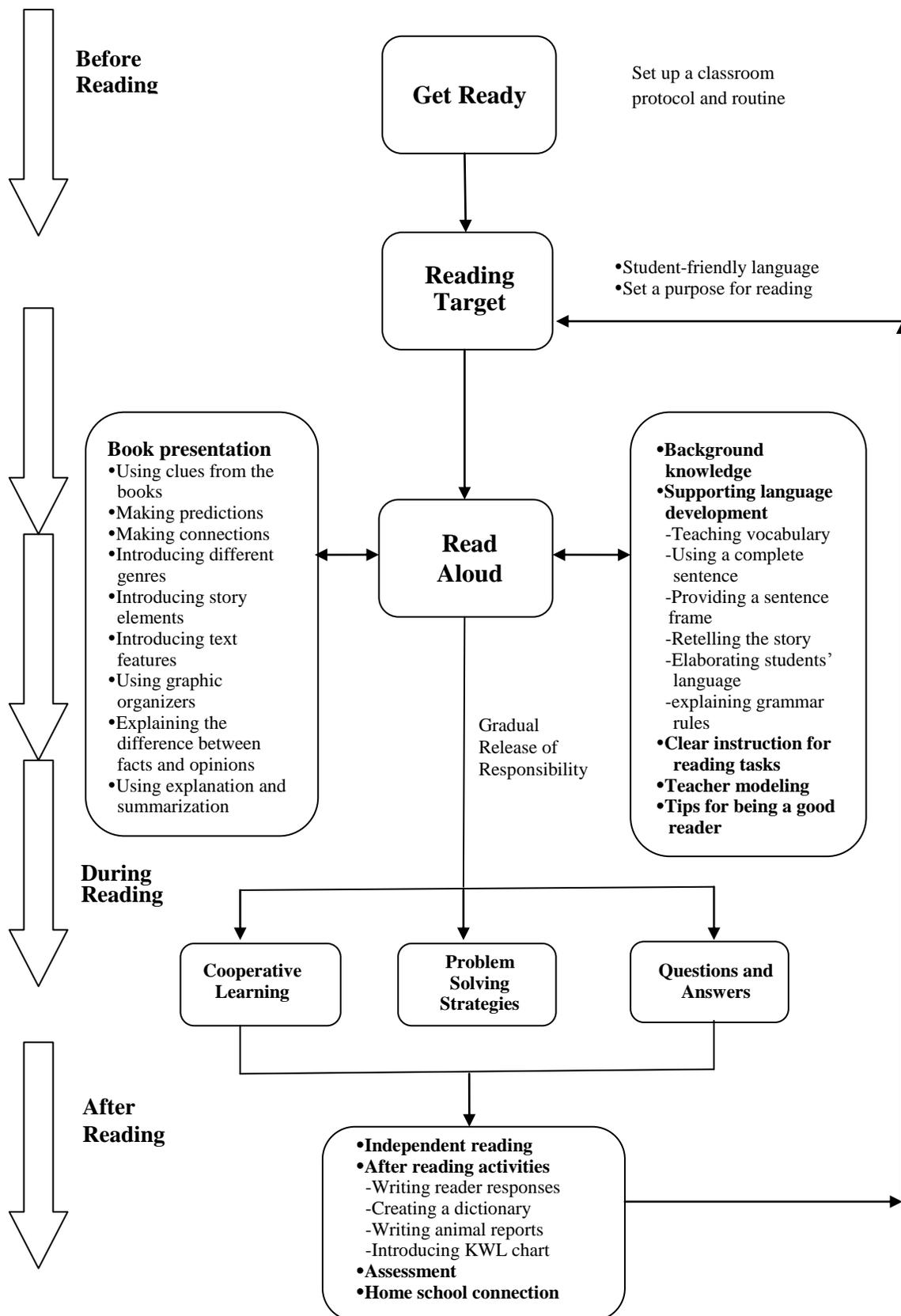
Ms. Walker thought that using pictures in picturebooks and other reading material was just “the biggest hook ever for kids.” Using pictures was interesting and grabbed students’ attention and made them want to learn more. “If I just show them a book with just words, they are not going to be hooked on it” (Interview, 2/27). Most importantly, the picturebooks and other reading materials showed students that words match with pictures. “It’s nice to see they know the pictures and the words go together.” (Interview, 2/27). For students who couldn’t take time to really think about what’s going on, the pictures “made them stop, look at what’s happening and further deepen their understanding of it, because like when you read these books, yes. You read the words, no matter how fast the kids are reading, they are always eager to see the picture, and even a glance is gonna help them understand their text” (Interview, 2/27).

Read-Aloud Practices

The purpose of this section is to report descriptive results from my observations to provide an overview of the nature of read-aloud practices in a classroom serving linguistically-diverse students. My research question is, “How does the teacher present read-aloud materials to improve linguistically-diverse students’ learning?” I explore the following perspectives, “How does the teacher conduct read alouds?” “What strategies does the teacher use to help linguistically-diverse students to comprehend read-aloud materials?” “How does the teacher support linguistically-diverse students’ language development by using read-aloud materials?” “How does the teacher scaffold linguistically-diverse students to read read-aloud materials?”

The data I collected provide a rich description of the teaching experiences of a first grade teacher, Ms. Walker. I begin the section with Ms. Walker’s practices before reading, and follow with a closer look at the presentation of books and other reading materials during reading and a discussion of the observation results on her after-reading activities. Figure 4.2 synthesizes the whole process of Ms. Walker’s read-aloud practice.

Figure 4.2 Ms. Walker’s Read-Aloud Practice



Before Reading

My observations revealed that Ms. Walker established routines in the classroom. Students all knew what was expected of them when it came to read-aloud time. After they had finished their previous class, students always sat on the floor in front of the pink chair when they returned to the classroom. They all knew it was time for read aloud. Most of time, they were able to sit quietly and wait for Ms Walker. Once Ms. Walker made sure everyone was paying attention and ready for listening, she started to read aloud.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Ms. Walker set the students' purpose for reading to achieve targeted objectives. The reading targets she set were specific and concise. Generally, Ms. Walker switched the language arts standards related to the story elements into student-friendly language for her mini-lessons. She made the language simple but still got the same idea across. She worked with the specialist and picked the reading target every two weeks. For example, in January, a month ago, they did "we will name the characters in our book and describe them." Two weeks later they did "we will compare characters." So the reading targets built on each other. Ms. Walker and the specialist focused on keeping the reading target consistent. Each time Ms. Walker read aloud, she guided students to focus on their learning target to make it purposeful. Sometimes students were required to read to perform a task or read to gain new information, not simply reading for a literary experience. This occurred especially in read alouds for science lessons.

Ms. Walker provided a great amount of support for students to achieve the selected goal. Before reading aloud, she usually showed the reading target and modeled reading the reading target first, and then had students repeat after her. By demonstrating the reading target on the board as she read aloud, or during their independent reading, Ms. Walker showed a clear visual reminder of their goal for the day.

During Reading

How to Do Read Alouds

During most read-aloud sessions, Ms. Walker sat in a big pink chair in the corner in front of the classroom. She held the book up high and had students sit facing her on the

floor. Sometimes, she had students sit in their normal seats and she would stand or walk around the classroom while she read aloud. Most of the time, Ms. Walker read books and other reading materials with different intonations and gestures. However, while reading the informational text for science lessons, occasionally she asked students to follow along if they liked to whisper with her with their own individual copies. Other times, she would ask students to take turns reading one paragraph with a “loud and nice voice” each time.

I observed Ms. Walker’s various ways of reading aloud. For example, there was one time when she presented a big book by using a giant pencil as a pointer and pointed to the words one by one while reading. There was another time when a fifth grader came into the classroom. Ms. Walker used the opportunity to invite him to read aloud a chapter of *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (Park, 1997) to her first graders. Generally, each read-aloud session lasted roughly from 15 to 40 minutes. The duration of the event varied depending on the content of the book.

Using storytelling techniques. While reading aloud, Ms. Walker spontaneously adopted some storytelling techniques. For example, sometimes she changed her intonation and made her voice melodic according to the characters and their emotions, feelings, and circumstances. Occasionally, she surprised students with a loud voice or an unexpected picture. She also used body language or gestures to explain the concepts presented in the books and reading materials. These dramatic qualities helped hold students’ attention. The following passage shows an example of how Ms. Walker changed her intonations and gestures to draw students’ attention while she read aloud the book of *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003).

Ms. Walker put her left hand on her waist and read louder while reading Ella’s lines. She used a sharp tone with a high pitch while reading Mother’s lines. ...She read with a lower and firm tone while reading Father’s lines (2/13_1).

Adding, skipping or replacing words in the text. While Ms. Walker read aloud the book *A Walk through the Minnesota Zoo* (Hoff, 1994), I noticed that she would skip, add some words, or use easier words instead of the original ones in the text during the read aloud. She employed these strategies to make reading passages more comprehensible. For example, while she read the passages about the Malayan Sun Bear

she stated: “In the winter it is very, very cold. In the short spring and summer, it warms up a little. But it’s still cold” (5/6_1), Ms. Walker added the last sentence ‘It’s still cold,’ which is not shown on the text. In addition, while reading the passage: “The docile sun bear is a skilled climber” (5/6_1), she spontaneously skipped the word, ‘docile,’ which might be hard for first graders. While reading the passage about Dolphins: “Undulating from head to tail, he appears to swim effortlessly with his companions by his side,” she replaced the word, ‘undulating’ with ‘moving’ instead. By adding, skipping or replacing words in the text, Ms. Walker facilitated students’ understanding of the passage of the book without causing confusions.

Background Knowledge

Ms. Walker identified one of the difficulties the linguistically-diverse students would confront was that they “don’t have the background experiences that match what we are reading in the text” (Interview, 6/3). So she thought that building those background connections and helping students relate to the story is not easy. “I think that is the hardest thing for a lot of our, um, the English learners in here. It’s just they don’t have that experience or those backgrounds to explicate their vocabulary in the story” (Interview, 6/3). However, “it gets better throughout the year because we do more things even in the classroom” (Interview, 6/3). One method Ms. Walker used was to expose her students to different things, talking to them about new ideas and reading lots of reading materials to them on a regular basis. She used teachable moments to guide students to relate to their prior knowledge. When introducing some new concepts or ideas, Ms. Walker would review what students had learned to activate their prior knowledge. For example, before reading aloud the book *I’m a Caterpillar* (Marzollo, 1997), she helped students review what they already knew about the subject to learn the new information in the book, as seen in the following sequence.

Ms. Walker: Going back to science, what happened when a caterpillar gets bigger and bigger? Who remembers what it’s called? What is it called?

Students: Their skin comes out.

Ms. Walker: Their skin comes off but what do we call the specific, do you remember?

Students: Molting.

Ms. Walker: Molting. Perfect. So when they get bigger and bigger, their skin is going to come off and they are molting (4/23).

Another method Ms. Walker used to build the knowledge is to “do as much as we can to actually get them out, and doing it and seeing it” (Interview, 6/3). So before going to the zoo for their field trip, Ms. Walker first exposed her students to different books and reading materials about animals. Then she brought students to the zoo to actually go there and see them.

Ms. Walker: So like I can tell you that the bear swims in the water, a bear likes to wrestle, but to actually go and stand by the class and see a bear wrestling with another bear, it’s like I think way more meaningful for them and more exciting (Interview, 6/3).

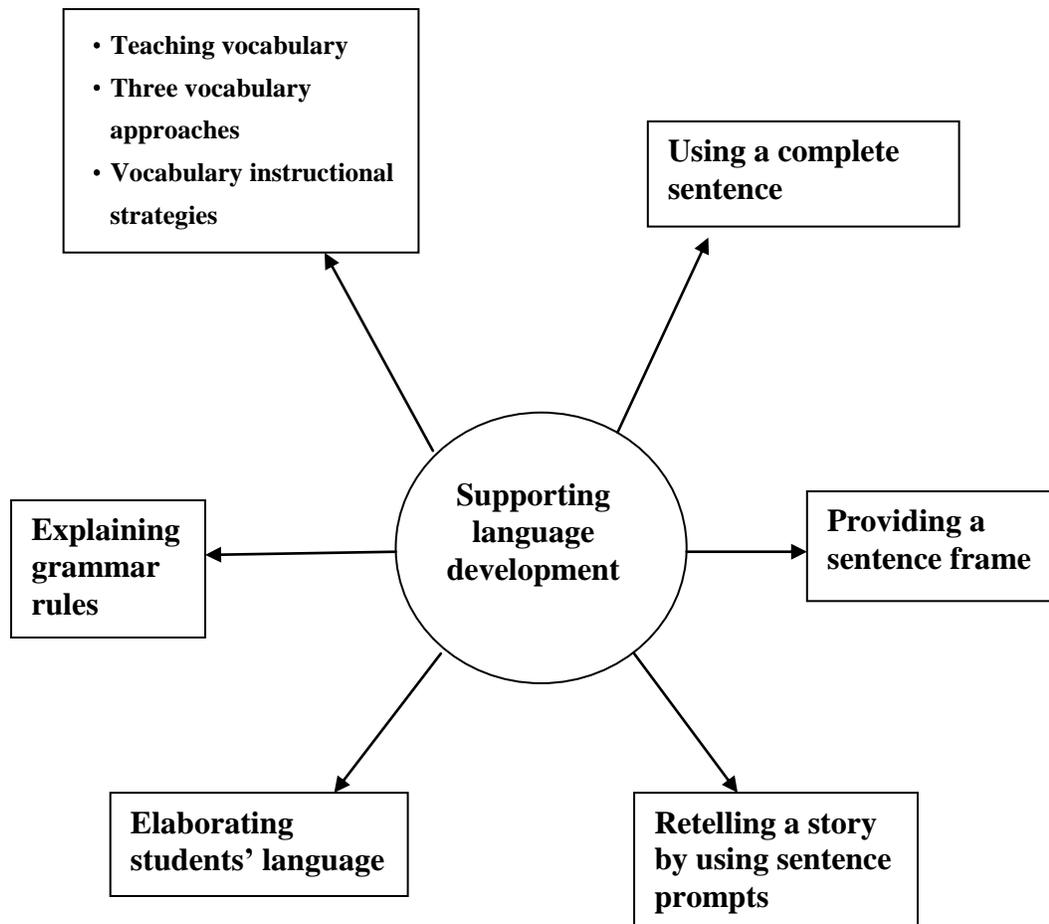
She also used the teachable moment to help students to name the strategy they used while they were trying to figure out a question by using prior knowledge. She helped students to make a background connection.

Ms. Walker: OK. So he knows he is already thinking what he knows in the past. He knows dinosaurs lived in the forest and he saw the sand on the ground. Great job the way to use all the different context clues, the pictures and prior knowledge. That stuff you’ve already learned. That is like a third grade answer. Amazing, bud (2/20).

Supporting Language Development

In this session, I describe how Ms. Walker supports students’ language development during read alouds. I identify six categories of instructional strategies, including vocabulary instruction, using a complete sentence, providing a sentence frame, retelling the story by using sentence prompt, elaborating students’ language, and explaining grammar rules. I describe each of these along with examples from the observational data. Figure 4.3 indicates the six strategies Ms. Walker used to support students’ language development.

Figure 4.3 Supporting Language Development



Teaching vocabulary. My observational evidence showed that Ms. Walker spent a lot of time on vocabulary instruction. She believed that what makes a text hard for linguistically-diverse students is vocabulary. Through interviews, I understood that at the beginning of the school year, the texts Ms. Walker was looking for were relatively simple. They usually had one or two sentences with some nice pictures to go with it. They became more difficult gradually as time went by because fewer pictures would occur in the text. Therefore, with denser text and fewer pictures, limited vocabulary became an obstacle to reading for linguistically-diverse students. For example, Ms. Walker mentioned that when they listened to a story about a wolf and talked about the den, a lot

of students had not heard of ‘den’ before. She needed to explain that, “Well, den is a home. You have a home” (6/3). But then they had many other stories where they talked about things that the students might not know about. So, one of the means that Ms. Walker employed to develop students’ vocabulary was, if possible, to get outside and actually act it out or do it. Otherwise she would bring in pictures or have some students share their experiences.

Three vocabulary approaches. Typically, Ms. Walker’s approach to vocabulary instruction can be classified into three major categories: definitional, contextual, or conceptual (Herman & Dole, 1988). In the definitional approach, teachers either provide or elicit a synonym or phrase that approximates the meaning of a target word (Herman & Dole, 1988). Based on my observations, Ms. Walker adopted the definitional approach to draw students’ attention to the word incidentally. However, as opposed to traditional methods such as drilling students or instructing them to look it up in a dictionary, Ms. Walker provided the definition of the target words directly or through discussion, as seen in the following sequence.

Ms. Walker: Most water birds,’ so it means birds that live in the water a lot, not birds that just go there sometimes, we are talking about birds that are always, like on *Finding Nemo*, those birds are always by the water. They were water birds. So it says: ‘Most water birds have oily feathers and layers of fat to keep them warm and dry’ (3/19_2).

Additionally, the contextual approach to vocabulary instruction is to teach students the meanings of words by studying the context of surrounding words (Herman & Dole, 1988). According to my observations, Ms. Walker developed contextual knowledge when she referred students back to the text or reread the sentence in which the target terms occurred, helping students to confirm or disconfirm their definition. The following excerpt demonstrates how Ms. Walker helped students to gain contextual knowledge using the information in the text to draw a conclusion about word meaning.

Ms. Walker: There is a great vocabulary word in there. A word that would be great in the dictionary. I wanna talk about. The word ‘gills.’ Let me

read the sentence again. It is in the third paragraph. Find the third part. Please find the word, fish. Third part, please. Point to it so I know you have it. ...Gills spelled g-i-l-l-s, it says right there. Let's see whether you can figure out using the context clues, the words around it and the pictures. What does gill mean? Listen to the sentence. 'Fish breath with gills. Most fish are covered in scales and use fins to swim.' So I like that first sentence. Fish breathe with gills. What does that word, 'gill' mean? What do you think, bud (3/19_2)?

However, students need conceptual knowledge to make connections between new words, their prior knowledge and previously learned words and concepts. The goal of the conceptual approach is to develop extensive knowledge of a word. It helps students to know how the word is similar to and different from related concepts (Herman & Dole, 1988). In the following passage, Ms. Walker helped to figure out the meaning of 'gill' by making the connection to human lungs to help students understand the concept.

Ms. Walker: What are gills like on us, do we have gills?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: No. We use something else though. So we don't have anything around here on my belly to let water in. That's why when I am in water I have to hold my breath. Does a fish go oh? (Teacher makes a gesture as if taking a deep breath, holding it, and swimming.) Does a fish do that?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: No. Do I have to do that? Yes. Because I don't have gills. I have what? Penny?

Student: Your mouth.

Ms. Walker: It's not just my mouth because a fish has a mouth, too.

Students: Spines./ Nose.

Ms. Walker: No. Something inside my body, that I need to breathe away, just like

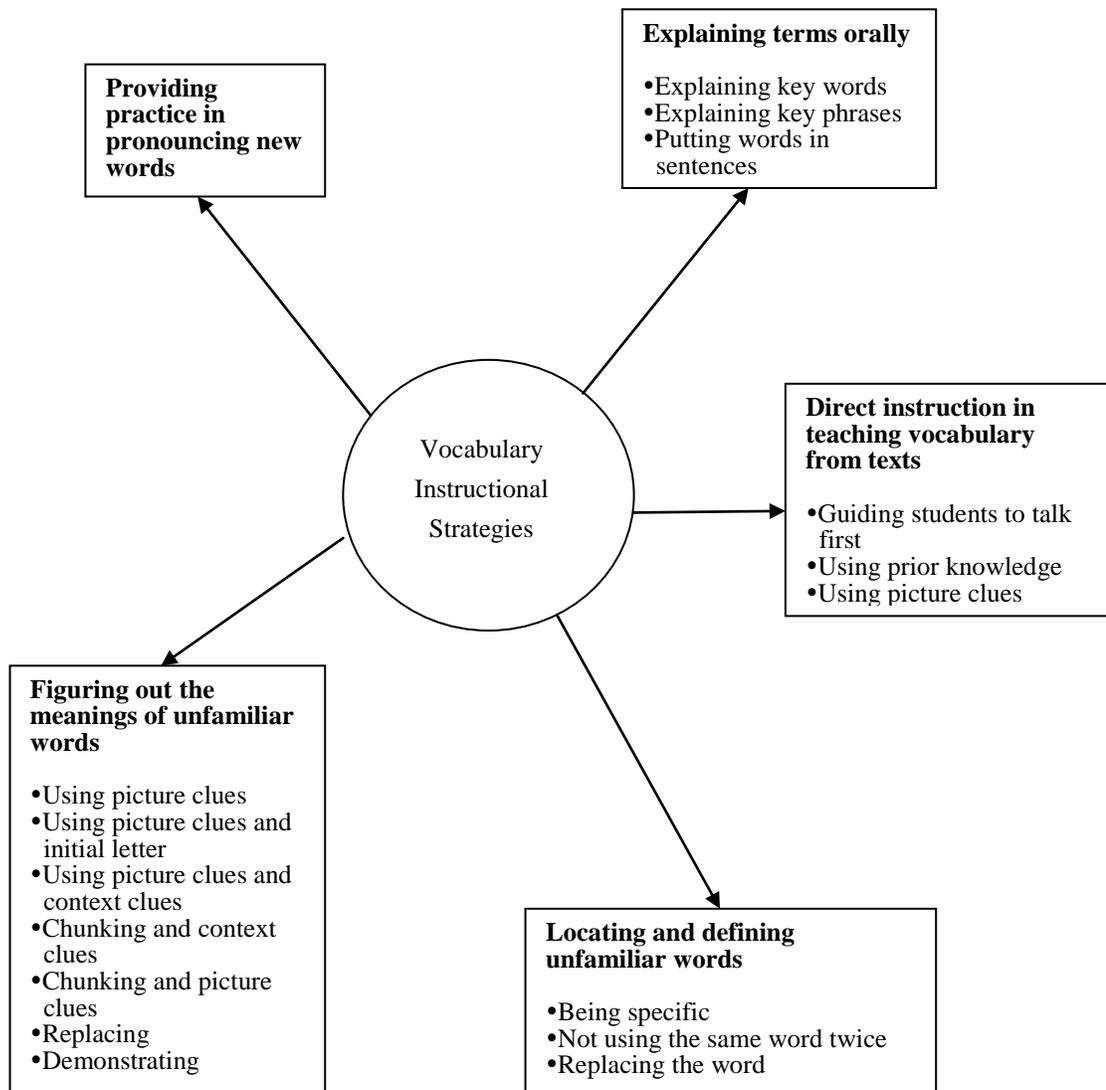
fish's gills. We need what, Allen?

Student (Inaudible.)

Ms. Walker: What do we use to breath? That's what comes in and out. Lungs. Everyone say 'lungs.' I have lungs to breathe to live. That is why I can't let water get into that. Fish do not have lungs. Fish have gills. Gills are things on the side of them that open up, open back and forth to let the water in. Gills make them breathe under water (3/19_2).

Vocabulary instructional strategies. Ms. Walker emphasized students' vocabulary learning and employed a variety of instructional strategies to build students' vocabulary. During read alouds, Ms. Walker provided vocabulary instruction both incidentally and intentionally. She elaborated on particular words occasionally. She stopped, identified words for instruction and demonstrated strategies that facilitate word learning. Research shows that even brief explanations of one or two sentences can be sufficient for students to make initial connection between novel words and their meanings (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). Based on my observations, I identified five categories of instructional strategies. Figure 4.4 synthesizes the strategies Ms. Walker demonstrated to facilitate students' word learning. She consistently explained terms orally, provided direct instruction in teaching vocabulary from texts, located and defining unfamiliar words, modeled strategies and process for figuring out the meanings of unfamiliar words and provided practice in pronouncing new words. Following Figure 4.4, I discuss what I observed about Ms. Walker's instructional strategies within the three approaches described above during and after read aloud. I describe each of these strategies along with examples from the observation data.

Figure 4.4 Vocabulary Instructional Strategies



Explaining terms orally. While Ms. Walker conducted a read aloud or provided instruction, sometimes she gave a synonym or explanation for the target terms. That is, no matter whether she was explaining terms or demonstrating tasks, she constantly provided intentional definitions and explanations of **key words** or phrases she mentioned. By doing so, she made her instruction comprehensible. After she mentioned a key word that might confuse students, she consistently provided an explanation for it. The

following example demonstrates how she immediately clarified the word ‘native’ in her speech.

Ms. Walker: But the Minnesota Zoo also has cool animals that are native to Minnesota. That means animals that are from Minnesota, live in places in Minnesota far north (5/6_1).

In addition, Ms. Walker provided complete explanations or examples of **key phrases** that she thought students might have problems understanding. The following example shows how she provided a direct explanation of the phrase ‘at least.’ At the same time, Ms. Walker also assessed students’ understanding by questioning.

Ms. Walker: At least three, can you have four?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: Yes, you can. At least means that many or more. So at least three, can you have three?

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Walker: Can you have four sentences?

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Walker: Could you have ten if you are really working really hard?

Students: Yes.

Ms. Walker: Yes. Could you have two?

Students: No (4/17_1).

Occasionally, Ms. Walker would **put the word in a sentence** to help students understand the meaning of the word. (*Any*, I don’t have any markers.) (*Late*, Don’t be late for school. Interview, 1/30) She then asked students to make their own sentences by using the word. (Can anyone use ‘coat’ in a sentence?)

Direct instruction in teaching vocabulary from text. Ms. Walker would also teach words from text directly. She might use the following strategies.

Guiding students to talk first. As Ms. Walker read and encountered a word that she thought might be unfamiliar to students, she would stop and simply ask about it first and encouraged students to take a wild guess and then gave the correct definition, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: ‘We just had the loudest conversation.’ What does ‘conversation’ mean? Who can tell me what that big word ‘conversation’ means?

Student: It means we talk and the person is mad at me.

Ms. Walker: They don’t have to be mad. Just have a conversation. The first part you are kind of right. Just when you are talking to someone, if you want to, you can say we are talking. Or you can say we are having a conversation. Conversation means two people at least, maybe more, are having a talk back and forth. Make sure those are back and forth. Right now I am talking too, so are we having a conversation? No. But if I stop talking and I ask you questions, or you start talking back, back and forth, between at least two people is a conversation. Ok” (4/29_2).

Using prior knowledge. Alternatively, Ms. Walker provided direct instruction in word meanings by connecting to students’ prior knowledge. The following sequence demonstrated how she linked what the students already knew, *seaweed*, to the new word, *kelp* and referred to the movie, *Finding Nemo*. In this case, Ms. Walker also provided visual help by drawing a picture.

Ms. Walker: Kelp. It’s called kelp grass. It’s special kind of grass. (Teacher wrote kelp grass on the board.) Kelp grass is kind of like, have you ever seen seaweed?

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Walker: It’s like the same thing. Did anyone watch *Finding Nemo*? You did. Let’s say. Did you see the park where they look like these? (Teacher drew seaweed on the board).

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Walker: That is what we called kelp. Kelp is like seaweed (3/20_1).

Using the picture clues. Ms. Walker also drew students’ attention to illustrations of books while coming across a novel word. In the following example, while reading aloud the book, *Splat the Cat, Good Night, Sleep Tight* (Scotton, 2011), she introduced

the word *peer*, by providing one of the meanings first, and then guided students to figure out its other meaning by looking at the picture.

Ms. Walker: My word is *peer*. Everyone say *peer*. (Teacher wrote *peer* on the board.) *Peer* can have a lot of meanings, a lot of different meanings. *Peer* could be like your *peer* is like your friend. Someone who's about the same age as you. However, this *peer* is different. And it is not *pear*, you are thinking *pear*, a fruit. *Peer*. Watch as I am reading. Keep an eye on the picture to see if you can figure out what they mean, when they say *peer* (4/3_2).

Locating and defining unfamiliar words. During my observation period, Ms. Walker also instructed students to create their own dictionary. Therefore, during read alouds, she would select words intentionally to demonstrate how to define a word. First, she instructed students to choose words that were “important words, unfamiliar words, words that [students] are not very sure of their meanings” (5/21), the words that “I found kind of challenging; I was able to read it but when I think about the meaning, it's kind of hard to figure out what it means. It would be a great word for my dictionary” (4/3_2).

During read alouds, she modeled how to locate vocabulary words and how to define those words. While demonstrating how to define a word, Ms. Walker usually wrote the word on the board, re-read the passage and showed students the picture to figure out the meaning of the word. Sometimes she had students discuss the meaning of the word before an individual student shared his or her idea to the whole class. She used explicit examples to demonstrate how to define an unfamiliar word by using different strategies including ‘being specific’, ‘not using the same word twice’ and ‘replacing the word’ based on her understanding of what students were struggling with.

Being specific. While students tried to define a word, they were inclined to describe the word too generally and too vaguely rather than explicitly. For example, they might define a scarf as something to keep people warm. Ms. Walker pointed out to their students that this definition might be confused with a hat or any kind of clothes. Thus, she emphasized the importance of explicitness in the definition. The following excerpt showed how Ms. Walker demonstrated how to specifically define ‘a chipmunk.’

Ms. Walker: Chipmunk. Here is a little chipmunk (Teacher showed the cover of the book to students). If I say a chipmunk is something small, well, your scissors are small, are your scissors a chipmunk?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: Steven's shoes are small. Are they chipmunks?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: My nose is small. Is that a chipmunk?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: So when you are describing, you would say, maybe you can say, it is a brown animal that is small and has a big tail. Or if I keep reading, I found out that chipmunks like to climb trees. Maybe I will say a small animal that climbs trees. Do you see how instead of just saying one little thing, I am very specific. Every time you get the definition, the more specific you are, the better picture it is gonna be in your head. If I told you take out a paper, and I say draw a chipmunk. I will give you one hint, it is small. If you guys did not know what a chipmunk was, I bet you would not be able to draw it. But if I say it is a small animal, that is brown, with a fluffy tail and likes to climb a tree, I realize you will draw a real chipmunk (3/18).

Not using the same word twice. Another challenge students might have had when they were defining words was they were inclined to tell "the definition in definition" (3/20_2). For example, they might say "A fish is a fish in water or a whale is a big whale in water. Rest means to rest your eyes" (3/20_2). Ms. Walker wanted students to give "the meaning without reusing the word" (3/20_2).

Ms. Walker: Remember, do not say: A skeleton is a skeleton in your body. You just used the word twice. Can I do that?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: No. I don't know what skeleton means if you tell me a skeleton is like the skeleton in your body. I will think what is this? What is in

my body? I don't know what you mean if you say skeleton. You have to be specific and use different wording. Ok? (3/29_2)

Replacing the word. Additionally, Ms. Walker also had students use “replace the word” to verify their definition. That is, when you have a primary idea about the word by looking at the picture or the passage around the word, you can replace the word with your idea to validate whether the definition makes sense or not. The following excerpt demonstrated how Ms. Walker used replacement to verify the meaning of the word.

Ms. Walker: What do you think *peek* means?

Student: To look outside.

Ms. Walker: Let's take a look. Ok. So it says, 'little bunny something outside.' You want to replace the word with look. Let's see if that makes sense. Does it make sense instead of *peek*, I say look. Let's check. 'Little bunny looks outside.' Does that make sense?

Students: Yeah (5/21).

After modeling, she gave students the opportunity to practice finding unfamiliar words by using Post-It Notes to mark the page where the vocabulary appeared or marking the word directly with highlighters, and then had them define these words to create their own dictionary during their independent reading time.

Figuring out meanings of unfamiliar words. During read alouds, Ms. Walker also consistently guided students to figure out the meanings of new words they came across from the texts. As the semester went by, more and more students gradually started to check out and read chapter books for their independent reading. Ms. Walker noticed the phenomenon and said to students:

Ms. Walker: A lot of you got a library book and a lot of the rest of you got chapter books. That's great to see that you are pushing your reading. What that also means to me is that you are gonna have some problem words... because with those harder books, there seem to be some harder words (4/3_2).

So in her read-aloud sessions, Ms. Walker equipped students with a variety of strategies for figuring out meanings of novel words. For example, in the read-aloud

session, one of their reading targets was, “We will use the pictures and beginning letters to read unfamiliar words.” Ms. Walker also synthesized some steps that students would use to help themselves while reading.

Ms. Walker: If you don’t know these words, step one, what is the step one if we don’t know words, what did we do to figure it out?

Student: Look at the picture.

Ms. Walker: Ok. So Look at the picture and read the words surrounding it. We did that. Step two, how do we figure it out?

Student: Sound it out.

⋮

Ms. Walker: If you still cannot figure it out, you can always ask me. But please make sure you are doing all three options (2/22).

Generally, Ms. Walker guided students to use strategies like “sound it out,” ‘chunking it,’ ‘using the pictures,’ and ‘ask a friend’ (Interview, 2/22). However, in Ms. Walker’s read aloud, she actually demonstrated more strategies for figuring out the meanings of unfamiliar words. Based on my observations, I identified seven categories. The first one was **using picture clues**. Ms. Walker would guide students to look for visual clues from the pictures in the books (‘Frighten.’ Next thing I would do is to look at the picture. What do you notice about the picture? ...What do you think ‘frighten’ means based on this picture? 3/11)

Second, Ms. Walker often employed more than one strategy during the vocabulary instruction. It seems that the strategies used had to depend on the actual context in order to be effective. Sometimes, using multiple strategies to figure out unfamiliar words was necessary and more efficient. For example, one of their reading targets was, “We will use the pictures and beginning letters to read unfamiliar words in our books.” She demonstrated using **picture clues and beginning letters** to figure out words in the text, while reading the book *More Spaghetti, I Say* (Gelman, 2003). Ms. Walker guided students to look at the picture and gave clues by sounding out the initial sound of each word to lead them to figure out the word by themselves, as seen in the following sequence.

Ms. Walker: (Teacher pointed to the banana in the picture.) /b/, /b/, /b/.

Students: Banana.

Ms. Walker: (Teacher pointed to the jam in the picture.) And /j/, /j/, /j/.

Student: Jelly beans.

Ms. Walker: Close, great observation. It's like jelly but a little bit bigger and we only see three letters. (Teacher pointed to the word.)

Students: Jam.

Ms. Walker: My friends, let's say it together, what is /j/, /j/,/j/?

Students: Jam.

Ms. Walker: Do you see how we figure out every single word by only looking at the beginning letter and the picture? We use our context clues. They are the two most important things you are always looking at (4/9).

Third, Ms. Walker also guided students to use **the pictures and the context clues**, using the words around the unfamiliar word. The following sequences showed how she demonstrated using pictures and the words around an unfamiliar word to figure out a new word.

Ms. Walker: There is a very big hint in the picture. You hear the sentences: Two sets of eyes peered back. 'Peer' means what?

Student: You look at something.

Ms. Walker: Perfect. *Peer* means you look at some things. It actually means stare at something, the hint to us. Two sets of eyes, what do your eyes do?

Students: Look.

Ms. Walker: So if your eyes are peering, it is just like saying, you could replace it with the word, look. 'Two sets of eyes look back. Splat looks inside the tent.' So 'peer' means they look (4/3_2).

Fourth, Ms. Walker demonstrated the strategies of **chunking and using context clues**. She explained to the students, "Chunking is like doing a puzzle" (1/30). While reading aloud the book *Fancy Nancy Sees Stars* (O' Connor, 2009), Ms. Walker guided students to sound out the big word, 'planetarium,' by chunking it and learn the meaning

of the word by using context clues, as seen in the following sequences. It is interesting to note that after she pointed out the word meaning in the book, Ms. Walker used questioning to lead students to the word 'planetarium' again. By doing so, she assessed students' word knowledge to determine if students understand the word precisely.

Ms. Walker: Notice that word 'planetarium' was genuinely huge, do you see it? It was a really tough word. But here is how I figure it out. I knew I know this word. (Teacher covered the word part of 'arium' and shows the word part of 'planet' only.) What is that word, everyone.

Students: Plant/Planet.

Ms. Walker: Planet. What does 'i-u-m' say? (Teacher covered the rest of the word part and showed 'ium' only.)

Students: /ium/.

Ms. Walker: /ium/, here you come. So arium, planet-arium. Planetarium is what it's called. Notice how again- I even chunk words out sometimes. Because some of these words like, wow. You know what the planetarium is? It's gonna tell you right in the context clues. Sometimes they give you the answers right in the book. 'It's a museum about stars and planets.' So if you want to learn about animals. Where would you go?

Student: To the zoo.

Ms. Walker: To the zoo. If you want to learn about science stuff, where would you go?

Student: Go to school.

Ms. Walker: Where would you go though?

Student: Museum.

Ms. Walker: The museum. Yeah. If you want to learn about chemicals, dinosaurs in the museum, what about if you want to learn about Jupiter, where would you go?

Student: To space.

Ms. Walker: What if you can't go to space? I can't even go to space. I don't have a rocket and I don't have. I have a kid at home. My Ellerie. Ellerie needs somebody to take care of her. If I go to Jupiter, I can't take care of her. So where do I go to learn about it?

Students: A planetarium.

Ms. Walker: A planetarium, because that's a museum all about stars. Ok (5/31).

Sixth, in the same way, Ms. Walker also demonstrated **chunking and using picture clues**. In the following example, she first guided students to chunk compound words and figure out their meanings by identifying pictures in the book.

Ms. Walker: (Teacher wrote the word, 'flashlight' on the board.) Which word do you see for this, Melody.

Student: Flash.

Ms. Walker: Do you see some other words? (Teacher circled the word 'flash.')

Steven.

Student: Light.

Ms. Walker: Again. There it is again. I see flash, I see light. Put it together, what do you have?

Students: Flashlight.

Ms. Walker: Flashlight, beautiful. And then do we see a flashlight in the picture? Aaron, can you point to it? (Student pointed to the picture of flashlight.) Again, there is how using that picture can help me. (Teacher pointed to the reading target.) It's right there. (Teacher pointed to the picture of flashlight in the book.)

Last, Ms. Walker also modeled how to figure out meanings of words using **replacing** by discussing the word 'prey' (Let's check if it works. Ready. Let's change the word 'prey' to 'food' when we read it. See if it makes sense. 4/8_2) and **demonstrating** by acting, such as when she tiptoed to introduce the word 'tiptoe.'

Providing practice in pronouncing key words. While coming across new words, Ms. Walker constantly guided students to repeat the key words or phrases. She helped students to be exposed to and reinforce the key words or phrases by asking students to

repeat along. (That is ‘tide pools.’ Everyone say, Tide pool. [Ss: “Tide pool.”] Good. 3/20_1). Occasionally, Ms. Walker asked students to read aloud the passages instead. When students came across words beyond their reading level, such as *algae*, Ms. Walker would help students to read out those words and guided them to repeat the key words.

Using a complete sentence. Ms. Walker regularly used opportunities to support students’ language development. She constantly reminded students to use a complete sentence in their utterances. One of the linguistically-diverse students’ problems that I observed in the classroom was that they usually used fragmented sentences while they tried to talk or answer questions Ms. Walker posited. Therefore, it was crucial for Ms. Walker to model correct sentence patterns. In the following excerpt, Ms. Walker demonstrated how she provided a full sentence immediately after the student spoke a fragmented sentence.

Ms. Walker: Perfect. First the caterpillar was eating. What was he eating?

Student: The leaves.

Ms. Walker: Perfect. Use a full complete sentence. First, the caterpillar was eating a leaf. Be specific. (4/23)

Providing a sentence frame. Most of time, Ms. Walker would provide a sentence frame to help students to orally build a complete sentence. For example, on one occasion before Ms. Walker let students discuss with their partner, she provided a sentence frame for them.

Ms. Walker: So the sentence frame you are using for your partner... you know who your partner is. It’s ‘One animal that lives in the Arctic is blank.’ (Teacher wrote the sentence on the white board.) (4/8_1).

Retelling the story by using sentence prompts. Ms. Walker would also provide prompts to help students organize their utterances. For example, one of their reading targets was asking students to retell a story after reading. She guided students to retell a story by using the sentence prompts, *first*, *next* and *last*, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: So we will retell the story by stating the main events in the beginning, middle, and end. When I ask you to retell the story, I

want you to use words like *first, this happens, then this happens, last this happens*. I don't want you to use *this, this just tells me it's about a boy*. Tell me more. Retell beginning, middle, and end. When I say retell, I want three parts at least. It first starts with a boy going to the zoo. Next, the boy goes to see the elephant. Last, the boy gets sprayed with water by the elephant (4/29_2).

Elaborating students' language. Most important, Ms. Walker would provide strategies for students to elaborate their language, such as going back to the text and finding evidence from it. When Ms. Walker instructed students to talk about why they liked or didn't like the book, she would remind them that, "Make sure you use a concrete example from this story and use evidence from the text. Don't just say because I like it or it was cool or it was funny. Use a reason. It was funny because... and tell me what part was funny. Or it was cool because... Tell my why" (6/3). In the following excerpt, it shows that after the read aloud Ms. Walker guided students to evaluate the book by sharing how many stars they would give this book. While the student called on was giving a short answer, Ms. Walker helped him to elaborate on his sentence by offering him the book.

Ms. Walker: ...Jack, I have not heard from you. How many stars do you give this book and why?

Student: Five because it was funny.

Ms. Walker: What about it was funny. Remember we've got to use evidence. What part was your favorite, what was the funniest part?

Student: Umm...

Ms. Walker: You want to look at it to find a spot. Ok. (Teacher handed the book to the student.) He thinks it is funny because what part was so funny. Students sitting around him moved their bodies forward to take a look at the book as well.) Sit down, he will share with you.

Student: The rain comes upon.

Ms. Walker: Oh. Did you hear him? Oh, Zoe didn't hear you. Would you start

over and say, I give this book five stars.

Student: I give this book five stars because – (Teacher reminded him. T: It was funny because...) it was funny when it's hard raining.

Ms. Walker: It was raining so hard. That was really funny. It was raining so hard. Perfect (5/31).

In addition, Ms. Walker would use any teachable moment to reinforce the importance of using an elaborated sentence. For example, "What I really like is when Jack is telling a definition, he didn't just say it means, he said, 'delight' means. He repeated that vocabulary word. Great job using that sentence" (4/3_2). On another occasion, Ms. Walker asked: "What is the problem of the story?" The student answered in a full sentence: "The problem is when the dog digs holes around." She used this opportunity to emphasize that: "Notice how he said, the problem, he kind of restates part of the question. We're still missing them in a lot of your sheets. When I see you are doing your answers, I still see a lot, what is the problem of the story, the dog digs hole. I want to see you restate the question" (5/13_2).

Explaining grammar rules. Ms. Walker introduced grammar rules incidentally during read alouds. For example, on one occasion a student was retelling the story and he said: "First, Junie B. Jones went see his brother." After hearing that, Ms. Walker immediately corrected his mistake by saying: "Not his brother. Junie B. Jones is a girl. Her brother" (4/30). Additionally, she also introduced the contraction in a teachable moment ('What's' is a contraction of 'what is.' It's a little different. 4/24_2). She also taught students regular and irregular plural nouns, as shown in the following examples:

Ms. Walker: And *feet* and *foot* are the same word. They were just, *feet* means more than one. It's a tricky word because a lot of words, when you make them more than one, you added 's,' right! Have you ever heard someone say he has a lot of *foots*?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: No. There are just some words that instead of adding that 's' at the end to make it more than one, you change the word all together.

Foot turned into *feet*. If you have two of them, do you say you have two *foot*? You have two.....

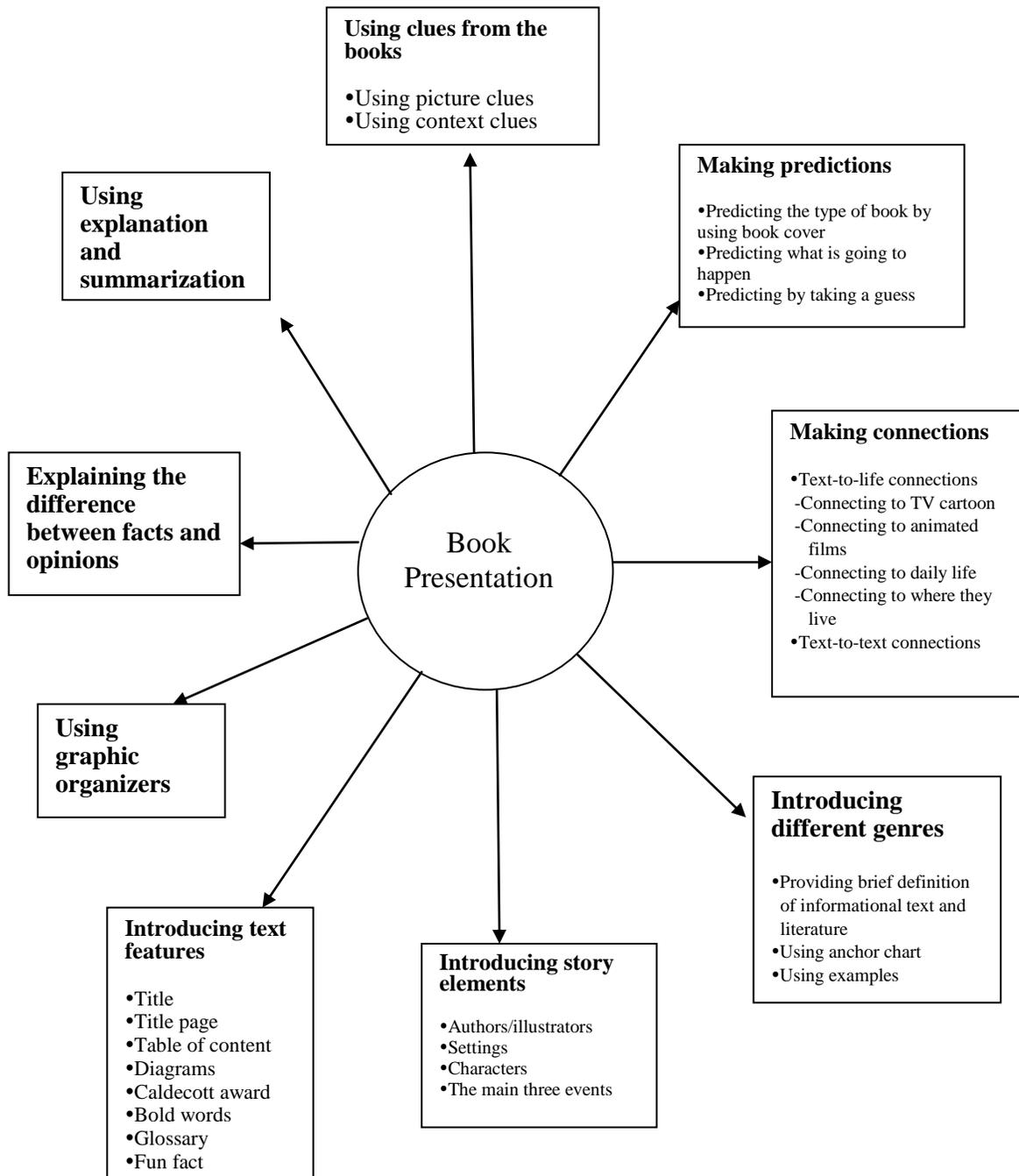
Students: feet

Ms. Walker: Thank you (2/20).

Book Presentation

During read alouds, Ms. Walker guided students to stay focused and comprehend the content. Typically, if students had their own copies of books or reading materials, she would monitor closely and make sure students followed along. If students listened to the stories without their own copies, after reading one or two pages, she would show the picture to draw students' attention and engage them in the whole reading experience. For example, while Ms. Walker read aloud the book *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose & Hoose, 1998), she showed the picture with a giant ant to students. They were so amazed by the double-page spread picture. Generally, Ms. Walker used a variety of strategies to present the books and reading materials. In all, I identified nine strategies she employed. Figure 4.5 summarizes how Ms. Walker helped students to comprehend the story and understand the information by demonstrating different strategies.

Figure 4. 5 Book Presentation



Using clues from the books. Before read alouds, Ms. Walker always provided a reading target as a purpose for reading, such as describing the settings, distinguishing the

genre of the book, and so on. At times, the information was not directly stated in the texts, so students needed to comprehend and “think beyond the lines.” “It means you need to think beyond what they’re telling you and figure it out” (2/13_1). Students were taught to use different strategies in order to reach the reading target goal. So during read alouds, Ms. Walker would instruct students to use various strategies to improve their comprehension. For example, when they were learning about the setting, at the beginning of reading aloud, Ms. Walker drew students’ attention by saying, “Watch for the clues in the book. If they are not telling you specifically where, you’re just going to have to listen to other words (The teacher pointed to her head) and most importantly, use your eyes today (The teacher pointed to her eyes), because the pictures will give you the biggest attention words” (2/20). Or, “You are going to have to use your brains and the context clues, meaning the pictures, the words we do read to think about while we were reading it, things to help us to figure out what the setting is specifically” (2/20). The following example demonstrates how Ms. Walker guided students to use picture clues and context clues in the books to improve comprehension.

Using picture clues. While guiding students to talk about ‘plants, animals and weather’ in the printable book *Polar Habitats*, there is one page with animals in the picture but not specifically indicated in the text. There was no other support to directly link the animals in the illustrations to their names. All of the animals in the picture are common for students, such as penguins and seals. This exemplifies how Ms. Walker guided students to use picture clues to find plants, animals and weather in the ocean around Antarctica.

Ms. Walker: So it doesn’t say specific ones but I see some in the picture. What do you notice? Use the picture clues to help you. What do you notice? Jeremy.

Student: It’s on land.

Ms. Walker: It is. What are we talking about though right now? One of these things. So look at the picture and use the clues. Do you see anything that would fit, Jeremy? Do we have any plants, animals or weather

in that picture? (The teacher waited.) What do you see? (4/5)

Using context clues. While reading the book *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose & Hoose, 1998), Ms. Walker read the sentence, “Now it’s gonna squish you flat!” but she replaced the word *squish* with *something*. So she read, “Now it’s going to *something* you flat!” She guided students to see what word would fit into the sentence and make sense.

Ms. Walker: What word would work there?

Student: Squish.

Ms. Walker: Good word, any other words?

Student: Squash.

Ms. Walker: Squash.

Student: Dead.

Ms. Walker: Dead, would it make sense to say dead, you are picking up on what you would do to her, but would you have a really good word to say to her?

Student: Stomp.

Ms. Walker: Stomp. All of these are really great words. Here is why I like them. First of all, I can tell you really looked at the picture, *squish*, *squash* and *stomp*, all are things you can do with your feet. Second thing I see is it starts with an ‘s’ and all of your words start with an ‘s.’
Great problem solving (2/22).

Making predictions. Making predictions is a reading strategy that students can use to increase comprehension. Teachers can guide students to use book covers, titles, headings, or pictures to make predictions. Ms. Walker engaged students to make different predictions during her read aloud. For example, on one occasion before reading aloud the book *I Am a Caterpillar* (Marzollo, 1997), Ms. Walker guided students to discuss and predict why she picked this book. By doing so, she guided students to connect to the main theme, life cycles, which they had been learning about recently for a series of science lessons.

I identified five strategies Ms. Walker employed for making predictions and provided the example excerpts in parentheses following the labeling of each strategy.

This included **predicting by using the book cover** (I am gonna show you the cover right now and I want you to think in your head. What could this book be about? You are gonna make a prediction. Here is our cover today; 4/9), **predicting what is going to happen** (Where is the lion going? Where has he been? Look at your picture. Talk to your partner. Where do you think he is going right now? 4/8_2), **predicting by using picture clues** (Do you want to predict? The bee has its life cycle. We said a butterfly has four stages. A flower has three stages. How many do you think if you look at this paper [On the worksheet there are four boxes], do you think a bumblebee has how many stages? 4/24_1) and last, **predicting by taking a guess** ('Begging for my nanny a little white...' What is your prediction? What do you think she will buy her nanna, why and what. Think about it; 4/29_2).

Making connections. Students gain a deeper understanding of a text when they make authentic connections. The connections make them more engaged in the reading experience. While introducing the comprehension strategy of making connections, Ms. Walker drew on students' prior knowledge and experiences to connect with the text.

While reading aloud, Ms. Walker helped students to make **text-to-life connections**. For example, while introducing the word 'kelp', she referenced the **TV cartoon**, *Spongebob*, because "the other day when I was watching, they were talking about kelp and how they like to eat kelp" (3/19). When reading aloud the printable book, *Ocean Animals*, she linked the text to the **animated film** *Finding Nemo* in order to visualize what the water birds look like. Additionally, she also **connected to students' daily lives**. For example, while reading "The octopus has a soft body and no skeleton or shell at all" in the printable book *Ocean Animals*, she asked questions about students' experience with octopi. (So think of the octopus, did anyone ever touch an octopus? [Some students raised their hands.] You have. What does it feel like? (Student: "Soft") Soft. Wow. You guys touched an octopus; 3/29_2) Moreover, Ms. Walker also connected to **where students live** while reading the individualized book, *When I Grow Up* (Andrews. 1993), which took place in St. Paul, Minnesota where the students live. Ms. Walker also guided students to make **text-to-text connections**. When she read aloud the book about a bee, she tried to guide students to make connections to the life cycle of a

butterfly which they learned from the previous read aloud, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: Is the life cycle of a bee similar to the life cycle of a butterfly or completely different? Think about that. Think about that one for a second. Is the life cycle of a bee similar, meaning kind of the same, as the butterfly or is it totally different? Think about it. Talk to your friends about what you think (4/24) .

In addition, she also helped students make connections in a different form. For instance, she encouraged students to ask questions while reading. One of the questions was, “How can I relate to this book?” She explained to students, “That is how my life is just like this book. How do I relate to it? It means how is that book like your life?” (5/29_1). She used herself as an example. “How can I relate to this book? ...How is Junie B. Jones just like me? Well. I am kind of silly sometimes. I like to jump on my bed. That’s how I can relate. OK. Relate means how is it like you” (5/29_2).

Introducing different genres of reading materials. During the observation period, one of the reading targets was to determine the book’s type. “We will say if our book is an informational text or literature and explain how we know.” In Ms. Walker’s instruction, she **provided a brief definition** and simplified the language and concept to help students understand the difference between the two. For example, she described an informational text as a book “full of information,” “about true things,” “we are going to learn from this book,” “real pictures like photographs” and a “smart book,” (3/4, 4/8_2, & 4/9) when she introduced literature as “fun books, “fun illustrations,” with “a beginning, middle and end, characters and settings” (4/9).

While engaging students to get familiar with these two genres, Ms. Walker used different teaching strategies including **using an anchor chart** and **using examples**. After Ms. Walker demonstrated how to determine the genre of the book, students needed to apply to their independent reading and decide the genre of the book they read. Before that, Ms. Walker would remind students to look at the anchor charts in front of the classroom. On one chart, it summarized the characteristics of these two genres. Ms. Walker would ask, “If you are not sure about the reason, who remembers where can you look to figure

out whether a book is informational text or literature? Where can I look, Sonia?” (4/8_2) By asking the question, she led students to pay attention to the anchor chart. “Yeah, which one do you use? Type of book. Everyone, point to the anchor chart. You can look at it if you are not sure. Everyone point to the anchor chart” (4/8_2).

During the learning of the two genres, Ms. Walker found some of the students seemed confused and misunderstood the two. One of the problems Ms. Walker found was students would write: “It is literature because it has pretty pictures.” “This book is an informational text because it has real pictures” (4/17_2). Ms. Walker wanted them to see “that is not always the only reason” (4/17_2), so she would choose a specific text intentionally in order to show an example to help students understand the difference between these two genres. On one occasion, Ms. Walker chose a tricky book with fancy snowman pictures but that introduced different body parts of a snowman rather than developing a storyline. “This is a tricky one. I will read it one more time before you answer. I want you to be thinking. Does it teach us about what the snowman is or is it just for fun? OK” (4/5_2). The following excerpts show how she explained why this book with fancy pictures was not necessarily literature.

Ms. Walker: If I just look at the pictures, I will guess it is going to be literature. But it didn’t really have a beginning, middle and end. It is kind of more teaching me like Joseph said, I like the way he said it. He didn’t just say informational text. He said informational text because (Teacher pointed to the word ‘because’ on the worksheet on the board.) and he told me why. It teaches us about the parts of the snowman. This is teaching me about it. So that’s good (4/5_2).

Introducing story elements. According to Dickson, Simmons, & Kame’enui (1998), teaching narrative text organization, using characters, a setting, problems, solution to the problems, and so on, gives students a frame of reference for processing and storing information. The ability to identify the elements of a story helps comprehension, and leads to a deeper understanding of stories. During the observational period, Ms. Walker introduced various elements of a narrative story and guided students

to identify them. The first element Ms. Walker would guide students to look at was author/illustrator.

Authors and illustrators. When getting ready to read aloud, Ms. Walker always showed the cover to the students and guided them to take a look at the author and illustrator. She guided students to look for the word “by” to locate them on the book cover. She introduced their jobs as to “write the story” and “draw the picture” (2/22) respectively. However, she also incidentally explained that sometimes authors and illustrators are the same person. “You know people are really talented. I mean amazing. They are so smart. They can write a book and they can draw the pictures for it.” “[They] wrote all the words in this book and drew all the pictures” (2/13_1). In the same way, Ms. Walker also described that sometimes the books have photos instead of someone’s drawing because “someone took these pictures with a camera. They did not draw them” (3/4). Additionally, she reminded students that they can find the authors/illustrators on the title page in addition to the book cover.

Settings. Based on their current reading targets, Ms. Walker guided students to figure out settings in the story and other reading materials. In terms of setting, she provided a brief definition first. “The setting is *where*. I want to know *where* it happens. All of the places” (3/4). She also created an anchor chart with students to make lists to categorize places inside and outside. While working on settings, Ms. Walker encouraged students to state specifically where the places were in the story, not just inside or outside. “Notice we did not say just outside, just inside. We said specifically. ... Outside at the park, outside at the zoo, outside in the yard” (4/5_2). She also reminded students to use a complete sentence to describe the setting: “What is the setting in the story? Make sure you use a full sentence, too.” “Did you hear how she said that? She didn’t just say ‘in space.’ She said, ‘The setting is in space’” (5/13_2). She explained to students, “You have to be specific for someone to understand completely” (Interview, 2/11). Ultimately, “the goal is to get them exposed to as many settings as possible and understand that inside or outside is not okay for explaining where it was” (Interview, 2/11).

Moreover, the capability she wanted students to build was to figure out the setting beyond the lines in the books. That is, students need to be able to determine the setting

without it being addressed obviously in the book. “It means you need to think beyond what they’re telling you and figure out where the setting is” (2/13_1). For example, while she read aloud the book *Catch Me If You Can* (Most, 1999), in which the setting was not stated directly in the story, she guided students to use picture clues (Pay attention to the pictures. It helps us with the settings; 3/4) and prior knowledge to decide where this story takes place. After students were familiar with stories in single settings, she proceeded to multiple settings.

While coming across multiple settings, Ms. Walker asked students to keep track of the settings at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. One way she used to guide students to keep track of the settings was by using their fingers. In doing so, she helped to draw students’ attentions to settings. The following excerpt shows how Ms. Walker guided students to keep track of changes in settings by using their fingers.

Ms. Walker: But the whole time I am reading this book, what I want you to think about is, where are they? Where is the story happening? And if it changes, I want you to keep track on your fingers. So if you find out one place, you will be doing this, (Teacher showed her forefinger.) if the people, or the ant, whoever in the story, they go somewhere else, just show this. (Teacher showed her forefinger and middle finger.) Try to keep track of how many different settings (2/22).

After reading aloud a couple of books, Ms. Walker found that students had trouble with differentiating between where it happened and what happened. So she decided to demonstrate how to figure out where the settings were instead of what happened in the story, and how to document them and write them down. After the demonstration, she gave each student the same printable book with multiple settings and had them practice identifying the settings in this book during their independent reading time. After Ms. Walker’s modeling, most of the students were making progress and able to identify settings accurately.

Characters. While introducing characters, Ms. Walker also created an anchor chart that listed a simple definition of characters and some adjectives to describe

character traits. While discussing characters, Ms. Walker always referred to the anchor chart (Let's take a look at our anchor chart down here. That has characters. Characters are people or animals that are in our book; 3/4) She emphasized the difference between **characters** and **main characters**. She taught students, "The main character is the character or the person or animal that the book or the chapter you read is mostly about" (5/7). "The main character is the most important one. The one that you cared about the most" (4/5_2). She also introduced **character traits**. "Character traits are telling me two things. We talked about words like *helpful, worries, scared, angry, happy, shy*, these are all things that describe the person or animal that is the main character" (5/7). While leading students to talk about character traits, Ms. Walker would ask, "How do you think she feels right here?" and guide students to closely look at the picture and notice, "How do the pictures make us as a reader feel?" (Interview, 2/27) When students shared their observation, "She really looked scared," Ms. Walker might ask follow-up questions like, "How do you know?" Then she would guide students to describe the characters, "Her eyes are really big, when you get scared, your eyes get really big. She is not smiling, so I can tell she is not happy" (Interview, 2/27). The following sequences show how Ms. Walker encouraged students to describe the characters by observing and finding evidence from the pictures.

Ms. Walker: How did you know that? What did you see?

Student: He is happy.

Ms. Walker: Yeah. You see, how do you know he is happy? Because you see them do what?

Student: They smile.

Ms. Walker: They smile. He is happy. (4/5_2)

On one occasion, she guided students to talk about what the main character, Junie B. Jones was like in *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (Park, 1997). After students shared some adjectives to describe Junie B. Jones's character traits like *odd, messy* and *mean*, and so on, one student said, "She dropped the glass." Ms. Walker clarified and asked follow up questions immediately. "That's what she did but what describes her? Remember not

what did she do, what is she like?” After the clarification, the student was able to respond accurately, “She is...um... crazy” (5/7).

The three main events. No matter whether keeping track of multiple settings or retelling the story, Ms. Walker always guided students to focus on three places or three events in the beginning, middle, and end of the story. While guiding students to talk about what questions readers should be asking while they are reading in order to be smart readers, one of the questions they discussed was, “What are three main events that happened in the book?” (5/29_2) She explained the reasons why they talked about exactly three events as a reader.

Ms. Walker: Ok. Why are there three, why do we say three not five? Who remembers? Do you remember, Emily?

Student: Because it has a beginning, middle, and end.

Ms. Walker: It is an easy way to break a story up. What are the three main events in your book? (5/29_2)

Introducing text features. In addition to story elements, Ms. Walker introduced some common text features including title, Caldecott award, bold words, title page, table of contents, glossary, fun facts, and diagrams. Text features help students to identify the big ideas and the topics that the author is focusing on. Authors use text features to bring readers’ attention to important details. Visual text features such as diagrams and bold words help to support the information the author presents in the text. These text features support the conceptual load of nonfiction text and help students construct meaning (Hadaway & Young, 2010).

While reading the book aloud, at first, Ms. Walker usually showed the cover to students and guided them to look at the **title** of the book. When unable to locate the author or illustrator on the cover, she would guide students to take a look at the **title page**. She also introduced **the table of contents** if they happened to come across one. (The table of content is a nice preview. Gentleman, the table of contents is a preview for where we are going; 4/8_2)

While reading *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* (Chodos-Irvine, 2003), which was a **Caldecott Award** book, Ms. Walker used this opportunity to introduce the award, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: It is a Caldecott award book. Does this mean a bad book or good book?

Students: A good book.

Ms. Walker: It usually means that if you got this, it is a really good book. It had good words. It had really good pictures (2/13_1).

She also introduced **bold words** incidentally while reading *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose & Hoose, 1998) aloud. The following excerpt shows how she explained the meaning and function of bold words by using the analogy of the big B icon on the computer screen.

Ms. Walker: When someone in texts or writing or typing, they make it really dark, they make it bold. And even like if you type on the computer, there is big B that's dark, it says it is bold. You click that one when you are typing. It makes the text you're typing darker, bold. So what does bold usually mean if it means something is important about this word. For some reasons, this word is important. It could be because it's someone's name. It could be because it is a new, unfamiliar word that could be important later in the story. Or it could be just the person's favorite word. The reason this word is bold is because it is a new vocabulary word. Meaning it is not something you see every day, OK (2/22).

While guiding students to do their animal report, Ms. Walker used this chance to introduce **diagrams**, (The difference between a picture and a diagram is a diagram has things labeled. 4/17_1) and the **glossary**. Before having students practice writing glossary in their independent reading time, Ms. Walker explained and demonstrated how to do it during a read aloud.

Ms. Walker: So in every non-fiction book, there is a glossary. A glossary is like a dictionary in a book. Do you remember that we are reading about

different animals that are different types of cats, there are a bunch of words that are bold. Bold means they are dark black. Those words, special words are in our book that we didn't know the definition. We went back to the glossary to find it. So there is a word like predator, we didn't know what it meant. It was dark black, it's bold (5/21).

In the children's magazine and one of the printable books, there were "Fun Facts." The **fun fact** was also a part of students' animal reports. So in a following activity after a read aloud, Ms. Walker explained what a fun fact is and demonstrated how to write it in their report.

Ms. Walker: The last thing is to write a fun fact about an animal, meaning what is something that is different about this animal from any other animals. Something unique. For example, when I say a fun fact, (Teacher pointed to the last box in this page on the whiteboard.) something we talk about in this book. That is like: Cool, I didn't know that. Or something people may think: Um...interesting, I didn't know that (4/16).

Using graphic organizers. A graphic organizer is a useful visual tool to help to classify ideas, concepts, thoughts and the relationships between them. The arrangement of information reduces the cognitive demands on students for them to interpret the text on their own. Students do not have to process as much semantic information to understand the reading. In the same way, Ms. Walker guided students to gain information from the book in a strategic and targeted way. For instance, while guiding students to talk about the text, sometimes she used a graphic organizer, such as a chart, to provide students visual aids to facilitate learning and discussion. She used graphic organizers to put complex information from the text into a more concise and clear visual chart. By using the chart, students were able to have a clear picture of the information in books based on Ms. Walker's guidance. For example, while reading *Polar Habitats* aloud, Ms. Walker guided students to discuss the information in the book by using three categories, plants, animals and weather, to help students to summarize the ideas in the book. So before

reading aloud, she put the three categories on the board and asked students to draw their attention to the three categories.

Ms. Walker: On the board, I have the three things we are looking for. Plants, animals and weather. We are going to read this book page by page. After we finish a page, if you hear about a new plant, animal or weather that I can add to my list, please let me know. Notice I say ‘new’, so we’ve already talked about penguins under animals, so if we see another penguin, should we raise our hands and say it again? No. We are looking for only new ones. Follow along with your fingers, please. Polar Habitats(4/5_1).

Explaining the difference between facts and opinions. While reading aloud and guiding students to discuss, Ms. Walker also helped students to distinguish facts from opinions. She let students know that a fact can be proven true or false, and an opinion is an expression of a person’s feelings that cannot be proven. An opinion is subjective. For example, “I might think [butterflies] are cute, but Zoe might say they are kind of gross” (4/17_1). However, “‘Most eggs are green or yellow.’ That is a fact because we can look at them and find out what color they really are” (4/17_1). The following example shows how Ms. Walker guided students to distinguish the difference.

Ms. Walker: Can I prove it? Let me pick one of the examples. ‘Balls pop up to the sky.’ Can we find if that is true?

Students Yeah.

Ms. Walker Yeah. We can get a baseball bat and we can kind of see it pop to the sky. It doesn’t say balls are so pretty. Or I like the balls the best. Or if it says, even it says something like basketball is the best. That is not a fact. That’s an opinion. (Teacher pointed to the anchor chart.) Because it is how I feel about it, I think baseball is the best (4/17_2).

Using explanation and summarization. While reading an informational text aloud, Ms. Walker usually stopped to explain the key concepts in the passage after reading a paragraph. For example, while reading *Arctic Life*, Ms. Walker explained and

elaborated on animals' camouflage, which was not stated directly in the text. The following excerpt shows how she explained why animals in the Arctic are white in order to hide from predators.

Ms. Walker: If the fox was bright orange, and standing in the snow, would you see it?

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Walker: Yes. Think about when something is bright white, and you put a big orange thing in the middle of it, can you see it right away? Yes. But if I put the other white thing on top of the white thing, would you see it as well or would it be kind of hiding?

Students: Hiding.

Ms. Walker: Kind of hiding. Good. Let's go to the next page (4/10).

One strategy Ms. Walker used most often while explaining a concept was analogy. Ms. Walker introduced new information from the text by comparing what students knew to unfamiliar information. For example, she used boyfriends and girlfriends to help students understand the concept of "mate" for butterflies (Every butterfly finds a mate, just like people find a mate, we talked about a mate just like a boyfriend or a girlfriend; 4/24_1). Similarly, when Ms. Walker explained that water birds had oily feathers and layers of fat to keep them warm and dry, she made an analogy between water birds' layers of fat and humans' coats (The oil on them would help keep the water kind of away from them. And then they have layers of fat. The layer of fat just like you put your coat on. You feel cold, you put a coat on. They put extra layers of fat on their bodies, so that they don't get so cold; 3/19_2).

In addition to explaining the concepts, she periodically summarized what they had read, which helped students to synthesize the concepts they learned and review the main points of the text. The consistent summarization provided an overview of the main ideas in the text. The following excerpt shows how Ms. Walker summarized what they had learned about the three layers of the ocean.

Ms. Walker: So when you go in the ocean, the tide pools are the shallowest. They

are the ones where we are gonna be able to touch the ground. They are on the rocks. They are on the shallow part by the shore. The kelp forests, they are the ones that are kind of deep. You probably couldn't touch the ground if you were swimming in them. They are kind of still deep. They are kind of like the deep end of pool. The open ocean is sooo deep. This is where we are gonna find our biggest animals, it is so deep (3/19_1).

Phonics, Spelling and Word Skills

During read alouds, occasionally Ms. Walker would ask students to read aloud some passages in science lessons. When students got stuck on words, the first strategy Ms. Walker would ask students to do was **sounding it out**. She frequently asked students, "What's the strategy? Sound it out. Does it make sense?" (1/30) Sounding it out was the typical strategy for first graders. She would guide students to sound out every sound in the word. (Sound it out. So 's' says what? ... What does qu say? 2/22). After students sounded out the word, Ms. Walker would guide students to read the whole sentence again to make sure it made sense (Let's check one more time to make sure it makes sense; 2/22).

When coming across words following phonics rules, Ms. Walker usually used these opportunities to help students to sound out these words by applying phonics rules. Most of the students could apply and sound out words accurately with her guidance. The rules applied included the **magic e rule** ('My mom...a...d' ... I see magic e, so it has magic e, makes the vowel do what? (Students: /e/.) What does the vowel, magic e do to the vowel before, it makes the vowel says what? 3/11), **long vowels** (This is a tough word. The two vowels are the same, right next to them, they say their names. So what should be said for the ee together? (Students: /ee/.) /ee/, let's sound it out together. Ready, /k/, /ee/, /n/, /Keen/, say it fast. 4/8_2), **blends** (The blend of the day is sh, what sound does it make? 4/23).

In addition, Ms. Walker guided students to use **rhyming** to figure out words. On one occasion, Ms. Walker read *Big Bad Cats* (Cain & Cain, 2004) aloud, she had students read with her. While reading the word *stalk*, students pronounced it incorrectly. The

following passage demonstrates how Ms. Walker used the rhyming part to sound out this word.

Ms. Walker: Let's take a look at this word. I am hearing different things. Can we chunk it? Do we see a word we know in here? What do you see? Look at the word. Do you see any word you know in here? Because I see one that we talk about a lot. I will wait to see if anyone notices it. Do you see a word we know? What word do you see? Do you guys see the word, talk? (Teacher covers the word part and show the 'talk' part.)

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Walker: So let's chunk it. What letter is that? (The teacher pointed to the 'st' part.)

Students St.

Ms. Walker: Now we put this with 'talk.' Here we go. Get ready. What word?

Students Stalk.

Ms. Walker: Stalk. So in this sentence, they stalk their enemies, then pounce. What do you think 'stalk' mean? If they are stalking their enemies, what do you think?

Students They hunt their enemies (4/8_2)

Another important ability Ms. Walker wanted students to build was **applying power words**. In her school, they referred to sight words as power words. Ms. Walker emphasized sight words for her linguistically-diverse students. She did a class set of power words which were listed in the weekly newsletter. She chose ten words per week so the whole class could work on them. However, she thought students' sight word learning would be limited due to their mixed proficiency, because some students still needed basic words like *me*, *the*, *this*, but other students knew most of the words. Therefore, she tried to differentiate based on that. Consequently she decided to make each student a sight word card and put it in a lanyard for the student to wear. Students could wear their own lanyard and practice at any time. Ms. Walker believed that

differentiating sight words for students could make the learning “more individualized and meaningful” (2/11).

She regularly assessed students on their sight word progress. After assessment, she knew the words that individual students had trouble with and then wrote six to ten words on their lanyard. Students could wear these all week so they could keep practicing them at home and at school. It would “help with not only getting them to learn these tricky words but also helping with transition, making them smoother and keeping them always kind of learning” (2/11). The goal was that when Ms. Walker saw the students at the next test time, the students would know all of these words, or at least most of them. Then she could wash them off the lanyard and rewrite some new words based on their weekly assessment. Ms. Walker needed to put a lot of effort in this because she had to constantly update and change cards.

In addition to this regular sight word activity, during read alouds, while encountering power words, Ms. Walker would remind students to apply power words (Jack is ready to go. Jack. What is our first word, power word.[Student: Some] Perfect. 4/10). She also used a word wall in the classroom to increase the exposure of these sight words to students.

Clear Instructions for Reading Tasks

Ms. Walker always provided detailed and specific instructions to make sure students are able to understand and follow along. What I noticed was that Ms. Walker usually explained the task first, and then she would provide some examples to clarify or reinforce her meaning. Finally, she questioned students and prompted them to “think aloud” about the procedures and goals they needed to attain.

During read alouds, if students had copies of the books, Ms. Walker would provide guidance to ensure that students followed along and were on the right page when she needed them to be. For example, she either described the picture on that page or asked students to identify the first letter of the first word on that page. By doing so, she ensured that every student followed along and stayed focused on the content, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: Let me read the sentence again. It is in the third paragraph. Find the third part. Please find the word *fish*. Third part, please. Point to it so I know you have it. If your partner next to you looks confused, tell them how to find it....It's still on page four, in the third paragraph, find the word *fish*. (Teacher walked around and helped students find the word *fish*.) (3/19).

Ms. Walker also focused on the time allotted. She let students know how much time they had to do their job. For example, she counted down in seconds to have students get their work done. She might remind students, "So here is my question. Using the words, first, then and last. You are going to get 15 seconds to share with the person next to you." (4/23) Or "I am going to give everyone two minutes to find the wh words" (4/22).

Using teaching aids. Ms. Walker used various teaching aids, such as a global ball or other teaching objects to introduce concepts as needed. In addition, using visual aids was a useful tool to help students keep in mind some key ideas. For example, Ms. Walker made **anchor charts**, related to setting, type of books, and characters. She could always refer to the chart if students had some problems. The anchor chart became a good reminder and a good resource for students. During read alouds, while discussing reading targets, Ms. Walker would say, "Use our anchor chart to give you hints" (4/9) or "Remember this is to help anchor your brains" (3/4). Before students started to write their reader's response, Ms. Walker demonstrated how to search for the chart and look for the word if they did not know how to spell it. "You can come up here and say, 'How do I spell, *scary*, my character is scary, s-c-a-r-y'" (4/5_2). Figure 4.6 shows an example of the anchor chart.

Figure 4.6 Anchor Chart



Ms. Walker also scaffolded students to use other sources they had in the classroom. For example, she would remind students to use the **word wall** to give hints to spell unfamiliar words. On the class wall, Ms. Walker set up a word wall on which she put the sight words they had learned. Students would always refer to the word wall if necessary. In addition, she added the words that students kept asking how to spell. On one occasion, when guiding students to write the title of their report, “All About Something,” Ms. Walker stated the following:

Ms. Walker: Are you gonna be asking how to spell *all*?

Students No.

Ms. Walker: You can sound it out, or it is on the action word wall. So all of your words are available to you (4/17_1).

Pictures are also useful tools, which can help students to understand word meanings and create a mental image quickly. For example, Ms. Walker used **picture cards** to help students understand what a *crab* is. On another occasion, she wanted to show how water birds catch fish. She explained the process orally and drew the picture directly on the board.

Ms. Walker: So here is my water, and you might see a little bird like this. (Teacher drew a bird on the water.) Chu chu chu chu. (Teacher made the bird chirping sound.) Then all of sudden, you might look over and all you are going to see is the butt in the air (Teacher drew a

butt in the air.) Because here is why, the bird is now, see here is the tail (Teacher drew some feathers on the tail of the bird.) The bird now is like... (The teacher drew a bird diving in the water.)

Students What is that?

Ms. Walker: I am gonna show you. (Teacher drew a bird diving in the water to catch a fish.)

Students Ohhh. (They are laughing at the picture.)

Ms. Walker: That's what the bird's doing (3/19_2).

Furthermore, Ms. Walker believed that real objects can help reinforce words students are learning. For example, she introduced *oceans* by grabbing a global ball, *scarf* by pointing to her own scarf and *shallow* by using her lunch box with some water. While introducing the word *late*, Ms. Walker pointed to her watch and said "Don't be late," or "Are you late?" By doing this, the students were able to associate *late* with time.

Kinesthetic learning. During read aloud, when guiding students to discuss in the whole class, sometimes Ms. Walker asked students to respond or answer with their body parts instead of passively sitting there or just listening quietly. Studies have shown that even simple interactions during book reading, such as asking children to point to pictures are more beneficial than passive listening for 4-year-old children's vocabulary acquisition (Sénéchal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995). Ms. Walker would occasionally ask students to show thumbs up to indicate they were following along and ready. (Everyone should be on the same page. It says /l/, /l/, /l/, leopards. If you are there, give me a thumbs up. Show me you are ready to read. 4/8_2). Other times, Ms. Walker would ask students to raise their fingers to show their answer. (One last question I have for you. You are going to show me on your chest how many stars you are going to give this book, either one, two, three, four or five. [Teacher showed her fingers in front of her chest] Show me on your chest where your heart is. Show me on your chest. 2/20). The following passage demonstrates how Ms. Walker guided students to count the stages of a bee's life cycle, while at the same time assessing students' existing knowledge.

Ms. Walker: Bees grow in stages. The stages of a bee's life cycle are... Here they

are. Count with your fingers with bees. *Eggs*,... (Teacher showed finger one.) Everyone, show me one. That was the first stage. *Larva*, show me two. And the third stage called the *pupa*, do you remember that one for the butterfly?

Students Yeah.

Ms. Walker: Who remembers what we also call that for the butterfly?

Students *Chrysalis*.

Ms. Walker: The *chrysalis*. Good. And then the last one is the *adult*. (Teacher showed her fingers one, two, three, four, one by one while counting.) So *egg, larva, pupa, adult*, say with me.

Students *Egg, larva, pupa, adult*.

Ms. Walker: Good (4/24_1).

In addition, there was one occasion that Ms. Walker introduced *lung*, so she guided students to feel their breath by using their hands, as shown in the following sequence.

Ms. Walker: Who can remember? (Teacher pointed to a student) Start with /l/, /l/, /l/.

Students *Lungs*.

Ms. Walker: *Lungs*. Everyone, put your hands right here. (Teacher put her hands on her chest.) Put your hands right here on your chest. Now go... (Teacher took a deep breath in.) Do you feel your chest rise? (Students followed teacher's instruction.) Now, go. (Teacher exhaled. Teacher guided students to inhale and exhale to feel the rise of their lungs.) Those things right there, that letting the air in and out are called your *lungs*. What are they called?

Students *Lungs* (3/19_2).

Cooperative Learning

Ms. Walker provided opportunities to create a collaborative environment for students to explore their ideas through talking with their classmates. She tried to get students to talk as much as she could because a lot of linguistically-diverse students were

very shy and they didn't like to talk. So in each mini-lesson, she created opportunities for students to talk to each other two to three times. During read alouds, Ms. Walker would ask questions to prompt students to brainstorm and had them discuss with partners first before they shared in the whole group. For example, on one occasion, she asked students to predict what would happen next in the story. She asked, "Think about it. Talk to your partner and see what is your prediction" (4/29_2). She always let students know how much time they had for discussion, what the question was, and what sentence frame they needed to use.

She not only encouraged students to express their ideas, but also helped to stimulate students to clarify things. By doing so, she could also check their understanding. For example, "Are they even following along? Are they remembering what to talk about? Are they remembering what we were thinking about?" (Interview, 2/20) For Ms. Walker, it is an easy check point. Moreover, once students were "getting wiggly," Ms. Walker would get them to turn their bodies and then refocus by guiding them to talk and learn from each other. Meanwhile, students had the chance to really talk about it before they shared. Students would become more comfortable and share ideas. During discussion, students were allowed to speak in their native language, as long as they were just talking to their partners and they understood what they were saying together. When they shared with the whole class, they had to translate it into English for everyone. After the discussion, she would let students share with the whole class, as shown in the following sequence.

Ms. Walker: Please share with your loud voice. Zoe. I am gonna go way back to you because I saw you talking nicely with your partner. Start with the sentence: I gave this book.

Student I give this book five stars because I like the part that it has community helpers.

Ms. Walker: Perfect. She has a very specific answer. She likes the part that has community helpers. Great. Ryan. Loud voice please.

Student I give this book five stars because I saw Kelly's name.

Ms. Walker: Beautiful. That was pretty cool. Isn't it? Seeing a book with someone that is a real person (6/3).

Ms. Walker created opportunities to engage students in team work. She encouraged students to ask their classmates to help and learn from each other. There was one occasion where Ms. Walker instructed students to work on their logbooks as a team. She told students, "You are a team and you need to work together. You can say to them, 'Let's discuss it'" (3/20). While students were doing their independent work, they would help each other, such as sharing how to spell words, how to do a task, how to draw a specific picture, and so on. I observed one student read a sentence to the classmate sitting next to him, and then the girl gave her feedback, "It doesn't make sense" (4/11).

In addition, since Ms. Walker had students with mixed English ability, she arranged students who spoke their native language only at home to sit by someone who was native of their first language but at an upper level. By doing so, the higher level students could translate things Ms. Walker said or "re-clarify in [their] first language, which definitely helps a lot" (Interview, 1/30).

Problem Solving Strategies

While guiding students to discuss, Ms. Walker asked many questions. Sometimes if students hesitated or didn't know what the answer was, she would remind them to look at their anchor charts for hints if they happened to be a useful resource in this specific situation. Another important strategy Ms. Walker would emphasize for problem solving was always "Go back to your book" (4/5_1). "Really look at the text, going back for more information you needed" (4/24_1). In the following excerpt, Ms. Walker explained that students were allowed to take a look at the book if needed.

Ms. Walker: Sometimes, I say, go back and look at your text. Look at it. Figure it out. This is not cheating. It's using the resources. When I read books, if I have to answer questions, sometimes Mr. Neil gave us homework and he said read this book and he will ask questions about it. If I don't know the answers, I don't want to say, I don't know. I go back to the book and I look for the answers. So use your

text (4/24_1).

She provided an example to show students in what situations they could go back to the text to find their answers, as seen in the following sequence.

Ms. Walker: Here is my question. What happens if you don't know what to draw? What happens? Look, problems solve ahead of time. So Ms. Walker, I don't know how to draw a grub. What am I telling you to do? I tell you to try but you know what, I don't even know what it looks like. What's the problem solving strategy? Yes. Kelly.

Student: You can go back to your book.

Ms. Walker: Go back to your book and look. Here is another question. Ms. Walker, I don't know how to spell *chrysalis*. Ms. Walker. I don't know how to spell *pupa*. Should you just sound it out? You don't even need to today. Why. Why do you not just sound it out? It's in your book (4/24_1).

Additionally, Ms. Walker encouraged students to learn from each other. So what she wanted students to do was, "Try to ask your table to help you if you have problems" (5/23). While students were doing their independent work, she wanted students to find their resource before asking her, "Ask Jeremy and Steven. They are a very good resource." "Ask your friend right now. What is step one?" (5/1)

Questions and Answers

Ms. Walker used questions around the text widely to prompt students' responses. It included literal questions, such as "Which penguin is taller, the Emperor penguin or the Gentoo penguin? Who remembers?" (4/15) Students were able to find the answers in the text directly. There were also some inferential questions. For example, in the book *Fancy Nancy Sees Stars* (O' Connor, 2009), Nancy made a wish in the story, but the wish she made was implied rather than stated in the text directly. So Ms. Walker asked students whether they could figure out what Nancy's wish was: "Hmm. Listen to my page one more time, and figure out what her wish was"(5/31). She also asked evaluative questions. For example, while Ms. Walker introduced *snowmobile*, she talked about how the sled under the mobile would make sliding easier. Then she asked students to make a

prediction and students had to look for information outside of the text in order to figure out the answer. “What do you think would happen if they took my car out there? All the way to the Arctic. Let’s say to the South Pole and they try to drive my car in the snow. What do you think would happen? Who has a prediction? Share with your partners very quickly. I will ask you later” (4/10).

Ms. Walker used most of the questions to do comprehension checks. For example, she would keep reminding students of the reading target. After reading a couple of pages, she posed questions to students to prompt them to think about the learning target. For example, if they were looking at the setting of the story, she asked students whether they noticed where this story happened, how many settings they noticed so far, and so on. So during read alouds, she always drew students’ attention back to the reading targets. In addition, Ms. Walker asked questions to check whether students knew about their tasks or assessed students’ existing knowledge. For example, she might provide the definition or the situation and ask students to supply the terms. On one occasion, Ms. Walker read aloud a book about different cats. When they read the sentence, “Circular spots called *rosettes*...” Ms. Walker guided students to repeat the key word, *rosettes*. After that, she asked the following questions to check, “So if someone says, oh, leopards have spots. You are gonna say, ‘Yeah, do you know what they are called?’ What are they called, everyone?” (4/8_2) She guided students to say, “*rosettes*.”

Sometimes Ms. Walker would ask questions by using negative examples to explain or reinforce some ideas, concepts, or tasks. The following interaction demonstrates how she used a negative example to point out the characteristics that distinguish it from a true sample by asking questions.

Ms. Walker: So any one knows what are the small animals that possibly live in the tide pools? How about a puppy?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: Why would a puppy... My puppy is very small. Why would a puppy not live in the tide pool ? Why wouldn’t that be considered a small animal? You are right. They don’t. Why? ...

Students: Because they are not ocean animals.

Ms. Walker: They are not ocean animals. What about a... let's see... an ant.
Would an ant live in the tide pools?

Students: No.

Ms. Walker: Why not. How come? Ricky, you have been very shy. Just tell me how much more you have been talking in class. Why wouldn't an ant live in tide pools?

Students: Because they can't swim.

Ms. Walker: Yeah. They are not ocean animals. They can't swim. We don't see ants swimming. So yeah. Good point (3/20_1).

Most importantly, Ms. Walker asked questions to structure elaborated student talk. She used questions to prompt students to expand on a topic. For example, while a student tried to recall the story, *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (Park, 1997), she prompted the student to give more details.

Ms. Walker: What can you use for your sentence prompt?

Student: Last, Junie B. Jones bumped her head.

Ms. Walker: Yes. But where were they, say more.

Student: ...

Ms. Walker: Last, what happened?

Student: Last she was in the golden limo and bumped her head.

Ms. Walker: Perfect. Last, Junie B. Jones was in the gold Cadillac, the limo, and she was driving away, she bumped her head. Good. She is not buckled up. Very nice (5/1_3).

Traditionally, researchers concluded that teachers should ask authentic questions, in which they ask students to provide their own evaluation and interpretation of the content of their reading, rather than use questions that ask students to recall information already known by teachers (Boyd & Rubin, 2006; Boyd & Galda, 2011). However, some studies have found that text-based display questions that inquired about details of readings elicited elaborated responses from students. The key elements of teacher questions that elicited extended student talk were found to be contingent on previous

student utterances. In other words, teachers can scaffold students' learning by asking questions and making comments that are contingent on what the students have offered. That is, teachers can ask questions that are grounded in what students say, and then support them as they try to express their ideas further (Boyd & Rubin, 2006; Boyd & Galda, 2011).

During my observation, I found Ms. Walker also used contingent questions to encourage students to develop their own ideas and gain practice in using English to learn. Ms. Walker also supported students in providing further explanations by following students' responses with more questions. That provided opportunities for students to elaborate on their thoughts. The following sequence demonstrates how she asked questions in a targeted way to engender elaborated student talk about the definition *tiptoe*.

Ms. Walker: Tiptoes. What does it mean to tiptoe? What does that mean if a lion is tiptoeing?

Student: It is getting like tiptoe, so the other animals don't know it.

Ms. Walker: Yes. But what does it mean if you are tiptoeing. I know why he is tiptoeing. But what does it mean? What does it look like or what does it sound like? What does tiptoe mean? Andy

Student: Tiptoe means when you are looking at other animals, you are always hide tiptoe or you want to get to the animal.

Ms. Walker: OK. So it's part of wanting to get an animal. If you told me to tiptoe right now, what should I do if I want to tiptoe?

Student: Be quiet, the animals don't see.

Ms. Walker: Ok. So I need to be quiet. But is that the only thing because I stand here quietly. Am I tiptoeing? What do I do to tiptoe?

Student: Walk quietly.

Ms. Walker: So you need to walk quietly, so any other component? Anything else I need to do to tiptoe?

Student: Walk super slow.

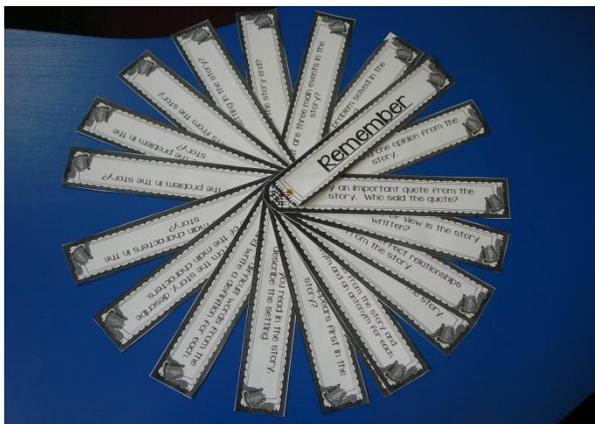
Ms. Walker: Super slow.

Students: Stand on tiptoes

Ms. Walker: Yes, stand on my tiptoes. Watch my feet. My friends. Am I tiptoeing right now? Back row, if you need to get on your knees, that's fine. Am I on my toes? (4/8_2)

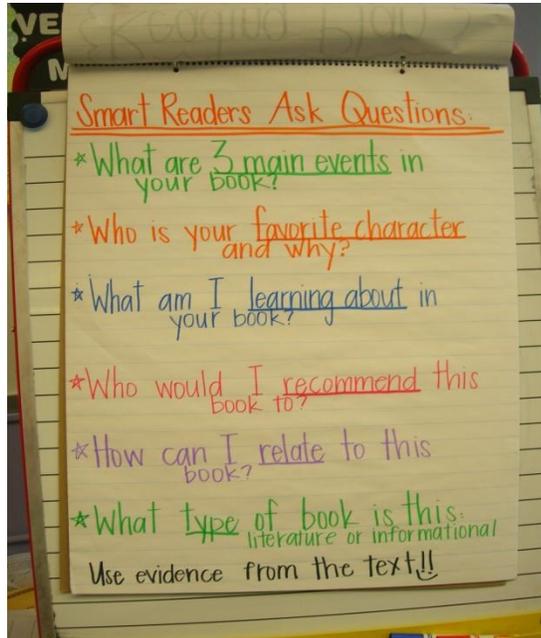
Furthermore, Ms. Walker wanted her students to not only be able to answer questions but also to ask them while they were doing independent reading. For example, she searched the internet for more resources and she found the “Comprehension Fan,” from *TeacherPayTeacher.com* which is a small fan that spreads out and there are different questions on it. Figure 4.7 shows a comprehension fan. So, students can pick any questions on the fan to ask themselves and try to find the answers from the books while they read. They are small and compact. So students can keep them in their reading bag. “I feel like they are really easy for them to travel with” (Interview, 5/8). The goal is that “When [students] are reading at home, they can read and then always like pull out their books and find the question and answer it” (Interview, 5/8). The biggest thing for her was to for students know how to answer it, not necessarily in the same form, but really internalize what it means. For example, she wanted students to know what characters are even when someone asked them in a different way than on the worksheet. The questions on the fan are like: From whose point of view is the story written? Who are the main characters in the story? What is the setting in the story? How did the story end? And so on.

Figure 4.7 Comprehension Fan



On their reading day, before shared reading started, Ms. Walker guided students to review questions that a good reader would ask. “So we are going to make a list of quick questions that you’ve already had on your book mark. But other questions that are not on your bookmarks, I want you to make me a harder question, a question that you can talk about” (5/29_2). Figure 4.8 shows the finalized questions they listed:

Figure 4.8 Smart Readers Ask Questions



Teacher Modeling

During and after reading, Ms. Walker provided explicit modeling as needed. She modeled almost everything from how to pick an unfamiliar word for their dictionaries to how to draw a picture for the word. Before asking students to apply any strategy or do any task, Ms. Walker always provided them with a clear example of the strategy or task, as she noted: “So I am showing them exactly. When I demonstrate I don’t do something totally different. I always do the exact same thing. To say, this is what it’s going to look like, watch me fill it out and this just set them up for success, so that they know ‘I can do this’” (Interview, 2/13). Typically, Ms. Walker would describe the strategy or task first. For example, she guided students to practice blends and look for them while reading. The

following excerpt shows how Ms. Walker explained the task for the day. While they were reading, they needed to look for 'sh' words.

Ms. Walker: The blend of the day is *sh*. What sound does it make?

Students: /sh/

Ms. Walker: Good. You are looking for this blend any /sh/ word in the words. You may find it in the beginning, middle or end. This is one of the blends you will find in every word. For example, /sh/ shark, it's in the beginning, wish /sh/, it's at the end, wi/sh/ing is in the middle. You will find /sh/ multiple places. Your job today is to read, not just search but to read and if you happen to come across the /sh/, write it down (4/23).

And then she would describe the features of the strategy or steps of doing the task. The following excerpt demonstrates how Ms. Walker explained the steps of how to use Post- It Notes to mark unfamiliar words for their dictionary.

Ms. Walker: You each today, while you are reading, you'll get your dictionary at the end for your reader's response. While it is your turn in the morning and I will explain it to you. I drew the sample page on the board and talked about in the second. Also while you are reading today, you will get a set of Post-It Notes. You will only need one or two of them today. The rest you will save in your reading bag until tomorrow. So I do not want to see these with pictures all over the place. These Post-It Notes today are for while you are reading, if there is an unfamiliar word you see, I want you to put the Post-It Note on that page. With that there is a word you will put in your dictionary. Your goal is, every day you enter one or two words into your dictionary (3/11).

She engaged students in learning through demonstrating the concept or skills step by step and periodically questioning students to check for understanding. For example, after Ms. Walker found students had difficulty in writing their reader's response, she decided to demonstrate how to write the response accurately. She modeled the task

visually by projecting the worksheet on the whiteboard. So students could all keep their eyes on the board and follow step by step to see how to work on their reader's response. She started demonstrating from reading a book aloud. While reading aloud, she pointed out each element of the story, such as title, author, settings, or types of books, and then after reading, she proceeded to write the reader's response step by step and modeled how to document all the elements on the sheet. Through the modeling, students knew the whole process of completing the task and applied this to their own task. The following example shows how Ms. Walker modeled the writing of an unfamiliar word she picked from the sheet and spelled it accurately.

Ms. Walker: What was the word I am not sure about? Everyone.

Students: *Frighten.*

Ms. Walker: Thank you, *frighten*. Good. So I would right away write that up here. The most important thing when you write your word, because you write in your book, should you have any excuse to spell it incorrectly? No. Because your book is right here. The word is right here. (Teacher pointed to the word.) I need to make sure I am spelling perfectly. If I don't spell correctly, I am not going to know this word perfectly. So when I write it, I am copying it. F-r... Notice I am going back and forth to look. I-g-h-t-e-n. (Teacher demonstrated how to copy the word from the book. Write letter by letter carefully.) *Frighten* (3/11).

Ms. Walker thought aloud as she modeled. She would make her thinking 'visible' to students. She modeled the strategy or task by verbalizing her thinking step by step. She also periodically posed questions and ideas along the way to engage students in thinking about their ideas. The following excerpt shows how to locate the *wh* blends in words during independent reading.

Ms. Walker: That's how I read first, now I am going to go back and search. I am looking for the word, *word*, w-o-r-d. No. Does not look like a blend, it has a w, but no h next to it. Umm, look at, look, look, make sure I

am not missing any. *Window*, w-i-n-d-o-w. No. Does not have *wh* together. Umm. *Who*- w-h-o.

Students: Yes.

Ms. Walker: Yes. That would be a word to write. *Wants*- w-a-n-t-s. No. Why not?

Students: Because it doesn't have *wh*.

Ms. Walker: It doesn't have *wh*. Just has the *w*. Okay, I am gonna keep going. So I will write *who* down (4/24_2).

Ms. Walker also provided negative examples to demonstrate the expectations and stopped frequently to get students' input. In the following excerpt, Ms. Walker explained her expectations by using negative examples as a comparison.

Ms. Walker: Ok. Be careful. It needs a /sh/ sound. If you write the word /s/kin, start with an 's', but it is not 'sh'. What about the word like um.. what about *his*, has 's' at the end. Is *his* an 'sh' word? Why not? Tell me very quickly. Why is *his*, it has *s* and *h*, let's look at the word. (Teacher wrote *his* on the board.) There is my *h* and there is my *s*. So there is my *s*. (Teacher points to *s* and then *h* in the word.) Why isn't *his* a /sh/ word? How come? Jennifer?"

Students: They are not together.

Ms. Walker: They are not together. And they are not the right word. Because even if they are together like, if a word ends like this (Teacher wrote *hs*.) they are not the right word. That's what I am trying to say. So make sure /sh/, like here. (Teacher wrote *highs* on the board.) *Highs*, the *sh* is backward, they are not the *sh* (4/23).

Ms. Walker's modeling made the strategy or task clear and learnable. On one occasion, before students were instructed to do their discussion in pairs, Ms. Walker asked one student to come up front and demonstrate the discussion process for the whole class, as shown in the following excerpt. The sentence frame for their discussion was, "One animal that lives in the Arctic is blank."

Ms. Walker: So the sentence frame you are using for your partner. You know

who your partner is. It's 'One animal that lives in the Arctic is blank.' (Teacher wrote the sentence on the white board.) Your job is not to pick the same one with your partner. So if you let your partner go first, and they say, whatever they say here, you cannot take the same. Let me show you an example. Ms. Melody, come here to be my partner please. Would you like to be the first, or would you like me to go first? Me? OK. So, me and Melody would turn and face and I would say, 'Melody, one animal that lives in the Arctic is the walrus.' Your turn.

Student: One animal that lives in the Arctic is the caribou.

Ms. Walker: Perfect. High five. (The teacher high fives with the student.) (4/8_1)

Ms. Walker modeled expectations and language patterns for students. Students appropriated language such as they heard Ms. Walker demonstrate. The following excerpt shows Ms. Walker modeling how to evaluate the book *Fancy Nancy Sees Stars* (O'Connor, 2009) and then has students share their own.

Ms. Walker: I will give this book four stars because I thought it was really cool that I learned the word *constellation*. I learned way more than that because that was my favorite word. Do you know how I use the word from the book? I used evidence from my text. I didn't say I give this book four stars because it was cool. Why was it cool? It taught me new words. What word did it teach you? *Constellation*. (Teacher pointed to the word on the board.) Or, um, *alfresco*, or um, *brilliant*. All of those words are words I learned. So notice how I used evidence from the text to rate my book. (5/31)...Can I have one more person please rate my book that I just read, the *Fancy Nancy Book* and give me reasons and give me some evidence why you gave that book stars. I need a loud voice. Ok. Raquel, are you ready? I give this book...

Student: Five stars because it looks not scary.

Ms. Walker: Oh, that was a good one (5/31).

Tips for Being a Good Reader

During read alouds, Ms. Walker demonstrated a variety of strategies for being a good reader. One of the strategies was finger pointing. For example, while reading the oversized book *Big Bad Cats* (Cain & Cain, 2004), Ms. Walker used a giant pencil as a pointer. She pointed to the words one by one in order to have students follow along. When talking about some key words or key pictures, she always reminded students to point to them to draw students' attention to them. "Point to that word. Find it. (Students pointed to the word, Algea" (3/20_1). "So that's capital. Find out in your map where the capital's figure on it. Put your fingers on the capital" (4/26). In addition to finger pointing, she occasionally asked students to read silently with her. "Should see you pointing to words with your partner. I should see your lips moving while you are reading with me" (4/8_2). She let students know that lip moving was also an indicator whether they were engaged in reading or not.

Importantly, she once guided students to discuss what a fabulous reader looked like. "What does a fabulous reader look like? Who can tell me?" (4/24_2) Through questions and answers, they concluded that a fabulous reader should include the following characteristics: "They are actually reading [not just scanning]." "They are tracking with their fingers." "Their eyes are tracking." "Either whispering or reading in your brain." "You are sitting SLANT." "You need to be on task and sitting up" (4/24_2).

Teacher-Student Interaction

During read alouds, Ms. Walker had a positive relationship with students. She clearly stated her requirements and made her instruction comprehensible for students. She also provided supportive and encouraging feedback to students. For example, after the student answered the question, she provided specific feedback to her. "So she has been investigating, she is using the clues and she sees that the baby chicken is starting to grow" (4/29_1). Students were able to follow her instruction immediately. When she noticed students might be distracted or less engaged, she would give students a prompt to think, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: I want you to listen and learn. Well. While we are learning, please turn your brains on. ‘Think, brain, think.’

Students: Think, brain, think.

Ms. Walker: Oh, I just want everyone to turn their brain on. We are ready to do action 100, which means I need everyone’s brain on this. Let’s try again with 100 percent. Are you ready?

Students: Think, brain, think (3/4).

Additionally, while students were sitting on task for a longer time, Ms. Walker would give a couple minutes for a short break to do some simple exercises. For example, she assigned each number on a dice an exercise, such as 1-jumping jacks or 2-table push ups, and so on. She would have students roll the dice and do the action according to the number that came up. By doing this, she helped students refresh their mind and then go back to their work.

After Reading

Independent Reading

In a typical mini lesson, Ms. Walker read a book aloud for around 15 minutes and students had 15 minutes to quietly read by themselves after that. Generally, students were required to pick books at their level or below their level. “They cannot go above because we found that they just sit there and look at the pictures and they are not getting any value out of it. We want to make sure even if the books are too easy for them, at least, they are reading” (Interview, 1/30).

To make the independent reading purposeful Ms. Walker always made it relate to mini-lessons. Before students got involved in independent reading, she would remind them again of the reading target. Students had to keep in mind their learning goals in order to make sure that the time was meaningful. For example, if they were studying the author’s purpose in class, while they were reading independently, “they are supposed to be intrinsically thinking about like the author’s purpose there” (1/30).

While discussing how to read in their independent reading time, Ms. Walker emphasized the importance of finger tracking.

Ms. Walker: So it is super duper important that you read every single word and that’s what we talked about pointing to every word because if I just skim with my eyes, that’s how I skip lines and I don’t even realize it. But if I point to every single word, I know I will read every word (4/3_2).

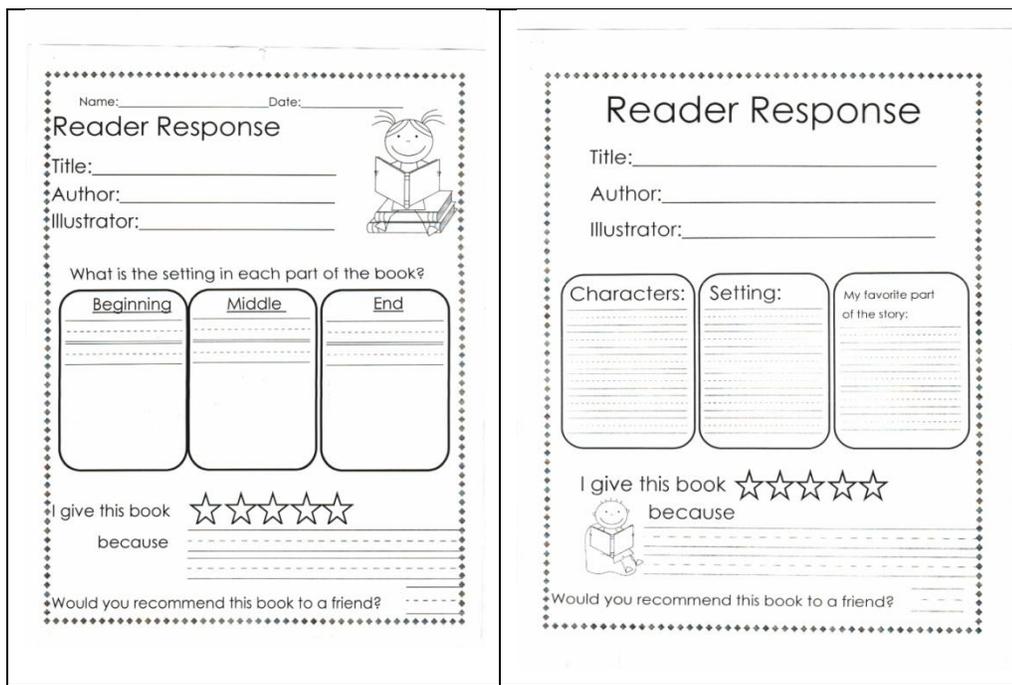
While guiding students to discuss how to be a fabulous reader, Ms. Walker summarized many tips with them. Moreover, through listening and discussion, students became more familiar with story structure and the way to read a book. This helped them apply the strategies Ms. Walker demonstrated to their independent reading.

After Reading Activities

In the following section, I briefly introduce activities Ms. Walker used, how she assessed students’ learning and how she cooperated with parents.

Writing reader responses. After independent reading time, students had to work on their reader responses. “There is always a sheet of some forms that have to do with our learning target that they have to complete when they are done with their steps” (Interview, 1/30). Figure 4.9 shows some examples of reader response worksheets.

Figure 4.9 Reader Response Worksheets



Typically, Ms. Walker read one book aloud as a whole class. Then students would do their 15 minute independent reading of their own books. After that, they would do their reader responses. If Ms. Walker saw students were having trouble with reader's response, she would go through the worksheet as an example during read-aloud time and then the students would apply it to themselves. If they happened to have the same reading target the following day, students would work on the same worksheet but with a different book. The worksheet would show whether students understood their reading targets. "The biggest thing is that not all books have the same characters and same settings. They all have characters and settings but they are different. So they have to always pick a different book to show that they understand the books are different and they are very diverse that way" (Interview, 2/13).

In the reader response worksheet, Ms. Walker started with the basics, such as the characters and settings. Students usually did the basic worksheet for the first week to build a foundation, but starting the following week, Ms. Walker might add in other key elements students had learned. For example, all the worksheets had the same bottom section because they were built the same. So students were familiar with the format and they didn't have any questions about it. Overall, the worksheets looked the same, but eventually that would cover all the different story elements. Ultimately, Ms. Walker would wrap up the elements all in one worksheet. The goal was that students could finish the worksheet with all the elements on it.

Before writing their reader responses, students had to read for 15 minutes, because "by reading multiple books they are able to see which books they want to write about. They are given more choice. Were they to read just one, we talk about how this is not, setting doesn't really work with a lot of informational text. It's non-fiction. And it is kind of letting them find out which book works for them, which books not. It is kind of an assessment point to see if they write about, you know some of them have color books, like I know there is one book floating around called Brown. It's all about brown, like chocolate is brown, this is brown, this is brown, my shoes are brown. So that wouldn't work if I plan for setting, because it is not really happening anywhere" (2/13). So Ms.

Walker was able to see if students could do that on their own, understand whether their books would work for the worksheet or not.

Creating a dictionary. Ms. Walker guided students to create their own dictionaries. By doing this, it provided a way to help students track new vocabulary, and provide opportunities to use new words and get multiple exposures to these words. While introducing the dictionary, Ms. Walker first provided the definition of the dictionary. “The dictionary tells you the definition of words. It tells you what words mean” (3/11). She compared it to their “character ad dictionary” and helped students to make connections. During read alouds, Ms. Walker incidentally explained and encouraged students to choose words that “you don’t know what they mean... or that are kind of tricky that you know but you think other people might be tricked by them” (3/18).

She found students’ problems with definitions were telling the new word in the definition, such as “a skeleton is a skeleton in your body” (3/29_2). So she shared students’ works with the whole class as examples to see what a good definition looked like, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: Here is another great definition. This person found the word *decide*. *Decide* is the word you might see a lot of people say. I am gonna *decide*, I will *decide* if I like to do this. But they keep using the word *decide*. They are not using different words. I don’t know what *decide* means. This person told me this word means to pick something. If I am going to *decide* if I like red or blue better, I am going to pick which one I like better, so *decide* means the same as choose or pick. Great job (3/18).

Writing animal reports. Ms. Walker read aloud an informational book first before guiding students to do an animal report. Then she modeled how to pre-write the animal report. At this time, the whole class all wrote the same report by following Ms. Walker’s modeling. Ms. Walker demonstrated step by step how to turn the worksheet into an animal paper. After her modeling, Ms. Walker guided students to work in pairs as a team for their animal reports. She tried to group students with different abilities. So she used high low groups more like teaching teams. “The only reason I do that is because my

low kids that are low in reading are also low in writing. And so they would be completely stuck” (Interview, 5/8). For the higher level students, “their job is not only to do their work but also to find a way to help explain it to their partners. So it’s helping those lower kids but it’s also challenging those higher kids... So it’s really getting them to explain it. It’s crucial” (Interview, 5/8).

After Ms. Walker’s demonstration and the students’ teams worked on writing animal reports, each student had to create his or her own animal report individually. At this phase, each student picked an animal to write a report about including table of contents, animal diagrams, habitat, nutrition, fun facts, life cycles, and glossary. For each part of the report, Ms. Walker conferenced with individual students and closely monitored their progress. Students could work at their own pace. Figure 4.10 shows some draft pages of the animal report.

Figure 4.10 Sample Rough Draft Pages of the Animal Report

The strategy for the whole process Ms. Walker employed was the scaffolding technique of “I do, we do, you do.” The following passage shows that Ms. Walker explained how she planned to do this.

Ms. Walker: I try to use it as ‘I do’ is when I read to them, I completely, I will take a non-fiction text and read to them. While reading it I personally point out everything I notice in this picturebook. And then when it comes to ‘we do,’ when we all are doing it together, that’s when we start brain storming, making lists of what do we have to do together, and so that’s when they make their animal report as a partner team. And then now let’s say, successfully having done that as a team, it’s time for them to independently show me that they can carry those skills across. So now they are doing their own and then um, Tuesday we are going to the zoo, for them to collect more information and then hopefully bring it back” (5/8).

The goal Ms. Walker set for her students was that each student could make his or her own non-fiction picturebook. She could laminate it and actually bind it for students to take home. So they could show that they understand “not only how to write sentences but they understand what a non-fiction versus fiction is and what different characteristics they have to have” (5/8). Figure 4.11 shows some final pages of the animal report.

Figure 4.11 Sample Final Pages of the Animal Report

The figure shows two pages from an animal report. The left page is titled "ALL ABOUT" in large, bold, outlined letters. Below the title are two horizontal lines, a dashed line, and another horizontal line. Below these lines are two fields: "Written and Illustrated by: _____" and "Date: _____". At the bottom of the page, the words "ANIMAL REPORT" are written in a smaller, bold, outlined font. The right page is titled "HABITAT" in large, bold, outlined letters. Below the title is a large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for a drawing. Below the box are several lines of handwriting practice, each consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

While scaffolding students to write their own animal report, she regularly had a conference with each student. She closely checked students' writing and reminded them about capital letters at the beginning of the sentence and periods at the end of the sentence. Since some students misused capital letters and randomly put periods in the sentences, Ms. Walker created a reminder to help students pay attention to the convention at all times. In addition, she also guided students to correct their grammar. (Teacher: 'A penguin eat fish.' How can we make it better? Student: Add 's') (5/20). She also prompted students to think while conferencing with students. (Teacher: What do you know about seals? Tell me a fun fact. A seal5/20).

While conferencing with students, Ms. Walker would try to expand students' repertoire of knowledge. For example, when students narrowed animals' habitat only as places they lived, she would stimulate them to think from a different perspective. (Teacher: [Habitat] means more than just living in certain place. You can also talk about places animals play and sleep.) (5/15) (Where do lemurs sleep? Or lemurs play?) (5/15)

By doing the animal report, in addition to the table of content and glossary mentioned in the previous section, Ms. Walker taught students "paragraphs." She introduced its definition, "paragraphs are chunks in a story," (4/16) and the function of paragraphs. Paragraphs could "help me know what to read. Otherwise, it gets to be too much in one row. We talk about how sentences go on and on and on, on and on. Makes you run out of breath. It's the same thing with the paragraphs" (4/16). Additionally, she emphasized the importance of matching pictures with texts (Your picture should be exactly the same with labels; 4/16) and conventions (I am checking for your conventions, which means I will see if your capital letters and periods are in the right spots; 4/17_1).

In order to have students learn by experiencing directly, they planned a field trip to the Minnesota Zoo. Students were grouped by their animals. They had to find information about their animals. Ms. Walker believed this would be more meaningful for students' learning. After the trip, students shared and felt they learned a lot from the trip beyond what they read in books. Finally, students shared their animal reports with their fifth grade buddies during the school's Reading Day.

Introducing KWL (Know-Want to know-Learned) chart. After reading books about the Arctic, Ms. Walker guided students to work on a KWL chart. Students could use the chart to organize what they had learned and accessed their prior knowledge. At first, she provided the definition of what a KWL chart was. “What a KWL chart is. It is a really nice tool to figure out what you already know ahead of time, what you want to know and then at the end, it’s nice to see what you learned” (4/5_1). Moreover, she knew students might be confused with the words “know” and “no,” so she explained these two words to them.

Ms. Walker: So if I know the answer, anything this word *know*, I am not using this word *no*. (Teacher wrote *no* on the board.) This means *no* as in don’t do it. It’s negative. (Teacher pointed to the word, *know*.) This means that we were thinking or something that was in your mind, that is why you were wondering why there is the *k*, it’s for *know*. That is why (4/10).

Then she introduced what the KWL chart was, explained the meaning for each category and guided students to complete the whole chart on the board as a class. The following excerpt demonstrated how Ms. Walker introduced the meaning for each category.

Ms. Walker: So when we say KWL, the reason to call that is because in your first column, it’s where you are going to write stuff you already know about whatever we are talking about yesterday, the Arctic, or the poles. We are going to figure out and list things we know. In the middle where the *W* is, it’s something we want to know. So we are going to put stuff that may be a list of questions like what is, what kind of plants grow in the Arctic. Or what is the life like in the Arctic. Those are questions I still have. And this one, the *L*, is what I’ve learned. This will stay blank until we are all done next Wednesday with the unit. Because it is the last time, that is the date we will write here something new we learned that we didn’t know at

the beginning. Make sense? (4/5_1)

While guiding student to do the chart, Ms. Walker demonstrated how to write a sentence on the chart by using an asterisk, as seen in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: I am just going to put a little star, so I know that's for my start. All I am doing is an example. Just an X with a line in it. You put a line in it. So that's called the asterisk. The computer makes it very nice. What it means is that you are going to start a new sentence or a new topic there (4/5_1).

Most important, while doing the *W* category, Ms. Walker wrote down students' questions. She reminded students of beginning with an asterisk. While writing, they should start with a capital letter. Finally, she asked what she needed to put at the end of her sentence. Students had trouble with the convention. So she referred to their anchor chart about questions, as shown in the following excerpt.

Ms. Walker: What do I put at the end of my sentence?

Students: Period./ Question Mark.

Ms. Walker: Why is it a question mark?

Students: Because...um,... it is a question.

Ms. Walker: I am asking. I want to figure out something I need to know and if I look at the word, 'how', or my questions up (Teacher pointed to the poster of questions and checked the question word on the chart. She pointed to the word, *how*, on the chart). There is my question word. So yes. We need a question mark (4/5_1).

Assessment

Ms. Walker used different assessment tools, including formal assessment and informal assessment, to monitor students' progress.

Formal assessment. Ms. Walker assessed students' fluency and sight words regularly. In addition, she would occasionally test students on what they learned. She specified the desired outcome and made assessments more constructive and accurate. On one occasion, after demonstrating how to do the research paper on *All About Geese*, Ms. Walker wanted students to apply what they had learned and do their own research paper.

She provided students a rubric and gave students guidelines to know what her expectations were. The following excerpt shows how Ms. Walker explained the rubric to students.

Ms. Walker: When I check your paper, this is the rubric I am going to use to grade you. (Teacher showed students the rubric.) For your diagram, you will get a 3, if you have a detailed picture with at least three things labeled. Yes. Today we have the beak, the feet, and the wings. Today in your picture, you will also need three things labeled. Your sentences need to be facts and not opinions. We need labels not to be things like ‘Oh, I love this butterfly. It is so cute.’ They need to be things we can prove. We talk about, tell me the size and the color in writing. Yesterday we talked about what they ate, where they lived, and fun facts. You need at least three facts. That means three sentences at least. At least means you can have more but you can’t have less. And the last thing I am checking for is your conventions, which means I will see if your capital letters and periods are in the right spot (4/17_1).

Informal assessment. Generally, except for the formal assessments Ms. Walker did regularly, one of the most important methods she used to check students’ learning was using worksheets. By evaluating what students wrote on the worksheet, Ms. Walker was able to pinpoint what confused students and how to modify her instruction to help them. Two main purposes of the assessments were to have students practice and allow her to check for their understanding. With a lot of the linguistically-diverse students, “we like to see if they can write it and not only can use but explain it. That’s why a lot of them have like ‘I gave this book five stars, because...’ They have to say why. Because a lot of them can just say five stars, I don’t know if they fully understand what that means, unless they draw and write their details” (Interview, 2/13). “Because if I look at [the worksheet], I see all the settings are wrong. That can tell me we need to go back and re-do it. It’s the goal of those” (Interview, 2/13).

On the one hand, with reading multiple books, students needed to determine which books they wanted to write about. For example, settings didn't really work with a lot of informational texts. So the worksheets would become an assessment point to let students find out which book worked for them. "So while they are reading, it is nice to see if they can do that on their own" (Interview, 2/13).

On the other hand, it helped Ms. Walker with grouping students and to see if she needed to pull students out in small groups and review everything they were just taught. For example, there was a student Jason who, in his worksheet on settings, just wrote inside and outside and what they were doing. So Ms. Walker was able to tell right from his worksheet that he understood the characters but he did not understand the settings. It helped Ms. Walker to know that she really needed to focus on him to make sure he was on task. "This is kind of a nice way to check everything. Getting them to practice is a way because we do it as a whole class, as like a mini-lesson. They are set up for success. They should know exactly how to do this. This is not meant to be a challenge. It's just meant to be like a practice" (Interview, 2/13). "The more that they are able to explain and talk about their book, the more they are going to get from reading and just more of the benefit they are going to get from it" (Interview, 2/13).

For science lessons, after finishing one topic or theme, Ms. Walker would ask students to perform a task to get their exit ticket. For example, while working on their KWL chart, Ms. Walker asked students to write their own sentence on the "L" column after they finished "K" and "W" in the whole class. She assessed students' work by assigning a color for students. She checked students' work after they finished their sentences and raised their hands. She gave her feedback immediately after looking at their work. Teacher assigned 'green,' 'yellow' or 'red' to students' work, which represented "go," "slow down" and "stop and go back." After obtaining their color, students came up to the board to mark their color and tally them. So they could see how many greens they got. That was a good way to graph their data to show how students were doing. The following is one example demonstrating how Ms. Walker explains their exit ticket.

Ms. Walker: Here is your ticket out for the day. ... You are going to go back to your penguin and you are going to open up your L. You are going to write one thing you have learned from what we have read. One thing, when you think you are done, raise your hand, I will come over and check it. If you have a very strong, powerful sentence that is something you learned, you are my green credit for today. (Teacher pointed to the “ticket out” chart on the board.) If you write a sentence that is either missing a capital letter or a period, or it doesn’t make sense, you are my yellow. If you are not following directions at all, you are in my red category (4/8_1).

Sometimes, Ms. Walker would assign numbers instead of colors. For example, on one occasion, she asked a student, “I want you to pay attention because your exit ticket today is going to tell me at least one animal that lives in the Arctic without looking in your book. So you are going to be able to tell me at least one at the end of the class” (4/8_1). After students said the sentence for their exit ticket, Ms. Walker then assigned numbers 3, 2 and 1 to students’ sentences, which means, “proficient,” “fair but not yet there,” and “need more time” respectively.

Generally, Ms. Walker was closely monitoring and checking students’ progress while they were doing their independent task. She would walk around and provide help for students individually. If students were writing, she would remind them of the capital letter at the beginning of every sentence and a period at the end. If students were too slow, she would tell them to catch up with their writing or reading.

Home School Connection

Ms. Walker also emphasized accountability at home. In addition to reading at school, “when students go home, they are required still to do two more steps and notice parents need to sign a log” (1/30). In Ms. Walker’s weekly newsletter, she would put their learning goal, such as “what is the book, the author’s purpose is, what is, who is the character, trying to get them all to talk about it. We are showing that the accountability is going to be at home as much as it can be at school” (Interview, 1/30). So students had to read a half hour each night at home as well. Each student took three books home daily

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

According to my observations of instructional practices during read alouds, Ms. Walker demonstrates that there is a lot of teaching before, during and after read alouds beyond simply reading to students. For a skilled teacher, it looks effortless to conduct read alouds. On the contrary, my observations show that read-aloud time is not as simple and effortless as it might seem. Rather, it is a complicated process that requires teachers to constantly make pedagogical decisions. Teachers need to select books, identify words for instruction, and choose strategies that facilitate word learning and comprehension of the content of books (Kindle, 2009). The features of effective read-aloud implementation are the work of a planful teacher.

In this vein, Ms. Walker adapted her teaching methods and materials to scaffold books and other reading materials to meet her students' need. She engaged students in participating during read alouds rather than just reading straight from the text. Her actions helped in identifying effective strategies for teaching linguistically-diverse students to become independent learners through read alouds.

The Teacher's Book Selection

Reading is a transactional process between the reader and the text. Individuals construct their personal meanings as they read (Rosenblatt, 1978; Galda, 1998; Sipe, 2008; Hadaway & Young, 2010) Therefore, while teachers select books or other reading materials for linguistically-diverse students, they must consider not only the text but also the students and the educational context. However, in comparison to fiction, nonfiction books have a higher cognitive or conceptual load for all learners (Hadaway & Young, 2010). It is interesting to notice that when teachers were asked which features of books they considered when selecting them, they rarely mentioned the informational content of the books (Dickenson & Smith, 1994). Teaching with informational books appears to be a challenge for many teachers.

Fiction Versus Non-Fiction

In my study, Ms. Walker believed that informational textbooks were vocabulary-heavy and hard for her linguistically-diverse students. However, as far as fiction or non-fiction were concerned, she still tried to incorporate both genres with goals to “do fifty and fifty,” because she knew students did not get enough non-fiction exposure. Moreover, she believed non-fiction texts had more “authentic language” and students could get more vocabulary exposure. Thus, she tried to incorporate more non-fiction books to help students transition to “research-based and non-fictional-based reading in college.” Compared to picturebooks, Ms. Walker used easy readers and printable books more for her read alouds for her science lessons after deliberating on the needs of her linguistically-diverse students.

Selecting Different Types of Books for Instructional Purposes

Ms. Walker chose her reading materials purposefully based on an understanding of her linguistically-diverse students. For this reason, she used a variety of picturebooks and reading materials in purposeful ways. For instance, she used an individualized book to surprise the whole class. Students were amazed seeing one of their classmates in the leading role in this book. She chose a children’s magazine to facilitate students’ understanding that they can read anything, not simply books. She read a chapter book aloud to demonstrate they need to read at an appropriate pace and really understand what they were reading instead of reading the whole thing in a hurry and understanding nothing. Importantly, she obtained copies of printable books from various sources for her students on different themes and topics, because she believed possessing their own book would be a meaningful experience for them. She even made her own book for students in order to help them obtain maximal information in a short period of time rather than telling them the information directly.

Selecting Books and Reading Materials to Meet Linguistically-Diverse Students’ Needs

While selecting books for her students, Ms. Walker showed her understanding of the double challenges they encountered. Linguistically-diverse students needed to learn academic content while they learned English and they often struggle to comprehend the content in books because they haven’t acquired the language or background

knowledge necessary to understand that content. For this reason on some occasions Ms. Walker modeled the purpose of reading through the use of relatively simple books. In this way she reduced the language load and guided students to focus on the targeted concepts. Ms. Walker used book selection to accommodate students' language levels and prevent language limitations from unnecessarily impeding students' understanding of the content.

Although some of the books Ms. Walker chose were not high quality literature, they did contribute to students' learning of important science concepts and academic vocabulary. Ms. Walker scaffolded text-to-text and text-to-life connections to promote content learning and English language development in her students. Ms. Walker's scaffolding is in keeping with the model of cognitive development, in which adult scaffolding for children eventually leads to children's independent cognitive development. Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the difference between a child's actual and potential abilities with expert guidance. He argued that any scaffolding provided by adults should be consistent with the child's abilities. For example, if the words in the books are beyond the child's comprehension even when read aloud, then the book reading cannot benefit the child. Therefore, for book reading to be beneficial, both the style of the reader and the level of the book must be within the ZPD of the child to whom the story is read (Reese, Cox, Hearte & McAnally, 2003). In Ms. Walker's read-aloud situation, she engaged students by asking questions, modeling, providing feedback, and students eventually were able to read books or finish tasks independently.

After Ms. Walker's read aloud and scaffolding, her linguistically-diverse students were able to apply what they learned and successfully create their own dictionary and animal report. For example, they shared their book and read to their fifth grade buddies on specially-designated days. In short, Ms. Walker used a wide variety of books and reading materials to shape her instructional units. Nonetheless, it may be worth studying how the other reading material, such as printable books or children's magazines, impact linguistically-diverse students' learning. Future research could examine how other read-aloud materials influence linguistically-diverse students' literacy learning.

Text Sets

Researchers argue that teachers need to make texts in English more comprehensible by using texts with content that is familiar to students (Goldenberg, 2011; Hadaway & Young, 2010). In general, people all comprehend familiar material more easily. Understanding decreases when the topic or the terms are unfamiliar. Based on schema theory, the cognitive framework provides a way to understand and manage new knowledge (Sternberg & Williams, 2010). Students' background knowledge serves as a foundation to help comprehend information from books. Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Comprehension requires the ability to connect the textual material to one's own knowledge (Carrel, 1984). What a student already knows will determine what he or she can comprehend. The less a student knows, the less he or she will be able to access from new material. When learning new vocabulary or new information, the lack of schemata becomes a common problem for students (Willingham & Price, 2009). Teachers help students experience success by providing familiar reading materials. This can be accomplished either by having students read material with content already familiar to them or by making sure students have sufficient exposure to the content in the text prior to reading the material (Goldenberg, 2011).

Pearson and Spiro (1982) encourage teachers to use analogies or comparisons to build connections between what students already know about a concept or a topic and what they may need to know in order to read and understand a text. A good reader needs to think about the interconnections among ideas they read (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). In this study, Ms. Walker used more informational texts for her science lessons. While teaching a concept, she usually read different books aloud about a topic for several days, such as Arctic life, life cycles, and so on. Therefore, understanding the life cycles of a butterfly would help students to get familiar with the life cycles of a bumblebee and a chick. Later on, she even let students figure out the life cycles of a plant and a ladybug on their own as students become more familiar with the concept of life cycles. Using a text set that focused on one topic with different books and reading materials allowed for the repetition of concepts or information and to improve students' comprehension and build background knowledge simultaneously (Hadaway & Young, 2010).

Building Reading Skills

For Ms. Walker, scaffolding phonics learning was a major focus while sharing read alouds. She spent time on this topic during read alouds, and during students' regular independent reading at school and home. The National Reading Panel (NRP) concluded that teaching children how to use letter-sound relationships to decode words results in the improvement of early reading achievement. Studies continue to provide evidence of the benefits of directly teaching phonological and decoding skills to English learners (Stuart, 1999; Shanahan & Beck, 2006).

In the morning, Ms. Walker conducted Direct Instruction (DI) lessons in which students were exposed to phonics instruction and practice. She found that in contrast to using only guided reading during previous years, combining DI lesson in the morning helped, "Their benchmarks for every year have definitely been going up, especially their phonemic awareness, like crazy high, compared to what we have seen in the past. So I feel like we are on the right track" (Interview 1/30). Therefore, in the morning's DI lessons, students built up their phonics. They created a foundation for reading harder texts. It is unlikely that linguistically-diverse students will develop high reading levels without phonics instruction. Therefore, while they encountered an unfamiliar word during read alouds, Ms. Walker would prompt them to "sound it out," use the "magic e," and so on. Most students were able to sound out words successfully by applying the phonics rules. The phonics lessons helped students to build a solid foundation for their independent reading.

Ms. Walker's teaching shows the importance of a balanced approach for linguistically-diverse students. That is, she emphasized not only reading aloud, introducing story elements and vocabulary, but she also stressed phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. Many linguistically-diverse students were unable to automatically recognize the meanings of all the words they could sound out and decode (Manyak & Bauer, 2008). Thus, it is critical for linguistically-diverse students to receive rich vocabulary and comprehension instruction in addition to phonics instruction.

Good Instruction Plus

Studies have shown that linguistically-diverse students learn in much the same way as native speakers. These studies suggest that what is known about effective instruction in general ought to be the foundation of effective teaching for English learners (Shanahan & Beck, 2006, Goldenberg, 2011). While linguistically-diverse students do need tailored instruction, many principles from the reading research base will also support students learning English. Ms. Walker's instruction demonstrated how to scaffold students' learning. She used a variety of scaffolding strategies including asking questions, modeling behaviors and explaining events, and so on. She helped students move progressively toward higher levels of comprehension and skill acquisition that they would not be able to achieve without assistance. In this section, I discuss features of Ms. Walker's instruction- including explicit instruction, vocabulary, modeling, and adaptability- and discuss how these work for her students.

Explicit Instruction

Focused and explicit instruction in particular skills and sub-skills is essential for linguistically-diverse students to become proficient (Goldenberg, 2011). One study argues that explicit instruction on how to use strategies effectively, especially metacognitive strategies might be beneficial for linguistically-diverse students (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985). Ms. Walker used many instructional practices identified in the literature as effective. Generally she adapted direct approaches that emphasized explicit and direct teaching of strategies or content. She clearly articulated specific goals and expectations for her students. For example, she always began with setting a purpose for reading before read alouds, followed by a clear explanation of what to do, and then continued her modeling of the process during reading and ultimately provided opportunities for students' practice after read alouds. She worked through these processes by constantly asking questions and thinking about the procedures.

Ms. Walker helped her linguistically-diverse students learn things effectively by making her instruction consistent. For example, she conducted read alouds in regular ways, kept the reader responses in a familiar format, and used the same phrases or repetitive terms, such as "find evidence from the book", "sound it out," and so on. All of

these not only created consistency for students' learning, but also strengthened students' learning through multiple exposures.

Modeling

Ms. Walker provided a lot of modeling and demonstrated precisely what she expected the students to achieve, such as how to locate unknown words, how to be a good reader, how to write a sentence, and so on. Research shows that some skills do not come naturally but must be modeled (Jimenez, 1997). For example, Herman and Dole (1988) and Jenkins, Matlock and Slocaum (1989) emphasized the importance of teachers demonstrating how to actually use contextual clues. In fact, students need modeling to become independent users of strategies. Strategies need to be explicitly taught, so students are able to choose to employ the strategies when engaged in independent reading. The goal is for learning to continue when students leave the classroom (Willingham & Price, 2009). Ms. Walker engaged students in learning by demonstrating the strategies and tasks step by step and periodically questioning students to check their understanding. She provided visual, auditory, and kinesthetic means for illustrating important tasks. She knew ahead of time what she wanted students to achieve as a result of modeling, so when students set out to work on their own, they knew the expectations and requirements.

Vocabulary Instruction

One of Ms. Walker's prominent teaching practices during read alouds was her vocabulary instruction. She believed that vocabulary was the most difficult component for linguistically-diverse students while learning to read since they might lack background knowledge of the needed words. In fact, studies of vocabulary instruction for linguistically-diverse students show that students are more likely to learn words when they are taught explicitly, using words from texts, or directly embedded in meaningful contexts (Carlo, et al, 2004; Spycher, 2009). linguistically-diverse students need much more exposure to new terms and words than do their English-fluent peers. Similarly, Ms. Walker put a great amount of effort into teaching vocabulary because she was aware of students' lack of vocabulary. For example, she found, "The kids can read these words but they have no idea about what they mean. So the kids can say *rag*, but don't know what the *rag* is."

She often conducted vocabulary instruction during read alouds when target words might confuse students or when the words were needed for story comprehension. In most cases, Ms. Walker identified key words that were important for students to learn. Occasionally, her vocabulary instruction occurred before reading while introducing key terms specific to the current learning target, such as the word *glossary*. She often guided students to figure out two to three words for each read aloud by employing different strategies. She also gave specific instruction and attention to vocabulary after a passage was read. Further, she provided opportunities for students to apply the strategies they learned during their independent work. Laufer (2003) points out that directed vocabulary instruction is necessary for vocabulary development. Specifically, word-focused tasks are beneficial for vocabulary expansion. Ms. Walker's support for the creation of student self-made dictionaries was good practice for students. In their self-made dictionaries, students were required to create picture images for new words, which demanded action and thinking. By doing this, new words became memorable and meaningful for each student.

Additionally, research shows that pictures help children with low levels of oral English learn story vocabulary. The visual representation of concepts, not just language-based explanations, provides children with support in learning vocabulary words (Roberts and Neal, 2004). Ms. Walker had the same belief: "When students were not proficient in English, that's where picturebooks come in because of those pictures." (Interview, 2/10) The pictures on these books provided helpful visual support for students, which is especially important for linguistically-diverse students. When word knowledge is limited, readers rely on illustrations to help them "figure out" the meaning of the text (Hadaway & Young, 2010).

Studies also show that students are more likely to learn words when they are provided with multiple opportunities for their repetition and use in addition to being taught explicitly in meaningful contexts. It is essential that students are provided with various opportunities to use new words repeatedly in different contexts (Carlo, et al, 2004; Spycher, 2009). Therefore, one recommendation for vocabulary practice would be to find

opportunities for the new words to be used in different contexts to encourage ample use and deepen students' word learning.

Adaptability

Studies have shown that teachers' adaptability relates to their reactions to group and individual developmental differences (O'Keefe & Johnson, 1989). Effective teachers are highly responsive to students. The adaptive teacher is able to see beneath external behaviors and recognize the "unique psychological qualities of each interaction" (O'Keefe & Johnson, 1989, p. 20). In fact, the ability to change and be responsive to different conditions is important for teachers in the classrooms. If students are confused about particular strategies or tasks, teachers must adapt to the learning situation. By doing so, students are able to better comprehend what is being taught. Ms. Walker demonstrated a great amount of thoughtful adaptability. The strategies she taught students were not only research-based, but also based on her understanding of their current learning needs, such as "being specific," "not using words twice," and "replacement" for defining unfamiliar words. If needed, she revisited and modeled the practices over and over again. This shows that frequent assessments to gauge students' progress, providing feedback on students' responses, and re-teaching what confused students were also significant in Ms. Walker's instruction and critical for student learning.

Instructional Modifications Are Necessary for Linguistically-Diverse Students

Ms. Walker used many additional support and scaffolding that appear to be effective strategies not limited to linguistically-diverse students but effective for many students. For instance, she set up predictable and consistent classroom routines. She posted an easy-to-read schedule and learning targets on the board or on a chart and referred to them frequently. However, researchers state that instructional modifications are almost certainly necessary for linguistically-diverse students (Goldenberg, 2011). Ms. Walker knew about linguistically-diverse students' special needs and how to modify her instruction to help them, which was demonstrated in her teaching during and after read alouds

Providing Comprehensible Input and Opportunities for Student Output

Input has been identified as an important factor for children learning language. Krashen (1985) proposed that second-language acquisition is a result of comprehension input that is received by students. It is interesting to notice that Ms. Walker tried very hard to make her instruction comprehensible. One of the most distinct forms of instruction for her linguistically-diverse students- as compared with native English-speaking students- was her consistent explanation of key words or terms that she thought students might have trouble with, such as “perfect means zero mistakes.” “This book will be giving us a brief, meaning a quick overview” (4/8_1). “This is like a comprehensive test, meaning reviewing everything” (4/5_2). “...nice and bold, which means nice and black” (4/5_1). I found many examples like this in my observations. Those terms might easily go unnoticed for native speakers. Even teachers might articulate without a second thought about them. However, these words could become the barriers for linguistically-diverse students who are immersed in mainstream classrooms, because these words are key to understanding Ms. Walker’s instruction and performing academic tasks. Ms. Walker also used student-friendly language to introduce some complicated concepts. For example, she changed the abstract standards into easy language to help students understand. She compared butterflies’ “finding mates” to human beings’ “finding boyfriends and girlfriends,” and so on. All of these exemplify how she scaffolded the content of books for students’ comprehension..

Ms. Walker also provided students with multimodal input to improve comprehension. She usually wrote key words and sentence frames on the board after she pointed them out for students. She also used visuals and other nonverbal means to make her instruction more comprehensible. For example, she used graphic organizers that made the information of the books visually explicit. She drew pictures, used physical gestures, and real objects to facilitate students’ understanding of the content. Through the use of the above-mentioned support, Ms. Walker was able to make complicated information accessible to linguistically-diverse students.

For many years, the input hypothesis argued that comprehensive input was a necessary and sufficient condition for second language learning (Krashen, 1985). However, recent theoretical models include output as another critical part of the second

language learning process. Output has an important role in the learning process, whereby linguistically-diverse students learn from the feedback they receive (VanPatten, 2003). Evidence suggests that input alone is not sufficient in these cases, and producing the target language is important for linguistically-diverse students (Swain, 2005). In the same way, Ms. Walker created a supportive learning environment. She intentionally planned to create opportunities for student output. For example, in order to maximize opportunities for output, she encouraged collaborative dialogue by inviting students to work together to discuss their group projects. She helped students focus on their writing by providing them daily opportunities for writing, and so on. Teachers working with students from diverse language backgrounds need to help them not only attend to input but also produce output. Teachers have to provide feedback to output by scaffolding students to produce the target language more and more correctly (Anthony, 2008).

Scaffolding Oral Language Development

Linguistically-diverse students learn content and language knowledge simultaneously, so teachers need to help students with both conceptual and linguistic development. Teachers need to identify the language demands of their content areas that may be particularly challenging for linguistically-diverse students (Harper & de Jong, 2004). While introducing a new concept during read alouds, Ms. Walker provided support for language development when students were required to comprehend a concept or perform a task. For example, she drew students' attention to the use of vocabulary that might cause confusion. She pointed out the differences between *no* and *know* while she introduced the KWL chart. She distinguished *peer* from *pear* and introduced the multiple meanings of *peer* during a read aloud.

While asking students to share their learning, Ms. Walker provided sentence frames and prompts to help students use a complete and appropriate sentence, such as "One animal that lives in the Arctic is _____" (4/8_1). Or, "I predict this book is going to be literature because _____" (4/9). She also invited students to elaborate on their language by questioning. For example, she encouraged students to find evidence from the text to support their statements since her linguistically-diverse students usually oversimplified their sentences. Ms. Walker's use of questioning prompts to help them

expand their thinking also proved to be a good strategy. Students not only learned the content of the reading but also the language required to perform the task.

Addressing Students' Literacy Needs

During read alouds, Ms. Walker used teachable moments to demonstrate how to be a good reader, how to use strategies to sound out words, how to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words, how to ask questions while reading, and how to read a chapter book at an appropriate pace. She clarified difficult words and passages within texts, summarized content, and reviewed the concepts to facilitate comprehension. She also gave students extra practice in reading words, sentences, and stories to get familiar with them. She provided comprehensive support to help students' independent reading.

While guiding students to complete their writing tasks, Ms. Walker scaffolded them in various ways such as how to write a sentence, how to make a complete sentence by using accurate conventions, how to transform sentences into a paragraph and finally create an article, and so on. Researchers point out that simply exposing students to literacy-rich environments is not sufficient to promote acquisition of the specific skills that comprise reading and writing. They argue that focused and explicit instruction in specific skills and subskills is especially important for linguistically-diverse students to become effective readers and writers (de la Luz Reyes, 1991; Kucer & Silva, 1999).

Assessing Knowledge and Language Separately

Language limitations are likely to disguise what students know and can do, so it is important that teachers with linguistically-diverse students allow them to demonstrate their content knowledge in spite of language limitations (Goldenberg, 2011). Ms. Walker assessed students' knowledge in a way that separated language proficiency from content knowledge. She would give points to students' tasks which show they understood the content even if there were grammatical errors.

While assessing students' readers' responses, Ms. Walker did not consider their grammar. Rather, she evaluated whether students really understood the concept. On one occasion, she talked about how she assessed one student's understanding of settings. "When I look at this, I don't take into account like grammar. I am looking at, do they understand the concept? (Ms. Walker pointed to the student's writing.) So it's like, 'She

is in the library,' 'She is in the story toy,' she meant toy store, but I got that. 'She is in the story dog.' Pet store. So she understands the concepts. Just 'cause the grammar is not correct, that's not what I am grading. I want to see she understands *where*' (Interview, 2/25).

Linguistically-diverse students' language limitations are likely to be mistaken as lack of content knowledge or delay of cognitive development. Research shows that linguistically-diverse students need to be assessed in a way that separates language proficiency from content knowledge (Roberts & Neal, 2004). Teachers might misinterpret linguistically-diverse students' errors because they are learning a second language and have a limited knowledge of the structure of English (Haper & Jong, 2004). Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to assess students' knowledge and language separately in order to interpret their performance accurately.

Teacher's Read-Aloud Style

Due to her adaptability, Ms. Walker's reading style was hard to categorize as a certain style, but it could possibly be categorized as a style between performance-oriented and co-constructive according to the categories found by Dickinson and Smith (1994). For some short easy readers, Ms. Walker read with few interruptions and guided discussion at the end of the reading focused on the reading targets or definition of unfamiliar words, which is defined as a performance-oriented reading style. Other times she promoted analytic talk during the book reading, which is defined as a co-constructive style.

Instructional Focus

Generally, Ms. Walker initiated most of the talk about the books and reading materials. Thus, she was not child-centered in the sense of letting children determine the nature or direction of the talk about the books and reading materials. She adopted a more "teacher-centered" way of reading (Martinez & Teale, 1993). Nevertheless, she encouraged students' participation by questioning and intentionally called on some shy and quiet students to share their perspectives. If she found that students were isolated, she would interrupt and assign a group for them.

While moving students through the story during the reading, she systematically reminded students to focus on their learning target for the day. Although she generally talked about the content, she spent most of her discussion focused on their current reading targets. Reading targets had a relatively powerful impact on the topics that Ms. Walker chose to discuss during read alouds. She helped students understand their reading target in each read-aloud session, which became the distinctive feature of Ms. Walker's reading style. Therefore, compared to reading targets, the storylines in literature received somewhat less attention in her discussions. Proportionally more time was spent discussing important information in informational books compared to the literature story books.

Instructional Strategies

I identified diverse patterns of strategies used across Ms. Walker's read alouds. Ms. Walker frequently used a questioning strategy that would be more likely to open up discussion. She also demonstrated the strategy of analogy and emphasized inferential reasoning in her use of instructional strategies in addition to reviewing and summarizing strategies. Most important of all, her style was also marked by her focus on vocabulary. She repeatedly halted her reading of the book and selected an unfamiliar word to give her students the opportunity to figure out the meaning of the words. Her reading style seemed consistent with her belief that linguistically-diverse students need more specific instruction in vocabulary. It was interesting to notice that Ms. Walker also emphasized students' responses to texts by guiding them to externalize their affective reactions to the book. By doing so, she signaled that reading is not only a cognitive process but also an affective process. Students enjoyed certain books purely for the fun of them.

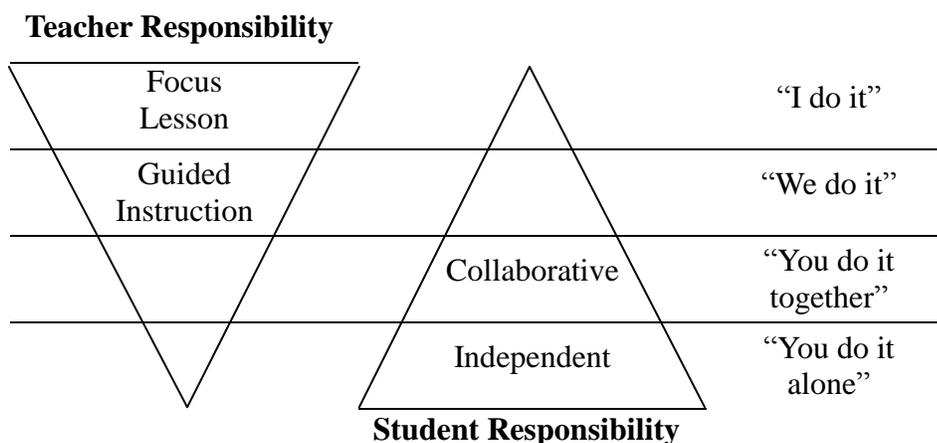
Research shows that one style of reading cannot be considered "best" for all children. Reese, Cox, Harte & McAnally (2003) found that children with lower initial vocabulary levels benefited most from the describer style while children with higher initial vocabulary levels benefited most from the performance-oriented style. Thus, the effectiveness of a reading style appears to be highly dependent on children's initial skill level and on the particular skill being targeted. Martinez and Teale's study (1993) shows that read-aloud experiences can be a very different experience from classroom to

classroom. The type of interaction varies from book to book, day to day, and child to child. Engaging students in active participation during read alouds is almost always better than a straight reading of the text. Teachers should expand their reading styles and learn to shift their styles depending on the type of books, students' levels and ages. That would be especially important to teachers who work with linguistically-diverse students.

Using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Ms. Walker used read alouds as scaffolding for students' independent use of reading strategies, independent reading, and tasks. She employed the scaffolding technique, "I do, we do, you do," (Interview, 5/8) which generally follows the gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). This model emphasizes that teachers' instruction should move from teacher knowledge to student understanding and application. It ensures that students are supported in their learning of the skills and strategies necessary for handling the tasks. In fact, Ms. Walker followed this structure in almost every task she assigned to students. The most obvious example was when she guided students to write the animal reports. She demonstrated components of the model as delineated in the visual representation in Figure 5.1 (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

Figure 5.1 Gradual Release of Responsibility



For example, she first provided a demonstration of writing a short animal report after reading aloud *From Eggs to Geese* (Cain, 2004). She did the first part on her own, and had students share their ideas by prompting and questioning students, and then

worked on the second part together. After the guided instruction, she had students proceed to do a group project of an animal report. At this phase, students worked collaboratively to complete the report, either in pairs or groups of three. In doing so, students learned to work cooperatively. Ultimately, students moved on to work on their individual animal report independently. During this independent work phase, Ms. Walker spent a lot of time in providing extra individualized support through constant conferences. In this way, students learned to synthesize information and solidify their understanding.

Although implementing the whole process required time, the outcome was encouraging and promising for both Ms Walker and her students. In fact, Ms. Walker used this model in almost every task she asked students to do. Although in some cases she did not assign students to work cooperatively before their independent work, she always provided a detailed model with clear and specific instructions about the task. This model has been documented as an effective approach for improving literacy outcomes for English language learners (Kong & Pearson, 2003). However, teachers should keep in mind that the gradual release of responsibility model is not linear. Students move back and forth between each of the components as they master skills, strategies and standards (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant Pedagogy is a framework for teachers to meet linguistically-diverse students' needs and better support students' participation in learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). Culturally relevant teaching emphasizes teachers' attempts to have culturally and linguistically diverse-students sustain their own cultural values. Teachers include all of the students as learners and offer opportunities to participate in meaningful contexts for learning (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994). Yoon's study showed that teachers' approach to linguistically-diverse students can act as a support or constraint to their participation in literacy learning (Yoon, 2007). Teachers need to be aware that they are the most important factor in promoting linguistically-diverse students' learning. What linguistically-diverse students need "is not just specific methods, even if they are scientifically proven as effective, but teachers who are sensitive to their cultural differences and needs" (Yoon, 2007, p. 225).

Working with Parents as a team

While addressing her students' cultural and social needs, Ms. Walker showed her respect to students by pronouncing students' names correctly and building personal relationships with her students and their families. She worked closely with parents as a team to aid students' learning. She encouraged students to read with their families at home. By using a reading log, both Ms. Walker and classroom parents were able to monitor and understand students' reading progress.

Grouping and Using the First Language

Ms. Walker believed that pairing or group sharing for discussion was an important part of her instruction, since if students were not linguistically-diverse students she would have them share directly as a whole group. While grouping students, instead of pairing linguistically-diverse students with English speakers, Ms. Walker would pair students by their native language in order to have students in need get sufficient assistance. Research shows that simply pairing linguistically-diverse students and English speakers is not enough. If the tasks are far beyond students' language and academic skills, the interaction may not be productive at all (Genesee, Lindholm-leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006). Garcia recommends that linguistically-diverse students from similar language backgrounds be placed in the same classroom together and be allowed to use their native language with each other, since research findings indicate that when linguistically-diverse students are grouped together in all-English settings, it reduces their anxiety. Moreover, most of the time that linguistically-diverse students spend speaking in the first language is focused on figuring out what the teacher is saying in English instead of chatting (Garcia, n. d.). In Ms. Walker's class, students are allowed to speak in their native language while they are discussing. When students talk to the whole class, they may translate it into English for everyone. Ms. Walker stated the importance of students using their native languages. She said, "Sometimes they learn that way" (Interview, 2/20). It is important to note that while Ms. Walker valued and supported students' use of native languages in the classroom, she was also sensitive to students' need to learn English, and she continued to emphasize their exposure to comprehensible input and the use of the language.

Teacher's Role as an English Speaker

In one of my interviews, Ms. Walker reflected on her role as a speaker of English, “When I plan my lesson, I have to think about vocabulary so much. Like in math, I always have to think about like we’ve been spending two weeks just on operational words like *all together*. . . .For some of these kids, I say *all together* and they have no ideas what that means. So it’s like trying to focus on the vocabulary as much as you can has been like the hardest thing to do because you don’t realize it, you take it for granted. Especially I do ‘cause I am a native English speaker, but at the same time when you do see, oh gosh, yes, they need it. You’ve got to do it and it does help.” (Interview, 1/30). My observations showed that Ms. Walker was responsive to her students’ learning needs and used many intentional strategies to support them.

Ms. Walker thought her teaching experience with linguistically-diverse students had really helped her to know more about her students. “I taught these three years, I feel like I am getting to know it a little bit better. So I know what to expect” (Interview, 1/30). Harper and Jong argue that a classroom that explicitly addresses the needs of linguistically-diverse students is where “teachers extend practices of good teaching to incorporate techniques that teach language as well as content” (Diaz-Rice & Weed, 2002, p.17). Ms. Walker’s teaching showed her understanding of the language demands within the academic content. She included ways to reduce language loads, such as providing comprehensible input, while at the same she provided scaffolding for students to learn language skills, such as providing sentence frames.

Implications

Ms. Walker’s classroom provided students a separate book area, and offered books with a range of difficulty. Those books were displayed in a thoughtful and organized manner. Ms. Walker arranged these books according to their levels. She put them in boxes with corresponding colors and labels. She even labeled each book with its leveled color, such as green books or red books. Students could easily find books at their reading levels. Organizing books by their levels would be beneficial for all the students. In doing this, teachers can also easily check whether students are reading books at the appropriate level and make sure that all the students can find books for independent

reading. However, one of the important shortcomings I noticed was that the classroom's books did not necessarily represent varied racial and cultural groups. Johnson (1981) found that the cultural origin of a story had more effect on the comprehension of linguistically-diverse students than the level of syntactic and semantic complexity in both adapted and unadapted texts. Thus, teachers with linguistically-diverse students should consider including some culturally-relevant books in their classroom libraries. Moreover, research shows that a rich supply of books and teachers' sharing the reading with students improved linguistically-diverse students' language tests (Elley, 1991, 2000). Routman (2003) argues that "The most effective reading programs are generally supported by large classroom libraries. The better the libraries, the better the reading achievement as measured by standardized tests" (p. 64). Providing access to a wide variety of texts in classes would be crucial for linguistically-diverse students' learning as well.

Ms. Walker's varied book selection showed her adaptiveness and thoughtfulness. For beginning English language learners, those reading experiences with various books and reading materials provided the support for enhancing students' experiences with different texts. Teachers who want to find enough copies for their students could consider printable books and children's magazines. I believe printable books would be appropriate for young English learners since they are able to color, mark or even take notes in their own books. Students love to bring them home to share with their families. In Elley's study (1991, 2000), the books he used were provided cheaply with local initiative, in very simple black-and white format, without tight control over structures and vocabulary. The positive results of this research provide evidence that students still benefit from the readings, even though the books they used were not picturebooks. Teachers could consider printable books as a highly motivating factor to stimulate students to read and share their books.

Most importantly, Ms. Walker's read alouds show that it is possible for teachers to conduct read alouds on a regular basis even with a hectic school schedule. Fifteen minutes could be enough time to conduct a good read aloud. Young children tend to get distracted or uninterested when read alouds go on for a long time or seem to drift. Ms. Walker typically conducted read alouds for her mini-lessons for approximately 15

minutes, whereas the time for read alouds for science lessons varied depending on the content of the books or reading materials. During read alouds, Ms. Walker focused the class discussion on learning targets or current classroom themes. She tried to concentrate on the most important parts of a story or the main ideas of informational books to help students stay focused. Her experiences helped foster my confidence to promote read alouds in an elementary classroom in Taiwan. As long as teachers select appropriate books, read with a high level of interactive style, and promote discussion around books, 10- to 15-minute read alouds would be good enough. In Taiwan, teaching is strictly constrained by the school curriculum. Reading aloud 10 to 15 minutes on a weekly basis would be a good start. However, reading aloud does not directly contribute to all dimensions of literacy learning. It is possible for teachers to read aloud too much. Therefore, it is important for teachers not to give up time needed for other early literacy experiences. Elements including oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are all important for students' learning.

Although there is no specific reading style that is better than others, some strategies seem to have greater benefit for linguistically-diverse students. When instructing English language learners in English, teachers must modify instruction to take into account students' language limitations. Moreover, teachers with linguistically-diverse students should also emphasize and model the integration of the strategies rather than relying on a single strategy. For example, researchers have different views on using context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Some think a word's context is significantly useful for determining the word's meaning (Gipe, 1979; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Others believe context clues are not substantially helpful in determining a word's definition (Juel & Deffes, 2004). Eeds and Cockrum (1985) found using context clues alone to establish a word's meaning was not as helpful as learning a word's meaning through teacher-led discussion. In fact, Ms. Walker's teaching demonstrated that the combination of context clues and discussions can lead to constructing a word's meaning successfully. In short, choosing what strategies to use depends highly on the extent of the textual support, and most importantly, the teachers' guidance. Therefore, teachers with linguistically-diverse students should emphasize the importance of demonstrating and

instructing how to actually use these strategies. These skills or strategies do not come naturally but must be modeled.

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APPENDIX A

Transcription Conventions

The following transcription conventions are used.

Speaker IDs

Students	Utterances were assigned to more than one student, spoken either in unison or staggered.
Student	Utterances were assigned to a particular speaker.

Delivery

...	Three dots indicate that some material of the original transcript has been omitted or an untimed paused.
Going to	When the teacher used the colloquial form, <i>gonna</i> , the more standard “going to” was used instead.
<u>At least</u>	Underlying indicates emphasis or a key word.
/sh/	Letters in slashes indicate the sound they make.
WHAT	Capitalization represents speech delivered more loudly than surrounding talk.
um	When the teacher paused and said ‘um’ before she finished her thought, ‘um’ was left in.
[they]	Words in square parentheses indicate words added to the original transcript to make it more understandable.

Other

(Interview, 6/3)	The word <i>interview</i> and numbers between parentheses at the end of the transcripts indicate the date the audiotape was taken.
(4/23)	Numbers between parentheses at the end of the transcript indicate the date the videotape was taken.
(Teacher pointed	Contextual information and non-verbal behavior were

to the word)	added between parentheses.
(Inaudible)	Unintelligible speech is marked with 'inaudible' in parentheses.

APPENDIX B

Books and Reading Materials the Teacher Used

Picturebooks

- Chodos-Irvine, M. (2003). *Ella Sarah gets dressed*. New York: Harcourt.
- Hoff, G., & Melich J. (1994). *A walk through the Minnesota zoo*. Minneapolis: GJ & B Publishing.
- Hoose, P., & Hoose, H. (1998). *Hey, little ant*. New York: Scholastic.

Individualized book

- Andrews, P. (1993). *When I grow up*. Addison: Best Personalized Books.
<http://www.myfairytalebooks.com/>

Easy Readers (Level Books)

- Cain, M. M. & Cain, J. G. (2004) *Big Bad Cats*. Keller: Triple C Management.
- Cain, M. M. & Cain, J. G. (2004) *From Eggs to Geese*. Keller: Triple C Management
- Gelman, R. G. (2003). *More spaghetti, I say!* New York: Scholastic.
- Greene, C. (2011). *Snow Joe*. New York: Scholastic.
- Jones, M. D. (2002). *Balls*. USA: Children's Press.
- Kelbrick, R. (2003). *A Snowman*. Hong Kong: Wright Group/McGraw-Hill.
- Marchesani, J (2010). *Dick and Jane and Vampires*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Marzollo, J. (1997). *I'm a caterpillar*. New York: Scholastic.
- Most, B. (1999). *Catch me if you can*. New York: Harcourt.
- O' Connor, J. (2009). *Fancy Nancy sees stats*. New York: Harper Collins
- Scotton, R. (2011). *Splat the cat: good night, sleep tight*. New York: Harper Collins
- Spevack, J. (1996). *Never say never*. Needham Heights: Silver Burdett Ginn and Modern Curriculum Press.
- Taylor-Butler, C. (2004). *A mom like no other*. New York: Scholastic.
- Tripp, V. (2007). *Gulls*. Madison: Rowland Reading Foundation
- The Robot*. (N/A)

Printable books

Ocean animals

Habits logbook

Polar Habitats

Explore and learn Arctic animals

Arctic life

Life cycle of a bumble bee

Stages of an egg

Teacher' self-made book

Norway

Children's magazine

We are Penguins. (2011, December). *Weekly Reader*.

Chapter book

Park, B. (1997). *Junie B. Jones is a party animal*. New York: Random House.