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Teaching and Instruction: A Study Exploring Contributing Factors That Impact Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners in Middle School and Strategies for Improvement

Tieandra L. Lewis
Clark Atlanta University, tieandra.lewis@students.cau.edu

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

LEWIS, TIEANDRA L.  B.A. HAMPTON UNIVERSITY, 2008
                  M.T. HAMPTON UNIVERSITY, 2010
                  M.S.ED. UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, 2011

TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION: A STUDY EXPLORING CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS THAT IMPACT READING COMPREHENSION FOR ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND STRATEGIES
FOR IMPROVEMENT

Committee Chair:  Barbara Hill, Ed.D.

Dissertation dated May 2016

The purpose of this mixed methodological study was to explore factors that
impact English Language Learners’ (ELLs) reading comprehension in middle school and
strategies for improvement. The independent variables were Oral Language Skills,
Reading Motivation, Cultural Relevant Pedagogy, Teacher Instructional Strategies,
Students’ Self-Efficacy in the use of English, Academic Peer Support, and Student
Socialization/Involvement; the dependent variable was Reading Comprehension. This
study took place at one private school outside the Atlanta Metropolitan area in which
99% of the population were ELLs. The participants included 60 students and three
teachers of different content backgrounds.
The quantitative data collected included a survey of 60 students and students’ Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) scores were analyzed. Pearson r 2-tailed correlation, descriptive statistics, and a regression test were used to test the significant relationship between variables. The qualitative data collected included interviews of six students and classroom observations of teachers’ lesson plans. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher interpreted statements from the interviews, classroom observations of teachers’ lesson plans, and document analyses into themes.

The findings of this study revealed that there are significant relationships between the dependent variable, reading comprehension, and the independent variables oral language skills, students’ reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, student socialization/involvement, and students’ self-efficacy in the use of English having the greatest impact on ELLs’ reading comprehension.
TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION: A STUDY EXPLORING CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT IMPACT READING COMPREHENSION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

TIEANDRA L. LEWIS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2016
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed”

(Psalm 20:4). Thank you Father God for guiding me throughout this journey, for I know that without you, there is no me nor would any of this have come to pass. This dissertation is dedicated to my first teacher and friend—my mother, Jasmine A. Lawrence-Lewis Ileks. I know you are dancing in heaven. I love you and this is for you. To my sister Keyosha, thank you for your tireless support in all areas. A heartfelt thank you to my Grandfather, Raymond Murphy, Aunt Marcia, Uncle Earl, and cousin Stephanie—I love you all tremendously. To my partner, Daveon Cole, thank you for your unwavering support and bona fide love—you make my heart smile. To my Hampton University family: Dr. Foster, Dr. Carmines, Dr. Danley, and Professor Claggion, thank you for being relentless in your efforts to make me a better scholar and person. To the HU English Department, thank you for teaching me about community. To my amazing committee chair, Dr. Hill, thank you for your constant direction. To my committee members, Dr. Turner and Dr. Groves, thank you for your commitment in ensuring my success. To my Clark Atlanta colleagues, this journey would be incomplete without you all, and I am grateful for the memories. To Hope H., you are next my friend. Samantha, Shené, Natalie, and my twin Amanda, thank you for being my biggest cheerleaders. Rachel P., thank you for setting the goal of becoming “Doctors Before 30;” mission accomplished. To my extended family, friends, and sorority sisters, I thank you all.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Our current educational system throughout this country is focused on the standardization of curriculum. Passing state standardized assessments are used to measure the success of schools, districts, students, as well as teachers. Teachers face a great challenge when making a conscious decision to approach curriculum in a way that is different from the mandated teaching methods and standardized and scripted curriculum. The pressure to “pass the test” has caused many educators to narrow the focus of lessons and activities due to an increased level of accountability.

Accountability is defined as the quality or state of being accountable; especially, an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions and in 2001, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) increased that accountability level for both schools and teachers. NCLB is a federally funded program that “focuses heavily in using . . . test scores to determine whether schools are making progress in reducing achievement gaps amongst various subgroups of students” (Catwelti, 2006, p. 64). The program appears to be the driving force for many school districts around the country to implement scripted curriculum so that schools will execute the appropriate modules so that they may be “awarded” funding.

NCLB supports standards-based education reform, which is based on the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve
individual outcomes in education. The Act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades, if those states are to receive federal funding for schools. The Act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state. (Public Law 107-110)

As opposed to teachers implementing rich authentic practices that provide a learning experience that is engaging, transferable, and incorporates students’ home language and culture, they are in a way forced to make sure that their students are able to “perform” on standardized assessments, as that is the main priority. In many states, students’ outcomes impact teachers’ future careers as educators.

The Common Core State Standards commenced in 2009 and stemmed from an increased level of accountability and reform by state leaders through their membership in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). To ensure consistency in the academic success of students across states, Common Core was implemented. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is defined as follows:

A set of clear college- and career-ready standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Today, 43 states have voluntarily adopted and are working to implement the standards, which are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to take credit bearing introductory courses in two- or four-year college programs or enter the workforce. (Common Core State Standards: http://corestandards.org)
It is with such reforms that the overall academic freedom that educators have is somewhat diminished when a system is set in place that monitors schools and teachers closely, as well as “trains teachers in the implementation of these programs. . .” (Edmondson, 2004, p. 423). Without the proper implementation and modifications, students, especially English language learners (ELLs) will suffer tremendously on such high-stakes tests.

Alternative assessments such as portfolios, oral presentations, narrative evaluations, and year-end presentations, are slowly gaining perceptibility as an improvement upon more widely used practices such as letter or number grades (Ardovino, Hollingsworth, & Ybarra, 2000; Trumbull & Farr, 2000). Research has shown that alternative assessment provides a stronger connection between learning and mastery; helps students to better evaluate their own performance, and highlights each student’s’ personal growth (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995; Wagner, 2002). High-stakes testing in English does not truly reflect ELLs’ knowledge, as the assessment begins to take on characteristics of an English proficiency exam, versus its intended nature. In the same vain, the unfortunate persistent underachievement of students in the United States in the area of reading comprehension has been well documented (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007; Baer, Baldi, Ayotte, Green, 2007) and despite frequent attempts to improve reading outcomes in the United States, on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress Report (NAEP), only 34% of eighth graders scored at or above the proficient level, 42% scored at the “basic” level, and 26% scored below the basic level (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). The data revealed that in the United
States, less than one third of eighth graders demonstrated mastery in the area of reading comprehension on standardized assessments. Standardized assessments are regularly used for classification purposes of ELLs and according to Zehler, Hopstock, Fleischman, and Greniuk (1994), about 40% of districts and schools use achievement tests for assigning ELL students to specific instructional services within a school, and over 70% of districts and schools use achievement tests to reclassify students from ELL status.

In addition, most standardized, content-based assessments are administered in English, geared towards native English-speaking test populations, and inadvertently function as English language proficiency tests. ELLs may be unfamiliar with the linguistically complex structure of test questions, may not recognize vocabulary terms, or may mistakenly interpret an item literally (Duran, 1989; Garcia, 1991). They may also perform less well on tests because they read more slowly (Mestre, 1988). Consequently, according to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999), published collaboratively by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) since 1966, language factors are likely to reduce the validity and reliability of inferences drawn about students’ content-based knowledge. Lastly, according to the standards,

For all test takers, any test that employs language is, in part, a measure of their language skills. This is of particular concern for test takers whose first language is not the language of the test. Test use with individuals who have not sufficiently acquired the language of the test may introduce construct-irrelevant components to the testing process. In such instances, test results may not reflect accurately the
qualities and competencies intended to be measured…Therefore, it is important to consider language background in developing, selecting, and administering tests and in interpreting test performance. (p. 91)

As an adolescent learner, there are various factors that affect students reading comprehension. Through this study, the researcher showed the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Reviewing theories, the researcher analyzed the various causes that hinder the reading comprehension of ELLs.

**Statement of the Problem**

Research shows that the dropout rate tends to peak during the first two years, illustrating that middle school serves as a critical point in a student’s career and presents one last opportunity at instruction and effective intervention, if needed. Middle school is a transitional period for students between elementary and high school. The significance of the middle school academic program is tremendous as it lays down the foundation for the student to go to high school and hopefully postsecondary education. In addition, since students are more likely to accept what is being taught at that age, students usually base their thinking on what and how information is communicated to them and as a result, impacts students mentally, emotionally, and academically.

Reading is a basic life skill that many take for granted and is considered the cornerstone of students’ success in and outside of the classroom. While the research illustrates the disturbing statistics of learners who struggle with reading comprehension, the reality for adolescent English language learners (ELLs) is that comprehending, decoding, and identifying academic English text is a struggle for them, as is finding
success in content area classes and on high-stakes examinations. The problem is that the number of adolescent ELLs who comprehend English texts at only a limited literal level is quite disturbing. The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results from the reading section illustrated that approximately 95% of eighth grade ELLs from all racial and ethnic backgrounds were below the proficient level in English reading, while more than 80% of former ELLs were considered below proficient (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). The results also revealed that students who scored below the proficient level were unable to consistently make inferences, draw logical conclusions, and make connections while reading, elements that are critical to reading comprehension.

Additionally, it is important to note that all reading texts are written on grade level (and many ELLs are not reading on their respective grade levels) with experiences that are generally aimed at the middle class majority’s mores which adds to the challenges ELL students encounter and have to battle. Without the ability to comprehend complex and cognitively challenging English texts, ELLs are not likely to be successful in middle school and beyond (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Kamil, 2003).

**Purpose of the Study**

The explored the factors that impact English Language Learners’ (ELLS) reading comprehension such as oral language skills, reading motivation, cultural relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, self-efficacy in the use of English, academic peer support, and student socialization/involvement. This research focused on a private middle school that had an ELL population of 99%. Students completed a survey and were interviewed in order to acquire additional information concerning the reading
comprehension of ELLs within their school. The findings from this research will provide teachers and assist educational leaders with an opportunity to increase the reading comprehension of ELLs and narrow the achievement gap.

**Research Questions**

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners’ (ACCESS for ELLs) assessment and the student’s oral language skills?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s reading motivation?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and culturally relevant pedagogy?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and teacher instructional strategies?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s self-efficacy in the use of English?
RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s socialization/involvement?

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s academic peer support?

RQ8: Of the independent variables, which variable has the greatest impact on ELLs’ reading comprehension?

Significance of the Study

From the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to the U.S. Department of Education and the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), closing the achievement gap is a critical mission for the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), achievement gap is defined as follows:

The difference in the performance between each ESEA subgroup (as defined in this document) within a participating LEA or school and the statewide average performance of the LEA’s or state’s highest achieving subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics as measured by the assessments required under the ESEA. (http://www.ed.gov/race-top/district-competition/definitions)

This study is significant to the field of education because it builds upon the current research available relating to middle school ELLs and their reading comprehension. As the ELL population continues to grow, additional tools and support will be greatly needed. When NCLB was implemented, it increased the accountability of
schools and educators, and in a generation of high-stakes testing, it is imperative to understand the many components of the reading process and the independent variables that affect ELLs’ reading comprehension. This research will provide educators with information that could most efficiently ensure students’ success and could prove to be invaluable to educators in providing opportunities to meet the literacy needs of all of their students.

The United States’ educational system is painstakingly attempting to modify instruction. By possessing a better understanding of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, educators will be able to provide appropriate instruction in combating illiteracy. The research aids in facilitating additional opportunities for students to be successful both in and outside of the classroom.

Summary

The researcher of this study examines improvements in reading comprehension for ELLs based on the independent variables. This study is significant to the body of educational research because it will aid in closing the achievement gap for not only ELLs, but also students in general because it focuses on improvements in reading comprehension, which is a component of student achievement.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter explores the literature relevant to the research questions and provides a historical overview, a review of prior studies, and research results. This research is cited to address the study: Teaching and Instruction: Exploring Contributing Factors that Impact Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners in Middle School and Instructional Strategies for Improvement.

Dependent Variable

Reading Comprehension

The ELL population continues to grow in the United States at an increasingly high rate. According to Padolsky (2005), from 1991 to 2001 the ELL enrollment in public schools in the United States increased by 95% and the general student population increased by only 12%. While this is a progressively high rate increase, research on ELL reading comprehension is rather limited. Goldenberg (2008) argued that while the research is lacking, the current research does provide resources that can possibly increase ELLs’ achievement and presents findings from various studies that illustrate how the use of explicit vocabulary instruction aids in increasing reading comprehension. In addition, Goldberg (2008) outlined seven steps educators should implement in order for ELLs to be successful in the reading process. The steps are as follows:
1. Setting clear content and language objectives;
2. Using meaningful, challenging, and motivating texts and activities;
3. Well-designed clearly structures and appropriately paced instruction;
4. Actively engaging students and encouraging participation;
5. Providing opportunities to practice, apply, and transfer new learning;
6. Providing feedback on correct and incorrect responses;
7. Providing opportunities for ELLs to interact with other students in motivating and appropriately structured contexts. (p. 42)

Moreover, August and Shanahan’s (2006) research on ELLs showed that oral English development must be incorporated into successful literacy instruction. In addition, their research revealed that while many ELLs are often proficient in word recognition, decoding, and spelling—and many times have the capability to perform at the same level as their native English-speaking counterparts in regards to text-level skills such as reading comprehension—ELLs rarely reach the same levels of proficiency as their counterparts.

**Independent Variables**

**Oral Language Skills**

The main components for the oral language skill set include:

- Word knowledge – vocabulary
- Sentence structure – grammar
- Language understanding – semantic and comprehension ability
- Structured thinking – elaborate, organize and sequence thoughts
Research has shown that children’s foundational oral language skills develop at age four and as a result, impact their preparedness for kindergarten and throughout their academic journey. Children typically enter school with a wide range of background knowledge and oral language ability attributable, in part, to factors such as children’s experiences in the home and their socioeconomic status (SES). The resulting gap in academic ability tends to persist or grow throughout their school experience (Fielding, Kerr, & Rosier, 2007; Juel, Biancarosa, Coker, & Deffes, 2003). ELLs typically face a number of factors with regard to oral language development (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2000; Snow, Porche, Tabors, & Harris, 2007) which include some of the following:

- English not spoken in the home: Children in homes where English is not spoken often lack exposure to critical oral language skills such as English vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, and discourse. Without these skills being modeled and reinforced in the home, these students enter school already significantly behind their peers (Biemiller, 1999).

- Amount of exposure to language: Hart and Risley (1995) found a wide disparity in the quantity of words (sum of unique words and gross sum of all words) as well as the quality of language to which the children were exposed.

- Background experiences: Children in low SES homes often lack the opportunity to expand their background experiences and knowledge, compared to their peers in other subgroups. These experiences and
knowledge can be based on exposure in books, conversation, or first-hand experiences.

Considering that oral language primarily deals with vocabulary and the skills are usually formulated at such an early age, students with limited oral language skills are usually at an incredible disadvantage. Due to such factors, ELLs are often among the most at-risk (Fielding et al., 2007). Students with poor oral language skills are more likely to possess reading comprehension difficulties and research shows that this increased likelihood to be as much as 4-5 times more likely than their peers (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 2001).

Lastly, it is important to consider that “not only are oral language skills linked to the code-related skills that help word reading to develop, but they also provide the foundation for the development of the more-advanced language skills needed for comprehension” (Cain & Oakhill, 2007, p. 31).

**Reading Motivation**

In today’s society, children have become accustomed to things occurring instantly. From technology and Internet speed to minute rice, children are in the era of instant gratification, also known as the microwave generation. With such a mentality, teachers and parents alike, struggle with how to motivate adolescents to read. Technology, computer games, social media, and more have taken the place of actual books, creating an environment in which many adolescents view reading books as not being conducive to their lifestyle.

The term *motivation* is a bit complex, as researchers do not have one solid definition of motivation. According to Heckhausen (1991), motivation is goal-directed
behavior, while Paris and Oka (1986) state that it is the will and skills to learn. Although there is no unified definition for motivation, it can be presumed that in essence, motivation is a psychological process that guides learners in order to achieve a goal.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) related motivational factors for language learners’ (L2) motivation to linguistic aptitudes, outlining them in terms of three psychological notions: (a) Desires, (b) Effort, and (c) Attitude. In essence, L2 motivation refers to the L2 learners’ desire to learn the language, the effort that learners put into learning, and their attitude towards L2 learning.

In L2 learning, there are also two types of L2 motivation. According to Gardner (1985), L2 motivation includes the following:

1. Integrative Motivation: Motivation that occurs when a learner desires to learn and to communicate with community members in order to be immersed in the new community.

2. Instrumental Motivation: Motivation that occurs when a learner desires to learn the L2 for a functional goal such as better grades or a job.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) assert that integrative motivation coupled with instrumental motivation directly effects L2 achievement and in a 1985 study, Gardner found a correlation between integrative motivation and L2 achievement.

Lastly, L1 researchers Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) state that reading motivation is multifaceted and divided it into three categories:

1. Competency and Reading Efficacy—motivation related to reading challenges, reading confidence, and reading work avoidance;
2. Achievement Values and Goals—intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation;

3. Social Aspects of Reading—related to social reasons for reading and reading compliance.

Of the three, intrinsic motivation has gained an immense amount of attention by both L1 and L2 researcher as many believe that intrinsically motivated readers read more voluntarily and as a result, this leads to further development of their reading capability and L2 proficiency (Krashen, 1993; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1995).

Cultural Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1995) stated, “Culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 32). It is important that when trying to improve ELLs’ reading comprehension that teachers utilize this practice as it “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 34). As a result, teachers create a bridge between home and school life, while meeting and in some cases exceeding district and state standards.

With literacy prosperity comes the acknowledgement of access—who has the rights to it and who does not. Peggy McIntosh’s riveting article, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (1998), unpacks the ideas of certain privileges that she was born into and did not have to worry about due to her race: “I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race” (p. 25). Additionally, it is important to note that all reading texts are written on grade level
(and many ELLs are not reading on their respective grade level) with experiences that are generally aimed at middle class white America which adds to the challenges ELL students encounter and have to battle. Without the ability to comprehend complex and cognitively challenging English texts, ELLs are not likely to be successful in middle school and beyond (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Kamil, 2003).

Like Ladson-Billings (1995), Kandaswamy (2007) discussed multicultural education and culturally relevant teaching, respectively, as a way to truly create a diverse pedagogy and diversity within the classroom.

Part of cultivating a radical consciousness among our students entails persistently asking them to evaluate the assumptions and criteria . . . If we can show our students how to imagine beyond the constraints . . . we might lead them to ask more complex questions, which the first step to developing a more radical vision of how the world could be. (p. 11)

Moreover, Ladson-Billings (1995) encouraged educators to teach students about their individual culture. Celebrating and respecting each other’s differences is an aspect of education that is extremely important. Nieto (2000, p. 199) stated: “The freedom to maintain and use one’s native language is . . . a basic human right;” that rationale is critical when instructing ELLs and will allow them to obtain a more relevant experience that will lead to a new dimension of analysis, debate, and overall empowerment.

**Teacher Instructional Strategies**

It is beneficial for students to learn to analyze literature from various critical lenses. As a result, students will be able to analyze literature from various perspectives.
Using critical lenses to analyze literature will promote recognition of all approaches to literacy interpretations. Appleman (1993) stated the following:

Although there are many teachers skilled in reading, interpretation, and criticism, all too often they relegate the reading to their students, while they predetermine the appropriate critical approach for the literary text in question and either provides a single reified interpretation for the students or allow for students to create interpretations within the context of that singular critical approach. All too frequently, the literature teacher assumes too much interpretive responsibility, thus, reducing the students’ opportunities for independent meaning making. (p. 159)

Students who use different lenses to analyze literature will begin to understand the thoughts of others and stances that may be in opposition of their own thinking. This rationale takes on the idea of culturally relevant pedagogy, but also speaks to the importance of teacher instructional strategies.

According to Alberta Learning (2000), instructional strategies are techniques teachers use to help students become independent, strategic thinkers. Instructional strategies can (a) motivate students and help them focus attention, (b) organize information for understanding and remembering, and (c) monitor and assess learning. Effective teacher instructional strategies are one of the cornerstones of classroom success, especially for ELLs, as they require a more meticulous yet intensive amount of instruction to navigate through the English language. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education Case Study (2005), the New Teacher Center (NTC) at Santa Cruz developed a language-focused resource entitled, “Accelerating Academic Language
Development: Six Key Strategies for Teachers of English Learners.” The six strategies help students develop English as a second language and are based on numerous research studies that recognize successful techniques for developing ELLs’ reading comprehension, basic communication skills in English, and content knowledge. While the results include an array of other tools, a long-term teacher retention rate skyrocketed to 95%, and the NTC model has expanded beyond its origin city of Santa Cruz, in more than 30 states, and into state and national training programs. Table 1 outlines the six strategies in full detail.

Table 1

*Key Strategies for Teachers of English Learners*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy #1</th>
<th>Strategy #2</th>
<th>Strategy #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and Language</td>
<td>GUIDED INTERACTION</td>
<td>Authentic Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
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<th>Content Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduce new concepts via essential academic vocabulary</td>
<td>• Structure multiple opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions as they learn content and develop their use of academic language in speaking/listening</td>
<td>• Teach students processes for metacognition (i.e., pre-reading and pre-writing skills, word analysis, and methods to monitor their reading comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connect student-accessible synonyms or concepts to this essential vocabulary</td>
<td>• Clarify expectations, outcomes and procedures related to tasks for flexible group activities</td>
<td>• Teach and model ways for students to describe their thinking processes verbally and in writing</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy #1</th>
<th>Strategy #2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary and Language Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guided Interaction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Authentic Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support students to distinguish word meanings and their uses for subject-specific tasks and prerequisite language skills</td>
<td>• Allow for primary language interactions to clarify concepts</td>
<td>• Use a variety of activities and tasks to check for understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academic Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academic Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage beginning-level students in using basis social and school vocabulary, phrases, and sentence Structures</td>
<td>• Structure multiple opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions to increase speaking, listening, reading comprehension and writing skills</td>
<td>• In addition to components listed above, ensure that assessment tasks are appropriate to students’ assessed language development Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As students progress, continue to contextualize instruction of more complex language forms and uses: subject-specific academic vocabulary, grammatical forms, and sentence structures used in listening, speaking, reading, and Writing</td>
<td>• Support language interactions with review/preview of language forms, use of graphic organizers or other types of modeling</td>
<td>• Provide enough time to complete tasks, appropriate feedback, rubrics, and models to guide students’ self-assessment</td>
</tr>
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• Respectfully distinguish differences between primary language use and standard academic English

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<tr>
<th>Strategy #1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary and Language Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guided Interaction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metacognition and Authentic Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Activities/Assessments</td>
<td>Sample Activities/Assessments</td>
<td>Sample Activities/Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Word analysis (e.g., dissecting words into their parts – prefix, root, and suffix)</td>
<td>• Partner interviews, class surveys, tea party, think-pair-share</td>
<td>• Guided reading, completing chapter pr-reading guides,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocabulary journals, A-B-C books, word webs, word walls</td>
<td>• Poster projects, group corners</td>
<td>• reciprocal teaching, directed reading thinking activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interactive editing, close paragraphs, dictations, subject-specific journals</td>
<td>• Presentations</td>
<td>• (DRTA), anticipation guides, double-entry journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interactive editing, close paragraphs, dictations, subject-specific journals</td>
<td>• Perspective line-ups</td>
<td>• Think-alouds, K-W-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reader’s Theatre</td>
<td>• Poster projects, group corners</td>
<td>• Learning logs/journals, quick</td>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy #4</th>
<th>Strategy #5</th>
<th>Strategy #6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explicit Instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Universal Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Graphic Organizers and Visuals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teach essential grade-level concepts and build students’ background knowledge as needed</td>
<td>• Introduce new concepts through familiar resources, prompts, visuals, or themes</td>
<td>• Model how to complete tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connect overarching ideas (whole), then examine components or processes (part), culminating with students’ own applications or synthesis of ideas (new whole)</td>
<td>• Use associated types of “realia” meaningful or familiar to students to affirm the appropriate context for using new language</td>
<td>• Provide graphic organizers and meaningful visuals to support students’ recognition of essential Information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use graphic organizers to support understanding of specific tasks and specific uses of academic Language</td>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy #4</th>
<th>Strategy #5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explicit Instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Universal Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visuals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explicitly teach academic language and cognitive reading skills needed to complete subject-specific tasks (e.g., analyze, interpret, classify, compare, synthesize, persuade, solve)</td>
<td>• Sustain motivation to learn challenging concepts by linking ideas to resources or contexts that reflect student interests and sociocultural or linguistic backgrounds</td>
<td>• Use advanced organizers to support metacognition and overall comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academic Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academic Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teach essential language forms and uses per students’ assessed language development level: listening/speaking, reading, and writing</td>
<td>• Use methods listed above for introducing academic vocabulary, sentence structures, and language uses</td>
<td>• Use methods listed above with the addition of word banks, word Walls, and modeling the use of graphic organizers appropriate to ELD level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow contextualized introduction and explicit modeling of language use with repeated practice</td>
<td>• Link ongoing language practice or tasks to both school-based and community-based uses</td>
<td>• Appropriately modulate language delivery (i.e., speed and enunciation) when modeling language forms or presenting content; repetition helps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Activities/Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sample Activities/Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sample Activities/Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teach/explain prerequisite language applications: reading</td>
<td>• Quick-write responses or recording student responses to visuals,</td>
<td>• Venn diagrams, story maps, main idea plus supporting detail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy #4</th>
<th>Strategy #5</th>
<th>Strategy #6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning-Based Context and Explicit Instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Universal Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Graphic Organizers and Visuals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Activities/Assessment</td>
<td>Sample Activities/Assessment</td>
<td>Sample Activities/Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directions, idioms, sentence</td>
<td>current event stories, real-life</td>
<td>schematics, double-entry journals,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starters, essay formats, pattern</td>
<td>models, video clips, teacher</td>
<td>semantic attribute matrices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drills, or completing a story map; check for understanding</td>
<td>read-alouds, thematic prompts, role-play, comparing language</td>
<td>• Jazz chants, read-alouds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teach specific reading comprehension skills for completing: task procedures, answering questions, word problems, understanding text, and graphics</td>
<td>uses for similar contexts</td>
<td>• Identifying and analyzing different perspectives and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>references re: essential concepts</td>
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**Student Self-Efficacy in the Use of English**

Bandura (1977) developed the self-efficacy theory and defined it as the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Four major factors about self-efficacy beliefs include the following:

- **Mastery Experiences** are personal experiences of success at a task and are considered the most powerful source of efficacy information. People’s perceptions of their capabilities are increased following successes; however, they must believe that their own capabilities were responsible for the success as opposed to outside factors.
- **Modeling** is witnessing the successes of others.

- **Persuasion** is defined as messages that others convey about their beliefs and expectations about one’s abilities. This can be either positive persuasion or negative persuasion.

- **Affective Factors** include anxiety which can alter a person’s emotional state and people’s perception of his or her capability.

It is the opinion of the researcher that ELLs’ self-efficacy in English is a major factor because students who believe that they can complete an assignment are more likely to persist in order to achieve the set goal. Attempting to master a second language, let alone English text, can be a daunting task; however, if students believe they can be proficient in the English language, they are more likely to be successful versus a student who has many uncertainties.

**Academic Peer Support**

Many second language (L2) researchers agree that newcomers (ELLs) to a community develop their linguistic sociocultural knowledge through observation of and participation in language-mediated interactions with the assistance of more experienced members of that community (Guiterrez, 1995; Ochs, 1988; Rogoff, 1995). According to Ochs (1988),

The notion of social activity is of central importance to the sociocultural perspective. Social activities involving language are structured by linguistic and
sociocultural knowledge; at the same time, it is through participation in these
structured activities that children . . . acquire knowledge in these two domains. (p.
21-22).

**Student Socialization/Involvement**

Language is best learned through close communication and collaboration among
students. Much like peer learning, Lunnenburg (2010) stated the following:

Extracurricular activities serve the same goals and functions as the required and
elective courses in the curriculum. However, they provide experiences that are
not included in formal courses of study. They allow students to apply the
knowledge that they have learned in other classes and acquire concepts of
democratic life. (p. 2)

It is through extracurricular activities that ELLs not only have the opportunity to hone
their language skills with their peers, but are also exposed to an array of “new words” and
euphemisms that will aid in advancing their vocabulary.

Drawing heavily upon Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory which stresses the
fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition, Vygotsky (1978)
strongly believed that community plays a pivotal role in the process of *making meaning*.

The term language socialization is defined by Hadzantonis (2013) as follows:

Developing expertise in the use of linguistic, pragmatic, and other cultural
knowledge, so as to develop language competence while obtaining membership in
desired communities, and hence negotiating individual and social identities. This
occurs through social experience, but is concurrent with the development of cultural and interactive competence. (p. 143)

To acquire language competence, it is important for ELLs to have a community experience which can be done by participating in extracurricular activities, and as a result, will enhance their language skills.

**Summary**

This chapter explained the relevant research as it pertains to reading comprehension among ELLs and the independent variables. The research explained that oral development must be incorporated into successful literacy instruction for ELLs (August & Shananhan, 2006) as it is critical to their overall growth and progression. For ELLs, the development of their oral language skills includes many obstacles beyond their control that inhibit their success, resulting in many of them becoming the most at-risk (Fielding et al., 2007). For ELLs to be successful, the common theme among the research is explicit vocabulary instruction (Goldenberg, 2008). Vocabulary is the foundation that is necessary for ELLs to build their oral language skills which leads to effective communication skills and “the development of the more-advanced language skills needed for comprehension” (Cain & Oakhill, 2007, p. 31). Chapter III explains the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of Variables

This study sought to determine if there was a significant relationship between the dependent variable, reading comprehension, and the independent variables: oral language skills, reading motivation, cultural relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, standardized assessments, peer learning, and student socialization/involvement at a private middle school outside the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Educators of ELLs should examine the cultural differences that exist not only in the classroom, but also in the community of the students, hence the need for culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1994) coined the term *culturally relevant pedagogy* describing it as a concept central to the academic success of African-American students; however, over time, it has been proven to be an effective form of pedagogy for students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. According to Ladson-Billings, culturally relevant pedagogy is “an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 48). Along with empowerment, culturally relevant pedagogy allows students to develop and maintain cultural competence and challenge social inequalities.
In Ladson-Billings’ (1994) *The Dreamkeepers*, culturally relevant pedagogy is further defined and stated to possess the following principles:

- Communication of High Expectations
- Active Teaching Methods
- Teacher as Facilitator
- Inclusion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students
- Culturally Sensitivity
- Reshaping the Curriculum
- Student-Controlled Classroom Discourse
- Small Group Instruction and Academically-Related Discourse

For culturally relevant pedagogy to be successful, Ladson-Billings (1994) also states that teachers must show respect for students and “understand the need for the students to operate in the dual worlds of their home community and the white community” (p. 56).

In addition, Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) and Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez, and de los Reyes, (1997) identified characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy which aligns with Ladson-Billings and includes the following:

- **Validating and Affirming:** Culturally relevant teaching is validating and affirming because it acknowledges the strengths of students’ diverse heritages.
- **Comprehensive:** Culturally relevant teaching is comprehensive because it uses cultural resources to teach knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes.
- **Multidimensional:** Culturally relevant teaching encompasses many areas and applies multicultural theory to the classroom environment, teaching methods, and evaluation.
- **Liberating**: Culturally relevant teachers liberate students.
- **Empowering**: Culturally relevant teaching empower students, giving them opportunities to excel in the classroom and beyond. Empowerment translates into academic competence, personal confidence, courage, and the will to act.
- **Transformative**: Culturally relevant teaching is transformative because educators and their students must often defy educational traditions and the status quo.

Lastly, Durden (2008) recommended that when considering any type of school reform model, district and school-based educational leaders must ensure that the reform allows teachers the opportunity to integrate culturally responsive teaching practices because multiple studies indicate the positive impact the pedagogy has on diverse student populations.

**Brain-Based Learning**

In addition to culturally relevant pedagogy, brain-based learning (BBL) is a concept that educators, especially those of ELLs, should also examine. BBL refers to teaching methods, lesson designs, and school programs that are based on the latest scientific research about how the brain learns, including cognitive development—how students learn differently as they age, grow, and mature socially, emotionally, and cognitively (Hidden Curriculum, 2014). According to Duman (2010), BBL involves knowledge and understanding of the way the brain functions to design instruction in the best way to promote student learning and brain research in education includes the following: (a) acknowledging and teaching students based on their individual differences,
(b) using a variety of instructional strategies, and (c) capitalizing on the brain’s natural process of learning.

In a 2010 study, Duman investigated the effects of BBL on the academic achievement of students with different learning styles. The study group consisted of students from the Department of Social Sciences Teacher Education and the Faculty of Education at Mugla University (N = 68). In the study, a pretest/posttest experimental design was used; academic achievement tests and the Kolb’s Experiential Learning Style questionnaire were used to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that the BBL approach used in the experimental group was more effective in increasing student achievement than the traditional approach used in the control group. As a result of these findings, an implication for educational leaders was that BBL should be used when developing lesson plans and activities for students with different learning styles.

In regards to ELLs, Lombardi (2008) examined how Caine and Caine’s (1991) 12 principles of brain-based research were applicable when teaching ELLs. Caine and Caine’s 12 principles are illustrated in Figure 1. Stemming from the 12 principles, educators can develop strategies from each principle to appeal to ELLs. From cooperative learning, community involvement, graphic organizers, to introducing (new) vocabulary and presenting video clips will allow ELLs to search for and create (new) meaning.
Figure 1. Caine and Caine’s 12 principles of brain-based research.

In addition, it is imperative that ELLs have time not only to process the information, but also time to reflect (on learning) and be able to make real-life connections. Lastly, principle 12 is the most critical as educators of ELLs must realize that all brains are unique and “meet students where they are, by using instructional methods that address a variety of students’ needs and build their confidence and skills” (Lombardi, 2008, p. 222).

Viewing ELLs through the lens of brain-based research can provide a sense of new hope to educators and turn problems into possibilities. Implementing innovative approaches helps educators recognize that teaching and learning address the needs of
diverse learners in second-language learning through a variety of strategies. The brain’s complex, adaptive nature means ELLs are not stuck in neutral and will have the opportunity of infinite choices and possibilities.

**Definition of Variables**

**Dependent Variable**

**Reading Comprehension:** For the purpose of this research, reading comprehension is defined as oral language, literacy, comprehension, listening, reading, writing, and speaking in a face-to-face interview that is adaptive and allows students to demonstrate proficiency at the different WIDA\(^1\) language proficiency levels as defined by the ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

**Independent Variables:**

**Academic Peer Support:** For the purpose of this research, academic peer support is defined as a system in which classmates give and receive encouragement and help.

**Cultural Relevant Pedagogy:** For the purpose of this research, culturally relevant pedagogy is defined as teaching in a cross-cultural setting that equips students to relate the content to their culture.

**Oral Language Skills** – For the purpose of this research, oral language skills refers to the act of speaking and listening. The main components for the oral language skill set include:

\(^1\)WIDA stopped using its acronym definition because it no longer adequately described its mission. WIDA formerly stood for World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (http://www.wida.us/FAQ1consortium.aspx#C3)
- Word knowledge – vocabulary
- Sentence structure – grammar
- Language understanding – semantic and comprehension ability
- Structured thinking – elaborate, organize and sequence thoughts

**Reading Motivation:** For the purpose of this research, reading motivation is defined as the set goals and beliefs that guide behavior in regards to reading.

**Student Socialization/Involvement:** For the purpose of this research, student socialization/involvement is defined as the participation in school activities.

**Teacher Instructional Strategies:** For the purpose of this research, teacher instructional strategies is defined as techniques teachers implement to actively engage students in learning in order to become independent, strategic learners, and critical thinkers.

**Definition of Terms**

**ACCESS for ELLs:** The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). It is given annually in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. ACCESS for ELLs is only available to Consortium member states. ACCESS for ELLs test items are written from the model performance indicators of WIDA's five English Language Development (ELD) standards:
• Social & Instructional Language
• Language of Language Arts
• Language of Mathematics
• Language of Science
• Language of Social Studies

Test forms are divided into five grade-level clusters:

• Kindergarten
• Grades 1-2
• Grades 3-5
• Grades 6-8
• Grades 9-12

Within each grade-level cluster (except kindergarten), ACCESS for ELLs consists of three forms: Tier A (beginning), Tier B (intermediate), and Tier C (advanced). This keeps the test shorter and more appropriately targets each student’s range of language skills. Each form of the test assesses the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The overall purpose of ACCESS for ELLs is to monitor student progress in English language proficiency (ELP) on a yearly basis and to serve as a criterion to aid in determining when ELLs have attained language proficiency comparable to that of their English-proficient peers.

Alternative Assessment: For the purpose of this research, alternative assessment is defined as an evaluation given to a student that differs from the traditional standardized assessment (timed, multiple choices, true-false). Alternative assessments seek to reveal
and hone in on students’ critical thinking and life skills. These assessments can be customized to the students and do not only assess fact-based knowledge, but also overall growth. There are several types of alternative assessments that include portfolios, oral presentations, narrative evaluations, and year-end presentations.

**Authentic Assessment:** For the purpose of this research, authentic assessment is defined as evaluating varying types of literacy abilities in contexts that are extremely similar to real-life situations in which those capabilities are utilized. This evaluation illustrates to teachers that students can apply what they learned in authentic scenarios. This type of assessment encourages the amalgamation of teaching, learning, assessing, and (engaging in) student voice.

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:** This term was coined by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994). For the purpose of this research, culturally relevant pedagogy is defined as teaching in a cross-cultural setting that equips students to relate the content to their culture.

**English Language Learners (ELLs):** For the purpose of this research, English Language Learners are defined as Korean students whose first language is not English, as it is their second; Korean is their first language.

**High-Stakes Testing:** For the purpose of this research, high-stakes testing is defined as an assessment that has significant results for both students and teachers.

**Literacy:** For the purpose of this research, literacy is defined as a vehicle that individuals use to communicate with one another. It is the ability to read, reflect, and decode texts (novels, songs, pictures, conversations, movies, etc.) in an active manner to better understand the many powers it possesses.
**Performance-Based Assessment:** For the purpose of this research, performance-based assessments are defined as assessments that allow the teacher to observe students completing tasks using the skills being assessed.

**Portfolio Assessment:** For the purpose of this research, a portfolio assessment is defined as a collection of students’ work that illustrates the students’ best work and mastery of an objective over time (grading period or semester). In this research, the researcher explored two types of portfolios:

- **Process Portfolio** – documents the stages of learning and provides a progressive record of student growth.
- **Product Portfolio** – demonstrates mastery of a learning task or a set of learning objectives and contains only the best work.

Teachers use process portfolios to help students identify learning goals, document progress over time, and demonstrate learning mastery. In general, teachers prefer to use process portfolios because they are ideal for documenting the stages that students go through as they learn and progress (Venn, 2000).

**Reading Comprehension:** For the purpose of this research, reading comprehension is defined as decoding text to make meaning. It is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among (a) the reader’s existing knowledge, (b) the information suggested by the text being read, and (c) the context.

**Standardized Assessment:** For the purpose of this research, standardized assessment is defined as a high-stakes uniformed assessment. The assessment refers to each student’s performance back to a norm group for interpretation.
• Norm-referenced assessments – the overall goal in this example is to rank students as being better or worse than other students.

Or to a set of established objectives

• Criterion-referenced assessments – compares test-takers to a criterion and are only concerned with whether or not the student’s answer is correct and complete.

**Relationship among Variables**

A model of reading comprehension that explores the variables for this study was not found; however, it is the position of the researcher that each independent variable defined in this study is likely related to reading comprehension at the organization being examined. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship among the variables.

![Figure 2. Relationship among the variables.](image)
Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include the following:

1. This study is limited to a single school in Georgia and may not be representative of all schools or school districts in the state of Georgia;
2. The study is limited because the sample population is from one private school;
3. The study is limited because the sample ELL population is only Korean-Americans;
4. The researcher is an employee at the private school being examined and works with the targeted population on a daily basis. As a result, the participants may feel obliged to participate due to the established professional relationship.
5. The researcher is also the teacher of record for the students involved in the sample study; therefore, the reliability of the responses may be questioned.
6. The study is limited because the validity of the data will be dependent on the integrity of the participants.

Summary

This chapter explained the relationship among the variables, presented the definition of the variables, the theoretical framework used, and the limitations of the study. Durden (2008) investigated the role of culturally relevant pedagogy and previous research; Duman (2010) investigated the effects of brain-based learning of students with different learning styles. Caine and Caine (1991) examined the implications of brain research and the 12 principles of brain-based research. Lombardi (2008) amplified on Caine and Caine’s (1991) research by applying it to ELLs, which was critical as it
highlighted the advantages of incorporating brain research in the classroom and how it can improve the educational outcomes for ELLs. Chapter IV explains the research design and the method in which the study was executed.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that impact reading comprehension through the independent variables of oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, standardized assessments, student socialization/involvement, and academic peer support.

This chapter discusses the research design, description of the setting, sampling procedure, working with human subjects, instrumentation, participants and location of research, data collection procedures, statistical applications, and how the research questions align to the questions on the instrument used.

Research Design

The research study investigated whether the independent variables of oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, standardized assessments, and academic peer support significantly related to the dependent variable of reading comprehension.

A mixed-methods approach was used to explain how the independent variables affect reading comprehension for seventh graders in a private middle school outside the Atlanta metropolitan area. Mixed-methods research design is defined as an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two
forms of data, and using distinct design that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell, 2014). A concurrent triangulation mixed-methods approach was used in this research study because Creswell (2009) described this approach as one in which quantitative and qualitative data collection takes place concurrently; the researcher compares the two types of data to determine if there is convergence, differences or a combination of the two. Advantages of the concurrent triangulation approach include its familiarity to most researchers and the fact that it results in well-substantiated findings (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative data were collected via a survey provided to students. The survey provided information about the independent variables and their impact on the dependent variable, gender, and how long they have been in the United States. Qualitative information was collected via interviews with the six selected students (2 per-level). The researcher worked hard to ensure that a reputable number of students would be selected for this process with six students being the overall goal. Student interviews provided insight on factors that impacted reading comprehension. Student interviews focused on strategies and behaviors students used while reading the selected passage. Lastly, qualitative data were collected through data analysis of teachers’ lesson plans to determine if their lesson plans reflected culturally relevant pedagogy. The researcher used an observation tool designed specifically for this purpose.
Description of the Setting

The study was conducted at a private middle school outside of the Atlanta metropolitan area in the Southeast Region of Georgia. The school was located in a neighborhood with strong community ties, and parental involvement was extremely high. Some examples included the rotational lunch menu where parents sign up for days in which they will provide lunch for the teaching staff to volunteering their time before, during, or after school. The school was family oriented and many of the students had a sibling that attended the school.

As the student population heavily consisted of ELLs, the school emphasized vocabulary and grammar in order to assist students in the acquisition of effective communication skills. Reading comprehension was the main focus for grades 6-8 and both Saturday enrichment classes and extended day tutorial sessions were offered that focused on this matter. The science and social studies curricula mirrored the mathematics instruction which is hands on, starting with concrete approaches and experiments. The curriculum incorporates all areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (as defined by the ACCESS (The ACCESS is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners [ELLs]. It is given annually in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor students’ progress in acquiring academic English. ACCESS for ELLs is only available to Consortium member states). The maximum class size was 23 students, as the school believes in students receiving personalized learning and instruction. Eighty percent of students have been in the U.S. for less than four years, 10% have been in the U.S. for no more than five years, and the remaining 10% of the student population was
born in the United States. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the demographics of participants and Figure 3 shows ELL students’ performance in language domains for Academic Year 2014-2015.

Table 2

Student Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>405</td>
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Table 3

Family and Teacher Demographics

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Family Income:</td>
<td>&gt; $80,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents’ English Language Ability for Students in U.S. for &lt; than 4 years:</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ English Language Ability for Students in U.S. for &gt; than 5 years:</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
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<td>Parents’ English Language Ability for Students born in U.S.</td>
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(continued)
Table 3 (continued)

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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Teachers: 21

Average Age of Teachers: 28.86

Teacher Retention Rate: 86.0%

Figure 3. Student performance chart in language domains, academic year 2014-2015.
**Sampling Procedures**

Purposeful sampling was used in the study as it was “the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 134). Participation was voluntary. Due to the age of the participants, only students with parental permission were included in the study.

**Working with Human Subjects**

Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. Participants who contributed in both the survey and the interview will remain anonymous. Only the researcher knows the names of the interviewees.

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation that was used to measure the students’ reading comprehension was the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs).

**Quantitative Instrumentation**

A student survey was developed by the researcher in consultation with the dissertation committee and student interviews. The student survey consisted of 33 questions that related to the independent variables: oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, standardizes assessments, student socialization/involvement, academic peer support; the dependent variable was reading comprehension. The survey (see Appendix A) was coded so the researcher could identify and match each student’s survey to his or her ACCESS score. In addition, selected students were interviewed. The student interview questions were
intended to gain insight into the factors that impacted reading comprehension from the student’s perspective.

**Qualitative Instrumentation**

A document analysis of teachers’ lesson plans was collected and reviewed to examine content that related to the independent variables of culturally relevant pedagogy and teacher instructional strategies. In addition, the researcher observed three teachers of different content backgrounds (social studies, science, and language arts) using the researcher-developed observation tool to examine teacher instructional strategies and the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy. Lastly, the reading excerpt given to selected students was an on-level (grade 7) reading passage on Manifest Destiny (a social studies lesson) that used common words in both subjects that allowed students to employ their common word recognition skills to decode content.

**Participants/Location of Research**

Surveys were administered to seventh grade ELLs who took the ACCESS during class time. The volunteer participants selected for the interview consisted of a purposeful sample of six students: three students who were proficient on the ACCESS and three students who were not proficient on the ACCESS. Both of the surveys and interviews were conducted at the research site.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The following is a list of the procedures followed in this study:

1. The researcher applied to Clark Atlanta University’s Institutional Review Board to gain approval to conduct the study.
2. The researcher sought approval from the school to conduct the research.
3. Due to the age of the participants, the researcher sought parental permission and only students with that consent were included in the study.
4. The researcher provided an introductory letter with a description of the study to the Head of School requesting that the school be used in the study.
5. After receiving permission from the Head of School, the researcher had the students complete the coded survey instrument that measured oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, student self-efficacy in the use of English, student socialization/involvement, academic peer support, and reading comprehension in class.
6. The data from the survey were inputted and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
7. The researcher interviewed several students at the school site.
8. The researcher transcribed the interview and looked for commonalities.

**Statistical Applications/Data Analysis**

The quantitative data collected in this research study were analyzed using SPSS. The researcher then analyzed the results to identify significant relationships between the dependent and independent variables. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher tape-recorded and transcribed the student interviews. The researcher then identified common themes.
Summary

Students at a private school outside the metropolitan Atlanta area were provided with surveys to complete at the research site and selected students were interviewed. Furthermore, a document analysis was conducted on the teacher’s lesson plans. The research used a mixed-methods approach to investigate the independent variables: oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, student self-efficacy in the use of English, student socialization/involvement, and academic peer support to determine if they had an effect on the dependent variable, reading comprehension.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this mixed-methodological study was to determine factors that impact reading comprehension for ELLs in middle school and strategies for improvement. Specifically, the study investigated whether the independent variables of oral language, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, student self-efficacy in the use of English, academic peer support, and student socialization/involvement had a significant relationship with the dependent variable of reading comprehension.

To determine definitive findings, this chapter illustrates the statistical data derived from a survey administered to middle school students. It also provides an analysis of interviews conducted with students as well as classroom observations.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher collected a total of 60 surveys from middle school participants in a private school setting. In addition to the selected variables as they related to reading comprehension, the survey also included two demographic questions concerning gender and the number of years the participant had lived in the United States. The survey consisted of 33 questions representing independent variables: oral language skills (survey items 1-4), reading motivation (survey items 5-10), culturally relevant pedagogy (survey items 11-14), teacher instructional strategies (survey items 15-19), student’s self-efficacy
in the use of English (survey items 20-26), academic peer support (survey items 27-30), and student socialization/involvement (survey items 31-33). These items were assembled on the survey with the following response options: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5. The analysis was conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software; a Pearson Correlation, Scheffe, and ANOVA were used. The survey results were studied and displayed in the following tables. The dependent variable, reading comprehension, was measured using the students’ ACCESS scores.

In regards to the participants, Table 4 displays there was a total of 60 respondents to the inquiry of gender, 29 male (48%), and 31 (52%) female.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>51.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 displays that of the 60 respondents to the inquiry of how many years they had been in the United States, 23 respondents (38%) had been in the United States for 1-2 years, 24 (40%) had been in the United States for 3-4 years, 8 (13%) had been in the United States for 5-7 years, and 5 (8%) had been in the United States for 8-10 years.
Table 5

**Participants’ Number of Years in the United States**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>5-7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners’ (ACCESS for ELLs) assessment and the student’s oral language skills?

Based on the results of survey questions 1-4, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and their oral language skills. This was evidenced by a .546 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level. Table 6 answers the research questions that follow.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s reading motivation?

Based on the results of survey questions 5-10, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and their reading motivation. This was evidenced by a .694 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level (see Table 6).
Table 6

*Pearson Correlations Related to Survey Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS Tier</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>ACCESS Tier</th>
<th>OralLangSkills</th>
<th>ReadMotiv</th>
<th>CulRelPed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.546**</td>
<td>.694**</td>
<td>.331**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>.682**</td>
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<td>.682**</td>
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<td>.000</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CulRelPed</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>.011</td>
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<td>.816**</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Table 6 (continued)

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<td>.782**</td>
<td>.109</td>
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<td>.406</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>.649**</td>
<td>.193</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>.140</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>.816**</td>
<td>.312*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>.015</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.121</td>
</tr>
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<td>.355</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>.601</td>
<td></td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>StudSelfEff</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>.197</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>AcadPeerSup</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>.197</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>.131</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>.531**</td>
<td>.427**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and culturally relevant pedagogy?

Based on the results of survey questions 11-14, while there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and culturally relevant pedagogy, the relationship was not as high as compared to the other variables. This was evidenced by a .331 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level (see Table 6).

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and teacher instructional strategies?

Based on the results of survey questions 15-19, there was no significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and teacher instructional strategies. This was evidenced by a .099 Pearson Correlation at the 45% confidence level. The minimum accepted is the 95% confidence level (see Table 6).

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s self-efficacy in the use of English?

Based on the results of survey questions 20-26, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and students’ self-efficacy in the use of English. This was evidenced by a .782 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level. This variable had the greatest impact on reading comprehension than all others according to the regression test conducted (see Table 6).
RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s socialization/involvement?

Based on the results of survey questions 27-30, there was no significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and academic peer support. This was evidenced by a .109 Pearson Correlation at the 45% confidence level. The minimum accepted is the 95% confidence level (see Table 6).

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s academic peer support?

Based on the results of survey questions 31-33, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and student socialization/involvement. This was evidenced by a .422 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level (see Table 6).

RQ8: Of the independent variables, which variable has the greatest impact on ELLs’ reading comprehension?

Based on the results of survey questions, students’ self-efficacy in the use of English had the greatest impact on ELLs’ reading comprehension, followed by reading motivation, oral language skills, student socialization/involvement, culturally relevant pedagogy, academic peer support, and teacher instructional strategies (see Table 6).

The researcher further analyzed students’ ACCESS scores based on gender. On average, female students scored slightly higher (at 1.87) than the male students (at 1.52)
(see Table 7). The $t$-Tests in Table 8 show a significant difference between gender at the 95% confidence level; the results of an ANOVA is presented in Table 9.

Table 7

*Difference in ACCESS Scores Based on Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS Tier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Results of $t$-Tests Based on Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Samples Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1.948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

ANOVA Results Based on Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS Tier</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>5.765</td>
<td>24.267</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>13.304</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.600</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data were further analyzed to determine if time in the United States made a difference on students’ performance on the ACCESS test. Table 8 illustrates the number of years students had been in the United States and their average ACCESS score. Table 10 also reveals that students who had been in the United States for 8-10 years outperformed their counterparts who had only been in the United States for 1-2 and 3-4 years.

Table 10

Multiple Comparisons of Years in the United States by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Yrs. In US 1-2</th>
<th>(J) Yrs. In US 1-2</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.576*</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-.99</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.076*</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.826*</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.576*</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-.500</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1.250*</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>-.56</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2                   | 4                   | -1.250*               | .240       | .000 | -1.94                   | -.56        |             | (continued)
Table 10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS Tier – Scheffe</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I) Yrs. In US 1-2</td>
<td>(J) Yrs. In US 1-2</td>
<td>Mean Difference (I-J)</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.076*</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>.278</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-1.55</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.250*</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>1.55</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 11 is a regression test that illustrates that of independent variable, students’ self-efficacy in the use of English, had the greatest impact on the dependent variable, reading comprehension, with a coefficient of .782.

Table 11

Regression Test of Independent Variable, Students’ Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>Std. Error of the Estimate</td>
<td>R Square Change</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.782*</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>.604</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>91.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), StudSelfEff

(continued)
Table 11 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficientsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudSelfEff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: ACCESS Tier

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative information was collected from six student interviews, with two students representing each ACCESS tier (A, B, C). The researcher also collected qualitative data through an examination of lesson plans via an observation tool specifically designed for this study. The overall intention of collecting these forms of qualitative data and analyzing them was to gain insight into what factors students thought were impacting their reading comprehension, as well as if teachers were knowledgeable and implementing instructional strategies that reflected culturally relevant pedagogy.

The transcribed student interviews are included in the (Appendix B). Two dominant themes appeared during the student interviews: Student Self-Efficacy in the use of English and Oral Language Skills. The emergent themes were Vocabulary, Student Engagement, and Native Language. Native language, also referred to as home language or mother’s tongue, is defined as the language a student has learned from birth, speaks the best, and is often the basis for the students’ sociolinguistic identity. A student’s home language is an essential resource for ELLs reading comprehension as it has the ability to increase their sense of efficacy for learning English by the following:
facilitating vocabulary acquisition;
• aiding learners in comprehension;
• encouraging self-regulation;
• making routines and explanations clear so as to direct attention and free up working memory for tasks in English;
• modeling communication in environments where students may be reluctant to initiate conversation; and
• Setting the tone in situations where students have come to view English as exceedingly difficult. (Yough, 2010, pp. 27-32)

In regards to the lesson plan observation tool used, the researcher examined teachers’ instructional strategies and the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy. During the three observations of three teachers of different content backgrounds (social studies, science, and language arts), the researcher observed the developed lesson plans teaching strategies manifest themselves. From modifications made for limited English proficiency (LEP) and cultural relevant references, to peer support and grouping strategies, the teachers observed using the researcher developed observation tool to examine their teacher instructional strategies and the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy. Lastly, the reading excerpt given to selected students was an on-level (grade 7) reading passage on Manifest Destiny (a social studies lesson) that used common words in both subjects that allowed students to employ their common word recognition skills to decode content.
Summary

The quantitative data collected in this research study were analyzed using SPSS. Analysis of the data revealed that the independent variables—oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, student self-efficacy, and student socialization/involvement—were significantly related to ELLs’ reading comprehension among the surveyed population. In addition, qualitative data were collected in this research study via student interviews and an observation tool of teachers’ lesson plans. The qualitative results revealed two dominant themes: student self-efficacy in the use of English and oral language skills, as they were both significant in terms of ELLs reading comprehension. This chapter explained and analyzed the data in relation to the research questions and summarized the information obtained via student interviews. Chapter VI reviews the findings, conclusions, and implications of the research study.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that impacted ELLs’ reading comprehension through the following independent variables: oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, student self-efficacy in the use of English, academic peer support, and student socialization/involvement. Analysis of the data revealed that the independent variables—student self-efficacy in the use of English, reading motivation, oral language skills, student socialization/involvement, and culturally relevant pedagogy—were significantly related to ELLs’ reading comprehension among the surveyed population at the institution being examined. Regression analysis revealed that student self-efficacy in the use of English was the independent variable most strongly related to ELLs’ reading comprehension.

This chapter focused on the major findings discovered in the research. Recommendations were made to begin the framework for improving factors that impact reading comprehension for ELLs at the institution being examined. Conclusions were based on the findings and implications were defined and explained.
Quantitative Findings

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners’ (ACCESS for ELLs) assessment and the student’s oral language skills?

Based on the results of survey questions 1-4, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and their oral language skills. This was evidenced by a .546 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s reading motivation?

Based on the results of survey questions 5-10, yes, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and their reading motivation. This was evidenced by a .694 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and culturally relevant pedagogy?

Based on the results of survey questions 11-14, while there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and culturally relevant pedagogy, the relationship was not as high as compared to the other variables. This was evidenced by a .331 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level.
RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and teacher instructional strategies?

Based on the results of survey questions 15-19, there was no significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and teacher instructional strategies. This was evidenced by a .099 Pearson Correlation 45% confidence level. The minimum accepted was the 95% confidence level.

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s self-efficacy in the use of English?

Based on the results of survey questions 20-26, there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and students’ self-efficacy in the use of English. This was evidenced by a .782 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level. This variable was the highest out of all variables analyzed.

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s socialization/involvement?

Based on the results of survey questions 27-30, there was no significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and academic peer support. This was evidenced by a .109 Pearson Correlation 45% confidence level. The minimum accepted was the 95% confidence level.
RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between ELLs’ reading comprehension as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs’ assessment and the student’s academic peer support?

Based on the results of survey questions 31-33, yes there was a significant relationship between students’ reading comprehension and student socialization/involvement. This was evidenced by a .422 Pearson Correlation at the 99% confidence level.

RQ8: Of the independent variables, which variable has the greatest impact on ELLs’ reading comprehension?

Based on the results of survey questions and the regression test, students’ self-efficacy in the use of English had the greatest impact on ELLs reading comprehension. The researcher further analyzed the data and discovered that students who were in the United States from 1-2 and 3-4 years were outperformed by their counterparts who were in the United States from 8-10 years (see Table 10 in Chapter V).

**Qualitative Findings**

- The findings from the qualitative analysis of data provided evidence to support the quantitative findings that student self-efficacy in the use of English and oral language skills impacts ELLs reading comprehension.

- The findings also produced an emergent theme: Native Language.

- The findings displayed evidence to support that students’ oral language skills were below average, which was evident in students who had lived in the United States for the shortest period of time (1-2 years and 3-4 years).
• Contrary to the quantitative findings, the qualitative findings revealed that students who were in the United States no more than 4 years, preferred reading in their native language, versus students who lived in the United States more than 5 years. In addition, students who lived in the United States less than 4 years, did better answering comprehension questions that were in their native language.

• The findings also produced an emergent reveal of gender preferences. Male students preferred science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects and reading material, while the female students preferred reading and language arts.

• Document analyses of teachers’ lesson plans provided evidence to support teachers’ implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy such as incorporating topics about students’ culture, made students feel included in the lesson, exposed students to different cultures, and made real-life connections when teaching.

• The specifically designed observation tool used in the research provided evidence to support teacher instructional strategies such as involved all students in the lesson, made certain modifications for students with limited English proficiency (LEP), the use of multiple strategies, provided feedback to students, made use of technology, and allowed students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways.
Conclusions and Implications

Based on the findings of this research investigation, some of the researcher’s initial assumptions were supported, while others were not. The researcher’s initial assumption that a significant relationship would exist between students’ reading comprehension and teacher instructional strategies was not supported based on the quantitative and qualitative findings in this investigation. The assumption was made by the researcher because of students’ varying ACCESS scores. In addition, the researcher’s initial assumption that a significant relationship would exist between students’ reading comprehension and academic peer support was not supported based on the quantitative findings. These assumptions were made by the researcher because of the structure of the classrooms at the institutions (students work in groups for the majority of their assignments).

On the other hand, the researcher’s initial assumption that a significant relationship would exist between students’ reading comprehension and their reading motivation was supported based on the quantitative and qualitative findings. The significant findings appeared in this population based on students’ lack of interest in reading and being uncomfortable in reading in English. The implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy and effective teacher instructional strategies significantly impacted students’ reading comprehension. Based on these findings, the implication for the administrative leader is that teachers who implement culturally relevant pedagogy and effective teaching strategies will aid in increasing students’ reading comprehension scores.
Furthermore, quantitative research revealed that students’ years in the United States affected their reading comprehension. Students who lived in the United States 5-10 years outperformed their counterparts who lived in the United States for only 1-4 years. The implication for the Head of School is that students who have been in the United States less than four years are not as immersed in the English language as students who have lived in the United States longer.

Lastly, the independent variable, students’ self-efficacy in the use of English, was the most significant variable for ELLs’ reading comprehension. Bandura (1977) developed the self-efficacy theory and defined it as the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). The role of self-efficacy affects the amount of effort and persistence that a student allocates to tasks, assignments, goals, and challenges. Bandura outlined the effects that self-efficacy had on individuals in Table 12.

Table 12

*Effects of Self-Efficacy on Individuals by Bandura (1977)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Weak Self-Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forms a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities</td>
<td>Focuses on personal failings and negative outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops deep interest in the activities in which he/she participates in</td>
<td>Believes that difficult tasks and situations are beyond his/her capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovers quickly from setbacks and disappointments</td>
<td>Quickly loses confidence in personal abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views challenging problems as tasks to be mastered</td>
<td>Avoids challenging tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications for educators that can be drawn from Bandura’s theory are the following:

- Based on Bandura’s belief that personal competence constitutes the key factor of human agency, educators should first recognize their role in shaping students’ self-efficacy beliefs.
- Provide students with challenging and meaningful tasks that can be mastered by monitoring and encouraging their efforts.
- Students learn from actions of models; as a result, educators should engage in varying modeling practices which can affect students’ self-efficacy.
- Pay close attention to students’ perception of competence, for their perception may heavily influence their motivation and academic choices.

As previously stated, attempting to master a second language, let alone the English text, can be a daunting task; however, if students believe they can be proficient in the English language, they are more likely to be successful versus a student who has many uncertainties.

**Recommendations**

The goal of this research was to explore factors that impacted reading comprehension for ELLs in middle school. Since a significant relationship existed between student self efficacy in the use of English, oral language skills, culturally relevant pedagogy, and student socialization/involvement, the recommendations are as follows:
Administrative Leaders

Administrative Leaders at the P-12 Level should consider the following actions:

- Provide ongoing professional development on culturally relevant pedagogy and its implementation for all teachers and staff.

- Invest money in professional development that provides teachers with additional tools that will foster students’ reading motivation and enhance teacher instructional strategies specifically targeted at the English Language Learners population.

- Provide professional development prior to the academic school year to meet the specific needs of Korean ELLs with an emphasis on reading comprehension and culturally relevant pedagogy.

- Add a supplementary intervention class for ELL students that have been in the United States for less than four years that focuses solely on the development of oral language skills. Student can also receive additional support in English either before and/or after-school tutoring.

- Seek assistance from surrounding institutions whose population mirrors the school researched to help teachers capitalize on their current knowledge and introduce them to other strategies that will help improve instruction.

- Develop a partnership with surrounding schools and postsecondary institutions to expose ELL students to multiple modes of learning as well as language development strategies.
• Partner with local universities and colleges to design programs to extend the learning in STEM and Reading vocabulary for ELLs.

• Provide an opportunity for experienced highly qualified ELL teachers to act as mentors and teacher leaders to help support novice and/or inexperienced teachers who lack training and background in culturally relevant pedagogy and with dealing with this student population.

• Develop an action plan to ensure continued support for ELL teachers and students.

• Ensure that teachers have the necessary resources to implement such strategies outlined in the action plan.

• Provide ongoing feedback to all ELL teachers related to culturally relevant pedagogy. The provided feedback will help and provide improvement to students’ self-efficacy in the use of English.

**Classroom Teachers**

• When students first enter the classroom, have teachers administer an interest survey to them that will illustrate their overall comfort with the English language and what motivates them to read.

• Provide ongoing feedback to students that includes their strengths and areas of (needed) improvement.

• Communicate with parents on an ongoing basis about students’ progress.

• Involve students in the learning process.
• Based on gender preferences and strength in content areas, develop strategies to support male and female students in all content areas.

• Practice a variety of good modeling behaviors that encourage and motivate students

**Future Research**

In terms of future research, researchers should look at variables that were not included in this study which include:

• Native language

• Vocabulary

• Student Engagement

• Students’ Background knowledge

• Knowledge of test structure and genre

• Reasoning and inferential skills

• Text structures

The provided variables are infused in reading comprehension but were not highlighted in this study. In addition, conducting a more wide-spread study in a different environment, preferably students whose native language is Spanish, as it is regarded the most common spoken language in the United States. Moreover, an examination of specific instructional strategies that implement culturally relevant pedagogy and its effectiveness on students’ reading comprehension skills and ACCESS scores is recommended.
Summary

Based on the findings of this research investigation, some of the researcher’s initial assumptions were supported, while others were not. Student self-efficacy, oral language skills, reading motivation, culturally relevant pedagogy, and student socialization/involvement significantly impacted students’ reading comprehension, while teacher instructional strategies and academic peer support did not.

The findings from this research investigation should add to previous research regarding ELLs’ reading comprehension, while validating the importance of student self-efficacy in the use of English and outlining necessary actions school leaders and districts need to take to ensure ELLs’ success in reading comprehension. Results from the research investigation provided implications and recommendations for both school districts and school leaders in hopes of closing the achievement gap between ELLs and their American born counterparts.
APPENDIX A

Likert-Scale Survey Data Collection Instrument

Dear Students:

The purpose of this survey is to gain your opinion about factors that impact reading comprehension. Your answers will be kept confidential as well as your names. Please answer each item based on your experience. Please do not write your name on this survey. Thank you!

Instructions: Please put a check mark in the box that best represents your opinion about each of the following statements.

**KEY:**
- SD = Strongly Disagree
- D = Disagree
- A = Agree
- SA = Strongly Agree
- N = Neutral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS**

1. I have a clear understanding of homonyms.

2. I have a clear understanding of what the main parts in writing include.

3. I have a clear understanding of the basic parts in storytelling.

4. I have a clear understanding of what figurative language is.

**READING MOTIVATION**

5. I am encouraged by my teachers to read outside of school.

6. I am encouraged by my family to read outside of school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I have a desire to read outside of school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Because I am comfortable with my English, I read more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I have a desire to learn the English language</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Learning English will help me get a better job.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>My teacher incorporates things about my culture into the lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>My teacher makes me feel included in the lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>My teacher exposes me to different cultures when teaching.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>My teacher involves all students in the lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>My teacher provides me with immediate feedback on my assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>My teacher uses technology when teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>My teacher uses many ways to test me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>My teacher gives me many chances to demonstrate my knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY IN THE USE OF ENGLISH</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>When taking an assessment, I feel comfortable with my English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>When taking an assessment, it takes me longer to read the English text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>When taking an assessment, I understand the English text used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>When reading in English, I am able to understand what the text is saying.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>When reading in English, I am able to make meaning from the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>When reading in English, I am able to pronounce the vocabulary words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>When reading in English, I am able to recognize words quickly.</td>
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</table>

**ACADEMIC PEER SUPPORT**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>I interact with my classmates when doing assignments in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>If I need help on an assignment, I ask my classmate.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>I feel comfortable asking a classmate for help.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>My classmate is able to explain information to me better than my teacher.</td>
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**STUDENT SOCIALIZATION/INVOLVEMENT**

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<td>31.</td>
<td>By participating in extracurricular activities, I learn new words.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>The words I learn in extracurricular activities differ from the words learned in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>I feel comfortable using the new words I learned.</td>
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34. Gender: __________ Male __________ Female

35. How long have you been in the United States?

   _____ 1 – 2 years   _____ 3 – 4 years   _____ 5 – 7 years
   _____ 8 – 10 years   _____ 11 – 13 years   _____ 13 – 15 years
APPENDIX B

Transcribed Student Interviews

Note: Students were asked the interview questions after reading a passage and answering corresponding comprehension questions. Questions 8-11 were based on the following passages:

Passage I

During the 1840s America saw a rapid expansion of its territory into the unexplored West. Politicians of the time saw this ever-increasing westward migration and settlement as America’s “Manifest Destiny.” American politicians (and later American citizens) believed that it was their mission to claim all the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They wanted to “extend the boundaries of freedom” and bring democracy to all those who were capable of self-government. Despite unfortunate prejudices, the goal was just. Every nation needs a sense of purpose and destiny; every nation has a right and a duty to explore the limits of its geography and to extend its culture as far as possible.

Passage 2

From the vantage point of the 21st century one can only look back with dismay on the expansionist fever that gripped Americans in the 1840s. Fueled by fears of English alliances with Mexico, the aftermath of two economic depressions, and a desire to expand the slave trade, Americans, egged on by the politicians of the time, pushed westward seeking their “Manifest Destiny.” And what was this destiny? The settlement of the entire country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, by white people of European descent. The tragedy, of course, is that this came at such a high price—the decimation of Native American cultures and the despoiling of the wilderness.

8. According to Passage I, “Manifest Destiny” is best described as

A. the desire of Americans to settle the West  
B. a form of self-government  
C. the belief that America should extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific  
D. an unfortunate prejudice held by the 19th century Americans  
E. one of the Constitutional rights to which Americans are entitled
9. The phrase “egged on” in Passage 2, line 7 most nearly means
   A. urged
   B. dismissed
   C. discouraged
   D. belittled
   E. rewarded

10. The author of Passage 2 would most likely respond to the contention of the author of Passage I that “the goals [of Manifest Destiny] was just” (line 12) by
   A. ridiculing the author of Passage I as naïve
   B. commending the author’s insight
   C. presenting a similar position
   D. defending the author’s right to his opinion
   E. arguing for an alternative point of view

11. Both authors would probably agree that
   A. despite its drawbacks, Manifest Destiny produced good results
   B. Americans were encouraged by their political leaders to pursue Manifest Destiny
   C. Americans began the westward migration because they were suffering from the results of economic depression
   D. People have no right to impose cultural values on others
   E. Manifest Destiny was an inevitable result of the cultural climate of the time
On August 18, 2015, I had the opportunity to interview a student who has lived in the U.S. for 1 year. The interview took place in the library at the student’s school in Duluth, GA. For the purpose of this transcription, the student will be referred to as Student 1 and myself as TL.

**TL:** Hi. Thank you for agreeing to do this. This interview will not take long. As I explained to your parents, there are 12 questions and you will be finished in about 15 minutes. I am interested in investigating factors that impact ELLs reading comprehension. Your contribution to this research is very important for fellow teachers. Is that ok?

**Student 1:** Yes. That’s ok.

**TL:** Great! So let’s get started. Question 1: Did you make any predictions about what the passage would be about? If so, when?

**Student 1:** No, why would I? [pauses] Was I supposed to?

**TL:** There isn’t a right or wrong answer. If you didn’t, that is perfectly fine.

**Student 1:** Oh. Ok well no I didn’t.

**TL:** And that is alright. Let’s move on. Question 2: When reading, did you find yourself stopping? If so, why and when?

**Student 1:** Yes. All the time because I don’t know what the words are saying.

**TL:** What do you mean?

**Student 1:** Like the words are confusing. All these big words. Why can’t they just say what they really mean? I hate it! [looks away to the right and then down]

**TL:** I understand. Well then how about we move on to the next question. Is that ok?

**Student 1:** Yes, we can keep going. I can be honest right? And you won’t tell my parents?
TL: I would only want you to be honest and no, I will not tell your parents. I will not put any names on this interview. Ok?

Student 1: Ok.

TL: Ok where were we? Question 3: When reading, did you ever wonder or ask yourself why something happened?

Student 1: Yeah, I ask myself why a lot of things happened because I just [pauses] I just really didn’t understand what they’re (author) is talking about. Like why you say it like this? That’s why it took me so long. Keep reading and reading it again and again and again.

TL: Ok. Question 4: Are you interested in learning anything more about what you read? If so, what?

Student 1: Not really.

TL: Any reason why?

Student 1: Because I don’t want to read anything like this. That has words like this. It is not fun.

TL: I understand. Question 5: After reading, are you able to recount the important parts? If so, what are they?

Student 1: What does recount mean again? Recount import parts?

TL: Oh, it pretty much means tell me. So, tell me the important parts.

Student 1: Oh [takes a long pause]. Ok. I’m not really sure if I can do that. I didn’t really understand what it was saying. I couldn’t even pronounce a lot of the words. I’m sorry [puts head down]

TL: Oh do not be sorry. Remember, this is a judge free zone [holds hands up and smiles]. These are just questions. If you don’t remember, that is fine. This is going to help me to find way to help you. Ok. [smiles]

Student 1: Ok. You are very good teacher. Thank you.

TL: Well you are a very good student so I thank you. Ok, Question 6: Are you able to describe what the passage was about in two sentences? If so, please describe them to me.
**Student 1:** I think Manifest Destiny. Yes, that is it. Manifest Destiny and something with the [pauses]. I can’t say that word, it is a hard word to say but I know it’s something like what you call Obama. I really didn’t like this one. (Student is referring to the word politicians)

**TL:** Ok, well Question 7: Was the passage easier to read in Korean versus English? Why or why not?

**Student 1:** Korean. I know how to read in Korean. I know the words. I don’t know these words. Why can’t everything be in Korean?

**TL:** Ok. So Question 8: Did any of your answers change, once you read the passage in Korean? If so, why do you think that is?

**Student 1:** Some of them. I remember I changed number 11. The ones that asked about vocabulary I just left it because I don’t know that.

**TL:** Ok. Question 9: Does reading in Korean cause you to think about other things? If so, please explain.

**Student 1:** Sometimes [pauses] I can see myself in the story when I read in Korean. It just makes sense and I think about home a lot.

**TL:** I see. Well here’s Question 10: Were you able to understand all the words used throughout the passage? If not, what words did you not understand?

**Student 1:** In Korean or English?

**TL:** Good question! How about both?

**Student 1:** No to English. Yes to Korean, but those vocab words. I just don’t know them.

**TL:** Can you show me which ones they are?

**Student 1:** Yes. Let me see the paper.

**TL:** [slides paper to student]

**Student 1:** [points at the words “egged on”, democracy, despooiling, expansionist]

**TL:** Ok thank you. Question 11: Was there any part of the passage that was unclear and you had to re-read? If so, what part?
Student 1: I had to re-read all the parts in English. You can’t just read it once. You have to keep reading it.

TL: I understand. Ok, well here is the last question. Question 12: Looking at paragraph two in English and paragraph two in Korean, what were your takeaways? Were there more or less in English?

Student 1: Takeaways? I know what you mean [pauses] Ok. I takeaway less in English. This passage was dumb. That’s how I really feel.

TL: Well thank you for your time. I appreciate you being honest with me. [smiles] Those are all the questions I have for you. You are free to leave or you can check out a book if you want.

Student 1: You welcome. I don’t want to check out at this time.
On August 14, 2015 I had the opportunity to interview a student who has lived in the U.S. for 2 years. The interview took place in the library at the students’ school in Duluth, Ga. For the purpose of this transcription, the student will be referred to as Student 2 and myself as TL.

TL: Hi. I just want to thank you for agreeing to do this. This interview will not take long. As I explained to your parents, there are 12 questions and you will be finished in about 15 minutes. I am interested in investigating factors that impact ELLs reading comprehension. Your contribution to this research is very important for fellow teachers. Is that ok?

Student 2: Yes we can start.

TL: Ok. Question 1. Did you make any predictions about what the passage would be about? If so, when?

Student 2: Yes and no. When I saw the word Manifest Destiny I kind of knew. I don’t know if that was a prediction but when I saw that I knew that’s what it would be about.

TL: Ok. Question 2. When reading, did you find yourself stopping? If so, why and when?

Student 2: Umm sometimes. When I get to this [points at line 9 and 10]. Like what does that even mean? “Extend the boundaries of freedom”? I just stop. I read it so many times and then just had to stop [puts hand on head]

TL: I understand. How about Question 3. When reading, did you ever wonder or ask yourself why something happened?

Student 2: No. I just want to get it over with.

TL: Ok. Well Question 4. Are you interested in learning anything more about what you read? If so, what?

Student 2: [shakes head very fast] No! No! I don’t like it. Not good.
TL: Ok. Question 5. After reading, are you able to recount the important parts? If so, what are they?

Student 2: Nothing was important to me. Manifest Destiny. That’s it but not important to me.

TL: Well, Question 6. Are you able to describe what the passage was about in two sentences? If so, please describe them to me.

Student 2: I told you Manifest Destiny. That’s all they talk about.

TL: Question 7. Was the passage easier to read in Korean versus English? Why or why not?

Student 2: I guess. I knew how to read more. More words. So yeah, it was easier.

TL: I got it. Question 8. Did any of your answers change, once you read the passage in Korean? If so, why do you think that is?

Student 2: I change my answer in number 8 because I saw that I didn’t read the question right the first time so I change it. Korean was easy so I know what it’s saying so I just make the change.

TL: Question 9. Does reading in Korean cause you to think about other things? If so, please explain.

Student 2: No.

TL: Question 10. Were you able to understand all the words used throughout the passage? If not, what words did you not understand?

Student 2: No I did not know half of those words. I show you. [grabs paper and begins to point out the following words: “egged on”, despoiling, decimation, westward, aftermath, expansionist.

TL: Question 11. Was there any part of the passage that was unclear and you had to re-read? If so, what part?

Student 2: I just read everything two times. My mom says I have to do that even if I don’t want to so I always do that. But everything was unclear. I don’t know why someone would write something like this. It is just [pauses and shake head].

TL: I understand. Well this is our last one. Question 12. Looking at paragraph two in English and paragraph two in Korean, what were your takeaways? Were there more or less in English?
Student 2: I know more in Korean. Number 8 I changed my answer because it ask you to tell what Manifest Destiny is and I just look in the passage to see but when I did that in English I got confused a little bit.

TL: I got it! Well thank you once again for agreeing to do this. You are welcomed to stay in the library and check out a book.

Student 2: No I just leave. Have a good day!
On August 26, 2015 I had the opportunity to interview a student who has lived in the U.S. for 4 years. The interview took place in the library at the students’ school in Duluth, Ga. For the purpose of this transcription, the student will be referred to as **Student 3** and myself as **TL**.

**TL**: Hi. Thank you for agreeing to do this. This interview will not take long. As I explained to your parents, there are 12 questions and you will be finished in about 15 minutes. I am interested in investigating factors that impact ELLs reading comprehension. Your contribution to this research is very important for fellow teachers. Is that ok?

**Student 3**: It’s ok.

**TL**: Great! Question 1. Did you make any predictions about what the passage would be about? If so, when?

**Student 3**: When I saw Manifest Destiny in line 5 I said to myself oh ok this what it is going to be about. It’s gonna be about that.

**TL**: Alright. Question 2. When reading, did you find yourself stopping? If so, why and when?

**Student 3**: I just stop when I don’t know a word or if I get tired. Or sometimes I kinda doze off so I have to reread. But I didn’t doze off because it was short but I did stop when I got to words I didn’t know.

**TL**: Ok thank you. Question 3. When reading, did you ever wonder or ask yourself why something happened?

**Student 3**: I kinda wondered why this even happened.

**TL**: What do you mean?

**Student 3**: Like why are they [points at the word “politicians” in the passage]

**TL**: [says the word politicians]

**Student 3**: Yes politicians. I ask why are they so mean?
TL: I got it. Question 4. Are you interested in learning anything more about what you read? If so, what?

Student 3: I guess. Only because of class. Not your class but my social studies class. We do this [pauses] learn this in social studies and my grade is not good so it could help me I guess.

TL: Question 5. After reading, are you able to recount the important parts? If so, what are they?

Student 3: It’s all important! Well not the first line [points at the passage “During the 1840s]. Well I guess that is important too because it tells you when it happened. But I think everything is important. You need it all for the story.

TL: Got it! Question 6. Are you able to describe what the passage was about in two sentences? If so, please describe them to me.

Student 3: Manifest Destiny and how it is important for people to have a destiny.

TL: So Question 7. Was the passage easier to read in Korean versus English? Why or why not?

Student 3: Yea because Korean is just different. It’s shorter. But then it was kinda hard because the English words, well some of them don’t really go for Korean. They just can’t be Korean so I read it but I still had to use the English word.

TL: I see. Question 8. Did any of your answers change, once you read the passage in Korean? If so, why do you think that is?

Student 3: Yes. I guess I just knew. I kinda understood better.

TL: Question 9. Does reading in Korean cause you to think about other things? If so, please explain.

Student 3: [pauses] Well, I started thinking about my family. Korean is just normal and how I am. It’s just easy for me and I know it a lot better because my parents speak it a lot at home.

TL: Question 10. Were you able to understand all the words used throughout the passage? If not, what words did you not understand?

Student 3: No [shakes head]. That’s why it was harder. I can’t even say them. I know should know democracy but I forgot, and I don’t know what its talking about when it says “fueled by fears”. Begins to point to the following words: contention, “egged on,” vantage, decimation, despoiling.
**TL:** Question 11. Was there any part of the passage that was unclear and you had to re-read? If so, what part?

**Student 3:** All the words I did not know I just read them 5 times.

**TL:** Ok. Time for the last question. Question 12. Looking at paragraph two in English and paragraph two in Korean, what were your takeaways? Were there more or less in English?

**Student 3:** This is kind of a tough question for me you know. I say that because I like passage 1 better but passage 2 had a lot more vocab words that will help me.

**TL:** Well thank you so much for you time. Please feel free to check out a book.
On July 31, 2015 I had the opportunity to interview a student who has lived in the U.S. for 5 years. The interview took place in the library at the students’ school in Duluth, Ga. For the purpose of this transcription, the student will be referred to as Student 4 and myself as TL.

**Student 4:** Sure.

**TL:** Hi. Thank you for agreeing to do this. This interview will not take long. As I explained to your parents, there are 12 questions and you will be finished in about 15 minutes. I am interested in investigating factors that impact ELLs reading comprehension. Your contribution to this research is very important for fellow teachers. Is that ok?

**Student 4:** Sure.

**TL:** Question 1. Did you make any predictions about what the passage would be about? If so, when?

**Student 4:** Yes. I always try to make predictions. I’ll read the first couple of lines and then predict what it is going to be about.

**TL:** Ok. Question 2. When reading, did you find yourself stopping? If so, why and when?

**Student 4:** Yes. I have to stop to try and pronounce the words. I get stuck on some of them so I stopped. Is that ok?

**TL:** Yes, that is ok. Let’s try. Question 3. When reading, did you ever wonder or ask yourself why something happened?

**Student 4:** Why I have to read this? Why this so boring? I’m sorry but that is the first thing I think because I really don’t want to read. I don’t really like it but I know I have to do it. I guess I just wonder why does it have to be so long.

**TL:** Ok well Question 4. Are you interested in learning anything more about what you read? If so, what?

**Student 4:** I mean it could be cool because my teacher in social studies is talking about this too so yea, I would but just don’t want it to have so many big words.
TL: I understand. Question 5. After reading, are you able to recount the important parts? If so, what are they?

Student 4: Basically that Manifest Destiny is needed by everyone [pauses] like everyone should have it. And there was slaves and the white people took over the country.

TL: Got it. Question 6. Are you able to describe what the passage was about in two sentences? If so, please describe them to me.

Student 4: Kinda like what I just said. Everybody needs to have a Manifest Destiny. That is important. I’m not sure what was being said in the other passage. There were many vocab words that I did not know.

TL: Question 7. Was the passage easier to read in Korean versus English? Why or why not?

Student 4: It was because I went really fast reading it. I can’t do that in English.

TL: Question 8. Did any of your answers change, once you read the passage in Korean? If so, why do you think that is?

Student 4: Yes. I’m not too sure. When I read it in Korean I just looked at the questions again and just knew it had to be changed.


Student 4: Not really. I just read really fast since I know how to.

TL: Question 10. Were you able to understand all the words used throughout the passage? If not, what words did you not understand?

Student 4: No, because many of those words were not on my vocabulary list. I did not understand contention and that was in the question so I think I got that wrong. I didn’t understand [points to: despoiling, “egged on”, expansionist, economic, decimation].

TL: Question 11. Was there any part of the passage that was unclear and you had to re-read? If so, what part?

Student 4: I had to re-read passage three times. Too many vocab words that weren’t on my list.
TL: I see. Well this is our last one. Question 12. Looking at paragraph two in English and paragraph two in Korean, what were your takeaways? Were there more or less in English?

Student 4: Still a little confused but I rather in Korean because I can read it better. I know that America was scared.

TL: Well thank you again. Feel free to check out a book before you leave.
Student 4: Ok thank you and you are welcome.
On September 8, 2015 I had the opportunity to interview a student who has lived in the U.S. for 8 years. The interview took place in the library at the students’ school in Duluth, Ga. For the purpose of this transcription, the student will be referred to as Student 5 and myself as TL.

TL: Hi. Thank you for agreeing to do this. This interview will not take long. As I explained to your parents, there are 12 questions and you will be finished in about 15 minutes. I am interested in investigating factors that impact ELLs reading comprehension. Your contribution to this research is very important for fellow teachers. Is that ok?

Student 5: Yes.

TL: Ok here we go. Question 1. Did you make any predictions about what the passage would be about? If so, when?

Student 5: When you gave me the paper I skimmed it and saw the word Manifest Destiny a lot of times so that’s what I predicted it would be about and I was right.

TL: Ok. Question 2. When reading, did you find yourself stopping? If so, why and when?

Student 5: I didn’t really stop, I just had to re-read a few words.

TL: Question 3. When reading, did you ever wonder or ask yourself why something happened?

Student 5: No because I already knew what this was about. I know about Manifest Destiny already so I didn’t have to ask or wonder. I just knew.

TL: I see. Question 4. Are you interested in learning anything more about what you read? If so, what?

Student 5: I’d be ok with that. It is kind of interesting to know this is something that really happened.

TL: Question 5. After reading, are you able to recount the important parts? If so, what are they?
Student 5: The important parts were how the politicians wanted to take the land and how it is important for all the people in the land to have a purpose or whatever.

TL: Question 6. Are you able to describe what the passage was about in two sentences? If so, please describe them to me.

Student 5: Greedy politicians wanted to claim all the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific because they felt that every nation deserved to have a sense of purpose. And looking back on that time, people can look back and see what he anger actually caused.

TL: Ok. Question 7. Was the passage easier to read in Korean versus English? Why or why not?

Student 5: That’s kind of tough to answer because I was able to read both and it was kind of weird to read it in Korean because I was thinking Korean people don’t talk like this [laughs]. But I think I was able to read it faster in English, so that was easier.

TL: Question 8. Did any of your answers change, once you read the passage in Korean? If so, why do you think that is?

Student 5: No


Student 5: I think about my grandmother when I read in Korean because she is the one that makes me practice my reading and writing.

TL: You’re reading in writing in Korean correct?

Student 5: Yes. I visit her every summer and she always wants me to read and write [sighs].

TL: Oh I see. Well her is the next one. Question 10. Were you able to understand all the words used throughout the passage? If not, what words did you not understand?

Student 5: Yes. [pauses] Wait! Egged on, what exactly is that? I know it’s not to really have egg on you. I thought about how you said to use context clues but it was kind of hard to in that passage.

TL: Well I appreciate you making the effort in trying and remembering to try and use context clues. When a person is egged on, it means that he or she is urged or persuaded to do something.
**Student 5:** Ooooooh. That’s a weird way to just say that. They could have just said urged! Ok. Thanks.

**TL:** You’re welcome. Two more questions and we are finished. Question 11. Was there any part of the passage that was unclear and you had to re-read? If so, what part?

**Student 5:** I did have to re-read egged on because I didn’t know what it meant. Even when I did re-read it, like I said I didn’t get it. It was unclear.

**TL:** I understand. Last one. Question 12. Looking at paragraph two in English and paragraph two in Korean, what were your takeaways? Were there more or less in English?

**Student 5:** My takeaways were about the same for both. It was nice to have it in both languages because if I missed anything in one, I caught it with the other, but you can’t really catch egged on in Korean so [pauses] but it’s ok.

**TL:** It is ok. Well thank you for your time. If you’d like, you can check out a book.

**Student 5:** I checked one out this morning. Thanks!
Interviewee: Tier C, Student 6; 8-10 years in the U.S.
Date of Interview: 09/14/15
Length of Interview: 16 minutes
Location of Interview: Duluth, GA

On September 14, 2015 I had the opportunity to interview a student who has lived in the U.S. for 10 years. The interview took place in the library at the students’ school in Duluth, Ga. For the purpose of this transcription, the student will be referred to as Student 6 and myself as TL.

TL: Hi. Thank you for agreeing to do this. This interview will not take long. As I explained to your parents, there are 12 questions and you will be finished in about 15 minutes. I am interested in investigating factors that impact ELLs reading comprehension. Your contribution to this research is very important for fellow teachers. Is that ok?

TL: Question 1: Did you make any predictions about what the passage would be about? If so, when?

Student 6: Yes. When I first get a reading passage I look at the questions first. That always gives me an idea of what to look out for and what the passage will be about.

TL: Question 2. When reading, did you find yourself stopping? If so, why and when?

Student 6: No, I didn’t need to stop.

TL: Question 3. When reading, did you ever wonder or ask yourself why something happened?

Student 6: When I was reading this I did think about it a little bit because we are talking about this in social studies and I was trying to remember what was said in there. Then I started to picture what was happening in the story in my mind.


Student 6: Yes, I wouldn’t mind. Manifest Destiny is pretty cool. It would make a great movie! You could see how it was for all people. Manifest Destiny for Koreans, for White people and Black people. That could be cool.
Question 5. After reading, are you able to recount the important parts? If so, what are they?

Student 6: Well the most important parts are totally different in each passage. Passage 1 is more about how Manifest Destiny is important for everyone to have and get and the other passage is kind of like a reflection you know. Looking back at what happened and everyone’s reactions.

Question 6. Are you able to describe what the passage was about in two sentences? If so, please describe them to me.

Student 6: I think the important parts could also be the same as my sentences. People need to find their Manifest Destiny because it is important for everyone to have that, period. Then, years later people looked back on that time period and saw how ugly it was.

Question 7. Was the passage easier to read in Korean versus English? Why or why not?

Student 6: It was easier in English for me because I don’t read much in Korean.

Question 8. Did any of your answers change, once you read the passage in Korean? If so, why do you think that is?

Student 6: No.

Question 9. Does reading in Korean cause you to think about other things? If so, please explain.

Student 6: It just kind of reminds me that I’m not really good as I should be in reading Korean. I speak Korean with my family but I don’t have to write it as much anymore.

Question 10. Were you able to understand all the words used throughout the passage? If not, what words did you not understand?

Student 6: Pretty much. Yes, I knew all the words. Many of them were on my vocabulary list I have been studying. Except for [pauses] despoiling and I’m not sure if this is a word or a word phrase but egged on. I knew what that meant though because I remember you saying that one time about the food fight last month. How people were egging it on.

Question 11. Was there any part of the passage that was unclear and you had to re-read? If so, what part?
**Student 6:** No. I just read straight through

**TL:** Question 12. Looking at paragraph two in English and paragraph two in Korean, what were your takeaways? Were there more or less in English?

**Student 6:** I had more takeaways in English because I just read straight through. I have to really focus when I am reading in Korean.

**TL:** Well that is it [smiles]. Thank you again for your time. You are welcomed to check out a book before you leave.

**Student 6:** Ok. I’ll do that. Thank you.
Lesson Plan and Classroom Observation Instruments

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Observation: 25 min</td>
<td>Time In: 10:10 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Out: 10:35 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Technology: Yes</td>
<td>Materials Used:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>powerpoint, worksheet handouts, promethean board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How many students are limited English proficient (LEP)? 16

2. Are any modifications made for LEP students? If so, what are they? Yes. Students are given extra time, handouts, and have many opportunities to answer questions.

3. Do the learning targets incorporate a multicultural perspective? If so, how? Explain.

   Yes. The teacher has every student pick a different culture out of a hat and whatever culture they chose, after researching it, they had to look at Manifest Destiny from that lens.

4. Are the learning targets appropriate for all students in the class? If so, how? If not, please explain.

   The learning targets are appropriate for all the students because they are written in language the students will understand. Tier A, Tier B, and Tier C students learning targets differ in wording but have the same meaning and are posted in the classroom.
5. **What strategies were used to accommodate the varying reading and developmental levels of students?**

   During the large group discussion activities, the teacher directed the higher level questions to certain (Tier C) and adjusted the questions accordingly for student with greater needs (Tier A and Tier B). All students had opportunities to answer the important questions.

6. **Did the lesson incorporate students’ (cultural) backgrounds, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and/or experiences?**

   No, the lesson incorporated other cultural backgrounds that differed from the students.

7. **Did the lesson stimulate critical thinking and problem solving skills?**

   Yes.

8. **What type of student engagement did you observe?**

   Whole Class □  Small Groups □  Lecture-Style □  Individual □

   **Comments:**

   The teacher took her time while teaching and stopped several times to ask students questions to make sure they were paying attention.
Lesson Title: Food Chain

Date: 9/18/15

Subject: Science
Grade: 7th

Total Number of Students: 21
Females: 8 Males: 13

Length of Observation: 22 minutes
Time In: 1:05 p.m.
Time Out: 1:27 p.m.

Use of Technology: Yes
Materials Used:
Computer (Internet), paper plates, colored pencils, markers

1. How many students are limited English proficient (LEP)? 14

2. Are any modifications made for LEP students? If so, what are they?

   I did not observe modifications while I was there.

3. Do the learning targets incorporate a multicultural perspective? If so, how? Explain. No.

4. Are the learning targets appropriate for all students in the class? If so, how? If not, please explain.

   Yes. All learning targets are written in the appropriate student language and based off of levels (Tier A, B, C). Students have their personal target goal taped to desk.

5. What strategies were used to accommodate the varying reading and developmental levels of students?

   In this particular lesson, students were paired into small groups of 4 with students of different levels.

6. Did the lesson incorporate students’ (cultural) backgrounds, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and/or experiences?

   Yes. Students were asked to investigate the diets of their organisms and then identify what area that organism can be found. Students were asked to share any experiences they may have had (or read) in the locations the organisms were located.

7. Did the lesson stimulate critical thinking and problem solving skills? Yes
8. **What type of student engagement did you observe?**

   Whole Class □   Small Groups □   Lecture-Style □   Individual □

**Comments:**

This lesson was interesting to observe as students were extremely involved as they had the opportunity to create their own food chain. The teacher did an excellent job with classroom management and making sure that all students participated.
Lesson Title: Collecting & Displaying Data: Connecting Literacy & Math

Date: 7/31/15

Subject: Language Arts
Grade: 7th

Total Number of Students: 23
Females: 10  Males: 13

Length of Observation: 24 minutes
Time In: 11:26 a.m.
Time Out: 11:50 a.m.

Use of Technology: Yes
Materials Used:
  promethean board, chart paper, rulers, pencils

1. How many students are limited English proficient (LEP)? 18

2. Are any modifications made for LEP students? If so, what are they?
The modifications I observed were the following: simplified language, handouts, and visual support

3. Do the learning targets incorporate a multicultural perspective? If so, how? Explain. No.

4. Are the learning targets appropriate for all students in the class? If so, how? If not, please explain.

   Yes, the learning targets are appropriate for all the students in the class as they are leveled (by tiers: Tier A, B,C). Also, on the back wall each student has written their version of what the learning targets are.

5. What strategies were used to accommodate the varying reading and developmental levels of students?

   Students were placed in groups with readers of varying levels, directions were repeated several times and given to students, the vocabulary used throughout the lesson shifted

6. Did the lesson incorporate students’ (cultural) backgrounds, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and/or experiences?

   Yes. Students were asked about their experiences of working together and/or in groups.
7. Did the lesson stimulate critical thinking and problem solving skills?

Yes.

8. What type of student engagement did you observe?

Whole Class □  Small Groups □  Lecture-Style □  Individual □

Comments:

The teacher led a discussion about students working together when placed in small groups. The character objectives were: respect for others, self-control, courtesy, diligence, patience and creativity. They were discussed in terms of how they relate to the success or failure of the project. The teacher then made a frequency chart on the different shirt colors in the class. Students had to discuss the findings, and, if the data is a good representation of the entire school, the pros and cons of the small sampling would be discussed at a later date.
APPENDIX D

Statement of Consent

RESEARCH TITLE

TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION: A STUDY EXPLORING CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT IMPACT READING COMPREHENSION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

Tieandra L. Lewis

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to investigate oral language skills, reading motivation, cultural relevant pedagogy, teacher instructional strategies, self-efficacy in the use of English, academic peer support, and student socialization/involvement impact reading comprehension for English Language Learners (ELLs). You are invited to participate in this study because you are an ELL at the private school. A total of 60 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation in the study will require a total of forty minutes.

PROCEDURES

Upon agreement and parental consent to participate in the study, you will be required to complete and submit a survey to the principal researcher. There will also be a structured one-on-one interview. There will be no interaction with other participants. The research will take place at your school during the Summer and Fall semesters of 2015.

RISKS

Participation in this research study will not subject you to any risks.

BENEFITS

Participation in this research may benefit you personally. The investigative approach will allow you to explore your reading comprehension skills while considering additional factors. It will help you dissect the influence these factors have on your current reading comprehension skills. Your participation will assist the researcher with determining if, and which factors impact reading comprehension for ELLs. Your participation will yield insight for school leaders and stakeholders.
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study is not required. You have the right to remove yourself from the study at any time if you change your mind. Your decision to remove yourself will not negatively impact you. You will not face increased risk or lose any rights or benefits you were entitled to.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The utmost effort will be made to maintain the privacy of your personal information and any connection to surveys and interview responses. The use of your name is not necessary for this study. All identifying information will be removed from all data collection instruments. Any information you provide for this study will only be shared with a third party for the sole purpose of furthering the study and its publication. All information from the study will be summarized and analyzed strictly using discretion.

CONTACT PERSON

For any questions concerning this research study and or your participation, please refer to:

Barbara N. Hill, Ed.D
Interim Chair
Clark Atlanta University
Department of Educational Leadership
223 James P. Brawley Drive S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30313
Email: bhill@cau.edu
Phone: (404) 880-6126

COPY OF STATEMENT OF CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPANT

If you understand terms of the study, and this form and are willing to participate, please sign and date the form below. A copy of this form will be provided for your records.

__________________________________    __________________
Participant Name (Printed)               Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)
__________________________________    ____________________________________
Participant Signature                   Parent/Guardian Signature
__________________________________    ____________________________________
Date                                    Date
Dear Head of School:

My name is Tieandra L. Lewis and I am a doctoral candidate at Clark Atlanta University in the Department of Educational Leadership. As an educator to English Language Learners (ELLs), I am conducting a research investigation on the contributing factors that impact reading comprehension for ELLs. The research investigation will consist of the distribution of a student survey, a one-time basis student interview, classroom observations, and a document analysis of teachers’ lesson/unit plans.

I would like to include your school in my study because of your school’s demographics. Inclusion of your school in this study will provide valuable information for the research investigation, and I will be more than willing to share the results with you. There are no risks associated with this study. To maintain confidentiality, the name of your school will be changed and all records will be kept in private and in a locked file. Upon any publication of the results, no information will be included to make it possible to identify participants. A tape recorder may be used to accurately record information, but will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Participation will occur on a voluntary basis and participants may drop out of the study at any time if they choose to no longer participate.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would respond to this e-mail confirming/declining your school’s participation in the study. In addition, if you understand the terms of the study and are willing to participate, please sign and date the form below. A copy will be provided for your records. If you have any questions about the research you may contact me at 732-558-3848. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Barbara Hill at 404-880-6126.

__________________________________    ______________
Participant Signature                Date

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tieandra L. Lewis
Doctoral Candidate
Clark Atlanta University
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