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Describing Primary Grade Teachers' Practice Of Shared Reading As A Strategy To Build Vocabulary And Comprehension During Literacy Instruction In A Southeastern Urban School System

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DESCRIBING PRIMARY GRADE TEACHERS' PRACTICE OF SHARED READING AS A STRATEGY TO BUILD VOCABULARY AND COMPREHENSION DURING LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN A SOUTHEASTERN URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) reported the need for explicit and systematic instruction in vocabulary and comprehension in primary grades. Students have to know the meaning of words in order to develop comprehension. Therefore, vocabulary is essential to reading. In regards to shared reading NRP (2000) noted a lack of attention to comprehension. However, several researchers illustrated the value of shared reading and its link between vocabulary and comprehension (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008; Kessler, 2010).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. This qualitative case study included seven primary grade teachers in a southeastern urban school system. All of the female participants taught grades K through 3, and had eight-40 years of teaching experience. Data for this study were collected from interviews, classroom observations and accompanying lesson plans. The data analysis followed procedures outlined by qualitative researchers (Denzin, 1989; Krippendorff, 1980; Lichtman, 2013). Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher to provide a useable data set for analysis.

Seven themes emerged with supporting statements dealing with primary grade teachers' description of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary during literacy instruction. The main findings were that (a) teachers interviewed and observed were enthusiastic in their belief that implementing shared reading was important for primary aged students; (b) teachers were aware of and were active in supporting comprehension during shared reading by using modeling and other forms of support; and (c) although teachers (as a group) were aware of the need to use questioning, book introductions, and vocabulary instruction during shared reading they were not always able to implement the best practices for these aspects of inspiration. These findings will help school, local, and state administrators understand teachers' practice of shared reading to build vocabulary and comprehension and to help them make informed instructional decisions during literacy instruction in primary grades.

DEDICATION

This dissertation (Labor of love) is dedicated to the memory of family and friends who encouraged and helped me to always remember that reading is a gateway through locked doors and deferred dreams.

I stand on the shoulders of greatness and the proud legacy of my parents, Richard Williams, Sr. and Daisy Lee Hinton-Williams. They exemplified love, respect, and modeled perseverance and responsibility. My mother planted the seed and joy of reading in me before the age of 6. I fondly recall reading Psalm 23 to my older brothers before going outside to play.

I also stand on the shoulders of others whose memories and strength I will always cherish:

Sam Hinton, my (Bigdaddy) grandfather

Mary Lillie Hinton, my (Bigmama) grandmother

James Chandler, my father-in-law

Dorothy Chandler, my mother-in-law

Barbara Goldman, my friend

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“When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary; When troubles come and my heart burdened be; Then, I am still and wait here in the silence, Until you come and sit awhile with me.”

“You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;”

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“You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;”

To my sisters in Christ: Arlene Bulger, you have been with me through it all. Thanks for your professionalism, wisdom, and listening ears past midnight; Para Joyce Goldman Morrall, you have kept me grounded throughout the years; Dr. Sandra Ugoala, you listened and understood my frustrations about “walking on stormy seas”, Dianne

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"I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;"

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"You raise me up... To more than I can be."

To God be the Glory for "raising me up" to complete a product that can serve as a catalyst in moving the mountain of illiteracy. To God be the Glory for "raising me up" to ignite hope and the joy of literacy in today's generation and for generations to come. *The gift of literacy…This is my legacy!*

Lyrics from: *You Raise Me Up*, by Josh Grogan., 2001, Warner Brothers Records

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The most important part of our determination to develop as teachers is our willingness to have others observe and discuss our teaching. In the end we all develop our own peculiar way of doing things, but become increasingly clear about the objectives which we share.

(Holdaway, 1979, p. 136)

Shared Reading: Overview

Shared reading was a method that primary grade teachers used to holistically instruct students about words (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2008). Teachers and children interacted and focused on reading behaviors, text features, and specific comprehension strategies (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Hoyt (2002) emphasized high intense level modeling of language and fluency during shared text experiences in upper elementary, middle school, and high school. Boyles (2009) suggested that 30-minute sessions, three days a week should be devoted to shared reading. She noted because of the limited framework, teachers should remain focused. Allington (2001) affirmed shared book reading afforded teachers the freedom to decide which text features needed to be taught using data observed from students' responses during and after reading. A variety of texts were used for preschoolers and emergent readers and in primary through high school.

Shared reading was based on the learning process of social interaction that applied the principles of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding, and the gradual

release of responsibility (Brown, 2004). According to Vygotsky (1978), the zone of proximal development was "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Scaffolding with a focus on gradual release of responsibility was an effective type of support (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). As the student observed the modeling of a teacher or more capable individual, he began to understand the task and connected it with a previously learned activity. Teachers asked students questions and offered feedback as they expressed an understanding of the task (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). The process of ZPD was applied to reading comprehension when students engaged in a four-stage model of children's speech and language development (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991).

Tharp and Gallimore's (1991) four-stage model explained how the zone of proximal development led to actual change in development. This process could be applied to the way children develop speech and language (Vygotsky, 1978). In Stage I, performance was assisted by more capable peers. In Stage II, the learner imitated performance. In Stage III, performance was developed, automatized, and solidified. In Stage IV, the three stages were repeated depending on the difficulty of new learning or regression from the lack of practice.

Social interaction and scaffolding were also evident in Bruner's (1962) constructivist approach to learning. Teachers and students engaged in conversation concerning specific learning tasks. Constructivist learning included new learning and new experiences (Bruner, 1962). The relationship between learning and development

was an unresolved issue (Vygotsky, 1978). There were three theoretical viewpoints. The first theoretical viewpoint was based on the idea that child development was independent of learning. The second theoretical viewpoint was based on the position that learning was development. The third theoretical viewpoint was that the relationship between learning and development was combined (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) rejected each viewpoint because he believed learning always preceded development in the zone of proximal development. He asserted that assistance from a more capable other enabled the child to learn skills beyond his or her actual developmental level.

Holdaway (1979) developed "shared reading" from the concept of parents reading bedtime stories to their children. His contribution to the notion of scaffolding emphasized the importance of a conducive learning environment when teachers modeled effective skills in interactive settings. Holdaway applied Vygotsky's ideas of the zone of proximal development and modeling by a more experienced other in developing the instructional technique known today as "shared reading."

In shared reading, the gradual release of responsibility began with the teacher modeling. After the modeling, the student completed a task with the teacher's assistance. Then, he or she moved toward independence when tasks were completed without the assistance of an adult (Weaver, 2002). This independence illustrated Piaget's (1973) idea of autonomy, which was a primary goal of education.

Shared reading had advantages and disadvantages. Advantages included seeing the same text, which helped students associate with text cues such as pacing, layout of words, and punctuation (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Students developed confidence and a lifelong habit of reading through shared reading when teachers helped them construct

reading and listening skills (Brown, 2004; Prescott-Griffin & Withrell, 2004). Specific disadvantages included minimal attention to the diverse needs of students, more teacher-centered instruction, less student-centered instruction and less interaction among peers (Radencich & McKay, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to describe primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system. Primary grade teachers' instructional practice during shared reading may help close the vocabulary gap that contributes to comprehension difficulties.

Statement of the Problem

The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) reported the need for explicit and systematic instruction in vocabulary and comprehension in primary grades. Students had to know the meaning of words in order to develop comprehension. Therefore, vocabulary was essential to reading. NRP (2000) noted a "serious lack of attention to comprehension in the shared reading research available for the National Early Literacy Panel review" (p. 323). Yet, several researchers illustrated the value of shared reading instruction and its link between vocabulary and comprehension (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008; Kesler, 2010). Therefore, in order to close the gap in the literature that led to comprehension difficulties, there was a need for teachers to examine their instructional intent of shared reading (Pollard-Durodola et al., 2011). It was essential for teachers to support thoughtful responses by "aiming to get students to

explain, elaborate, and connect their ideas" and produce language (Beck & McKeowan, 2006, p. 263).

A study by Kindle (2011) compared the practices of preschool teachers reading aloud a common text. Results revealed different levels of social interaction among the preschoolers and their teachers. Kindle suggested further research to help preschool teachers provide maximum high-quality interactions. Additionally, Kindle recommended teachers receive training during professional development workshops to enhance their abilities to promote children's interactions with text. In many urban schools across the United States, there was evidence of a comprehension instruction gap in primary grades (Teale, Piciga, & Hoffman, 2007).

Research Questions

The following central question guided the study: How do primary grade teachers in a southeastern urban school system describe the ways in which they practice shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction?

Further research sub-questions guided this study:

1. How do primary grade teachers define shared reading?
2. How do primary grade teachers describe the strategies they use to determine students' comprehension of text during shared reading?
3. What do primary grade teachers do to provide vocabulary instruction during shared reading?
4. How do primary grade teachers describe what they do to provide comprehension instruction during shared reading?
5. What is the observable practice of shared reading in these primary grade classrooms?

Theoretical Framework

Piaget and Vygotsky were two prominent constructivist theorists who shared a common belief that classrooms must be interactive environments, which enhanced reading comprehension (Ozer, 2004). Piaget (1977) noted that, "Language serves multiple functions that develop with age" (p. 65). He emphasized that there were different channels one could use to construct meaning. For example, a child could tell a story without using sequence because the story was told as the child remembered it. According to Piaget (1973), constructivism and autonomy should be the aim of education. Constructivism was the practice of Piaget's theory *how* learners constructed knowledge. Vygotsky, Cambourne, and Holdaway were also proponents of constructivist learning environments.

Vygotsky (1978) explained that learning included the developmental level, which was determined by what a child could do without assistance by a more knowledgeable other. Vygotsky (1978) presented a theoretical view of learning relative to the interaction between learning and development. Lifelong learning included the zone of proximal development sequences, which go from teacher assistance to independent learning.

Cambourne's (1995) theoretical assumption of constructivism was what he defined as the Seven Conditions of Literacy Learning: immersion, demonstration, expectations, responsibility, employment, approximation, and response. His seven conditions of learning included a rich literature environment of reading and writing to, with, and by students. He noted that the seven conditions of literacy learning may transform literacy instruction within primary grades.

Cambourne's (1995) seven conditions of literacy learning were related to shared reading as students engaged in language modeled by the teacher. During *expectations*, shared reading built emergent readers' confidence when they were allowed to participate in reading behaviors. In shared reading, students used *approximations* as they joined in the reading of the text when they could and dropped back when the support of a teacher or more able reader was needed.

Holdaway (1979) suggested that in order for any teaching to occur, the environment must be conducive to learning. In a favorable environment, skills were modeled and effectively practiced by teachers. Holdaway concluded that if the environment was not conducive to learning, ineffective teaching was destined to be the result for many students. The research in this study addressed the gap in primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions provided clear meaning and understanding of the context in which they were used by the researcher:

Audit trail – records and/or information collected in accordance with qualitative research: raw data, data reduction and analysis, data reconstruction, intentions, and instrument development (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Best practices – "serious, thoughtful, informed, responsible, state-of-the-art teaching" (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2012, p. 2). Morrow, Gambrell, and Pressley (2003) noted the following eight principles reflected "common ground" themes related to best practices:

- Learning is making meaning.
- Prior knowledge guides learning.
- The gradual release of responsibility model and scaffold instruction facilitate learning.
- Social collaboration enhances learning.
- Learners learn best when they are interested and involved.
- The goal of best practice is to develop high-level, strategic readers and writers.
- Best practices are grounded in the principle of balanced instruction (direct, guided, and independent).
- Best practices are a result of informed decision making by teachers (pp. 14-18).

Cambourne's (1995) seven conditions of literacy learning – Cambourne's theoretical assumptions included the following conditions of learning:

- Immersion – teachers saturated students' environment with language and literate behaviors,
- Demonstration – provided thousands of opportunities for students to learn language through parent and teacher modeling,
- Expectations – messages teachers communicated to their students,
- Responsibility – provided students with choices to decide on what conventions of language they wanted to master based on their individual needs,
- Employment – provided various opportunities for students to read and write,

- Approximations – used by students as they engaged in talk and took risks,
- Response and feedback – suggested repeating students' incorrect statements by using and expanding on the correct form of speech.

Choral reading – two or more students read the same text simultaneously (Shanker & Ekwall, 2003).

Cloze reading procedure – students fill in blanks by saying words in a story after the teacher reads and pauses for their students' response (Shanker & Ekwall, 2003).

Constructivists' view of learning – a combination of what the child already knows and the integration of new knowledge (Temple et al., 2008). Learners were given the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experiences through which they could search for patterns, raise questions, model, interpret, defend strategies and ideas (Fosnot, 2005).

Echo reading – the student repeated what the teacher had read (Shanker & Ekwall, 2003).

Emergent literacy – knowledge of the forms and functions of print and the relationship between written and oral language usually learned in the preschool years (Teale & Sulzby 1986).

Gradual release of responsibility – the gradual transfers of responsibility of a task from teacher to the student (Brown, 2004).

Member checking – verification or extension of information developed by the researcher. Member checking was done by participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Metacognition awareness – being aware of what one knows and what one does not know (Frey & Fisher, 2007).

Metalinguistic awareness – the ability to think about and manipulate the structural features of spoken language (Tunmer, Herriman, & Nesdale, 1988).

Primary grades – primary grades included Pre-K through third grade (Bornfreund, 2013).

Reading comprehension – "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning" (Snow & Sweet, 2003, p. 1).

Reading text levels – the researcher noted the following three levels of text difficulty:

- An easy text (95 to 100% correct),
- An instructional text (90 to 94% correct),
- A hard text (80 to 89% correct) (Clay, 2005, p. 55).

Response to intervention –a three-tiered approach used to help struggling students from prekindergarten through high school and even beyond for students with specialized needs (Boyles, 2009).

Shared reading –a rich "interactive reading experience that can be enjoyed in whole classes, groups, or in pairs as students view the same text that is read by the teacher or an experienced reader to support literacy and comprehension skills" (Short, Kane, & Peeling, 2000, p. 287). Specifically, shared reading was an interactive teaching and learning strategy that engaged all students as they enjoyed reading out loud from the same text *with* a teacher or proficient reader in a nonthreatening environment (Harp, 1993).

Triangulation – involved using multiple sources to confirm emerging findings, such as observations, field notes, audiotapes, and documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Vocabulary – words that were used to communicate effectively: expressive vocabulary (words used in speaking) and receptive vocabulary (words used in listening) (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009). "Vocabulary is simply all the words a person knows" (Martin & Emfinger, 2008, p. 14).

Reading vocabulary – words we understand when we read (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006).

Writing vocabulary – words used during writing (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006).

Researcher's Educational Philosophy of Literacy

The researcher believed children must be given opportunities to enjoy learning in a safe and risk-free environment as they became independent readers, writers, thinkers, and learners (Holdaway, 1979). The researcher believed teachers must possess a genuine love and interest in children when they planned and engaged them in authentic learning experiences through the use of appropriately selected texts (Mooney, 1990). Rich text introductions were important in providing children with opportunities to make predictions and use prior knowledge as they read for enjoyment with teachers and peers (Clay, 1998). The researcher also believed it was important for teachers to use language to help students focus on specific learning tasks during scaffolding (Bruner, 1962; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991).

Children do not think like adults (Piaget, 1955). As children interacted with the environment, they constructed their own understanding of the world (Piaget, 1955). Children learn when they socially interact with teachers, peers, and others (Vygotsky, 1978). The Seven Conditions of Literacy Learning were important in primary grades to promote literacy instruction and to develop life-long learners (Cambourne, 1995).

Significance of the Study

Every student must be given an opportunity to succeed in school. Comprehension was essential to that success and in the development of reading abilities (NRP, 2000). The need for explicit and systematic instruction in vocabulary and comprehension strategies along with three other key components to reading were reported by the NRP (2000). Much research had been done on phonemic awareness and decoding, but explicit instruction in other aspects of reading development were equally important and had not been studied as thoroughly. In order to comprehend text, it was essential for students to know the meaning of words and how to read actively. Therefore, the use of shared reading to enhance vocabulary could be a strong contributor to reading comprehension (NRP, 2000).

A student's vocabulary was a predictor of successful reading in third, fourth, and fifth grades (Diamond, 2010; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; O'Leary, Cockburn, Powell, & Diamond, 2001). Findings from this study were used to offer suggestions and guidance to primary teachers, reading coaches, and administrators in similar situations when making pedagogical decisions to support instructional practices of shared reading (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Assumptions of the Study

A major assumption of this single case study was that the primary grade teachers were willing to participate in the study. Another assumption was that the primary grade teachers implemented shared reading in their classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

The narrow focus of this study was limited to seven teachers in one urban school district in the southeastern United States. The seven teachers were in the same urban public school system; therefore, generalizations to other research settings cannot be made of this study. However, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), findings may be transferable to a southeastern urban school system setting.

Yin (2009) noted that researchers must ask questions to find out what participants are thinking. Pertinent questions may have been omitted by this researcher, which may have resulted in not obtaining relevant experiences of the participants. Furthermore, qualitative research was subjective. According to Hatch (2002), "qualitative research is as interested in inner states as outer expressions of human activity. Because these inner states are not directly observable, qualitative researchers must rely on subjective judgments to bring them to light" (p. 9). Participants in this study described their practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system. Because the researcher served as the instrument of data collection and analysis, interpretation of results may have reflected potential bias during the study (Yin, 2009).

Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

The philosophical foundation for qualitative research was built on constructivism. "Constructivism begins with the premise that the human world is different from the natural, physical world and therefore, must be studied differently" (Patton, 2002, p. 96). A paradigm or worldview consists of beliefs guided by actions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested philosophical assumptions guided qualitative research. Qualitative researchers' beliefs varied according to philosophical assumptions, which included: ontology, epistemology, axiology, casual linkages, or inductive logic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ontology was based on beliefs and assumptions that multiple realities exist because researchers view the world from their own perspectives (Hatch, 2002). The researcher believed individuals were unique and had different experiences and backgrounds. Therefore, they shared different beliefs about the world in various ways. Different perspectives were illustrated in the quotes of participants. The researcher used participants' real words, and discovered themes that emerged from specific evidence relative to the participants' perspective.

Epistemology was based on the assumption that researchers and participants collaboratively constructed reality in the participants' environment (Hatch, 2002). The researcher agreed with the assumption, and reflected her belief through the establishment of a close relationship with the participants prior to the one-on-one interviews. The rapport helped the researcher build mutual trust and allowed the participants to feel comfortable in their setting during interviews and observations (Hatch, 2002).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that an axiological assumption provided an opportunity for researchers to acknowledge participant's values as well as their own. They further noted that an axiological assumption was grounded on the belief that all research was based on the researchers' value system, paradigm, and the researcher and or participants' social and cultural norms. The researcher must be reflexive in echoing the values, assumptions, and biases in the research. Therefore, the researchers' biases were reported in the study (Merriam, 1998).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted the naturalistic version of causal linkage and expressed, “All entities are in a state of simultaneous shaping so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects” (p. 38). The researcher believed primary grade teachers’ practice during shared reading would directly affect the way teachers built students’ vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. This was connected to causal linkage (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lastly, inductive logic was viewed as probable interference with respect to mind created actions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researchers’ logic was inductive and thus evident in the exploration of patterns and themes. The researcher began research by exploring the data. After revisiting the central question throughout the study, the researcher logically determined what could be derived from the given data. Themes and sub-themes were obtained from the researchers’ interpretation of the data. However, other interpretations could possibly be made concerning the data.

Organization of the Study

This single qualitative case study was divided into five chapters. The first chapter included an introduction, purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, theoretical framework, definitions of terms, researchers’ educational philosophy of literacy, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, limitations of the study, philosophical assumptions of the study, organization of the study, and a summary of chapter one. Chapter two included a review of the literature, theoretical traditions, historical background of shared reading, original applications of shared reading, best practices and implementation of shared reading, various descriptions of shared reading, building comprehension, building vocabulary, and a summary.

Comprehension instruction and vocabulary instruction were also included in chapter two. Chapter three included a qualitative research approach, tradition approach to qualitative inquiry, case study, purpose of the study, participants, research site, data collection, data analysis, establishing trustworthiness, ethical considerations, role of the researcher, and a summary. Chapter four included the findings of the study, phases of data analysis, setting, participants, themes, subthemes, and a summary. Chapter five included the discussion for the study. It was organized in six sections: major themes and sub-themes, research questions answered, implications, implications for future research, implications for practice, and findings.

Summary

The use of shared reading as a comprehension strategy was well documented (Brown, 2004; Holdaway, 1979; National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008; Ness, 2011). Shared reading was linked to vocabulary and comprehension (Brown, 2004). It was developed from the concept of parents reading bedtime stories to their children (Holdaway, 1979). Shared reading was a social interactive process that included scaffolding, attention to the zone of proximal development, and the gradual release of responsibility (Brown, 2004). Chapter one introduced the issue of shared reading and its link between vocabulary and comprehension instruction to support student engagement and language. Little research had described primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. The need for explicit and systematic instruction in vocabulary and comprehension along with three other key components to reading was reported by the NRP (2000). Research

questions, definitions of terms, and limitations of the study were also included in chapter one. A review of the literature was addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Learning to read and write ought to be one of the most joyful and successful human undertakings.

(Holdaway, 1979, p. 11)

Chapter two presented a review of the literature for the study. It was divided into eight sections: theoretical traditions, historical background of shared reading, original applications of shared reading, best practices of shared reading, an implementation of shared reading, various descriptions of shared reading, building comprehension, and building vocabulary. The review of the literature ends with a broad summary of chapter two.

Shared reading was linked to vocabulary and comprehension (Brown, 2004). It could be effectively implemented as the teacher provided explanations of words in context, which led to students' understanding and applications of words (Brown, 2004). Teachers could view and read texts with students to help them highlight main ideas, summarize, and learn new vocabulary.

"Comprehension was involved in all reading and writing of continuous text, even in a one-sentence message. It is often reserved in educational writing for the text or discourse level of understanding" (Clay, 2001, p. 107). "Comprehension is a thinking process" (Tompkins, 2006, p. 223). It was the primary goal of reading (Clay, 1991; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005). Metacognition was referred to as "readers own awareness of their cognitive and motivational processes while

reading and the actions they use to monitor comprehension" (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002, p. 249).

Delaying comprehension and vocabulary instruction was believed to cause irremediable harm (Teale et al., 2007). The current widespread push for reading intervention recognized some students fell behind in phonics and fluency instruction; however, comprehension and vocabulary were also important in understanding complex text and cannot be overlooked.

Theoretical Traditions

Shared reading could be used to unlock text meaning while simultaneously integrating the application of strategies such as predicting, questioning the text, and inferring. Word-level strategies could also be applied to student learning in other texts (Brown, 2004). Don Holdaway (1979) suggested that students had the potential "to teach themselves within a properly supported environment" (p. 7).

Many educators focused only on Piaget's stages of cognitive development rather than his contributions to constructivism (Kamii, 1991). However, Piaget and Vygotsky's theory of child thinking was evident in metacognition. Piaget (1977) theorized that peers challenged one another's theory and thus advancing cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) speculated that children develop the capacity for self-regulation through interaction with more knowledgeable peers or teachers.

Piaget's theory: Constructivism. According to Piaget (1973), constructivism and the idea of autonomy should be the aim of education. Piaget's theory explained *how* human beings constructed knowledge. He asserted that children's knowledge was constructed by "constructing it from the inside, in interaction with the environment"

(Kamii 1991, p. 18). Kirkland, Aldridge, and Kuby (2007) also noted, "Children construct knowledge from the inside out by interacting with their environment" (p. 2).

Autonomy means the "*ability* to make decisions for oneself between right and wrong in the moral realm and between truth and untruth in the intellectual realm, by taking relevant factors into account, independent of reward and punishment" (Kamii & Kato, 2006, p. 236). Morally autonomous people cannot be manipulated with reward or punishment. Intellectually autonomous people judge for themselves what is true and untrue. In relationship of autonomy to education, teachers avoided imposing *right* and *wrong* answers. Rather, children were encouraged to make their own decisions and construct high levels of thinking through their mental actions (i.e., their thinking). The more children thought actively, the more they developed intellectually and morally. Piaget (1952) argued, "It seems impossible to deny that environmental pressures play an essential role in the development of intelligence" (p. 359).

Piaget (1969) asserted that in all cultures, children's spontaneous vocalizations become evident between 6 and 11 months. Imitation of phonemes were evident in children between 11 and 12 months. During their second year of life, children use two-word sentences and short complete sentences. Piaget (1977) noted that, "Language serves multiple functions that develop with age" (p. 65). The functions of child language was divided into two large groups: the egocentric and the socialized (Piaget, 1955). The following three categories were evident in egocentric speech: repetition, monologue, and collective monologue. Initially, language was repetitive and echolalic. Echolalia involved the child parroting what he had heard from the speech of others. The child experienced pleasure in repeating words and syllables, which was similar to babbling.

Secondly, speech was egocentric as the child became more interested in his or her own language productions, while repeating words in a pleasurable manner. This monologue of thinking aloud was evident when the child talked to himself. Children were stimulated by the presence of others as they produced language. In collective monologue, children talk only about themselves without regards to their hearers' point of view.

Piaget (1955) emphasized that socialized speech included adapted information, criticism, commands, questions, and answers. In adapted information, the child exchanged thoughts with others and adopted the point of view of his hearer (Piaget, 1955). Criticism represented all comments made about the behavior of others. Commands, requests, and threats represent interaction between two children. Questions asked by children among themselves require an answer and are represented as socialized speech. Answers to real questions were given during conversations. Piaget (1955) indicated adults convey a different mode of thought by means of speech (Piaget, 1955). Piaget (1977) further indicated that explanations given in conversations among children who are six to eight years old reveal that they do not adapt explanations to fit the viewpoint of others. For example, a child tells a story without using sequence because the story is told as the child remembers it. Children think differently from adults. As children interact with the environment, they uniquely construct their own understanding of the world (Piaget, 1955). Piaget's idea of autonomy was related to learning to read as children independently read stories that have been reread by the teacher.

Vygotskian theory: Shared reading. The relationship of learning and development remain unclear, but the relationship of learning and child development has

been narrowed down to three major theoretical viewpoints. The first theoretical viewpoint was based on the idea that child development was independent of learning. The second theoretical viewpoint was based on the position that learning was development. The third theoretical viewpoint was that the relationship between learning and development was combined (Vygotsky, 1978). In *Mind and Society*, Vygotsky (1978) presented a theoretical view of learning relative to the interaction between learning development that rejected all three of these viewpoints. Vygotsky's rejection of all three viewpoints; however, led to his theory of the zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky (1978) explained that learning included the developmental level. The completed developmental cycle was determined by what a child could do with the assistance of a teacher or more experienced other. Vygotsky called this level that included assistance "the zone of proximal development." In shared reading, children read a text along with an adult, who provide needed support and assistance. Reading instruction provided through the shared reading technique offered a zone of proximal development for beginning readers.

Shared reading grew out of the notion of parents reading bedtime stories to children (Holdaway, 1979). However, it became a teaching approach based on the learning process of social interaction (Brown, 2004). Three learning processes that were supported by social interaction support shared reading included: the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and the gradual release of responsibility (Brown, 2004).

Vygotsky (1978) theorized that social interaction with others was an essential element in the learning process and the development of a child's thinking abilities. The interaction between adult and child was important, because without adult assistance the

child might not have made progress. According to Vygotsky's social interactive theory, cognitive development was enhanced when a child's needs benefited from the support of an adult.

Vygotsky (1978) defined the zone of proximal development as the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Vygotsky (1978) further noted the following:

> The Zone of Proximal Development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed the *buds* or *flowers* of development rather than the *fruits* of development. (p. 86)

Tharp and Gallimore (1991) have defined a four-stage model for learning that reflects the zone of proximal development relative to how children develop speech and language.

- Stage I: Performance is assisted by more capable others.
- Stage II: Performance is assisted by the learner.
- Stage III: Performance is developed, automatized, and fossilized.
- Stage IV: The first three stages are repeated because of new levels of difficulty or regression from lack of use (pp. 33-37).

In Tharp and Gallimore's Stage I, students must rely on adults or another capable individual before they can function independently on an outside-regulated task. The amount of assistance needed depended on the age of the student and the complexity of the task. As the student observed the modeling of a teacher or more capable individual, he or she began to understand the relationship of the task and connects it with a

previously learned activity. This understanding is developed as the student and teacher engage in conversation while the task is being performed. The teacher questions the student and offers feedback as the student expresses an understanding of the task. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) and Bruner (1983) developed this process of questioning and feedback, known as scaffolding, to emphasize the role of the teacher. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the task and subject matter and about the child's level of understanding in order to provide prompt assistance to the student. Adult responsibility decreases during this stage and moves to self-regulation as the student asks questions and gradually assumes the responsibility for completion of the task (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991).

In Stage II, the student independently completes a task. However, the task may not be fully developed by the student. This stage consists of a relationship with language, thought, and action. The important phase of this stage is when the students' behavior is directed by their self-speech. The students' self-speech could include writing, which was the highest form of literate communication (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991).

Stage III was dominated by self-regulation. In stage III, the student moves from the zone of proximal development into the developmental stage of a specific task. The student is able to easily execute and integrate the task without assistance from the teacher or the use of self-speech. In this stage, "assistance" from the teacher is irritating because the student can independently perform the task (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). This stage was illustrated as the *fruits* of development (Vygotsky, 1978).

In the final stage, Stage IV, control is totally shifted from the teacher to the student. Lifelong learning could be characterized by the ZPD sequences, which move

from teacher assistance to self-assistance. As new learning becomes evident, the recurrence of teacher assistance to self-assistance becomes a naturally occurring experience. A student could be in the zone of proximal development for a task and in the developmental stage for another task (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991).

Scaffolding was closely related Vygotsky's learning process through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Researchers Wood et al. (1976) first used the educational term *scaffolding*. The researchers defined scaffolding as the "process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). Almost 20 years later, Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998) defined scaffolding as "a process whereby a teacher monitors students' learning carefully and steps in to provide assistance on an as-needed basis" (p.116). During scaffolding, adults respond to students' problems by guiding them to focus on important areas of learning. Teachers assist students on learning how to independently focus on specific tasks. As teachers scaffold learning, students are provided with many opportunities to construct new knowledge that they would not have learned without the teachers' help (Bruner, 1962; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). According to students' needs, scaffolding can be increased or decreased. This support is similar to the idea of parents' providing support for their children as they learn to ride a bike (Brown, 2004). Social interaction and scaffolding are approaches that are evident in the social-constructivist learning theory (Bruner, 1983), and the practice of shared reading.

The gradual release of responsibility model for learning was also connected to Vygotsky's learning process of social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Gradual release was defined as the "change that occurs as the teacher carefully withdraws support as the

responsibility for learning shifts from the teacher to the student" (Brown, 2004, p. 10). The gradual release of responsibility begins with the teacher modeling a task (Weaver, 2002). The teacher engages the student in guided practice as they both assume the responsibility of completing the task. Next, the student moves at his or her own pace. The teacher gradually releases responsibility to allow time for the student to independently practice the task (Weaver, 2002).

Shared reading mirrored Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) concept of the gradual release of responsibility. Teachers initially provide strong support by reading aloud to students. The teacher then models how good readers use metacognition to gain meaning from the text. Metacognition was defined as "thinking about one's thinking" (Frey & Fisher, 2007), which included using strategies to help students get unstuck, such as self-questioning and self-monitoring, when experiencing problems in the text. During shared reading, teachers provide support as needed to help students independently use strategies. The strategies modeled during shared reading could be used to make meaning of any piece of text (Brown, 2004).

Shared reading can be linked to Vygotsky's theory. Learning is not limited to a child's developmental level, but by what he can do with the assistance of a teacher or experienced other (Bodrova & Leong, 2006; Tompkins, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) initiated the concept of the zone of proximal development. Scaffolding and gradual release were consistent with Vygotsky's theory of learning through social interaction (Brown, 2004; Tharp, Gallimore, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). Modeling, scaffolding, and gradual release of responsibility were the constituent elements of shared reading.

Cambourne's theory: Seven conditions of literacy learning. Cambourne (1995) identified core theoretical assumptions of constructivism in what he defined as "The Seven Conditions of Literacy Learning." These seven conditions included immersion, demonstration, expectations, responsibility, employment, approximation, and response. Cambourne (1995) studied each condition that must be present for students to learn. His seven conditions of literacy learning included a rich literature environment of reading and writing to, with, and by students. He further noted that the seven conditions of literacy learning could be transformed to literacy instruction within primary grades. During *immersion*, teachers saturate students' environment with language and literate behaviors. At birth, young children are surrounded by language. Parents and teachers engage students in the language of the culture with sounds, meanings, and rhythms of the language. Immersion also involved teachers engaging students in multiple opportunities to read and write and to hear various kinds of texts read aloud (Cambourne, 1995).

Demonstration provided infinite opportunities for students to learn language through parent and teacher modeling. Daily demonstration included student introduction to new text and pointing to words in texts as the teacher reads them. Justice and Ezell (2004) noted that in order to facilitate language and literacy, "Print referencing should be used to be sensitive to and responsive to a child's skills and interests" (p. 190). Print referencing consisted of nonverbal and verbal behaviors. Nonverbal references included pointing to print and tracking. Verbal references included questions, comments, and requests about print (2004). Although difficult to pinpoint, print referencing conversations should be within the students' zone of proximal development and are a positive element of shared reading (2004).

Metalinguistic awareness was increased as children engaged in print referencing during shared reading. Metalinguistic awareness was defined as the "ability to think about and manipulate the structural features of spoken language" (Tunmer et al., 1988, p. 136). Metalinguistic ability was divided into four categories: phonological and word, syntactic, and pragmatic awareness (Lightsey & Frye, 2004). Phonological and word awareness referred to the ability to think about and use phonemes and words. Syntactic awareness was the ability to think about the structure of language. The final category, pragmatic awareness, involved the purposes for which we use language (p. 29). In a well-balanced literacy program, each category plays an important role in language learning (2004). Lightsey and Frye (2004) emphasized that, "Children need to learn how new knowledge works in addition to acquiring language skills" (p. 28). The authors added that, "Children learn about language through social interaction" (p. 28). Engagement and social interaction are important.

Engagement was evident when students interacted with text during immersion and teacher demonstration. Engagement added to the purpose of students' lives as they performed without fear of physical hurt if their actions or responses are not fully correct (Cambourne, 1995). Cambourne's notions of immersion and teacher demonstrations with student engagement reflected Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and the notions of scaffolding as described by Wood et al. (1976).

Expectations were messages teachers communicated to their students. Students benefit from environments where teachers have high expectations of them (Cambourne, 1995). Geekie, Cambourne, and Fitzsimmons (1999) indicated students would grow with words in their own time because they believed in their own ability to grow and learn.

Shared reading at the emergent literacy stage builds this confidence by allowing beginners to participate in reading behaviors early in the learning process.

Responsibility provided students with choices to decide on what conventions of language they wanted to master based on their individual needs. Teachers helped students direct their own language learning. When young children first learn to talk, grammatical structures are mastered at different ages. However, most students master grammatical structures by age six and a half. Geekie et al. (1999) further indicated that students retain language from information better and faster when they are engaged in topics of interest to them. This engagement could promote a love for reading. Cambourne's idea of responsibility reflected the concept of gradual release of responsibility described by Weaver (2002).

Employment provided various opportunities for students to read and write. Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in an abundance of reading and writing. Two kinds of opportunities are needed to help students' language develop: social interaction with other users of language and language interactions with self (Cambourne, 1995; Piaget, 1955). This need for interaction with the self is reminiscent of Vygotsky's description of "self-talk" as a necessary step in moving from the zone of proximal development into actual development.

Approximation in speech was used by students as they engaged in talk and took risks. Student approximation was encouraged during oral and written language (Cambourne, 1995). In shared reading, students approximated a rendition of the text by joining in when they could and dropping back when the support of other readers and/or the teacher was needed.

Response and feedback suggested repeating students' incorrect statements by using and expanding on the correct form of speech. The non-corrective form of speech registers in student's memory as they hear it spoken correctly by the teacher. During this expansion, students actively construct language and encourage student approximation (Cambourne, 1995).

Historical Background of Shared Reading

Don Holdaway: Shared reading. Shared reading was an instructional technique originated in New Zealand by Don Holdaway. Holdaway (1979) developed the idea of shared reading as a group instructional technique that mirrored lap reading when parents read bedtime stories to their children. This joyful experience was a special time for parents to read to their children in a safe and warm environment. Children listened with pleasure as no demands were made on them and parents received gratification as they bonded with their children. Holdaway believed that beginning reading instruction that was similar to the bedtime story experience provided many opportunities for successful learning.

Holdaway (1979) declared schools universally had not reached their goal of providing a literate society and that all kinds of resources had been put into the effort of helping children who had failed. He suggested, "Instead of setting up expensive and wasteful remedial programs with a whole new establishment to support them in their inescapable efforts of grinding the indignity deeper, we should find a preventive solution" (p. 12). Holdaway (1979) suggested shared reading literacy transactions be implemented as the center of literacy instruction in the classroom. "Shared book experience," often called shared reading, was used to describe Holdaway's approach to

maintaining and developing language techniques that were experienced during bedtime stories. Holdaway (1979) further suggested that in order for shared reading or any teaching to occur, the environment must be conducive to learning. In a conducive learning environment, skills are modeled by teachers and effectively practiced by students. Holdaway (1979) concluded that if the environment was not conducive to learning, the resulting ineffective teaching led to failure.

Holdaway (1979) described the three stages of a new literacy experience: *discovery*, *exploration*, and *independent experience and expression*. The first stage, *discovery*, involved a book introduction. The main purpose of the book introduction was for enjoyment. The child interacted with the text without experiencing pressure. In a classroom setting, children used background knowledge to make predictions as they became familiar with text vocabulary. The second stage, *exploration*, involved rereading. In a home setting, the child asked his or her parents to read the same story again and again. In a classroom setting, children view and read long with the teacher the same text multiple times. During these readings, the teacher points to each word. Concepts of print, such as how text is read top to bottom and left to right, are developed. Strategies for solving the problems in the texts were presented to children within whole and meaningful texts. The third stage, *independent experience and expression*, involved children engaging in role-playing, spending time reading and creating expressions of meanings from the text. In a classroom setting, students engage in social interaction relative to the arts and writing as they independently interpret text.

Marie Clay: Reading recovery and shared reading. In addition to Holdaway's (1979) original idea of shared reading, other research-based ideas were important in the

history of shared reading in the United States. Marie Clay's Reading Recovery intervention for individual children was introduced through the Ohio State University Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative (Holdaway, 1979).

In 1967, Marie Clay was asked by the Inspector of New Zealand Schools to help the educational system find solutions to the literacy problems in the inner city and suburb (Holdaway, 1979). This request was made because of the problem with learning to read among the large migration of people from different islands of the Pacific basin and the indigenous Maori people. The islanders brought with them a rich Polynesian culture and the Maori population emerged from their rural isolation. Educators from the University of Auckland and from classrooms were enlisted to assist in solving the literacy problem. For 10 years, shared book experiences were used to provide enjoyment of rich literature to the young learners. The developmental research in literacy learning conducted by Marie Clay, an instructor at the University of Auckland, was beneficial because she stressed the importance of child watching and monitoring by classroom teachers and children's self-correction during literacy learning. She was the most quoted authority in *The Foundations of Literacy* (Holdaway, 1979).

Clay (1993) affirmed that two assumptions were relevant to a reading intervention. The first assumption was that instruction for children experiencing difficulty learning to read should be based on teachers' detailed observations of their reading and writing. Clay (1993) further suggested that teachers observe students' progress during the early reading stage.

She asserted that:

> There must be times when the teacher stops teaching and becomes an observer, a time when she must drop all her presuppositions about what this child is like, and when she listens carefully and records very precisely what the child can in fact do. To prevent reading failure teachers must have time to observe what children are able to do. (p. 3)

The second assumption was that such instruction is based on teachers' knowledge of "how children who become readers learn to read and how children who become writers learn to write" (Clay 1993, p. 7).

In 1984, Gay Su Pinnell and Charlotte Huck through the Ohio State University introduced Clay's intervention, Reading Recovery (Ohio State University, 2012). Clay, a New Zealander, researcher, educator, and original designer, along with Barbara Watson, introduced Reading Recovery to the reading faculty at Ohio State University and sixteen public educators (Lyons, 1998). The first three trainers for Clay's intervention for individual struggling readers in the United States were Gay Su Pinnell, Carol Lyons, and Diane DeFord (Ohio State University, 2012).

The early intervention program was designed to provide intensive individual instruction and assistance to the lowest performing first grade students in six elementary schools in Ohio. During the first year of implementation, teachers simultaneously learned the program. Data at the end of the year showed 67% of the lowest-achieving children developed effective reading and writing strategies. After 12 to 20 weeks of intensive one-to-one instruction, children reached the average academic level of their peers (Lyons, 1998).

The successful results of the pilot were reported in July 1985. The data led the Ohio General Assembly to start implementing the program in every school within the

state. By 1987, Reading Recovery was implemented in 182 school districts throughout the state of Ohio. Long-term benefits became evident after two years of implementing Reading Recovery in Ohio.

Funding from the Ohio Department of Education and the General Assembly continued. Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders participated in ongoing professional development for 12 years (Lyons, 1998). Reading Recovery was recognized in 1987 as a model research-based program that became available to other school districts across the United States. During the 1987-1988 academic year, four teachers attended the University of Ohio to receive training in Reading Recovery. They returned to their states to implement the program. In 1996-1997 the program was operating in 48 states across the United States (Lyons, 1998).

The Reading Recovery intervention was designed for teachers working one-to-one with individual struggling readers. In 1984, the Ohio State University developed the Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative, which is now called the Literacy Collaborative (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The Literacy Collaborative was designed for group implementation in a classroom. The developers of the framework included Reading Recovery teachers and trainers who organized eight research-based components. The eight components included reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Oral language was the foundation of the eight components.

In 1987, the Literacy Collaborative team met weekly at Ohio State University to share and analyze students' reading behavior. Eventually, they used videotaping to observe and analyze their own teaching. The framework was revised by Ohio State University

personnel after their "hands-on" approach of observing and working in first grade classrooms with small groups of children. During the formal training of Literacy Collaborative teachers, selected tapes were viewed and used as protocol to observe the reading behavior of students.

The Literacy Framework for Early Literacy Learning was a planning and organizing tool for teachers. Teachers' own learning was important in the literacy framework. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) noted as teachers used the framework, the following factors were considered:

- The strengths, needs, and the experiences of the children they are teaching;
- The nature of materials they have and can acquire;
- The requirements of the curriculum;
- Their own experiences, background, and level of confidence (p. 41).

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) further stated a framework for literacy "is a way of thinking about the range of reading and writing activities that are essential for promoting early literacy" (p. 21). It was useful in guiding teachers as they integrated early literacy across the content area. The framework for literacy was implemented in grades one through three. Using oral language was the foundation of the primary curriculum (Fountas & Pinnell 1996, p. 21). Quality classroom conversation between teachers and students were essential to the implementation of the framework. Conversations included the following:

- Making statements and asking questions
- Elaborating and explaining
- Listening and responding

- Expanding other's ideas
- Taking turns
- Thinking about and respecting alternative meanings
- Replacing and restating ideas
- Using language to investigate and wonder
- Enjoying and sharing the play of language through poetry, rhyme, and humor (Fountas & Pinnell 1996, p. 25).

In the Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative, children used language to learn new concepts and teachers used language to demonstrate different ways to help children use language. Each component of the literacy framework required various levels of control. For example, shared reading was a part of balanced learning, which required the child to share control with the teacher (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

In the Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative, shared reading had a role in creating a community of readers who experience pleasure from reading together. Studies by Sulzby (1985), Pappas and Brown (1987), and Martinez and Roser (1985) provided evidence of the early thinking and development of shared reading as a standard classroom practice. Each study illustrated emergent readers' reading behavior of storybooks, reading patterns, and repeated reading that is evident in preschools.

A longitudinal study by Sulzby (1985) reported how children of the same age read different books. The research included two different studies. Study I included 24 kindergarten emergent readers without formal instruction in reading and writing. The emergent readers were from a middle-class suburban city in the Midwest, which consisted of 13 boys and 11 girls. The children were interviewed individually to assess

their general knowledge of written language. After analyzing transcriptions, the findings showed an increase in two types of reading behavior: attempts governed by print and attempts governed by pictures. There was a decrease in attempts governed by pictures without formed stories. Study II examined the reading attempts of emergent readers in a private day care with children ages two through four. In four sessions, the students read two books per session. Participant's reading remained stable during the course of the study. However, the study revealed a limited amount of data.

Socioeconomic data for judging literacy development was also found to be irrelevant due to the varying enrollment of the private day care during the year. Findings showed reasonable reading stability across storybooks. The researcher reported children who were read to by their parents and others read conventionally before formal instruction in school. The researcher further reported storybook reading development, which consisted of two main categories: interactional research and independent functioning. Interactional research focused on linguistic and non-linguistic activities interactions between parent and child. Teacher-child interactions focused on how teachers read books and how children engaged in books read by teachers. Independent functioning included "reading attempts" made by children as they attempted to read to adults. The acquisition of reading involved transforming oral language to written language. Limitations of the study suggested that much more thought needs to be devoted to investigating emergent reading. Additionally, care must be used when interpreting children's reading behavior of storybooks.

Pappas and Brown (1987) revealed that young children's development and understanding of writing was an essential element in becoming literate. Children gain

basic insight of written language by hearing it read aloud (Holdaway, 1979). Children learn the conventions of writing as they engage in repetitive experiences with their favorite books. Emergent readers "act-out" or pretend to read books that have been read to them by adults or an experienced other (Holdaway, 1979).

Pappas and Brown (1987) researched the reading-like behavior of a pre-reading public school kindergarten student named Andrea. Strategies used to secure understanding with typical language of written stories were also examined. The teacher read the same picture storybook to five-year-old Andrea on three consecutive days. After each reading, Andrea was asked to read the story. Her reading patterns showed attempts to understand social conflict, plans, and actions of the story characters. Findings from the study showed an increase in Andrea's tokens across three readings. Tokens were referred to as Andrea substituted responses of original words located in the written text of the picture storybook. Andrea's reading patterns were similar to that of other kindergarteners in her classroom, as she learned to read by reading (Pappas & Brown, 1987).

Martinez and Roser (1985) conducted a case study that investigated how children's response to text changed as they became familiar with stories. Studies were conducted in homes and preschools. Four-year-old children were read three unfamiliar stories six times by an adult. Their "talk was classified according to form (whether the talk was a question, comment, or answer), and focus (whether the talk was directed toward the story's title, characters, events, details, setting, language, or theme)" (p. 783). Findings revealed children in both home and preschool settings engaged in more talk after parents' and teachers' repeated readings of familiar stories. Martinez and Roser (1985) reported, "When a parent or teacher reads the same story to children several times,

the children begin to attend to different aspects of the story than they did on the first reading" (p. 782). Exposing children to good books for reading aloud is beneficial; however, repeated readings of familiar books during story time is also beneficial (Martinez & Roser, 1985).

Original Application of Shared Reading

Early childhood: Preschool and emergent readers. Preschool and emergent readers gain literacy from teachers during shared reading experiences (Justice & Lankford, 2002). Teachers of typically developing preschoolers and emergent readers can promote emergent literacy by engaging children in conversations about print during shared reading and by asking questions about the story and illustrations (Whitehurst et al., 1988). Preschoolers with mild physical disabilities (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005) and mild intellectual disabilities can also benefit from shared reading (Katims, 1991).

A quantitative study by Box and Aldridge (1993) illustrated the use of shared reading using predictable books with at-risk preschoolers to promote emergent literacy in a Head Start program. Different models have analyzed the importance of shared reading in Head Start. Box and Aldridge (1993) emphasized a need for additional studies that focused on specific teaching strategies implemented by Head Start teachers. Box and Aldridge's (1993) results indicated children who engaged in shared reading experiences scored higher on Concepts About Print (CAP) tests than two groups of children who were not instructed using the method of shared reading. The treated group engaged in shared reading using predictable books with their teachers. Control group participants engaged in traditional basal activities, which included unit work and learning centers. Placebo group participants engaged in movement activities with their classroom teacher. Results

revealed differences in scores on Clay's (1985) Concepts About Print (CAP) test and Early School Inventory – Preliteracy (Nurss & McGauvran, 1987). However, no differences were noted in scores on understanding story structure, which is related to the development of comprehension.

Parents also engaged their preschoolers and emergent readers in shared reading through informal lap or bedtime story reading. Holdaway (1979) reported preschoolers with background book experiences were likely to experience the following benefits: continue their quest for literacy upon entering school, develop high expectations of print, build a set of oral models for the language of books, become familiar with written symbols, understand the complex conventions of direction and position in print, and learn to listen for long periods of time.

Holdaway (1979) reported reading-like behavior of bedtime stories of students from studies conducted between 1969 and 1974 in Auckland, New Zealand. His results indicated a link between shared reading and the development of listening comprehension. Results from selected transcripts of the following four students: Leslie, David, Robyn, and Emelia, were reported. Leslie, a four year old, had a story, *Where the Wild things Are* (Sendak, 1963), read to her four times. Her re-enactment of the story illustrated her understanding by the use of proper language. She understood that print, not the pictures, holds the message. She also knew where to start reading and illustrated precision when turning pages during her re-enactment of the story. Leslie demonstrated remembering the plot as she used her verbal inventory during the re-enactment of the story.

Leslie also illustrated her understanding of the story as she transformed her speech:

> till Max said, BE STILL! that's what he said. One of these ones have toes (turns the page to find the toed monster) Toes! (Laughs) until Max said, BE STILL! into all the yellow eyes without blinking once. And all the wild things said, You wild thing! (p. 41)

David, a two-year-old boy in Holdaway's study, was read a book, *Are You My Mother?* (Eastman, 2003). Appealingly, David used baby grammar as he re-enacted the action on each page of the book. David's excitement was illustrated as he told the plot of the story. The same book was read to a two and a half year old preschool student named Robyn. She used a stick to beat to the rhythms throughout the book. She later experienced difficulty with syntax. Both David and Robyn remembered less on the surface level, but their level of meaning was firmly rooted. Emelia, aged three and a half, also re-enacted the story, *Are You My Mother?* (Eastman, 2003). She used automatic time fillers as she consciously organized the structure of the text. Time fillers are automatic predictive devices such as false starts and repetitions consciously used by readers to organize upcoming text structure (Holdaway, 1979). For example, Emelia used "Dere" at the beginning of two sentences in an effort to consciously organize upcoming text structure. She also used the words, "And the" at the beginning of a sentence to continue to organize upcoming text structure. This strategy was useful when text became difficult or when the confidence of the child was low. However, these time fillers should not be interpreted as errors during the reading of the text (Holdaway, 1979).

Specific literacy learning was achieved as the above participants interacted with bedtime stories. Observers noted how early reading behaviors were demonstrated as the young children problem-solved through vocalizing and the re-enactment of text.

Holdaway (1979) recognized that most students enter school unprepared for reading because they have not developed their "literacy sets." Specific learning factors in a literacy set include the following: motivational factors, linguistic factors, operational factors, and orthographic factors (Holdaway, 1979). Motivational factors included children's high expectations from print. They are driven by repetitive book experiences and ask for stories to be read. Children also have a curiosity about all forms of print. Linguistic factors included children's high level of semantic processing. "Children learn to use language to talk about things they know; that is thought precedes language" (Trumbull & Farr, 2005, pp. 78-79). A child's language is refined after they reach age five, but language continues to develop at school entry and throughout a lifetime (Trumbull & Farr, 2005). Children learn language best as they socially interact with others (Trumbull & Farr, 2005).

Children's language acquisition and vocabulary are developed from supportive adults reading aloud (Elley, 1997). Children use intonation to express meaning and are familiar with the oral form of written language. Operational factors include children's basic strategies of written language, involving the processes of self-monitoring, making predictions, and understanding structural operations, which include plot, sequence, and logic. Children understand language and use their imagination to produce un-experienced images. Orthographic operations include preschool children's understanding of the traditional conventions of print. However, only a small number of preschoolers obtain all of the orthographic principles because learning the print system is a process that is slowly mastered. At an early age, children develop a curiosity about print. They began to understand meaning comes from print.

Children also develop an understanding about the concepts of print. They experience the concepts of print in different ways as they engage in shared book experiences during the early years with adults (Clay, 1991). Concepts of print factors, such as reading the left page before a right page, from the top of the page downward, and identifying the first letter in words, demonstrate the emergence of literate behavior (Clay, 1993). In emergent reading, the reader focuses on print detail and cues, which leads to true reading. Holdaway (1979) argued that teachers must be careful not to move students into early reading when they have a weak literacy set. He suggested that lap reading and shared reading contribute to the development of the literacy set.

Beyond the emergent reading level: Shared reading. The purpose of shared reading was similar for both younger and older children: to provide an enjoyable reading experience; to increase background knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension skills; and to develop reading strategies through modeling (Fisher et al., 2008). Stahl (2012) indicated, "By the late first grade, most children have mastered important concepts about print, one-to-one matching, and other emergent literacy skills that are easily taught using an enlarged text" (p. 48). Although Holdaway developed shared reading for emergent readers, it is also valuable for older students (Allen, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Teachers used selections to teach word analysis, vocabulary, and punctuation. Students read texts in unison from a personal or an enlarged copy. Texts may include poems, drama, or short stories (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Young children may engage in discussion, questioning, retelling, dramatizations, comprehension, and illustration of stories. Older children engaged in similar activities while viewing the same text that was read by the teacher. Shared reading materials for

older children included magazine articles, newspaper, poetry, short stories, and sections from chapter books (Fisher et al., 2008). Shared reading differs in style and content when implemented in the upper grades. Age-appropriate text was reflected in literature and story-based lessons (Browder, Trela, & Jimenez, 2007). Shared reading was seen as a powerful context from middle second grade through high school where all areas of the reading process were demonstrated (Routman, 2003). Daunis and Iams (2007) noted how they engaged students in simple learning behaviors before moving to the more sophisticated and complex learning behaviors.

Additionally, Enguidanos and Ruiz (2008) described shared reading as a powerful technique used to enhance comprehension, fluency, and confidence in older emergent bilingual students. Although, Enguidanos and Ruiz (2008) initially were reluctant to implement shared reading in his inner-city special education Spanish-English speaking classroom, they found shared reading effective toward helping struggling readers understand various texts. Enguidanos and Ruiz (2008) used themes, rhythm, and prediction to help students connect with poetry. Poetry was a natural occurrence in our lives. The authors noted that poetry gave voice to students' experiences during shared reading. Shared reading, as an instructional technique, was developed for emergent reading instruction. Subsequently, successful variations have been developed for use with older students, special needs students, and English language learners.

Best Practice of Shared Reading

Basic qualities of best practice in reading instruction as defined by Zemelman et al. (2005) include the following eighteen characteristics:

- Reading means getting meaning from print.

- Reading is thinking.
- Hearing books read aloud is a key to learning to read.
- Reading is the best practice for learning to read.
- Beginning reading instruction should provide children with many opportunities to interact with print.
- Children learn to read best in a low-risk environment.
- Basals are not enough.
- Young children should have well-structured instruction in phonics.
- Choice is an integral part of literate behavior.
- Students need easy books.
- Teachers should model reading.
- Effective teachers help children use reading as a tool for learning.
- Teachers should name and teach reading strategies directly.
- Teachers should support readers before, during, and after reading.
- Students should have daily opportunities to talk about their reading.
- Students should spend less time completing reading workbooks and skill sheets.
- Writing experiences are provided at all levels.
- Reading assessment should match classroom practice (pp. 44-49).

Shared reading afforded many opportunities for students to interact with text as they began to learn to read. Shared reading also provided instruction that linked new ideas to a student's prior knowledge and made use of a low-risk environment for instruction. Students listened to stories and engaged in shared reading experiences,

language experience stories, and conversations with teachers and their peers (Zemelman et al., 2005; Zemelman et al., 2012). Using the theory of Holdaway (1979), teachers can begin with fairy tales that are read during lap reading to build on what beginning readers already know, which include rhyme, rhythm, and repetition (Zemelman et al., 2005).

Low-risk environments promoted the best student learning outcomes. A safe environment was evident during shared reading as students took risks and made predictions about stories (Zemelman et al., 2005). Teacher modeling during reading was essential as teachers read along with and to their students. It was important for students to observe what good readers do as teachers joyfully modeled reading in various ways (Zemelman et al., 2005).

When teachers provided support to students before, during, and after reading, the reading abilities of the students improved (Boyles, 2009; Taberski, 2000). This pattern of support helped students to think about their thinking as they constructed meaning about the text, thereby increasing their comprehension. Students could use what they learned to make connections as they read and to build their reading skills and strategies (Zemelman et al., 2005). Shared reading could be used to help students unlock meaning and integrate reading strategies in a text (Brown, 2004).

Best practice for shared reading recommended by Holdaway (1979), Clay (1993), and Fountas and Pinnell (1996) included careful teacher observations of students in a supportive and safe environment. Holdaway (1979) suggested that "an effective learning environment for the acquisition of literacy should be alive with activity which is felt to be deeply purposeful in all the ways of human meaning" (p.14). He indicated that big books (enlarged texts) might be used so that all students could see the text as they shared and

participated in all aspects of reading. He further emphasized the importance of rereading the text in order for students to participate in reading with the teacher and their classmates. The rereading of the text provided many learning opportunities that may have included print concepts, rhyming, recognition of sight words, and making predictions. Some additional practices included: pointing, marking to highlight word beginnings, rhymes or spelling patterns; innovation on structure; cloze procedure; and the alphabetic principal. Pointing helped to match spoken words with written words in the text. Masking devices allowed teachers to highlight specific letters or words which are crucial to the "eye-voice-ear" link, which made print understandable during the early reading stage. Innovation on structure involved slightly changing the structure to create new versions of old favorites such *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, 1992). Cloze procedure allowed children to make predictions of missing words. Positive teaching was illustrated during this procedure because teachers did not discourage students' predictions. The alphabetic principle involved students' recognition of letter-sound relationships.

Some aspects of shared reading best practice were common to best practice for all reading instruction. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) stated that, "If we [educators] don't get it right in the first years of school, many children may never receive the effective education to which they are entitled" (p. 191). "The purpose of guided reading is to enable children to use and develop strategies on the run" (p. 2). One must not assume that children will learn to read just by providing books and encouraging them to explore books. "The process of reading must be dynamically supported by an interaction of text interaction and good teaching" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 9).

Three research studies (Sulzby, 1985; Pappas & Brown, 1987; Martinez & Roser, 1985) have demonstrated effective practices of shared reading. A yearlong longitudinal study by Sulzby (1985) showed evidence of best practice which included young children's reading behaviors as they read storybooks. This study included two studies: one with kindergarten students from a mid-western city in the suburbs and one with preschoolers in a private daycare facility.

Pappas and Brown (1987) reported kindergarteners reread text in order to understand written language. Emergent readers pretend read as they look at pictures and make approximations about texts. Martinez and Roser (1985) revealed that children benefit from repeated readings of familiar stories. Children's oral language is also developed as they attend to various aspects of familiar stories.

Text selection for shared reading. Mooney (1990) recognized that teachers' careful selection of text during shared reading afforded students many opportunities to be successful as they became convinced in their roles as readers and writers. Students became co-readers and co-writers as they actively engaged in selected texts. When teachers accept student approximations, students feel empowered and become involved in the text. Teachers' careful selection of text also provided opportunities for students to authentically engage in text that was modeled by the teacher. Teachers' gestures such as nodding and smiling encouraged students to join in reading with teachers using the "Three R's," which are rhyme, rhythm, and repetition (Manning, 1997). Mooney (1990) noted student participation is encouraged as teachers read with intonation to encourage oral or "in the head" reading by students. Mooney further noted that texts selected by teachers encouraged students to enjoy reading as they acted as readers and writers.

Teachers must select high-interest texts in order for students to make predictions and construct meaning. Rhyme, rhythm, and repetition were features evident in texts selected by teachers of shared reading. Other key elements include the following:

> the appeal of the book to the child, the appropriateness of the story's shape and structure, the effectiveness of the language, the authenticity of the story, the help illustrations give readers in gaining meaning, and the appropriateness of the book's format. (p. 27)

DeMoulin (2001) affirmed that young children enjoy reading books that rhyme. He showed that the rhyming patterns appeared to increase students' attention spans. Additionally, the use of rhyme was important because:

- Children are intrigued by sentence tempo and flow of words.
- Children become actively involved with rhyming patterns.
- Rhyming helps children identify word families.
- Children love rhyming designs because the sounds are appealing to the ear (p. 117).

Clay (1991) suggested that in order to enhance life-long reading, teachers should carefully select texts to focus on specific reading skills and strategies. Clay (2005) reported three points to consider when selecting text:

- The text must be simple enough for the learner to bring his or her existing competencies to the current task.
- Any and every text will contain phonemic richness.
- The semantic and syntactic richness of the text will allow the learner to bring speaking abilities to the synthesis and analysis of what he is reading (p. 33).

Teachers must carefully choose text that will allow them to focus on a text feature or a specific comprehension strategy (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Books that are chosen are on students' independent or instructional reading level (Frey & Fisher, 2007). The independent level was where the student reads materials on his or her own without support from a teacher or more skillful other. The student should have no more than 4 unknown words in 100. The instructional reading level was where the student learned to read new words with moderate challenges. At this level, the student experience 1 unknown word in 10 by practicing the new strategies without being overwhelmed. At the instructional level, the teacher supports the student by working in his or her zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The frustration reading level was where the student read materials that were too challenging. Materials at this level included more than 1 unfamiliar word in 10. The following criteria represented the three reading levels (Temple et al., 2008):

- Independent level: 97 to 100% the of words are read correctly,
- Instructional level: 90 to 96% of the words are read correctly,
- Frustration level: Fewer than 90% of the words are read correctly (p. 330).

"For learning to occur it is very important to ensure that the difficulty level of the reading materials presents challenges from which the child can learn and not difficulties that disorganize what he already knows" (Clay, 2005, p. 24).

Texts were related to class content and provided explicit illustrations that reflected the strategy or reading behavior of the lesson (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Before teachers read the text, they tell their students what strategy they are modeling. This procedure was modeled throughout the text. During shared reading, words in the texts

were visible to all students no matter where they were seated in the group (Frey & Fisher, 2007). The visibility of the text could be accomplished by using enlarged text, projected text, or individual personal copies.

Students' personal enjoyment was the overall purpose of text selection during shared reading. A "big book" used during shared reading was a *tool* for shared reading and not an approach. The teachers' approach to the text used to support students' active participation was more important than the idea of a "big book" or regular-sized book during shared reading (Mooney, 1990).

Text introduction for shared reading. One of the essential practices of shared reading was the introduction of the text. Clay (1998) recognized that as teachers used rich introductions to introduce new texts, students engaged in the enjoyment of shared reading and were encouraged to become independent readers. The purpose of text introduction was to assist students in successful first readings before engaging them in specific skills or strategies. A successful reading included comprehension as well as an accurate rendition of the text.

The introduction of text included helping students become familiar with the following key elements: story, plot, words, sentences, and writing style (Clay, 1993). Students should be introduced to the story before they engage in reading the text. Addressing these points helps facilitate student response, ideas, and language when responding to teacher prompts about the story. Clay (1993) contended that the importance of new text introduction was to introduce the student to the new text, not the text to the student.

Clay (1993) suggested that a book introduction included some of the following, which depended on the text and the needs of the reader:

- Draw the child's attention to the important ideas.
- Discuss the picture of the *whole* book.
- Give opportunities for the child to hear and use the new words and structures that he will have to work out from the pictures, the print, and the language context.
- Ask him to find one or two new and important words in the text after he has said what letter he would expect to see at the beginning (p. 37).

Cambourne's (1995) conditions of literacy learning were evident in rich text introduction: immersion, demonstration, expectations, responsibility, employment, approximations, and response. Rich text introductions could create a scaffold to help students read whole text while using background knowledge and new knowledge. Engagement and active student participation using a rich text introduction was illustrated as teachers encouraged students not by telling them what was expected; rather, teachers scaffold students during reading and gradually released them to read text independently.

Teachers' rich text introductions explored what students knew and could handle included the following:

- Inviting students to respond to illustrations and link it to other shared stories;
- Drawing from students' experiences to reveal unclear issues concerning the new text;
- Sketching the plot or structure the sequence up to the climate;
- Developing an understanding around the theme or topic;

- Anticipating when some language, or an unusual name, will not link to the students' own language (Clay, 1998, p. 174).

Teachers' interactions with students during text introductions should flow like a conversation. However, deliberate actions by the teacher may include the following: maintaining interactive ease, increasing accessibility, or prompting the child to constructive activity, which included (a) linking to personal knowledge, (b) pausing for children to generate the ending, (c) reflecting, and (d) accepting partially correct responses. Deliberate actions of the teacher also include: tightening the criteria of acceptability, probing to find out what children know, presenting new knowledge, asking questions to work with new knowledge, and providing a model for reading the new text (Clay, 1998).

Teachers could determine the benefit of their text introductions as they got feedback from students when they interacted with the text. Teachers' response to the reading needs of their students was key when introducing new text. Teachers' introduction of new texts should be in students' zone of proximal development (Clay, 1998). Teachers helped students process the text when the reading task was challenging. However, teachers slowly withdrew as students began to control the task. This interactive process afforded teachers with knowledge that could help students gain further control of tasks when reading different texts.

Effective teachers from primary grades through high school used text introductions for all types of reading instruction. Clay (1998) noted that rich text introductions might lead to students' successful first readings. Interactions between teachers and students enable students to know what the text was about before they read

(Clay, 1993). Text introductions can lead to independent and proficient reading, which was the ultimate goal of shared reading.

Implementation of Shared Reading

Marie Clay (1966) first used the term emergent literacy during her study of young children's acquisition of literacy as they interacted with books, reading, and writing. It was a gradual process that took place from birth to five when the child was able to write using conventions (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Emergent literacy integrated all parts of language, which included reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Emergent readers acquired literacy from direct instruction and from their engagement in stimulating and responsive environments (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Emergent readers were exposed to and engaged in shared reading experiences as they became motivated and encouraged to interact with the text (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Emergent literacy included three critical predictors of reading success: the child's development of language, conventions of print, and phonological awareness (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The first critical predictor of reading success was the development of language. Weizman and Snow (2001) reported that children must engage in rich language input in order to develop their vocabulary and semantic knowledge. They further reported that rich immersion in conversation assisted children in understanding the names of objects and how they go together.

The second critical predictor of reading success was conventions of print, which include the following: permanence of print, concepts about print, concepts of words, and

language talk about print (Aldridge, Kirkland, & Kuby, 2002; Clay, 1979; Kirkland et al., 2007). Concepts about print was an example of conventions of print, which included:

- left page before right page,
- top of the page downwards,
- left to right across a line,
- return sweep to the left of the next line,
- left to right across a word,
- the use one can make of spaces,
- what's the "first letter?" (p. 19)

Children engage in the concepts about print during the first years of school as they move toward successful performance (Clay, 2005). Change occurs from having a little knowledge towards having a control of all these concepts, which happens for most children within about two years of beginning literacy learning (Clay, 2005, p. 48).

The third critical predictor of reading success was phonological awareness. Phonological awareness referred to the ability to detect or manipulate the sound structure of oral language (Lonigan, 2006, p. 78). A child with the ability to detect and manipulate syllables, rhymes, or phonemes, learns to read quickly (Lonigan, 2006).

Schickendaz and McGee (2010) examined 19 studies reported by NELP in 2008. They noted that more comprehensive approaches were needed when reading to preschoolers during shared story reading. They further noted that children's understanding of meaning, vocabulary, sentence structure, and Clay's (1993) concepts about print could be supported through shared reading interventions.

"Shared reading activities were often recommended as the single most important thing adults can do to promote the emergent literacy skills of young children" (NELP, 2008, p. 153). Holdaway developed shared reading for emergent readers, who noticed and recognized that print holds meaning. Shared reading was also valuable for older students (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Fluency developed as the reading patterns of older students changed. Their knowledge about the world increased as they engaged in direct and indirect experiences. During shared reading, they gained knowledge from perspectives that could be different from their own (Brown, 2004). Although text selections changed from the "Three R's," rhyme, rhythm, and repetition, to more complex and challenging text, teachers selected relevant and important shared reading materials (Manning, 1997). Older students learning a second language also benefited from shared reading as they participated in small-group discussion. Overall, emergent, primary, and older readers engaged in similar shared reading experiences: rereading, word analysis, comprehensive, vocabulary, fluency, and explicit modeling by teachers and peers (Brown, 2004). However, "no matter what the purpose for conducting a shared reading lesson, engaging students' interest and heightening their motivation to make meaning should be paramount" (Brown, 2004 p. 62).

Rereading. Children in kindergarten and grades one and two enjoyed rereading poems, chants, and other favorite texts. These could be familiar text or new text chosen by the teacher (Routman, 2003). Teachers used pointers or sliding pieces of paper as they read text line-by-line; therefore, students were engaged in the text visually and orally. As students engaged in repeated readings, their self-confidence was increased. Repeated readings increased fluency, word familiarity, phonemic awareness, and

phonics. Teachers addressed phonics concepts and high frequency words after rereading the texts with students several times (Tompkins, 2006). Moyer (1982) indicated that repeated readings provided practice on all levels. Repeated readings helped students with the integration of word identification skills, which promoted comprehension. Word work was also evident in shared reading as students became familiar with text by rereading.

Turn taking. Another implementation of shared reading involved students taking turns to read to each other using trade books or basal readers. First graders read in pairs while second and third graders read in groups of three and four. The whole class was divided into pairs or threesomes for approximately 15 minutes as the teacher monitored them in small groups. This process gave students opportunities to work on strategies with their peers before they read in formal settings with the teacher (Otto, 2006).

In addition to building important reading skills and processes, shared reading could be implemented to motivate students to want to read more as teachers model their passion for reading (Brown, 2004). Novice and veteran teachers could use this approach during whole and small group instruction to develop students' specific literacy skills. Shared reading helped teachers to transition from prescribed basal reading instruction to a comprehensive and interactive literacy program. Shared reading could be implemented across the curriculum in all grade levels (Brown, 2004).

Additional practices of shared reading. *Read along* involved students reading familiar portions of the text with the teacher. *Echo reading* involved the students reading a line or two after the teacher. *Reading fast* or *reading slow* involved the teacher reading text at an appropriate speed. Teachers asked students specific questions after reading: How did the reading sound? What did you notice? Why do you think I read the way I

did? What did you notice about the words? (Prescott-Griffin & Witherell, 2004, p. 59). *Buddy reading* or *cross-age shared reading* involved students from upper grades reading to primary aged students in small groups. Students in primary grades increased their listening and conversational skills as they engaged in conversations with two or three peers at a time (Otto, 2006).

Various Descriptions of Shared Reading

Although shared reading was developed in the context of preschool and emergent literacy, Temple et al. (2008) indicated shared reading was a method that primary teachers used to holistically instruct students about words. Its instruction was grounded in Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which focused on zones of proximal development (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Teachers read collaboratively with students as they focused on reading behaviors, text features, and specific comprehension strategies (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Teachers often displayed a big book on an easel so that it was visible to the students (Temple et al., 2008).

Prescott-Griffin & Witherell, (2004) have also expanded the definition of shared reading and applied it to the primary grades:

> Shared reading is a model associated with the primary grades in which teachers use big-print stories (big books, or stories copied onto charts) to focus children's attention on print concepts and beginning reading strategies. Shared reading is also an important means of modeling fluent reading and can be effectively used with students in grades K-5. With older students, shared reading focuses readers' attention on "text signals" (punctuation or unusual print treatments such as boldface or italics. (p. 30)

Hoyt (2002) described shared reading as a shared text experience. Hoyt (2002) also found shared reading useful in literacy activities in upper elementary, middle school, and high school. Additionally, Hoyt noted high-level intense modeling of language and

fluency during shared text experiences. She found evidence of student engagement as they viewed nonfiction text features from transparencies, charts, or big books. Students were better able to activate prior knowledge and use picture cues from enlarged nonfiction texts (Hoyt, 2002).

For the best reading instruction, teachers' instructional approach to reading was correlated with their students' understanding of what reading is. Often, there was a contradiction between what teachers said reading was and what they did in the classroom during reading instruction (Weaver, 2002). Weaver specified that the practice of shared reading helped students make connections between what they were doing in the classroom and what teachers and other adults said about reading. There was evidence of increased shared reading experiences in primary grades (Weaver, 2002) involving an adult reading to a child, small group, or an entire class, from text what could be seen and read by all participants involved in the experience. Weaver (2002) identified four key procedures derived from Don Holdaway relative to shared reading experiences:

- Rereading favorite selections together,
- The teacher running a finger under the words,
- Later focusing on reading strategies and various aspects of the text, through discussion,
- Independent rereading of the texts (Weaver, 2002, p. 228).

Boyles (2009) suggested that 30-minute sessions, three days a week be dedicated to shared reading. She noted that because of the limited time frame, teachers must remain focused. The big picture required teachers to pay close attention to the selected objective while engaging students in explicit instruction (Boyles, 2009).

Boyles (2009) further suggested, “Planning begins long before the lesson is written out” (p. 13). However, effective teaching was more powerful than plans written on paper. Good instruction begins with teachers knowing *why* they do what they do and not only what and how they implement planned lessons (Boyles, 2009). Activities of a 30-minute shared reading lesson include: before reading, during reading, after reading, and times after shared reading. Lessons often include students’ participation and reflections. Below is an example of a 30-minute integrated shared reading lesson plan (Boyles, 2009).

1. Before reading
    - Discuss: prior knowledge, predicting, purpose.
    - Identify and briefly introduce vocabulary words.
    - Explain the objective.
2. During reading
    - Model and practice finding evidence for the focus objective.
    - Apply other strategies as appropriate.
3. After reading
    - Respond to the focus question orally.
    - Respond to other questions orally if time allows.
    - Model a written response to the focus question if you are introducing the objective.
4. After the shared lesson

    Follow-up work while the teacher is working with three small groups:

    - Respond to the focus question in writing,

- Other follow-up activities,
- Independent reading.

5. Reflection
    - What did you learn today as a reader?
    - What did you find in your independent reading that support your objective? (p. 3)

According to Allington (2001), teachers read from a big book, engaging students in the following activities as they sit in a designated area on the floor (p. 81):

- Lead a discussion of the title, cover art, and the illustrations.
- Invite students to predict the story line.
- Read the text aloud dramatically.
- Lead the response to the story, with discussion and perhaps a retelling.
- The text is read and reread several times.

Students reread the text in pairs or chorally with their teachers. Teachers may highlight word structure and patterns of language with sticky notes. Rereading was done to improve students' predictions. Basal lessons focused on student analysis of the text being read, while shared book reading (SBR) focused on student response to the text. Analysis referred to various forms of texts, which included evaluating plot lines in novels, text-to-world comparisons, text-to-text connections, and text-to-self-analysis. Response referred to students' verbal performance to teachers, such as rereading in pairs or chorally, making predictions, and confirmations. Student response could lead teachers to adapt their lessons. Shared book reading afforded teachers the freedom to decide what

text features needed to be taught using data observed from students' responses during and after reading (Allington, 2001).

Shared reading could be implemented in the classroom in various ways to model the use of different types of texts. Prescott-Griffin and Witherell (2004) suggested that shared reading procedures could be adapted to primary and elementary grades. Procedures in shared reading were simple, and teachers could preview texts to decide which texts best met the needs of their students.

Prescott-Griffin and Witherell (2004) shared some essential elements that teachers could use during shared reading:

1. Select interesting text.
2. Introduce the text, possibly discussing illustrations and asking students to make predictions.
3. Read the text with expression, intonation, and appropriate pacing. With primary students, point to words and pause often, asking the students to supply predictable or repeated words or phrases.
4. Pause as necessary during reading to:
    - Discuss text features.
    - Ask for predictions or conclusions.
    - Ask students to make a connection to their own experience or another text.
5. After reading, reread the whole text or segments of text while discussing text features or content. Ask literal and inferential questions about characters, plot, and setting.

6. Encourage students to respond:
    - During whole-group discussion,
    - During small-group discussion,
    - During partner discussion,
    - During writing (p. 59).

During shared reading, teachers initially focused on students' understanding of word knowledge during instruction. They withdrew their support as students engaged in more talk about the text. Students were enlisted to assume the role of the teacher as they charted conversations, recorded words on the word wall, and led in the coding of the text (Buis, 2004). In addition to building important reading skills and processes, shared reading could be implemented to motivate students to want to read more as teachers modeled their passion for reading (Brown, 2004). Novice and veteran teachers could use this approach during whole and small group instruction to develop students' specific literacy skills. It helped teachers to transition from prescribed basal reading instruction to a comprehensive and interactive literacy program. It could be implemented across the curriculum in all grade levels (Brown, 2004).

Short et al. (2000) defined shared reading as a rich "interactive reading experience that can be enjoyed in whole classes, groups, or in pairs as students view the same text that is read by the teacher or an experienced reader to support literacy and comprehension skills" (p. 287).

Stahl (2012) affirmed that:

> Bringing a classroom of children together for shared reading creates a literacy community around a common text and a common purpose. Variations in shared reading provide the means for teachers to make complex, compelling text accessible to their students while increasing student engagement and confidence. (p. 51)

Advantages of shared reading. There have been many advantages reported relative to shared reading (Brown, 2004; Buis, 2004; Clay, 2005; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Frey & Fisher; 2007; Hoyt, 2005; Otto, 2006; Prescott-Griffin & Witherell, 2004; Weaver, 2002). Letter, letter-sound, syntactic, and semantic aspects of printed language were components of shared reading experiences. Additionally, strategies for processing language through metacognitive awareness were taught during shared reading experiences (Weaver, 2002).

Shared reading was a powerful approach to help teachers and students work out reading strategies together, thereby reflecting the use of support. This scaffold of working with the teacher during shared reading built students' confidence as they worked with texts in different ways to develop higher-order thinking skills (Brown, 2004).

Shared reading connected the bridge between read-alouds done by teachers and independent reading done by students (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Seeing the text helped students associate with text cues such as pacing, layout of words, and punctuation (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Informal settings during shared reading provided students with several opportunities to increase grade level fluency as they practiced reading orally (Otto, 2006).

Prescott-Griffin and Witherell (2004) cited shared reading advantages. They noted that shared reading allowed students to authentically explore real-life situations vicariously through stories. Lifelong reading could be promoted through shared reading

experiences as teachers helped students construct listening and vocabulary skills. As students read with their teachers, they internalize rhythmic patterns while becoming familiar with expository text structures and narrative themes.

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) asserted that shared reading also helped students personalize new language as they developed an appreciation of the sounds of words. It increased students' confidence as they participated in plays, recitations, choral reading, and readers' theater. Hoyt (2005) explained that shared reading could be used to activate students' background knowledge and vocabulary prior to reading a piece of text independently.

Hoyt (2005) also explained another advantage of shared reading, which included instruction that could be organized during shared reading to help students think deeply and critically. Additionally, Hoyt noted that shared reading provided a context for grand conversations as teachers gradually released their level of support to help students become independent readers.

As students engaged in grand conversations during shared reading, opportunities arose for vocabulary learning within a clear context. Definitions of words were extended during conversations with primary and intermediate students. Word meanings were analyzed to further students' thinking about text (Buis, 2004). Conversation during shared reading increased students' knowledge and recognition of general words while improving word discriminating skills (Buis, 2004).

Older children made connections during shared reading as they talked about, coded, and classified the text. Instruction became less disconcerting because students shared the responsibility of talking about the shared text. Engagement could increase

with more activities that were student-centered. Students assumed leadership roles during shared reading (Buis, 2004; Frey & Fisher, 2007).

Disadvantages of shared reading. Researchers Radencich and McKay (2001) indicated disadvantages when shared reading was used with the whole class. During the sharing of big books and additional whole group instruction such as story-telling and creating language experience charts, attention to the diverse needs of students was minimal. Other disadvantages these authors identified included the following: (a) lack of student participation during whole-group instruction, (b) more teacher-centered instruction and less student-centered instruction, and (c) less pupil-to-pupil interaction. The aforementioned disadvantages could prevent students from attaining important goals that are essential toward the development of literacy.

The researchers further indicated that although whole-class instruction might create shared reading experiences, small group settings better addressed the diverse needs of students. Small groups provided opportunities for teachers to scaffold and support students *beyond* materials at a given level (Radencich, & McKay, 2001).

Building Comprehension

Comprehension instruction overview. Comprehension instruction was an issue that could not be put off until later grades because it was believed to cause irreparable damage to many primary students (Teale et al., 2007). Comprehension instruction was important in helping readers understand complex text (Teale et al., 2007).

Reading comprehension was defined as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning" (Snow & Sweet, 2003, p. 1). The reader, text, and activity were essential elements in the definition of reading (Snow & Sweet, 2003). Durkin's

(1978-1979) seminal study revealed the lack of comprehension instruction in elementary schools across America. Since her study, efforts have been made to identify cognitive strategies to increase students' understanding of text (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996).

Because of the "No Child Left Behind Act" (2001), many teachers did not implement shared reading in their classrooms. However, the value of shared reading was evident when working with preschool through high school students (Box & Aldridge, 1993; Enguidanos & Ruiz, 2008; Fisher et al., 2008; Maynard, Pullen, & Coyne, 2010; Zucker, Justice, & Piasta, 2009).

Reading comprehension was the ultimate goal of reading (Block, Gambrell, & Pressley, 2002; Clay, 1991; Nation & Angell, 2006). A primary role of shared reading was to help students gain a variety of strategies that could be used to understand text (Clay, 1991). Teachers could provide opportunities for students to read for enjoyment and to help them become independent and proficient readers. Teachers could also build students' reading comprehension through metacognitive awareness. Metacognitive awareness included: developing the plan of action before reading, monitoring the plan during reading, and evaluating the plan after reading through questioning (Frey & Fisher, 2007).

Across the nation, little comprehension instruction was evident in kindergarten through third grade (Neuman, 2001). Rarely does one read in the same sentence the words "comprehension instruction in primary grades" because many current reading instruction advocates believed comprehension instruction was not necessary for learning to read (Pearson & Duke, 2002).

The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) reported similar findings relative to the small amount of comprehension instruction in kindergarten through second grade classrooms. In recent decades, the idea of comprehension instruction has evolved from teaching a string of comprehension skills, which included sequencing, note taking, details, and following directions, to an emphasis on thinking skills such as activating background knowledge, creating visual images, monitoring, and summarizing (Pearson & Duke, 2002). The National Reading Panel (2000) found that only eight categories of comprehension instruction out of 16 had scientific basis for classroom instruction. These instructional strategies included comprehension monitoring, cooperative learning, graphic organizers, questioning and answering, generating questions, story structure, summarization, and multiple-strategy teaching. Comprehension instruction has changed from teaching strategies in isolation to teaching a "set" of strategies in a highly interactive, engaged, and collaborative setting (Pearson & Duke, 2002). This instructional setting was similar to that of shared reading.

Comprehension and shared reading: Response to intervention (RTI).

Response to Intervention (RTI) supported the academic needs of all students through teachers' differentiated instruction founded on research-based practices and progress monitoring (Boyles, 2009). A brief explanation of the RTI Tiers was described below (Boyles, 2009):

- Tier I classroom teachers provide explicit whole group instruction and incorporate the gradual release of responsibility.
- Tier II students are instructed in homogeneous groups by their classroom teacher.

- Tier III students who experience difficulties in Tier II are taught in a small group by the classroom teacher.

Teachers could use shared reading to get Tier I instruction off to a solid start (Boyles, 2009). Tier I included explicit instruction that was provided by the classroom teacher. In Tier I, the classroom teacher incorporated the gradual release of responsibility. Additionally, Tier I instruction was systematic teaching of comprehensive objectives from a yearlong continuum (Boyles, 2009). RTI did not include using only state or district materials such as the basal because they could not be sufficient for the academic needs of all students. Nor did RTI include reading books to and with students and asking random questions at the end of the text (Boyles, 209).

Tier II and Tier III included comprehension intervention for students who experienced difficulty based on their response to Tier I instruction. In shared reading, Tier II intervention consisted of a small homogeneous group of students. Tier II intervention did not include whole-class instruction. In shared reading, Tier III intervention consisted of students who experienced difficulty based on their response to Tier II instruction. Tier III intervention did not include whole-class instruction. Boyles (2009) affirmed, "All classrooms are Response to Intervention (RTI) classrooms—from pre-kindergarten through high school" (p. 49).

Boyles emphasized the following:

> Response to Intervention (RTI) is a federal mandate that makes official what good teachers have known all along: all regular education and special education students are entitled to instruction founded on research-based practices and progress monitoring. And all students will respond positively to instruction when that teaching is appropriately differentiated-with different students receiving different kinds of support based on their very different needs. (p. 49)

According to Boyles (2009) Response to Intervention (RTI) included the following four components:

- High-quality, scientifically-based, explicit, systematic instruction for all students in the regular classroom;
- Ongoing student assessment that includes universal screening and progress monitoring to determine which students need more intense intervention, as well as the appropriateness of the curriculum in meeting students' needs;
- Multi-tier differentiated instruction that provides more intense instructional interventions for students who need them;
- Parent involvement that keeps parents apprised of the instruction their children are receiving and the progress they are making (xiii).

Studies. A single study by Fisher, et al. (2008) looked at shared reading with older children that partly addressed reading comprehension. The focus was on modeling multiple categories during shared reading, such as comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features. This was a large-scale study of students in grades three through eight in an urban school. Findings showed that teachers modeled their own thinking during shared reading without asking individual questions. Students were encouraged to talk with a fellow classmate, jot down ideas, ask questions, and indicate agreement by modeling "fist-to-five" (Students held up the number of fingers to represent their agreement of a statement read by the teacher). Teachers modeled reading comprehension during shared reading by activating background knowledge, inferring, visualizing, connecting, synthesizing, and evaluating. Teachers modeled by using context clues, word parts, and resources. Teachers modeled text structures as they read and paid

attention to structures of nonfiction and fiction texts. Text features were modeled to determine the importance of texts: headings, captions, boldface words, illustrations, graphs, etc. This study illustrated 25 teachers' different approaches to daily modeling during shared reading. Findings suggested the importance of teachers having a clear purpose for selecting text during shared reading and that teacher modeling should not lengthen reading instruction during shared reading. Findings further suggested modeling shared reading and think-aloud could help students pay attention to what their brains were doing during reading. Fisher, et al. (2008) focused on expert teachers modeling shared reading in four categories: comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features. Their study included 25 teachers from 25 urban schools located in a large county in the western part of the United States.

This current study described seven primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system.

Ness (2011) contended that in the past three decades, significant gains have been made towards understanding how readers employ strategies to construct meaning from text. Constructing meaning was "the most important thing about reading comprehension" (Block et al., 2002, p. 3).

During explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies, teachers "use specific cognitive strategies or they reason strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension" (National Reading Panel [NRP] 2000, pp. 4-39). Teachers taught comprehension strategies through explicit strategy instruction in order to help students understand what they read (Duffy, 2002). During shared reading, modeling, being aware

of and using the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and self-regulation were connected to Vygotsky's learning theory of social interaction (Brown, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). Interaction with text and other people helped students develop their ability to comprehend (Vygotsky, 1978). The process of the gradual release of responsibility was a result of students' increasing proficiency in using reading strategies (Brown, 2004; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

Ness (2011) reported prior to the 21st century, researchers demonstrated that students could independently transfer reading strategies after eight months of explicit instruction in comprehension strategies (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Block, 1993; Collins, 1999). Recent researchers demonstrated that students could continually transfer explicit instruction in comprehension strategies after eight weeks of instruction (Cummins, Stewart, & Block, 2005).

Ness (2011) conducted an observational study in 20 grade one through five classrooms during the 2008-2009 school year. The goal of the research was to identify elementary teachers' frequency of implementing reading comprehension instruction. Additionally, direct classroom observations were made to determine which reading instructional strategies the teachers used. Research sites included two elementary schools in the northeast. The first school site was comprised of kindergarten through fifth grade students in a suburban area. The second school site was comprised of kindergarten through fifth grade students in a recently founded (2002) charter school. The ethnic background of the first school's student population was made up entirely of white students. The small town included a population of 6,000 residents with a per capita

income of $23,146. The ethnic background of the second school's student population was exclusively black in a neighboring city with a per capita income of $16,775.

Each school's language arts curriculum in the Ness study included daily oral language, vocabulary, listening comprehension, response to literature, and textual analysis. Students in the first school received 90 minutes of daily literacy instruction from a basal reader. Students in the second school received 180 minutes of literacy instruction from picture and chapter books. Findings revealed fourth grade classes showed the highest scores on reading comprehension measures and third grade classes showed the lowest scores. The reading comprehension strategies that occurred the most were making predictions/prior knowledge, question answering, and summarization. The study did not specifically address comprehension instruction in the context of shared reading.

A study by Kindle (2011) compared the practices of four preschool teachers during the reading aloud of a common text. Kindle's study looked at shared reading in relationship to the development of language. Kindle's study broadly defined shared reading as reading aloud to children in an interactive manner to promote language development, listening comprehension, and pre-based skills. The one-year study was done in an urban mid-western school district at an early childhood center. The participants in Kindle's study included Hispanics (17%), White (20%), Asian (2%) and Black (61%). Eighty percent of the student population received free and reduced lunches. The prekindergarten children attended the center during the 2009-2010 school year. Findings suggested that teachers' approaches to shared reading should be more purposeful and intentional in order for students to receive the maximum benefit from

their reading experiences. Language patterns differ among children from low socioeconomic families (Hart & Risley, 1995). Differences in this study revealed various levels of interaction among preschoolers and teachers. Further research was suggested to help preschool teachers provide maximum high-quality interactions. Kindle's findings were consistent with studies that report teachers need to be trained "in ways to read with children (reading in small groups as well as with the whole class), leaving time for child questions and open-ended questions" (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001, p. 331). "Without this training, it is likely that implementation of even the highest-quality curricula will vary across early childhood teachers, undermining efforts to build children's language skills at the very time when interventions could have the strongest long-term effects" (Wasik, 2010, p. 621). While the Kindle study addressed the value of the implementation of shared reading with low-income children, it did not specifically address how shared reading can affect comprehension.

In many urban schools across the United States, there was a comprehension instruction gap in primary grades (Teale et al., 2007). Primary grade teachers could engage students in a good beginning with respect to early literacy to help them experience positive results in later years. Primary grade teachers could rethink their focus to systematically engage students in comprehension instruction (Teale, Paciga, & Hoffman, 2007). Shared reading has the potential to address this gap in comprehension strategy instruction in urban primary schools.

Building Vocabulary

Vocabulary overview. The development of the rich vocabulary required for school success cannot be left to chance (Biemiller, 2001; Blachowitz & Fisher, 2004).

Vocabulary was central to reading, writing, listening, and speaking. "Vocabulary is simply all the words a person knows" (Martin & Emfinger, 2008, p.14). Many students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds enter school with vocabularies half the size of their middle-class classmates (Hart & Risley, 1995). Therefore, teachers must engage these students in more intensive and frequent vocabulary instruction (Blachowitz & Fisher, 2004). Without the help from teachers, many students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to fall even further behind (Biemiller, 2001; Blachowitz & Fisher, 2004).

The vocabulary a child can understand while reading was related to the child's oral (listening and speaking) vocabularies. The oral vocabularies of children from different socioeconomic groups have been found to vary widely (Hart & Risley, 1995). Hart and Risley (1995) reported a study of three-year-old students' vocabulary development. The preschoolers' parents valued the importance of language as they asked questions and engaged in conversations in the home, on outings, and at the store. The researchers found children from similar home environments are more advanced when they enter school, which is in contrast to children whose parents are less educated and who place little value on reading to their children and engaging them in conversations. Findings in the Hart and Risley (1995) study reported unfortunate news related to the expectations of preschool children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. However, research suggested there is some good news: teachers, schools, and homes can make a positive difference in preschoolers' vocabulary development. Preschool children's lack of advance in vocabulary was related to instruction and experience, rather than a deficiency in cognition. The vocabulary that children need to know can be learned in

classrooms where effective vocabulary instruction is evident (Biemiller, 2001; Snow, 1991).

The connection between readers' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension was one of the longest lines of research in literacy education (National Reading Panel, 2000). Students' vocabulary enhance reading comprehension and provide better opportunities for them to communicate in our world (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004). The researchers suggested that teachers should provide daily vocabulary instruction in their classrooms to improve students' vocabulary knowledge (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Biemiller, 2001; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004; Nagy & Scott, 2000; Teale et al., 2007).

A students' vocabulary consisted of four dimensions: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening, the largest dimension, included all the words students understand from hearing; however, the words may not be used in the students' own speech. Speaking vocabulary included words students used daily when they speak. Reading vocabulary included printed words that students could read and understand. Writing vocabulary, the smallest dimension, included words students understand when writing (Reutzel & Cooter, 2003). Additionally, vocabulary could be receptive or productive. Receptive vocabulary included words students understood when they saw or heard them. It was usually larger than productive vocabulary. Productive vocabulary included words that students used in print or speech (Temple et al., 2008).

Blachowicz and Fisher (2004) listed four best research-based practices teachers could implement to build students' vocabulary:

- Develop an awareness and love of words through play;

- Deliver explicit, rich instruction to develop important vocabulary;
- Build strategies for independence;
- Engage students actively with a wide range of strategies (pp. 67-69).

Vocabulary had a lifelong impact on student learning (Beck et al., 2002). Good readers learned approximately seven words per day in contrast to struggling readers, who learned approximately two words per day. Students who enjoy reading will read more. Therefore, the number of words they learn will increase. Without intervention, students with low vocabularies at the end of kindergarten often have low vocabularies throughout schooling (Beck et al., 2002).

Vocabulary tiers and stages. Teachers determine which words need to be taught directly. Beck et al. (2002) suggested grouping words into three tiers. Tier I consisted of the most basic words. Examples included *baby, happy,* and *walk.* Words in this tier rarely required direct instructional attention. Tier II consisted of words that were of high frequency. They were used to help readers understand passages. Examples included *absurd, industrious, fortunate,* and *coincidence.* Rich knowledge of words in this tier could greatly impact students' verbal functions, including reading comprehension. Tier III words were used in low frequency and were associated with words in specific fields. Examples include *lathe, peninsula, refinery,* and *isotope.*

Learning vocabulary was a complex process. A word could be known in many different dimensions. Beck et al. (2002) noted Dale's description of the four stages of word knowledge, which included the following:

- Stage I I never saw it [the word] before;
- Stage II Heard it, [the word] but don't know what it means;

- Stage III Recognize it [the word] in context as having something to do with …;
- Stage IV Knows it [the word] well (Dale, 2002, pp. 9-10).

Nagy and Scott (2000) suggested that knowing a word happens over time as students see the word in various texts. Students understood more words when they were exposed to them several times. In order to meet rigorous state mandates that required students to be able to manipulate language to become proficient in listening, speaking, and writing; students needed to use strategies that would deepen their understanding of words across all content areas. There were two types of strategies used in learning and using words: explicit and implicit (Dispenza, 2007). Explicit strategies included vocabulary terms, phrases, details, and the organization of ideas. Implicit strategies included processes, skills, and tactics.

Teachers could help students improve their vocabulary in two ways: indirectly (implicit) and directly (explicitly). Indirect (implicit) vocabulary acquisition was illustrated when students participated in oral social interactions with teachers and peers during reading. Adams (1990) emphasized that:

> The best way to build children's visual vocabulary is to have them read meaningful words in meaningful contexts. The more meaningful reading that children do, the larger will be their repertoires of meanings, the greater their sensitivity to orthographic structure, and the stronger, better refined, and more productive will be their associations between words and meanings. (p. 156)

Vocabulary instruction. According to Reutzel and Cooter (2004), there were three ways to directly teach vocabulary. First, engage students in oral language by providing opportunities for them to participate in conversation with others. Second, reading aloud was a powerful tool in helping students define unfamiliar words before,

during, and after reading. Third, students learned new words as they read independently. The more children read independently, the more words they learn (Reutzel & Cooter, 2004).

Vaughn and Thompson (2004) indicated teachers could use semantic mapping and teaching word parts during direct instruction. Semantic mapping included webs that could be used to help students understand concepts that were critical to understanding text. Teaching word parts included using affixes to extend students' understanding of unknown words (2004). Teachers teach vocabulary words prior to the reading of text (Vaughn & Thompson, 2004). The National Reading Panel (2000) suggested teachers provide students with opportunities to learn new words before encountering them in text. Multiple exposures help students when they hear, see, or read new words in text.

The identification and number of words for each student to know was still debatable (Nagy & Anderson, 1984). The average child learned approximately 3,000 new words each year. A first grader from a low-socioeconomic background knows 50% less words than an average first-grader from a middle-class socioeconomic background. With a vocabulary of 2,500 words, the low-socio-economic background first grader would have to learn an average of two words per day to catch up (Nagy & Anderson, 1984). Stanovich (1986) termed this gap the "Matthew Effect" where children from low-socio-economic backgrounds with insufficient reading skills fall further behind as their - more literate peers continue to make progress in reading and in other academic areas.

This gap lessened when there was intentional instruction provided in both vocabulary and comprehension (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982). Chall (1996) suggested 36-38 weeks in a typical academic year was not long enough to provide

instruction to directly teach 3,000 new words each year. With direct instruction, 300-500 words could be realistically taught at a rate of approximately 10 words per week (Chall, 1996).

Vaughn and Thompson (2004) reported the following reasons teachers should not attempt to directly teach all the words children should know:

- There are too many words for early elementary students to learn. Students should be limited to learning three words per story.
- Teachers need time to review previously taught words.
- Students should be given opportunities to figure out the meaning of texts without understanding the meaning of every word they read.
- Students should be encouraged to use strategies they have been taught to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words (p. 79).

Reutzel and Cooter (2004) developed the following principles for effective vocabulary instruction for teachers to consider:

- Principle 1: Vocabulary is learned best through *direct*, hands-on experience.
- Principle 2: Teachers should offer both definitions and context during vocabulary instruction.
- Principle 3: Effective vocabulary instruction must include a depth of learning component as well as a breadth of word knowledge.
- Principle 4: Students need to have multiple exposures to new reading vocabulary words (pp.125-127).

Several strategies recommended by Stone and Urquhart (2008) could be used to engage students during vocabulary instruction. Teachers could activate students' background knowledge as they learn new words in the content areas. Scaffolding could be used to help students compare and contrast new words. Additionally, teachers could encourage students to use personal word lists, vocabulary bingo, word walls, and comparison grids (Stone & Urquhart, 2008). Students could organize vocabulary words by using the computer, folders, file boxes, or notebooks. Words were best organized by content areas or topics. Vocabulary notebooks may include space for "My Words" and "My Responses." Using graphics could also help students to recall and develop a deeper understanding of new words. Establishing a framework provided an ongoing opportunity for students to organize vocabulary, use and review words (Stone & Urquhart, 2008).

Stone and Urquhart (2008) shared their view of what effective vocabulary instruction looked like in the classroom. Teachers decided which words were crucial for students to learn and when they should be taught. Teachers modeled vocabulary strategies and provided students with feedback as they encountered words in texts. Students were provided multiple encounters with words at least six times. The authors finally suggested ways to keep track of words students were learning and gathered evidence that reflected what students knew and understood about newly presented words (Stone & Urquhart, 2008).

Studies. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) conducted a meta-analysis of studies, which focused on learning word meanings and comprehension and their effect on vocabulary instruction. Data from the following two questions was analyzed: Does vocabulary instruction have a significant effect on children's comprehension of text? What types of

vocabulary instruction are most effective? Quantitative data from question number one suggested comprehension of passages containing words taught could be impacted by vocabulary instruction. Question number two suggested effective instructional vocabulary methods included the following: definitions and contextual. Overall, Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) found that comprehension passages containing taught words were significantly affected by vocabulary. However, the same findings were not evident in all instructional methods.

McKeown, Beck, Omanson, and Perfetti (1983) conducted a five-month experimental study that investigated the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary instruction. Participants included fourth graders from a low socioeconomic background, in two schools from a public urban school district. Of the participants, 70% were African American. The experimental group consisted of one-fourth of the class from each school. Three-fourths participated in control groups. Participants were selected because of similar scores on the Reading and Vocabulary subtests. The instructional design consisted of 104 difficult words that were taught in approximately 75 lessons, each within 30 minutes. Assessment was based on accuracy, fluency, and text comprehension. Findings showed that text comprehension was enhanced by intensive vocabulary instruction, which was designed to promote deep fluent word knowledge.

Goerss, Beck, and McKeown (1999) conducted a study to develop an instructional task to help fifth and sixth grade students overcome problems with words. The six subjects in this study were less-skilled readers from a parochial school in southwestern Pennsylvania. The middle socioeconomic background students received remedial instruction through Chapter I. Students were administered the Gates MacGinitie

Reading Test. The design was based on the teacher modeling the process of examining information in a word or context. Hypothesizing, refining, and prior knowledge were used to identify unknown words. The research suggested that students with limited vocabularies were least likely to gain information from context. The instructional task was designed to use context to gain word meaning. Students received instruction in vocabulary and word meaning acquisition for 30 minutes during a nine-week period. Findings from his study suggested that an instructional task based on the process of using context to derive word meaning information was a powerful model for one-to-one instruction.

A study by Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, and Stoolmiller (2004) developed and evaluated vocabulary interventions for young children at risk of experiencing reading problems. Storybook literature and vocabulary literature were studied. Research was summarized on storybook and shared reading activities. Kindergarten students were chosen because of their lack of performance on letter naming and phonological tasks. Students were given a pre- and post-test of 10 words from the 20-word instrument created by the researchers. Results suggested the vocabulary gap might narrow with the explicit teaching of word meanings during storybook readings. As evidenced by the studies summarized above, there was rich literature on vocabulary instruction in elementary school. However, there were only a few studies of vocabulary instruction within the context of shared reading.

Allen (2002) confirmed that students could use prior knowledge to help them understand vocabulary during shared reading. Teachers could use ABC graphic organizers to help children understand concepts as well as engage them in brainstorming

before reading. After reading the text with the teacher, students could revisit their graphic organizer and the shared text to analyze words. This process was consistent with the foundation of the shared reading (Allen, 2002). Context could be used to explore word meanings. Allen believed teaching content vocabulary helped readers to simultaneously see and hear unknown words. This could also help students place words in their context. As students revisited vocabulary during shared reading, they developed a deeper understanding of the word. Allen (2002) further emphasized increased vocabulary could be a result of increased reading comprehension with the support of the characteristics such as "integration (trying new words to familiar concepts and experiences); repetition (repeated encounters with a word in context, leading to automaticity); and meaningful use (understanding how to apply the word and connect it to other words in the knowledge base)"sought to add to the body of literature of shared reading by describing primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build both vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system.

Summary

This literature review presented theoretical traditions of learning, which included notable researchers Piaget, Vygotsky, and Cambourne. It discussed the historical background of shared reading, which Don Holdaway started in New Zealand. In 1984, Reading Recovery was brought to the United States. Its originator, Marie M. Clay, trained teachers at the Ohio State University. Although originally used with emergent readers, shared reading has been found to be useful for primary grades and even older readers.

The literature review allowed the reader to view the original application of shared reading. Some studies illustrated the early thinking and development of shared reading as a classroom practice. Best practice of shared reading was also included. Text selection, text introduction, and an implementation of shared reading were also included. Rereading, turn taking, and additional practices of shared reading were also evident. Various descriptions of shared reading included advantages and disadvantages. Building comprehension and vocabulary through shared reading were included as well. A review of research methodology and design will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology and Design

The only generalization is: There is no generalization.

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 110)

Chapter three presented the research methods for the study and was organized into 11 sections. The sections in this chapter include the following: qualitative research approach, tradition of qualitative inquiry, purpose of the study, participants, research site, data collection, data analysis, establishing trustworthiness, ethical considerations, role of the researcher and a summary.

Qualitative Research Approach

Lichtman (2013) revealed qualitative research included the analysis of an experience. Lichtman defined qualitative research as the following:

> It is a way of knowing in which a researcher gathers, organizes, and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters. It often involves in-depth interviews and/or observations of humans in natural, online, or social settings. It can be contrasted with quantitative research, which relies heavily on hypothesis testing, cause and effect, and statistical analyses. (p. 7)

One important characteristic of qualitative research dealt with how people made sense of the world and their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Understanding the experience from the participants' perspective was important in this qualitative research. A second important characteristic was the researcher's role as the sole human instrument whereby data was collected and analyzed. The researcher served as a human instrument of the context collected. Data was processed, clarified, and summarized during the evolution of the qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A third

characteristic of qualitative research was fieldwork. The researcher visited the site in order to naturally observe an experience in its realistic and natural setting. The fourth qualitative research characteristic focused on inductive research. Inductive research was built on concepts from data that were classified into categories, themes, and patterns (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). During the collection of data, categories were identified as interviews, field notes, and documents, which were collected and analyzed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The fifth characteristic of qualitative research focused on thick, rich descriptions from understanding context using words and pictures (Geertz, 1973). Findings were supported by raw data taken from the participants' own words, observations, and lesson plans.

The inclusion of key characteristics of qualitative research in natural settings and the researcher as data gathering instrument were noted (Yin, 2009.) Natural settings included the experiences of the participants and how they made sense of their daily lives and social settings. The researcher served as the data-gathering instrument, which included field notes from observations of participants, transcriptions of interviews, and documents (lesson plans from observed shared reading lessons). The study included three principles of data:

- Principle I: Multiple Sources of Evidence,
- Principle II: Create a Case Study Database,
- Principle III: Maintain a Chain of Evidence.

Principle I included multiple sources of evidence. Individual sources of evidence were not recommended for conducting case studies. A primary strength of case data collection was the use of several different sources of evidence. Yin (2009) suggested the

use of multiple sources of evidence to allow the researcher to address a wide range of behavioral issues. The most important advantage of using multiple sources of evidence was "the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation" (Yin 2009, p. 115). Data collection was information collected from various sources aimed at confirming an experience. The second principle was relative to organizing and documenting resources from data collected for case studies. Yin (2009) indicated that the components needed for developing a database included notes, documents, and narratives. Case study notes included notes from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Notes were handwritten, typed, and electronically filed. Notes were organized so that they could be retrieved at later dates (Yin, 2009). Documents were collected in the process of conducting a case study. They required extra storage and some were filed electronically. Narratives were viewed as a formal part of the database and not the final case study report. The third principle was the chain of evidence, which included an external observer. Directions concerning the research provided opportunities for the external observer to trace the research from the initial questions to conclusions in different directions (Yin, 2009).

Tradition of Qualitative Inquiry: Case Study

The key characteristics in a qualitative case study included an experience bounded by time and activity (Merriam, 1998). The researcher of this qualitative study explored a descriptive case study, which was one type of qualitative case study. Geertz (1973) defined "descriptive" in relationship to case studies as the rich, thick description of an experience. Thick description was further defined as the complete description of an explored entity or incident (Geertz, 1973). "Qualitative case studies share with other

forms of qualitative research the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and the end product being richly descriptive" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, pp. 178-179). The term "case study" focused on what could be learned from the question asked of a single study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). "A case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning" (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 87).

> The process of conducting a case study begins with the selection of the 'case.' The selection is done purposefully, not randomly; that is, a particular person, site, program, process, community, or other bounded system is selected because it exhibits characteristics of interest to the researcher. (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 179)

The researcher sought to uncover significant factors of experiences that focused on primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. The researcher used "how" and "what" questions to get close to the participants (Yin, 1984). The researcher also selected the qualitative case study because of a final characteristic, which included the uniqueness revealed about an experience. Uniqueness from a qualitative study revealed knowledge that would have otherwise been inaccessible (Abramson, 1992).

The researcher used a qualitative case study to gain descriptions from participants in the field in their natural setting. The researcher rationalized that case studies best suited the study because extensive data from multiple sources were used to relate to the participants (Yin, 2009). Detailed descriptions of primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction were not generalized beyond the case; rather, an understanding of the case was experienced by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Purpose of This Study

Yin (2009) defined case study as a research process. "A case study is a systematic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The purpose of this case study was to describe primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. The case study was the best way to accomplish this purpose because the instructional process of shared reading including primary grade teachers represented *the case*, which was an experience occurring in a bounded context that was represented by the classroom. The researcher chose a case study because it is also used often when examining educational issues, topics related to schools, innovations, teachers, students, and programs. The researcher used *thick description*, which is evident in case studies and is the literal description of what is being researched (Geertz, 1973). The researcher sought to fully understand the experience through the use of a qualitative case study. Yin (2009) suggested that "how" and "why" questions are explanatory, which may lead researchers to use case studies. Furthermore, case study afforded the researcher an opportunity to directly observe primary grade teachers in their natural settings.

Participants

The researcher identified "specific characteristics of individuals to study" (Lichtman, 2013, p. 192). The researcher included seven primary grade teachers with three or more years of experience. The seven participants represented a purposeful, criterion sample that included participants who implemented shared reading in their classroom during literacy instruction.

Research Site

The study was conducted in elementary schools located in a single southeastern urban school system in the United States of America. The school system had a total of 48 schools (seven high schools, 11 middle schools, 21 elementary schools, nine K – 8 schools, and one alternative school). The system served approximately 25,000 students. The school system was a Title I school district because over 50% of its students received free or reduced lunch. Teacher qualifications in the system were as follows:

6 – Year (Class AA – Doctorate)	approximately 13%
Master's Degree (Class A)	approximately 46%
Bachelor's Degree (Class B)	approximately 41%

The researcher chose this urban school system in the southeastern United States because of its focus on reading instruction in the primary grades, and because of its convenience. The researcher was an employee of the school system. The researcher conducted interviews and observations of lessons during shared reading in each participant's classroom at the local school site. Accompanying lesson plans were also analyzed. Rich and thick descriptions that were developed from this study provided the researcher with a better understanding of how primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy was used to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

In the qualitative case study, the researcher chose seven primary grade teachers who were purposefully chosen from geographically diverse schools within a southeastern urban school system. Although the number in the participant group was not large, it was hoped that the classroom experiences would yield a wide range of classroom methods

related to shared reading. The seven primary grade teachers were purposefully selected based on their experience in using shared reading as an instructional method to teach students in the primary grades. A copy of a recruitment letter and statement of consent were viewed and signed by each participant (See Appendix D and E). Interview protocols were provided for each participant. Preliminary copies of the recruitment letter, statements of consent for both principals and teachers, and interview protocols were provided in the appendix.

The geographically diverse schools represented primary grade teachers from the southern, eastern, and western sections of schools within a southeastern urban city school district. Teachers in the northern section were given an opportunity to participate, but elected not to do so.

Data Collection

According to Yin (2009) the following are examples of three principles of data collection:

- Principle I: Multiple Sources of Evidence,
- Principle II: Create a Case Study Database,
- Principle III: Maintain a Chain of Evidence.

The researcher used one-on-one semi-structured interviews, field notes of teachers' direct observations during shared reading instruction, and shared reading lesson plans in this qualitative case study.

Data were collected over 12 weeks, which included a half-hour to one-hour interview of each participant, one observation of a shared reading lesson, and

accompanying lesson plans. The researcher maintained a nonparticipant role during the observation. See attached observation protocol Appendix F.

Tape-recorded interviews were held in each teacher's classroom or in a quiet area with no students present. The teachers sat in close proximity to the recorder. They were reminded that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the study. A copy of the teacher interview protocol was included in Appendix E.

The researcher asked teachers three types of questions: background, essential, and extra questions. Background questions included: participants' teaching experience, number of years taught in primary grades, other grades taught, highest degree, and type of elementary school attended. Interview questions about participants' experiences and how they used shared reading were also included in the teacher interview protocol. Essential questions focused on the purpose of the study. The researcher asked "how" and "what" questions and used five generalizations when formulating questions: (a) questions were open-ended, (b) questions were centered around language familiar to participants, (c) questions were clear and neutral, (d) questions were respectful of the participant, and (e) questions were framed around the study. Extra questions were asked if participants needed clarification of essential questions. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher and reviewed by each participant for accuracy. Interview transcripts were saved as a Word document on a password protected computer. Specific shared reading lesson plans from observations were collected at the end of each observed lesson.

Data Analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined data analysis as a naturalist inquiry that was open-ended. Using inductive data analysis, the researcher made use of the data as it unfolded during the qualitative case study. The researcher used direct interpretation as materials were read and interpreted for meaning regarding the purpose statement. Data was read and reread several times. Data was coded into units of meaning. This process was known as bracketing. Bracketing was the first step of the analysis (Denzin, 1989).

Content analysis was defined by Krippendorff (1980) as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (p. 21). Krippendorff (1980) indicated predictive uses of patterns were evident in content analysis, which begins by identifying elements. Data that was analyzed must represent a real experience that was written or at least tape-recorded (Krippendorff, 1980). The researcher established patterns of repetitive words, codes and phrases between categories from transcribed interviews, observations and documents.

The researcher developed themes from multiple sources of data that included transcriptions from teacher interviews, observations, and an analytical review of lesson plans (Lichtman, 2013). The researcher further noted that codes emerged from the data by reading and reflecting on interviews and observations of the seven primary grade teachers, as well as lesson plans, which were dissected and categorized into codes. The researcher rearranged repetitive words, codes, and phrases according to the purpose of the study. Codes were reviewed for redundancy and renamed. Next, codes were organized into categories and sub-categories (Lichtman, 2013). Categories were then organized into themes and sub-themes. Themes and sub-themes from collected data related to

primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was based on the premise that findings were worthy of the reader's attention. Lincoln and Guba (1985) specified four questions that researchers asked themselves in regard to truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality:

> How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of findings, how can one determine the extent to which the findings of an inquiry have applicability, how can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated, and how can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined? (p. 290)

Establishing trustworthiness included four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, each of which must be met in order to assure and gain the confidence of the consumer. The researcher used four techniques relative to credibility: (a) prolonged engagement, (b) triangulation, (c) peer debriefing, and (d) member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement involved observing a site long enough to limit the introduction distortions into the data. The researcher built trust by spending time in the classroom culture of each selected participant.

The researcher conducted one interview and one observation of each of the seven teachers. Triangulation involved using multiple sources to confirm emerging findings. Seven teachers participated in a half-hour to one-hour interview. Each teacher was observed once in the classroom from 20 to 35 minutes. Transcriptions from seven interviews (one per teacher) and documents (lesson plans) were coded prior to identifying themes. The researcher triangulated the data collected from each of the seven teachers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Peer debriefing involved an unbiased and knowledgeable peer reviewing the research and questioning the researcher for bias, meaning, and interpretations relative to the study. There is no formula that prescribes how to conduct a debriefing; however, the researcher selected a peer debriefer from another school district, who took the role seriously. The debriefer possessed substantial knowledge about the researcher's area of inquiry and methodological issues (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Written records were kept of each oral debriefing. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined member checking as "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checking involved the researcher taking data back to participants to check for accuracy of the study findings. The researcher's written interpretations of teachers' interviews, field notes from observations, and lesson plans were checked to make sure all participants were represented fairly. Transcriptions were presented to teachers to read and review.

Transferability involved the use of thick, rich description. However, a "proper" definition of thick description is still unresolved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The term *thick description* was introduced by (Geertz, 1973). The researcher used thick, rich description to describe classroom settings and thick, rich description of primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Dependability and credibility were intertwined. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility was non-existent without dependability. Credibility consisted of the techniques mentioned earlier: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability was another trustworthy technique, which involved triangulation. Materials were kept to provide evidence of an audit trail. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted audit trail categories include the following: (a) raw data (recorded materials and field notes), (b) data reduction and analysis products (write-ups of field notes), (c) data reconstruction and analysis products (themes, definitions, and write-ups), (d) process notes (methodological notes and trustworthiness notes), and (e) instrument development format (observation formats). An audit trail cannot be conducted without records compiled from the qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010) was based on standards for scholarly research and writing. The sixth edition APA manual also reflected ethical and legal principles designed to accomplish three specific goals: "to ensure the accuracy of scientific knowledge, to protect the rights and welfare of research participants, and to protect intellectual property rights" (p. 11). Johnson and Christensen (2000) noted further assurances relative to ethical rights of participants.

- Researchers have the responsibility to get the informed consent of the participant.
- Any deception must be justified by the study's scientific, educational, or applied value.
- The research participants must know that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.
- The research participants are protected from physical and mental discomfort, harm, and danger that may arise from the research procedures.

- The research participants have a right to remain anonymous, and the confidentiality of the participants and the data must be protected (p. 69).

Each participant received a recruitment letter that explained the purpose of the study. Transcriptions, documents, and audiotapes from interviews were kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. Informed consent for teachers and principals were addressed through the careful development of informed consent statements that received approval of the university International Review Board. See Appendix H.

The researcher's ethical considerations included the following: (a) tolerance for ambiguity, (b) sensitivity, and (c) the ability to communicate effectively. In qualitative case studies, there are no set step-by-step procedures to follow (Merriam, 1998). As a qualitative researcher, the researcher designed a study that revealed how data was collected, as well as the number of participants interviewed and observed. Afterwards, the researcher gained access to the site by first submitting a letter to the superintendent in her school system to obtain written consent to conduct research in a southeastern urban school system. See Appendix A. Next, the researcher met with principals and submitted consent letters and consent forms. Teachers received recruitment letters as well as consent letters. Preliminary protocols were provided in the appendix of the study. The researcher expected these protocols would be modified based on feedback from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). A list of references and the appendices were included in the study, as well as an IRB approval form.

Sensitivity is another ethical consideration of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). The researcher must be sensitive to physical settings and participants. The researcher was consciously committed to putting any bias or preconceived judgments and

thoughts aside during the study as much as possible and used peer debriefing to further control for the effect of personal bias.

Effective communication was another ethical consideration of a qualitative researcher (Merriam, 1998). An effective communicator establishes rapport by listening attentively, illustrating empathy, and asking relevant questions (Merriam, 1998). The researcher illustrated the aforementioned characteristics in her role as a qualitative researcher throughout the study. The researcher's current position as a reading coach provided her with experience in these important characteristics of effective communication. Participants were assured of confidentiality in a recruitment letter informed consent process, and during the interview process. The researcher protected the study from pre-conceived bias by reflecting on personal biases and values that may have influenced analyses and conclusions.

In order to preserve the anonymity of each participant in the study, a pseudonym was chosen by the participant at the end of the interview. Data and documents from this qualitative case study were locked in a black, two drawer steel file cabinet in the researchers' home office during the term of the study. Data will be destroyed after three years. No one other than the researcher's committee will have access to the data from this research.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher of this study was an African American female with a genuine passion for literacy instruction in the primary grades. The researcher had worked for 33 years in education while rendering the following services: first-grade teacher in an urban setting and a fourth-grade teacher in a rural setting. She served as a Chapter I teacher in

grades five through eight and a Title I teacher in kindergarten through fifth grade. The researcher also served as an adjunct instructor of literacy with a focus on Classroom Management at a local university. The researcher worked for seven years as a Reading Recovery teacher and eight years as a Reading Coach, both in an urban school system. The researcher earned a Master of Elementary Education degree with certification as a Reading Specialist and holds certification in School Administration. The researcher earned an A.A. certificate and Educational Specialist degree in elementary education from a southeastern four-year university. The researcher was a National Board Certified Teacher in Early and Middle Childhood Literacy: Reading/Language Arts. During the study, the researcher was a Ph.D. candidate at a southeastern four-year university and a Reading Coach in a southeastern urban school system. Past experiences in the field of education have influenced the researcher's interest in this study. The researcher's professional experiences have been strongly influenced by a constructivist approach to learning and teaching. The researcher valued a balanced approach to literacy instruction that equally emphasized meaning, comprehension, and student autonomy on the one hand and careful skill instruction on the other.

Questions were phrased during the interview to limit protection of the researcher's perceptions about the study of shared reading and its assuming link toward reading comprehension and vocabulary. To ensure that interview questions were clear to the participants, questions were reviewed by a knowledgeable peer, which included a peer debriefer. A peer debriefer was selected because of her literacy background and experience in the primary grades.

The researcher's role in the study was that of an interviewer and observer. She served in this role in order to gain an in-depth understanding of primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system (Merriam, 1998).

According to Merriam (1998), "the researcher must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation" (p. 21). The researcher of this study was obligated as the principal researcher to acknowledge values, interests, and personal biases. The principal researcher acknowledged her role as a certified Reading Specialist, which may have warranted some biases relative to describing primary grade and teachers' practice of shared reading during comprehension and vocabulary instruction in this southeastern urban school system.

Summary

Chapter three discussed the research methods and design. The following components were included in the chapter: introduction, qualitative approach, tradition of qualitative inquiry, purpose of the study, participants, research site, data collection, data analysis, establishing trustworthiness, ethical considerations, role of the researcher, and a summary. A review of research findings will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The goal of qualitative analysis is to take a large amount of data that may be cumbersome and without any clear meaning and interact with it in such a manner that you can make sense of what you gathered.

(Lichtman, 2013, p. 250)

Chapter four presents the findings for the study. It is organized in seven sections: introduction, phases of data analysis, setting, participants, themes, subthemes, and a summary. The researcher used a case study design to gain a deeper understanding of how primary grade teachers describe the ways they practice shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. First, the researcher provided phases of data analysis. Second, the researcher provided descriptions of each setting with demographic information gleaned from the district and local school websites. Third, the researcher described the seven teachers and their demographic information such as, number of years taught, highest degree, type of elementary school participants attended, number of classroom students, and ethnic background. A description of each teacher's belief of how students learn and why they chose to become educators was included. Finally, the researcher discussed the themes and subthemes that emerged during the analysis of the data. The findings of chapter four concluded with a summary.

Phases of Data Analysis

The researcher's data analysis proceeded in five phases. In Phase I, the researcher transcribed verbatim five hours of audiotaped interviews. A total of 48 hours was required in order to complete this initial phase. Seven teachers were interviewed in sessions that ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. In Phase II, the researcher reviewed data that had been collected from transcribed interviews, classroom observations and accompanying lesson plans from teachers within a 12-week period. In Phase III, the researcher reread audiotaped transcriptions, observational notes from the classroom and accompanying lesson plans several times with the following question in mind: How do primary grade teachers describe the ways they practiced shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction? In Phase IV, the researcher analyzed each of the cases to find recurring phrases and patterns. In Phase V, the researcher established validity by returning transcribed interviews, observations, and chapter four to each teacher for their review.

Setting

Research from this study was conducted in a large southeastern urban school system in the United States. The mission of the school system was to guide all students to achieve excellence in a safe, secure and nurturing environment. The school system's vision was to be a recognized leader in public education, meeting the needs of a diverse student population prepared to succeed in a global society.

Demographics of school system. The urban school system consisted of approximately 25,000 students with a total of 49 schools: seven high schools, 11 middle schools, 21 elementary schools, nine Kindergarten through eighth grade schools, and one

alternative school. The school system adhered to a strict uniform policy. More than 3,100 people were employed in the system. Approximately 90% of the students were on free or reduced lunch. The urban school system was the largest in the state. According to the 2010 United States Census, the city had a population of 212,237. It was the core of the metro area of 1.1 million people.

History of school system. The school system started with a four-room brick structure in 1874 with approximately 150 students. In 1882, the mayor began a reorganization of the Free School. The mayor upgraded the methods, curriculum and instruction of the school, which was later supervised by an appointed superintendent. In 1887, the school system increased to seven schools. In 1940, 40 schools were annexed to the school system. In 1971, the school system had 11 high schools and 77 elementary schools. In the 1990s, the demographics of the city changed which caused schools to merge.

Growth of school system. Capital improvement was evident in the school system. Three new schools opened during the 2012-2013 school year. Also during the study, major renovation and addition projects were evident in one high school and one middle school. Six new schools opened in 2011.

In 2013, two schools, a K-8 school and high school, were in their second year of candidacy for the International Baccalaureate program and had begun teaching International Baccalaureate curriculum. Five magnet schools and other schools throughout the system earned well-deserved reputations for high levels of academic achievement. Several schools had been named-Torchbearer Schools by the state department of education. One K-8 school won the state academic championship in 2011.

A high school won back-to-back state 5A championship awards in boys' basketball in 2011 and 2012. Additionally, an academic team participated in the "We the People" mock congressional hearing team in the national competition in 2012. During the same year, Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) and culinary arts students were winners in state competitions. Each of the seven high schools had students participating in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Middle school teachers were trained to provide pre-Advanced Placement instruction in an effort to prepare students for Advanced Placement classes in high school. Career academies were in six of the seven high schools within the school system. The superintendent researched themed academies for elementary and middle school students to provide parents with options when selecting schools for their children. The district had many positives, but also many challenges. Challenges included serving the education needs of a large number of very low income students, accommodating an increasing number of low-income Latino students, and working with a shrinking tax base due to families leaving the city for the suburbs.

Site A – Elementary School K-5. Site A was a historical school in the western section that was opened in 1898. It boasted a vibrant and rich history in sports, music, and academics. More than 100 awards from 1916 to the present were neatly displayed in a large glass showcase, which was visible to all on the first floor near the principal's office. In 2006-2007, the school received the highest honor from the state department of education as a "Torchbearer School." This award recognized exemplary service and dedication that resulted in the highest student achievement worthy of "Torchbearer" status. The school was located in one of the most culturally rich areas in the city. In 1909, the school was renamed after the founder and president of a historically black

college/university (HBCU). The founder of the university was a former slave who dedicated himself to education and the advancement of freed slaves and their descendants. The school's motto illustrated high educational ideals: "Those who enter here enter to learn and go forth to serve!"

The administrator, teachers, and support staff, were committed to meeting the diverse needs of all learners. Ongoing communication with parents and community leaders was encouraged. Instructional content was governed by system and state requirements. The administrator encouraged high achievement, effective instruction, and explicit and direct teaching in an effort to produce greater use of technology and school-wide discipline. The reading block was protected throughout the school. A colorful sign outside each teacher's door read: "No breaks… No Errands… No Disturbances." On the second floor, students were encouraged to "Drop In and Read" on a comfortable sofa with soft plush pillows that encouraged students to participate in the "magic of reading." The school's mission was to develop students who were intellectually, socially, physically, and aesthetically prepared to function in a changing multicultural and technological society. The school's vision was to use technology to improve students' communication, presentation, and collaboration skills as well as their ability to acquire knowledge and problem solve. The school grounds were well manicured, resulting in the school being recognized with a beautification award given by the local city board of commissions.

Site B – Elementary School K-5. Site B was constructed in 1923. It was located in the Southside area of the city near a popular entertainment area and was noted for its historic preservation. Before a local high school was built in 1939, the site provided

service to students in K-12. After a reorganization to establish middle schools in 1989, the site began servicing local K-5 students. Site B school was renovated and had a student body of over 800 students. The school boasted a diverse population, which was evident in the high number of international students enrolled. During the school year, a school-wide celebration of each ethnic background was recognized and celebrated. Flags with richly defined colors representing countries and students' cultures from around the world adorned the hallways and bulletin boards throughout the school's three levels. Teachers and staff members representing 38 classrooms were dedicated and highly qualified to meet the needs of all learners. Each classroom was equipped with a Promethean Board ™, which allowed students and teachers to interact with technology on a daily basis. Classrooms also had telephones, computers, and wireless Internet. Extra curriculum activities included: art, music, P.E., and library. The school was located near a nationally recognized research university. Professors, volunteers, and tutors from the local urban university enhanced students' educational experiences. Other community agencies and universities volunteered their services to meet the academic and social needs of the students. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) had accredited the school since 1976. The schools' mission was to prepare its students to become productive citizens, lifelong learners, problem solvers, and self-directed individuals. The schools' vision was one of a highly qualified and capable staff that provided a wide variety of educational experiences for students to enable them to become capable thinkers and learners. The schools' motto was: "Learners Today… Leaders Tomorrow." The school's beliefs included the following:

- Everyone deserves a safe, caring environment.

- Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child deserves parental involvement and support.
- Everyone deserves love, trust, and self-worth.
- Everyone deserves an education that is appropriate and challenging.

The school's innovative principal was an advocate of literacy and research-based instructional methods throughout the school. Upon entering the school, visitors were visually greeted by a colorful "welcome" mural. Authentic student activities, including projects based on subjects such as books by Dr. Seuss, African American history, authors' point of view (e.g., Jan Brett, Michael Bandy, and Matt Faulkner), mathematics concepts (e.g., place value), and character development, were evident of students' work strategically displayed on bulletin boards and in hallways throughout the school's three levels. A colorful patriotic mural, which represented "Liberty and Brotherhood," reminded all learners, educators, and visitors who entered the school that they were welcomed. The school had an outdoor garden that was managed by students as they integrated learning across all content areas. Science was incorporated to illustrate the importance of healthy eating. The following represented some of the foods that were grown in the garden: radishes, broccoli, greens, parsley, rosemary, cabbage, spinach, and lettuce.

Site C – Elementary –Middle School K-8. Site C was located in the eastern section of the city. The K-8 brick school had two levels nestled in a community of modest homes and small businesses. The school was more than 60 years old and had been recently renovated in 2011. The school had 407 students and 47 teachers. The grounds were well kept with deep green, neatly trimmed shrubbery. The mission of the

school was to create and sustain an environment that encouraged civil responsibility and academic achievement; regardless, each member of the school community pledged to support the following outcomes:

The school pledge affirmed:

- I will be responsible.
- I will always try to do my best.
- I will cooperate with others and treat everyone with respect.
- I am able, willing, and ready to learn.
- I will succeed.

The school had extra-curricular activities to help students become responsible, respectful, and resourceful: basketball, soccer, football, and baseball. Teachers were challenged academically to meet the diverse needs of all students. Teachers promoted student participation in the academic bowl, music, and READ 180. The principal and assistant principal worked collaboratively to create a positive learning environment within the school.

Site D – Elementary School – K-5. Site D was located in the western section of the city. The magnet school's staff viewed it as an "Ivy League" school that had a rich heritage within the school system. Teachers boasted about their students: "The best in the west, the pearls of the world, and the pride of the principal!" Site D was founded in the early 1920s by a parent who taught a kindergarten class in her home. The school was moved from the parent's home to the upper level of an unused building. Classes were later moved to a local church and subsequently to a school near a busy highway. In the 1930s, parents thought that their children were too small to cross the busy highway and

petitioned the Board of Education to move the school to its current location. During that time, the school included a school office, four teachers, and four classrooms. During the study, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was still a viable part of the school. The school emphasized excellence in behavior, academic achievement, and a dress code. The school's motto was: "Where endless believing… leads to endless achieving." The school's mission statement was to foster respectful, responsible, resourceful, self-motivated communicators to be productive contributors in a global society by modeling, guiding, and challenging all students to achieve to their maximum potential. The school's vision was to educate all students academically, socially, and physically by inspiring a passion for learning and maintain a culture of respect, hard work, leadership, collaboration, and excellence in everything they do. The principal promoted a quality learning environment and communications with parents and community members. Smiles on teachers' and students' faces were evidence of the joy of teaching and learning within the school.

Site E – Elementary School – K-5. Site E was located in the southwestern section of the city. It was a new school that was built in 2011. Three schools merged to make up the diverse population of Site E. The mission of the school was to empower students with high expectations in a safe and nurturing environment. The vision of the school was to provide a safe and friendly environment where students could receive a quality education. The principal advocated remarkable and positive learning in a community of approximately 800 students. Site E teachers boasted an institution "Where Learning Comes First." The demographics of the research setting is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
School Demographic Data (2012-2013)

School Site	Participant(s)	Students (*n*)	K-5 Teachers (*n*)	Principals	Lunch Free/Reduced
A	Cee Jay Watts	295	16	1	98%
B	Ann Bee	840	39	*2	90%
C	Lucy	403	21	*2	98%
D	Alpha	238	12	1	63%
E	Carla	777	38	1	95%

*One principal/One assistant principal, Site C (K-8)

Participants

This section included the seven teachers' demographic information: number of years taught, grade taught, highest degree, kind of elementary school attended, number of students, and ethnic background. The type of elementary school that participants attended might have impacted teachers' reflections of literacy instruction. This section also discussed each teacher's theory of how students learn and how their theory was connected to shared reading as an instructional method. The information for each teacher was found in the audiotaped interview that was transcribed verbatim by the researcher and a follow-up interview.

Alpha - Site D. Alpha, a Black female, had been teaching for 40 years. She held an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in early childhood education and was a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). She had taught kindergarten, first, and second grade. She had taught at Site D for 23 years. The 20 students in her second grade classroom were Black: 10 boys and 10 girls. She believed all children were capable of learning and it was up to the person teaching them to expose them to new experiences. Alpha believed students' learning experiences should be based on their interests, needs, abilities, and

motivation. She emphasized that students learn in different ways, visual, kinesthetic, and/or auditory. She believed positive experiences could help mold students' learning. Alpha's beliefs about how children learn were connected to daily shared reading practices in her classroom as she worked to ensure adequate texts for all learning abilities. She further believed children should have opportunities to play and have fun as they learned.

Ann – Site B. Ann, a White female, had been teaching for 20 years. She held a doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in early childhood education and was re-certified as a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). She believed reading and writing were connected and that, "You read by reading and you write by writing." She believed students should keep trying when they encountered something they thought was difficult. She practiced shared reading daily in her classroom. Ann's classroom consisted of 21 kindergarteners; six of them were English Language Learners (ELL). The student population included 11 boys and 10 girls. Of the total number of students, 15 students were Black, six were Latino, and none were White. She connected her positive idea of perseverance to shared reading by encouraging students at the beginning of the year to try to read sight words, some of which cannot be "sounded out." Ann also believed children learn by doing, which was evident as they actively participated in the reading process. She believed when her children read along with her, they experienced minimum risk because they had other children reading with them. Ann emphasized, "The early years of education are crucial because it is when a person develops ideas about themselves as a learner and part of a community."

Bee – Site B. Bee, a Black female, had been teaching for 17 years. She held a Master's degree in elementary education and was re-certified as a National Board

Certified Teacher (NBCT). She had 22 students in her first grade classroom. The student population included 11 boys and 11 girls. Of the population, 14 students were Black, six were Latino, one was White, and one was Indian.

Bee's classroom represented students who were on different instructional levels. Three children were learners with special needs. Two of these children were on the autism spectrum. Two children in the class were achieving on a higher grade level. She practiced shared reading in her classroom two to three days a week. Bee believed student learning should be interactive and "hands-on." She said that she chose teaching as a profession because of her love for children.

Carla – Site E. Carla, the youngest teacher of the group, was a Black female who had been teaching for eight years. She held a Master's degree in elementary education and was a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). Each of the 19 students in her classroom was Black which included one student who tested as a gifted student, two students were identified with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and one student was identified with a special need. The student population included 11 girls and eight boys.

Carla believed in looking for teachable moments and pulling out silly things from texts even when the activity was not planned to help capture her students' interest. She practiced shared reading in her classroom four or five days a week. Carla also thought students learn best when they are interested in a topic or subject. She believed learning was contagious.

Carla was a product of the system where she taught. She appreciated the time her teachers' offered to her. She chose teaching because she wanted to help mold children

into model citizens who have a great love for learning. She stated, "I love to see the light in their [students] eyes when they understand concepts."

Lucy – Site C. Lucy, a White female, had been teaching for 20 years. She earned an AA certificate in early childhood education. The AA certificate noted that Lucy completed a preplanned graduate program approved by the state board of education in Alabama. All of the 20 students in her kindergarten classroom were Black. One was a child identified as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The student population included 12 girls and eight boys. Lucy believed students learn by linking new information to what they already know. She believed in choosing familiar text. Lucy also knew that shared reading was important and practiced shared reading in her classroom three to five days a week. She also believed that shared reading brings everybody together on the same page while providing opportunities for all learners to contribute during literacy instruction.

Lucy had a natural approach to teaching. She described her passion for teaching in the following manner:

> It is something I was born to do. I have been teaching somebody since I was a little girl. I would get the neighborhood children and teach them something and grade them. I love children [and some grown people]. I live for the moment when the light comes on and they [students] "get" it. That's what makes me excited. I still get goose bumps when it comes together and they [students] can just pick up and read anything.

Cee Jay – Site A. Cee Jay was a Black female who had been teaching for 19 years. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) with dual certification in early childhood education and elementary education. Cee Jay held an associate's degree in

medical office administration, but had never been employed in a medical setting. She had been employed in a private school as a librarian for two years.

Cee Jay held a Master's degree in early childhood education and was a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). Each of the 19 students in her classroom were Black. There were 10 boys and nine girls. Two students were recently identified as special needs (ADHD). One student attended speech therapy. Two students had special behavioral needs and visited a therapist for behavior. One student achieved well above the first grade level and the remaining students were at grade level.

Cee Jay shared that being an educator was not her initial intent as a profession. She entered college to pursue a degree in computer engineering. After two and a half years, she married, had children, divorced, and became a single mom who wanted to spend as much time as possible with her children. She emphasized that teaching gave her an opportunity to do that. She also indicated that she liked to "play school" and teach as a child, and that early preference influenced her second choice to become an educator.

Cee Jay emphasized in the following why she chose to become a teacher:

> I knew that I would be a great teacher one day and I am. I chose teaching as a career because I love to teach. I liked the idea of being my own 'boss' and the fact that each year would bring a new group of students with new challenges and opportunities to give children the best teacher that they would have.

Cee Jay practiced shared reading three to four days a week at the beginning of the year and two to three days near the end of the year. Cee Jay believed students learn through experience. She also believed they learn from teachers' modeling and from their peers. She noted the importance of reading aloud to students and that students needed to hear and see text.

Cee Jay shared a personal compliment given by one of her students:

> Ms. Cee Jay, you're such a good reader. I replied, 'Thank you.' I said, 'But you know, you're a good reader too…We can all be good readers and I read books and stories aloud to you all so that you can hear the way my voice rises and falls – where to stop, and to hear all the interesting words read with expression.'

Watts – Site A. Watts was a Black female who had been teaching at the same school for 37.5 years. It was the school where she started as a student teacher. Watts had always taught the same grade (i.e., kindergarten) during her tenure at the same school. She held a Master's degree in elementary education. All of the 17 students in her classroom were Black. The student population included nine boys and eight girls. The majority of the students in her classroom were on grade level, and none were identified as special needs learners. Watts practiced shared reading daily and believed all students had different learning modalities. She emphasized all students are included during shared reading activities. Additionally, she believed literacy involved physical movement and singing, especially for students who appeared to kinesthetically "track print" (point) during reading. Watts also believed kindergarten students should be given early opportunities to write in the classroom. An outline of the participant demographic data is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant	Grade	Exp. (*n*)	Highest Degree	Type of Elem. School Attended	Students (*n*)	Ethnicity
Alpha	2	40	EdS ECE NBCT	Suburban	20	Black
Ann	K	19.5	PhD ECE NBCT	Suburban	21	White
Bee	1	17	MEd NBCT	Urban	22	Black
Carla	3	8	MEd NBCT	Urban	19	Black
Lucy	K	25	AA ECE	Suburban	20	White
Cee Jay	1	15	MEd ECE NBCT	Urban	19	Black
Watts	K	37	Med	Urban	17	Black

Participants' Demographic Data

Note. M = master's degree, EdS = educational specialist degree, PhD = doctoral level degree, Ed = education, ECE = early childhood education, AA = AA certificate, NBCT = National Board Certified Teacher.

Identified Themes as Emergent

Seven themes helped the researcher answer the central research question and sub-questions. The central research question was the following: How do primary grade teachers in a southeastern urban school system describe the ways in which they practice shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction? Sub-questions included these:

1. How do primary grade teachers describe shared reading?
2. How do primary grade teachers describe the strategies they use to determine students' comprehension of text during shared reading?
3. What do primary grade teachers do to provide vocabulary instruction during shared reading?
4. How do primary grade teachers describe what they do to provide comprehension instruction during shared reading?
5. What is the observable practice of shared reading in these primary grade classrooms?

Through the qualitative, systematic analysis of the data set seven themes were identified that helped answer the central research question and sub-questions. The identified themes were the following:

1. Describing Shared Reading,
2. Creating 21st Century Learning Communities: Instructional Methods,
3. Planning Instruction,
4. Using Text Matters,
5. Modeling Comprehension Strategies,
6. Engaging Students, and
7. Implementing Instructional Methods.

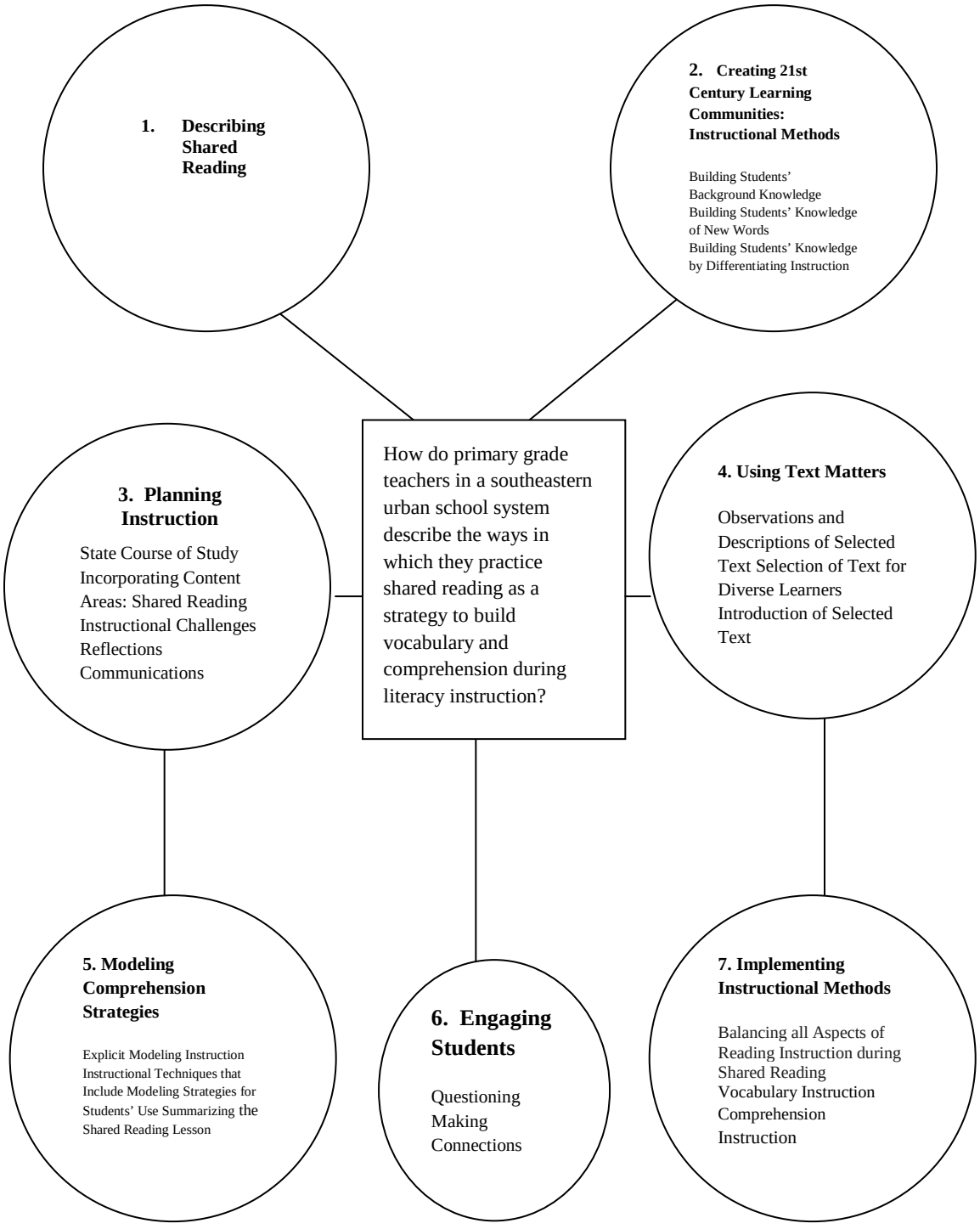

Figure 1. Graphic depiction of themes and sub-themes.

Describing Shared Reading

Alpha described shared reading as a teaching strategy used to enhance and monitor comprehension. She stated that, "What we do is really fun. I bring everybody in to share, to participate, to interact, and to engage in order to make sure that particular selected skills are really being enhanced at all levels for all children." Alpha additionally noted that shared reading is "detailed and analytical because it allows a child to think, and that is important." Modalities of learning were evident as Alpha described shared reading as an instructional method.

Ann described shared reading as:

> A time when the whole class comes together and a time that we look at text together – typically enlarged text. Every piece of text we look at may not be enlarged, but that is a focus of shared reading. The usual shared reading lesson will also have other components as well: a "warm-up" the text that might be a review text that we would have. It would be a specific lesson component that we're going to focus on together. Shared reading as an idea would be that you take the idea of what you would be able to do with a child if you sat down next to them to read – the way that you would teach a child to read and take that same idea and do that with a group of children with enlarged text.

After a long pause, Ann made a personal connection to shared reading from her experience as a parent. She affirmed the following:

> It goes back to that [parenting]. I really do think that it's one of the best ways to teach children how to read because it is more closely aligned to the way that you can really sit down and convey – let's enjoy this text together. Let's look at it together and show all those things about it [book]. You read to me. Shared reading is the closest way we can do that [enjoy] together.

Bee described shared reading as being interactive between the teacher and students. She added, "The teacher primarily does a "read aloud," but it's an instructional technique where the students are very involved and that makes it interactive."

Bee exclaimed emphatically:

> If there were any methods I think that I had to push to the back burner, shared reading would not be one of them, because I see reading aloud, as a method as mainly listening to me and understanding with me. They [students] can talk back to me and things, but mainly through me. I do it [read], and then they can participate with me. So, it's the interaction and I can adjust right then if I need to. They [students] can hear from their peers, as well, what their classmates are thinking. It is such an important tool because of the nature of it… everybody is participating. So, they learn from me, they learn from their peers, and then they can talk-it-out. That's the time they can talk-it-out and I can make adjustments as necessary.

Carla described shared reading as an instructional strategy which students read from the same text with her during a shared reading lesson. Carla's description of shared reading included the following:

> I'm able to scaffold my instruction for my groups. They are able to read along with me, and I can listen to them read as well. We're constantly talking about text and kind of sifting through it. So, to me that is what shared reading looks like – just sifting through text, making meaning of the words and using context clues.

Carla shared that phonics and fluency are also connected to shared reading and that "shared reading is necessary." According to Carla:

> It [shared reading] makes students feel less intimidated when it comes to reading because they [students] are able to work with me. I'm sifting through the text with them. And so they don't feel as though they have to do it [read] alone. And because we work mainly in homogeneous groups, they're around students that are just like them – that are near their reading level. And so they don't feel stupid or dumb when somebody around them answers the questions and they don't know the answers. So, there's not just one student in the group answering all the questions. I am able to see what my students know individually, rather than in whole group, where those who don't know as much are able to hide away behind the smarter students.

Lucy described shared reading as a time when she reads with children a text they can all look at. She stated that, "I may choose to teach a skill out of it [text] or just read for enjoyment. She declared that, "Shared reading engages all the students at the same

time. They [students] enjoy it. It [shared reading] holds their attention and increases their comprehension, vocabulary not just their reading skills, but listening and speaking too."

Cee Jay stated the following as she described shared reading:

> It is a time when the teacher reads a text to the students usually with a big book. In some cases what we'll do is I'll have the copy of the student book and they'll have a copy of it and we'll all read it together. I'll read it, but they'll have a copy in front of them so that they can see it [text].

Cee Jay affirmed that:

> Shared reading is another way for those learners who need to hear me read it and who need to get involved in that way can all get involved. It's just one of the many instructional methods that I use to help my kids read.

Watts described shared reading as an interaction between the teacher and the student where the teacher usually read a big book. Additionally, "Strategies are modeled during shared reading that I later want them [students] to be able to do on their own."

Creating 21st Century Learning Communities: Instructional Methods

During shared reading a safe environment is evident when students are given opportunities to make predictions about stories. The best student learning outcome is evident in low-risk environments (Zemelman et al., 2012). The teachers in this study created student-friendly classrooms where students were given opportunities to learn in nonthreatening environments. Each classroom illustrated a community of learning that was designed for all students to gain new knowledge. However, each teacher's classroom layout did not reflect shared reading.

Holdaway (1979) noted that in a shared reading classroom, "The total environment is alive with print" (p. 71). Fisher and Medvic (2000) acknowledged that appropriate classroom organization for shared reading includes a teachers' chair, located next to an easel and whiteboard (chalkboard). It might also include display charts, big

books, and preferably a large rug where students can sit near the teacher. Instructional supplies are accessible to the teacher during shared reading. Instructional supplies are kept in a basket or container which may include markers, pointers, post-its, name tags, and puppets. Wicky stix, which are colorful wax strings, can be useful for underlining, circling letters or words within the text during shared reading.

In this study, the layout of three of the seven classrooms clearly reflected shared reading activities [Figures 3, 4, 6]. The conditions of literacy learning from Cambourne (1995) were evident in the environment of reading and writing to, with, and by students. In Figures 3 and 4, the classrooms were "alive with print" (Holdaway, 1979, p. 71). One of the classrooms illustrated evidence of science big books, leveled books, books categorized by topics, and books on shelves. Books in both classrooms were strategically placed within students' reach to reread previously shared texts [Figures 3-4]. The room set-up in another classroom was well-suited for shared reading. A large colorful alphabet rug was strategically placed near a rocking chair. Big books and writing tools were easily accessible for teacher use [Figure 6].

Four other classrooms were less effectively designed for shared reading activities [Figures 2, 5, 7, and 8]. The arrangement in one classroom was not set up with a teacher's chair, an easel for big books, white board or writing tools. However, a large carpeted area for reading was evident [Figure 2]. The arrangement of the furniture in another classroom was more conducive to guided reading than shared reading. Books were arranged in colorful baskets near a carpeted area for students during "buddy" and independent reading [Figure 5]. In two of the four primary grade classrooms, a large carpeted area for shared reading was not evident. Neither of the classroom arrangements reflected

shared reading. For example, instructional supplies and a chart for writing were not easily accessible for teachers' use [Figures 7-8]. A layout of each classroom is shown in Figures 2-8.

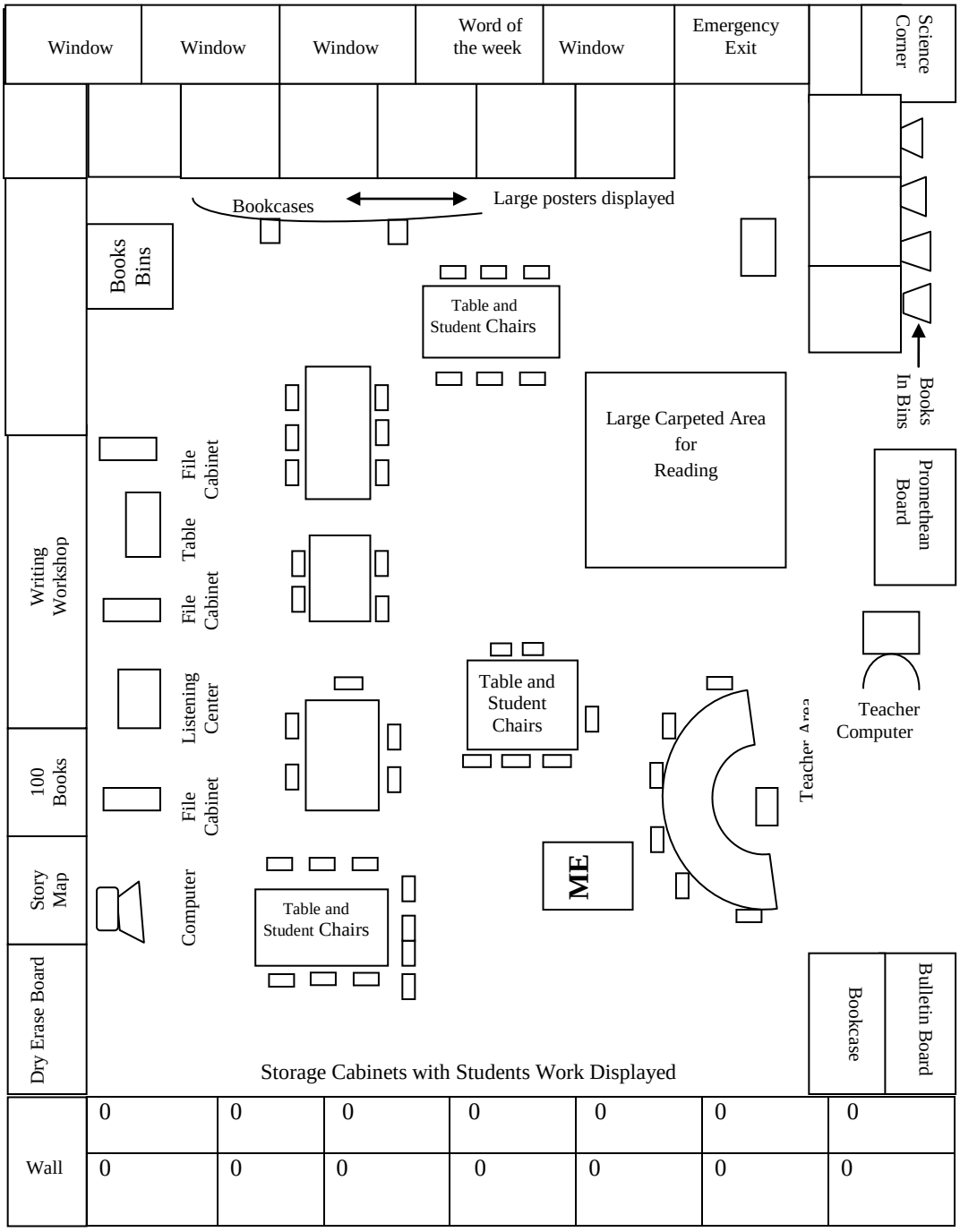

Figure 2. Layout of Alpha's classroom during the observation research. Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by "(ME)."

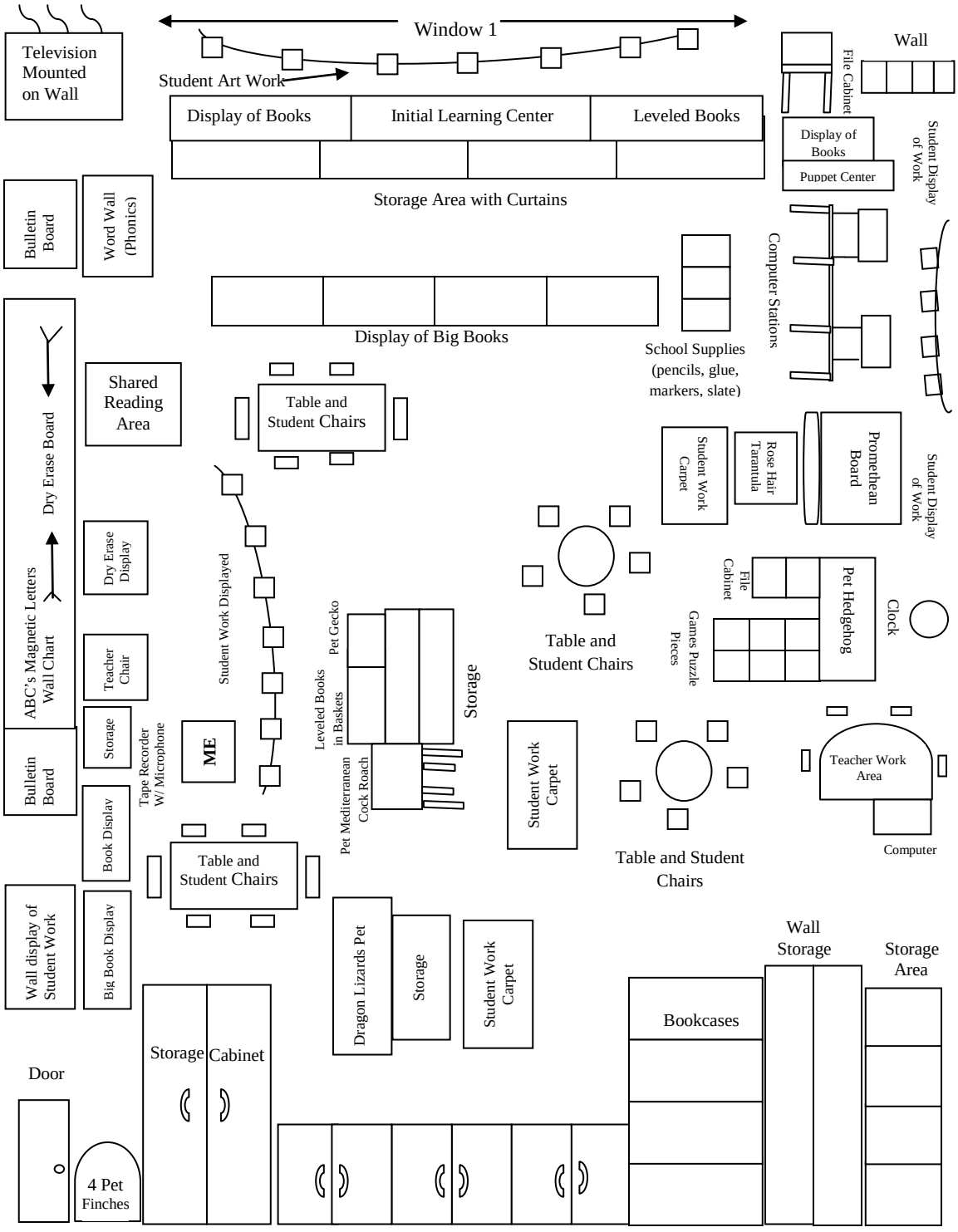

Figure 3. Layout of Ann's classroom during the observation research
Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by"(ME)".

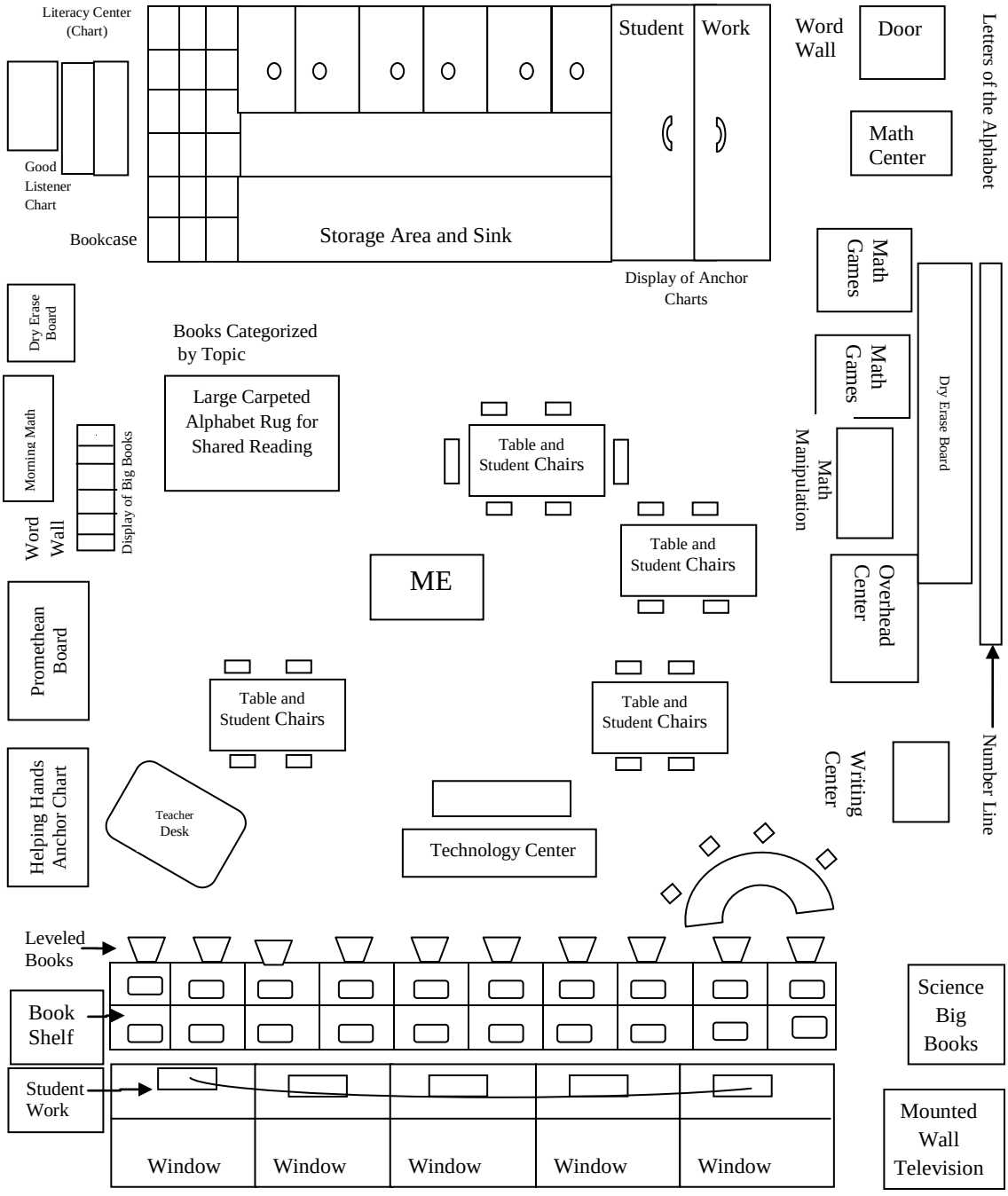

Figure 4. Layout of Bee's classroom during the observation research. Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by "(ME)."

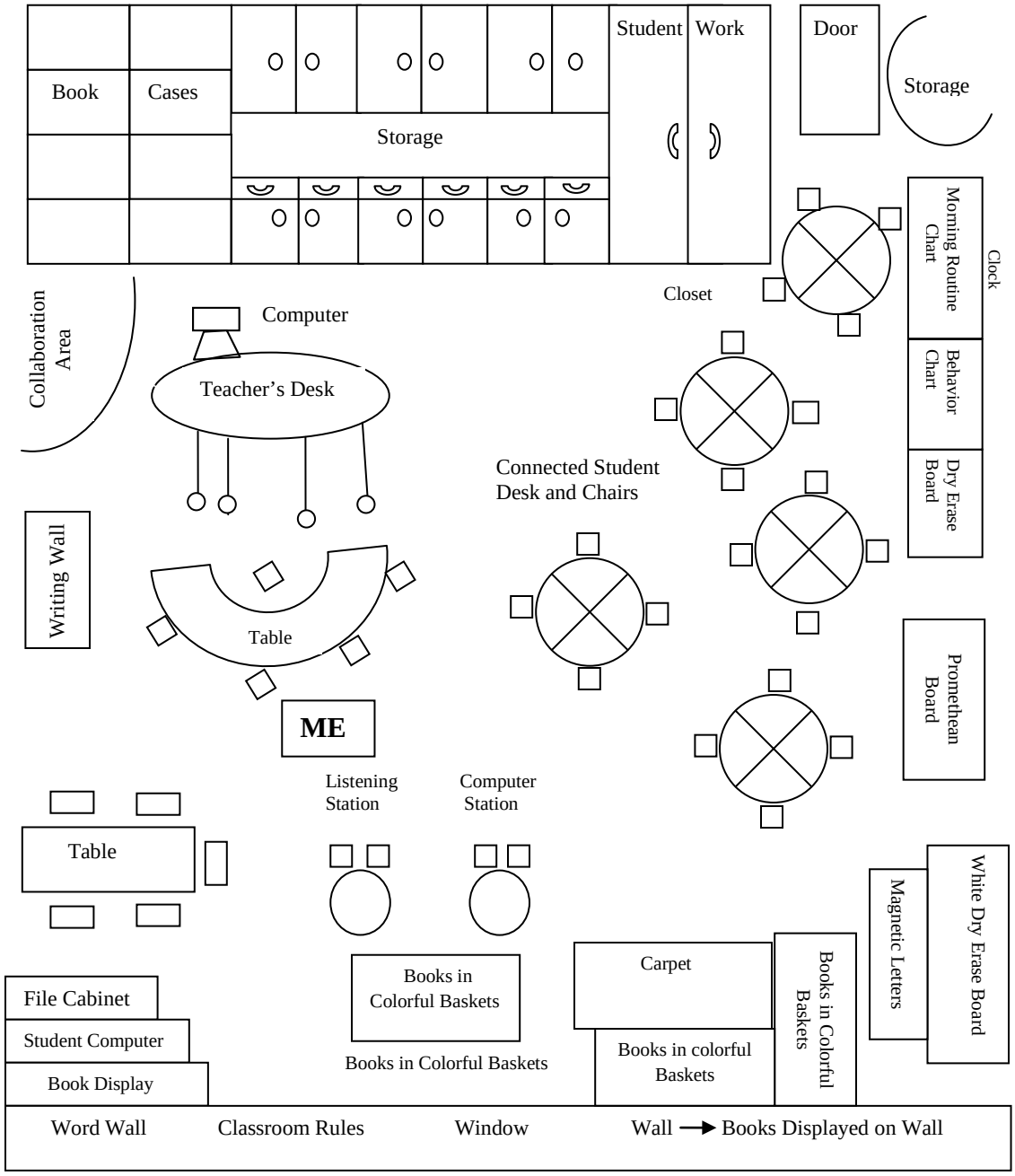

Figure 5. Layout of Carla's classroom during the observation research. Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by "(ME)."

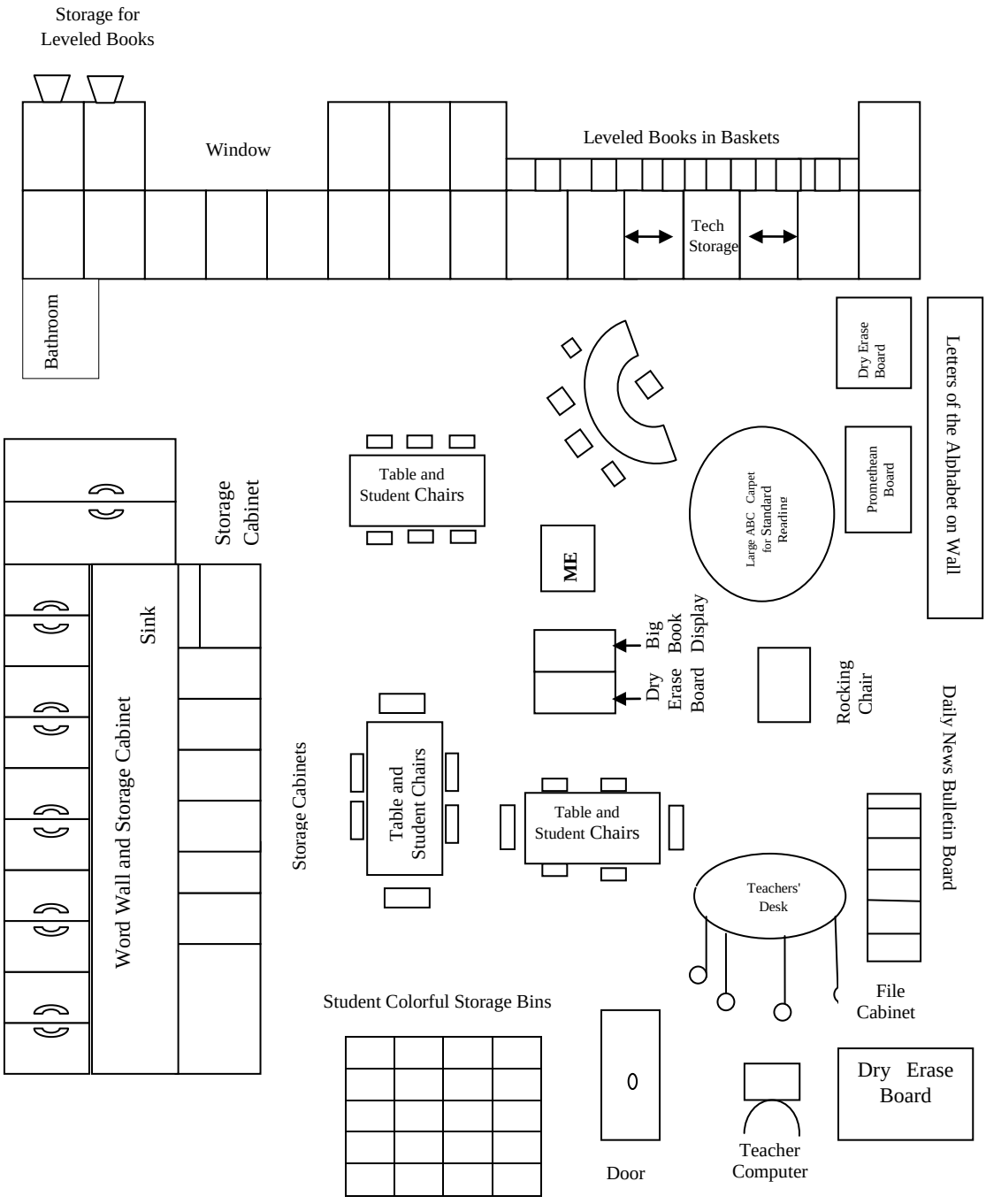

Figure 6. Layout of Lucy's classroom during the observation research. Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by "(ME)."

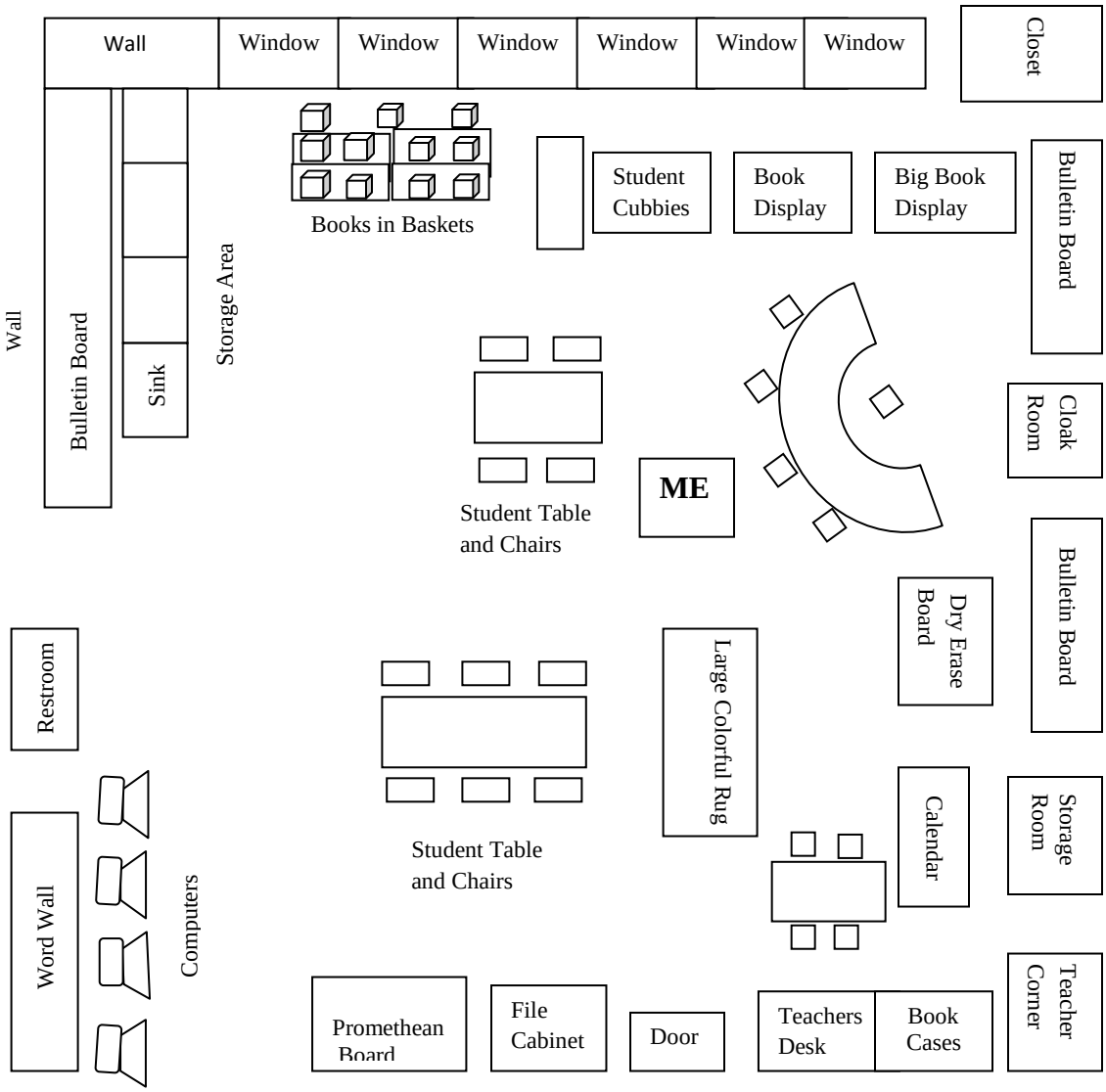

Figure 7. Layout of Cee Jay's classroom during the observation research. Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by "(ME)."

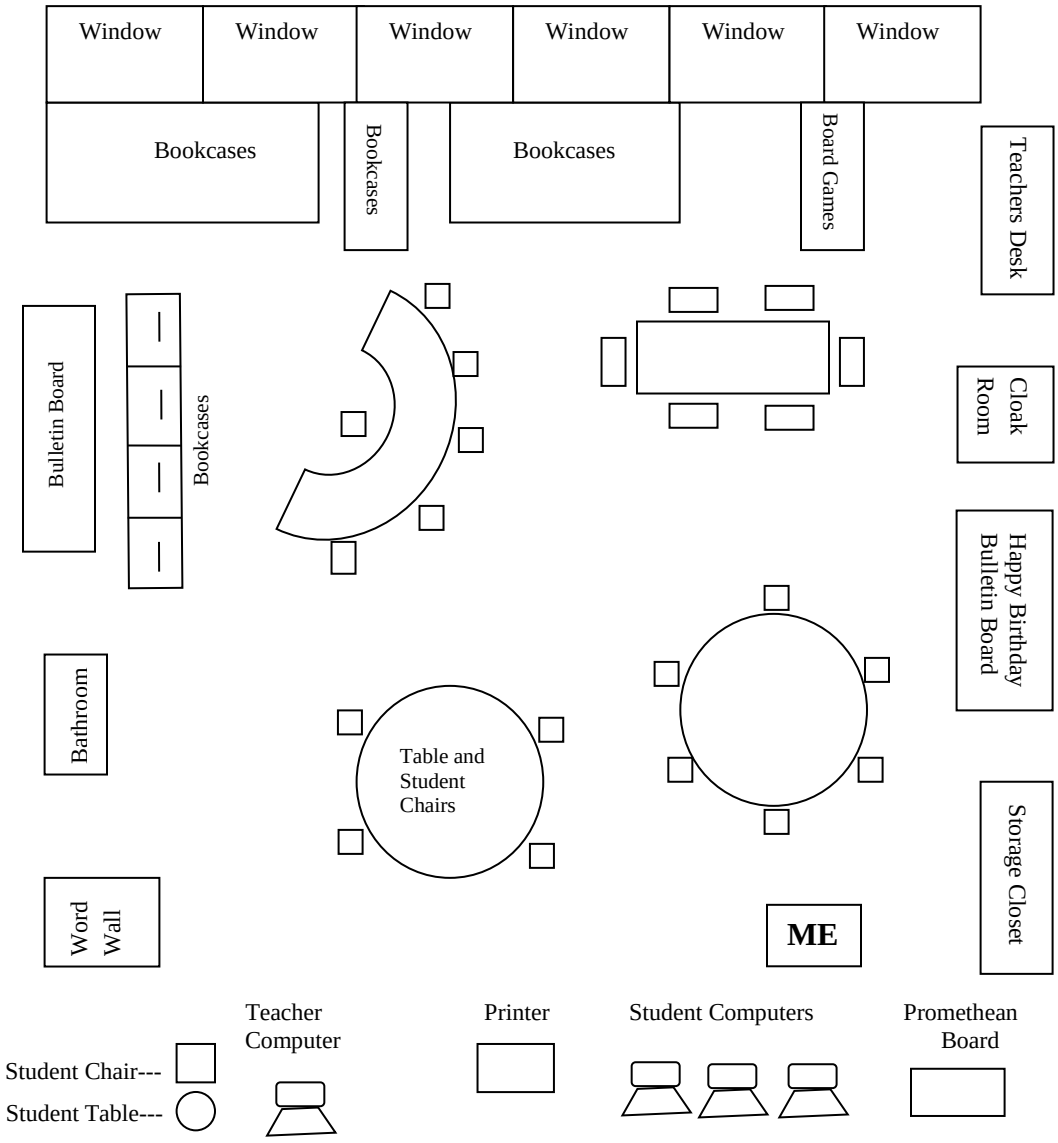

Figure 8. Layout of Watts' classroom during the observation research. Location of researcher during classroom observation referenced by "(ME)."

Bee worked at the beginning of the year to create a classroom learning community. Bee confirmed, "They [students] know that it's okay if they have questions to ask or maybe to stop me while I'm reading or to make a connection with something that I've just read, even if I hadn't asked for one yet." Ann also addressed a classroom learning community. She thought deeply as she connected reading and writing with her students' desire to play an active role in their own learning. "Everybody wants to be the person to try to point to the words." Ann created a learning community as she allowed all of her students to participate in a risk-free environment.

Lucy shared she does not permit students to make fun of one another. She emphasized in a serious tone, "You just don't tell children [you know] they're wrong. I just let them tell me whatever they need to tell and if they get it wrong, there's a way to say it so you're not scaring them." She encouraged students by saying, "Keep thinking, you're almost right."

Building students' background knowledge. Teachers' practice of shared reading in this study included making predictions, using students' personal experiences, and asking questions to build students' background knowledge. Lucy shared that predictions can be used to tell if students know anything about the topic of the text. Ann also shared how she used students' experiences to help them understand text. She used a Ukrainian folktale, *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989), to help students make connections by giving them (students) an opportunity to make a book for all the names they call their "grandmothers, aunts, or somebody that's important to them."

Bee also affirmed she assessed students' background knowledge "mainly through the types of questions asked." Bee also assessed students' background based on their comments about the text as she asked the following:

> Are they [students] making connections with what I'm saying? Are they referring to something else we've read before? Are they understanding the character traits of the character in the story based on what they are saying?" So, I listen to what they're [students] saying.

Building students' knowledge of new words. Building a better vocabulary can help primary grade students comprehend written text (Reutzel & Cooter, 2004; Vaughn & Thompson, 2004). Carla implemented the "related words" strategy before shared reading to help students make connections with unfamiliar words during the reading of the text. She asked students to write a word related to "nudging" on a sticky note. Students shared their words: nudge, nudger, and nudging and placed them on a large piece of chart paper with the word "nudging" encircled in the middle with lines extended from it. The instructional method gave students an opportunity to use words related to the encircled word in a complete sentence. The words "silky" and "lazily" were also utilized by the students. Carla asked students different questions about the vocabulary to help them gain a deeper understanding of their meaning. Examples of questions included the following: "Have you ever flopped down 'lazily?'…I'm thinking of a dog's tail. I want to know what 'silky' means. What does 'silky' mean? What more can you say? Silky is soft. Toby wags his 'silky' tail." Students' predictions were confirmed and encouraged. Synonyms were also given for each word.

Ann explained proudly how she used cloze reading during shared reading as a way to develop vocabulary:

> We use the cloze reading a lot during shared reading – when you cover up things [words] to try and figure out what words might be or figure out within the context of a page what a word might mean. We talk about what word they could have put in place of that word and to look within the page or within the picture to try and figure it [word] out. We talk about where we've seen that [word] somewhere else. They [students] are really good at that.

Ann strongly expressed how she modeled and identified new words by stating, "There was something else that was "amazing" to me." As noted by Ann:

> We'll read the book and we'll say, you heard that word somewhere else, and somebody will say, it was in *A House Is a House for Me* (Hoberman, 1978) and they'll [students] come up with that word and pull it out and gain a better understanding of that [word].

Building students' knowledge by differentiating instruction. Teachers differentiate instruction through the careful selection of text during shared reading, which affords students many opportunities to be successful in their roles as readers and writers (Clay, 2005; Mooney, 1990; Prescott & Griffin-Witherell, 2004). Type of text was one of the main ways Bee differentiated instruction during shared reading. She used texts that varied in difficulty as tools to assist struggling readers in her classroom. Many of the struggling students otherwise would be unable to "read the text or understand the concept because it's [text] above their readability level or it's more complex text."

Watts noted students who are nonreaders or beginning readers are given text with lots of pictures with high frequency words that they may identify. The higher-level children increase fluency as they engage in the text. Watts modeled by reading aloud and "tracked" (pointed) during shared reading to illustrate directionality from left-to-right. "Those students who can read – I let them track – Those who have not mastered that

level, I'll allow them to 'track.' Whatever they are able to do, I try to get them involved in that way."

Ann used questions to differentiate instruction during shared reading. For the higher level students, she used a lot of reviewing. She explicitly noted, "Shared reading may not be the place where I would be able to differentiate as much, but it is going to be a place where you would go back and do some specific lessons." Ann was concerned that shared reading does not get everything. She confirmed, "I believe really strongly in shared reading, but I do think you still need some small group instruction for your children that need the most support."

Planning Instruction

State Course of Study. Each school district within the state used specific standards for specific grade levels during planning. Most of the teachers in the study referred to using the standards in the State Course of Study as they planned shared reading lessons.

As noted by Ann:

> I still do a lot of thematic unit type instruction in my classroom. And so based on whatever themes or units we're studying and the type of text, I take a look at my standards to see what shared reading pieces may best fit or which standard it may help to meet.

Cee Jay also mentioned the role state standards played when she planned shared reading instruction:

> We look at the text that we're using and we make sure we know which standards are being addressed and whether we need to add that in order to make sure that the students are mastering those or being exposed to the standards that are needed.

Incorporating content areas: Shared reading. Each of the seven teachers in the study addressed ways that they integrated content areas into reading. They identified using shared reading as a tool for integration of social studies, science, and mathematics.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) noted the importance in guiding teachers as they integrated early literacy across the content areas. When teachers support students' reading before, during, and after reading, reading abilities tended to improve (Boyles, 2009; Taberski, 2000). Shared reading can be used to help students unlock meaning and integrate reading strategies in a text (Brown, 2004). Texts were related to class content and provide explicit instructions that reflected the strategy or reading behavior of the lessons (Frey & Fisher, 2007). As acknowledged by Watts:

> Shared reading is used during social studies, math, and science. Shared reading is a part of the arts, because reading is a part of all the instructional areas. As a matter of fact, you cannot really instruct without involving reading.

Lucy stated this, "I use it [shared reading] for other subjects… a lot of times for social studies and science, too." Ann addressed the same topic and said, "[Shared reading] is a part of our day…because our reading block is integrated. It's a part of everything we do."

Alpha described that she incorporated shared reading across all content areas. Nonfiction text was also evident in her classroom as the researcher observed a shared reading lesson. Lesson plans were also evident as Alpha incorporated nonfiction text during shared reading while engaging students in a science lesson about teeth.

In this study, six of the seven teachers described the importance of shared reading across the content areas. The seventh teacher noted the importance of integrating content area instruction and literacy. However, they did not mention the importance of text structures or text features during shared reading. The researcher found this lack of indication important since her research describes primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy

instruction. Understanding nonfiction text structures and text features are key components to comprehension of informational text.

Instructional challenges. Planning is an essential element used to provide effective instruction within the classroom during shared reading. Effective planning and effective instruction were particularly challenging when the classroom reflected a wide range of ability or achievement levels. Teachers in the study also indicated time and availability of instructional materials added to the challenges.

Watts noted that the various levels of her students' abilities were a challenge during instructional planning. According to Watts:

> The varied levels of abilities that my students have because we have students who have been to preschool and we have some who have not been exposed to reading – even the nursery rhymes. My biggest challenge is not to leave those students who are what we call "the benchmark level" without the quality time with me because I'm having to spend so much time with those students who are below level.

Another area of concern was time. Four teachers noted time as being the biggest challenge during planning and instruction. As emphasized by Cee Jay:

> Just being pushed; having to do so much else. The reading block is an hour and a half. I'll say it's two because my kids they actually get in here at 7:45a.m. But, at 10:00 a.m. reading is pretty much over with then. I can't spend all day doing shared reading and activities like that, because we have to move into other activities.

Alpha served as an administrator designee. An administrator designee served as an assistant principal within the local school. He or she may assist the principal with school projects, discipline, and communications from the superintendent's office. An administrator designee may also be asked to attend principal meetings and conferences with and/or for the principal. She emphasized that you can have the greatest plans, but not enough time to implement them.

Alpha strongly emphasized that:

> My number one problem is time T-I-M-E exclamation point! I don't feel that I have enough time to actually implement the instruction that I need because the schedule is so broken up –We've got to stop – We've got to stop to do something else. But those are the things that we work around and we make use of it [time] the best way we can.

Lucy shared, "I could probably use some more resources and having the time to gather materials." However, Bee exclaimed the following:

> I have a lot of resources and materials. I have a wonderful principal who believes in getting us what we need. So, I have a lot of resources. I have a lot of time to do whatever I want to do – our scheduling is not very rigid.

Although Bee had plenty of instructional resources, she specifically noted time was a factor because of students who participated in "pullout"-programs. While smiling Bee stated the following:

> The only challenge in planning for me would be coordinating time where I think most of my students would be in the room to be able to participate in the shared reading. Especially for my English as a Second Language (ESL) students and Hispanic students, shared reading is such an important experience.

While the teachers' comments were general in terms of various levels of students' abilities, limited resources, and lack of time to coordinate, challenges affected shared reading. For example, Carla noted, "Just having to go back and re-teach can sometimes be a challenge, especially if there is a timeline." Cee Jay shared, "Sometimes focus on my strategic and intensive students is not what it needs to be."

Reflections. Reflection on the part of teachers about their lessons and on the part of children about what they have read can be beneficial (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Reflection can drive instruction and assist teachers in the planning of more effective lessons. Teachers also can help children reflect on the meaning of a text when they ask specific questions after reading: How did the reading sound? What did you notice? Why do you think I read that way? (Prescott-Griffin & Witherell, 2004). The teachers in this study used reflection to describe their teaching practice of shared reading as a strategy to

build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Occasionally the teachers explained that they reflected about children understanding skill development. For example, Lucy stated she considered how "The different levels of the children and where I want to take them." She noted that, "If they [students] struggle with it [skill], if they don't understand – I'll have to go back over it and re-group. And if they seem to be getting it then I can move on to something else." Other teachers' comments indicated their reflections addressed students' growing comprehension. Teale et al. (2007) noted that comprehension is important in helping readers to understand complex text. For example, Watts reflected and observed the following:

> How well the students can retell, if they can identify characters, if they can relate to me about the text, whether or not it may be nonfiction or whether it's fiction, if they use vocabulary introduced in the text in another way, if they're able to use it in a sentence – maybe different from how it was used in a particular text.

Further lesson reflections were more general or were influenced by teaching standards. Weaver (2002) noted for the best reading instruction, teachers' instructional approach to reading was correlated with students' understanding of what reading is. Teachers must pay close attention to the selected objective while engaging students in explicit instruction (Boyles, 2009). Some aspects of shared reading best practice were common to best practice for all reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Cee Jay noted the following when she reflected on her shared reading lessons: asking more open-ended questions and providing more explicit instruction. Carla indicated her reflections include a self-assessment of how she made use of the time available. Recalling Zemelman, Daniels, and Hydes (2005) discussion of best practices for shared reading, Carla indicated she adjusted the time for the shared reading lesson based on the needs of the group. Carla noted that scaffolding was important during instruction. Scaffolding

was described as a "a process whereby a teacher monitors students' learning carefully and steps in to provide assistance on an as-needed basis" (Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998, p. 116). Several teachers reported the reflecting they did on shared reading lessons depended on students' responses. Boyles (2009) affirmed that, "All classrooms are Response to Intervention (RTI) classrooms-from pre-kindergarten through high school. And all students will respond positively to instruction when that teaching is appropriately differentiated with students receiving different kinds of support based on their different needs" (p. 49). Alpha stated that, "A lot of it [reflection] is their [students'] response. I put Post-it ™ notes on the inside of the books of questions that I ask; that seems (*sic*) to be helpful." While pausing to think, Alpha stated further:

> Students' responses end up showing me sometimes that I think we're farther ahead than [sometimes] we are. Or it will show me that just because I think that I taught it, does not necessarily mean that we [students] learned it.

Communications. Teachers' professional communication with principals, colleagues and parents was important (Hart & Risley, 1995). Although communication with the principal, reading coach, and parents about the use of the shared reading context for reading instruction may be important, Lucy and Cee Jay noted they did not communicate with others about the implementation of shared reading in their classroom practice. Lucy stated, "I haven't really communicated any of that." Cee Jay noted, "Honestly,. I can say, I don't."

Response to Intervention (RTI) included a fourth component: Parent involvement that keeps parents apprised of the instruction their children were receiving and the progress they were making (Boyles, 2009). Ann indicated she sent newsletters home to parents every Friday. Bee noted she communicated with parents by sending home

weekly newsletters. Carla also shared she sent home the STAR (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading) every Tuesday to inform parents of the improvements in their children's reading level.

Carla indicated good communication among colleagues. She shared she met with her colleagues on grade level to talk about "What centers we have, what's working, what's not working. Our principal and reading coach are generally in attendance to those meetings."

Bee indicated a strong line of communication with administration. She shared that her principal does regular "Walk-Throughs" therefore; he knew what went on in the teachers' classrooms. She noted she also communicated with the reading coach and can always talk with her about instructional or resource issues.

Alpha also indicated good communication between the classroom and principal. She stated that, "My principal and my reading coach are 100% in the know. They are knowledgeable about the importance of shared reading, how it should be done, and the ways it should be done." Although all teachers in the study acknowledged communication, evidence of coordinated communication among all parties (teachers, colleagues, administrators, and parents) was not clear.

Using Text Matters

Students' personal enjoyment was noted as the overall purpose of text selection (Mooney, 1990). Teachers' careful selection of text during shared reading affords students many opportunities to be successful as they become convinced in their roles as readers and writers (Mooney, 1990). The careful selection of text also provided opportunities for students to authentically engage in text modeled by the teacher (1990).

Three researchers demonstrated effective practices of shared reading. Sulzby (1985) conducted a study that used the same storybook with a student and found an increase in her substituted response to original words with in the text. The study noted how students responded to different texts. Findings revealed reasonable stability across storybooks. Martinez and Rozer (1985) studied repeated readings of familiar books during story-time. Findings revealed story-time that revisits the same text is beneficial.

Observations and descriptions of selected text. The researcher observed the use of various texts during shared reading lessons. Participants in this study selected various types of texts on the days they were observed by the researcher. Alpha, a second grade teacher selected nonfiction. Bee, a first grade teacher, selected realistic fiction, and Carla, a third grade teacher, selected a leveled reader from the basal series. The three kindergarten teachers, Ann, Lucy, and Watts, chose big books. Cee Jay, a former kindergarten teacher and current first grade teacher, also selected a big book during the shared reading lesson.

Evidence of use of texts representing various genres was clear from books displayed strategically for students' use within each of the primary grade classrooms. In some cases, the various genres were clearly related to shared reading activities, in other cases, many genres of books were evident, but the use for shared reading was not clear.

Alpha had books that represented a display of genres labeled in book bins and bookcases. Ann had a display of leveled books, big books, and a mixture of genres near the puppet center and in the bookcase below students' art work. Bee had a literacy center chart with a bookcase that housed books representing various genres. Colorful science big books were located near leveled books. Books categorized by topics were accessible

to students near a large carpeted alphabet rug. Leveled books were on top of a bookcase that housed books from various genres. Although big books on various genres were not visible in Carla's classroom, other types of books from various genres were labeled in colorful baskets. Book covers of different genres were also displayed on the wall. Lucy, on the other hand, did not have books displayed all over the classroom. However, leveled books were labeled in baskets, but books for shared reading in various genres were not evident. Cee Jay's colorful big book display housed books from various genres. Books in baskets near the window also housed books from various genres. Watts mixed the genre of books near the bookcase in the rear of the classroom. The researcher observed a display of books on various genres in each classroom, but the displays did not always clearly reflect use of the text for shared reading.

Mooney (1990) noted teachers should select text that students will enjoy as they engage in reading and writing. Selected text must be of high interest in order for students to make predictions and construct meaning. Alpha selected a nonfiction piece of text from *Scholastic News Magazine* entitled, "Say, Aaaahh!" (Scholastic News, 2013). The focus of the lesson was on identifying nonfiction text features. Data evidence did not reveal teachers consistently attending to text features as they reflected on shared reading. However when, Alpha was observed she addressed text features when she used nonfiction for shared reading.

Teachers must carefully choose text that will allow them to focus on a text feature or a specific comprehension strategy (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Teachers read collaboratively with students as they focus on reading behaviors, text features, and specific comprehension strategies. Hoyt (2002) noted shared reading was useful in

literacy activities in upper elementary, middle, and high school. She found evidence of student engagement as they viewed nonfiction text features from transparencies charts, or big books. Students were better able to activate prior knowledge and used picture cues from enlarged nonfiction texts.

Teachers' approaches to text that were used to support students' active participation were more important than the idea of a 'big book' or regular sized book during shared reading (Mooney, 1990). Bee selected a big book, *Alexander's Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972). While examining the cover of the book, students were asked to make predictions about the story. After the teacher read the title, students were asked if they wanted to make changes to their prior predictions. Bee did not use a pointer during the lesson; however, she smiled as she turned each page and read using strong intonation throughout the text. Bee's powerful and purposeful reading encouraged repeated readings of familiar phrases and loud hand claps of praise at the end of the story. Bee did not use the Promethean Board™. However, the students interacted with the text as they read familiar parts with the teacher from a big book.

During the observed shared reading lessons, Ann, Cee Jay, Lucy, and Watts selected big books for their students that included the three Rs of reading: rhyme, rhythm, and repetition (Manning, 1997). Each selected text that was simple enough to help students bring existing competencies to the task of the lesson because they contained phonemic, semantic, and syntactic richness (Clay, 2005). An outline of the text used during the observation of shared reading lessons is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Text Used During Shared Reading Lesson

Participant	Grade	Type of Text	Title of Text
Alpha	2	Nonfiction (Scholastic News)	"Say, Aaaahh!"
Ann	K	Fiction (Big Book)	"Zug the Bug's Big Book"
		Song	"Love Somebody"
		Fiction (Big Book)	"Slugs in Love"
Bee	1	Realistic Fiction (Big Book)	"Alexander, and the Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Day"
Carla	3	Fiction (Leveled Reader)	"Smart Dog"
Lucy	K	Fiction (Big Book)	"I Can't Get My Turtle to Move"
Cee Jay	1	Fiction (Big Book)	"Out of the Ocean"
Watts	K	Fiction (Big Book)	"My Lucky Day"

Each teacher further described the text they selected during shared reading. Lucy expressed that, "I use big books, fiction, nonfiction, poems... that's about all." Watts stated also, "I use big books. I use student reading [basal readers] charts, and I also use graphs." Cee Jay also indicated that she used big books and the students' textbooks. Carla emphasized with confidence:

> Earlier this year, I used a lot of fiction during shared reading to build their [students] interest for learning. Here recently, as we started this new semester, we've moved over into nonfiction text more, trying to make it [reading] interesting for them. So, it's the topics concerning science, things like food chains and food webs. Then I follow up with the video to peek their interest. So, when they come in the next day, they want to read more about it.

Ann shared that she used a lot of big books for shared reading, "I have a number of those [big books] that I've collected over the years from bonus points or just things that I have ordered or collected over time and big books I've made over time."

Bee affirmed that she, also, used many types of text for shared reading:

> All different types of texts: informational text, narrative texts, stories, fairy tales, and poems. We may read recipes or I may take a large chunk of the *Scholastic News* or the newspaper and we read it aloud together with the children picking out words.

Selection of text for diverse learners. Clay (2005) noted, "For learning to occur it is very important to ensure that the difficulty level of the reading materials presents challenges from which the child can learn and not difficulties that disorganize what s/he already knows" (p. 24). The independent level was what the student reads on their own without support from a teacher or more skillful other. The instructional level was where the student learned to read new words with moderate challenges. The frustration level was when the student is reading material that was too challenging for him/her (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Watts noted that she used a variety of text to accommodate the diverse needs of her students. She stated the following:

> I like to use some books that are fiction and nonfiction. I like for students to be able to see characters that look like them in text and I like for them to also see places that are relevant in the text selection.

When selecting text, Bee spoke with sincerity, "The foremost factor I consider is my students; their learning abilities, reading abilities, and background knowledge that they're bringing to the skills or to the information that we're talking about." After clearing her throat, Bee added, "I also consider skills and the standards that we're working on that I'm trying to address." Carla also contemplated students' backgrounds when selecting text. She explained that, "So they [students] are able to just focus on the concepts." Bee echoed teacher concerns about differentiation of instruction, "The types of text I choose and the types of questions I ask to the different students depending on what their grade level is how I fit shared reading in and use it as for helping to individualize instruction."

Ann addressed the issue of cultural diversity in text selection when she shared with me during the interview, "I look at what the books look like in and of themselves. I

like books to reflect the real world. I want the books to reflect my students' real world. Some of the books have Spanish in them as well." Ann added this, "Our class knows that I'm trying to learn Spanish. I talk about that with our children that can already speak more than one language and shared that I am trying to do that." Overall, Ann selected text for diverse learners "to reflect what our world looks like and what we look like as well."

Introduction of selected texts. Introduction to selected text was important because it was an essential practice of shared reading. As teachers used rich introductions as they introduced new texts, students engaged in the enjoyment of shared reading (Clay, 1998). Students should be introduced to the story before they engaged in the text. Addressing key elements such as story, plot, words, sentences, and writing style because this helped to facilitate students' responses, ideas, sentences, and language when responding to teacher prompts about the story (Clay, 1993).

During the introduction the researcher did not observe the teachers' link to previous texts; although links to students' prior knowledge was evident. For example, after guiding students to look at the illustrations on the cover *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972), Bee stated about the book, "He looks scared and maybe a little grumpy." During the observation she called on various students to make predictions about the story. Lucy guided her students to look at the front and back cover of the text as well as the title page to make predictions. Afterward, she inquired about the role of the author and illustrator. Lucy provided opportunities for students to use their prior knowledge to make predictions about *I Can't Get My Turtle to Move* (O'Donnell, 1989). She asked her students, "What do you think this story is going

to be about?" Watts made links to students' prior knowledge by asking students to look with her at the pictures in the text, *My Lucky Day* (Kasza, 2003). The purpose was to discuss why the pig had the fox do certain things. Cee Jay linked students' prior knowledge to the theme 'treasures' as she read from the text, *Out of the Ocean* (Frasier, 1998). She gave an overview of the text by stating that, "Today, we're going to find out what comes out of the ocean." Afterward, she modeled a picture walk for her students.

Explaining or introducing new language and/or sentence structure was not observed during text introductions in this study. The four teachers who read from big books did not introduce repetitive phrases, rhymes, or rhythms located in the text. For example, the following was the repetitive phrase in Lucy's book, "But I can't get my turtle to move." The repetitive phrase in Bee's book was this, "I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, bad day."

One teacher out of seven introduced new words and invited students to find them in the text. For example, Carla shared with her class, "We're looking for words that look like 'silky'. "We're going to see these words in our story 'commanded', 'nudging' and 'lazy'". Afterward, she gave students a colorful sticky note and asked students to write a "related word"; for example, 'commanded', 'commanding' and 'commander'.

The researcher did not observe teachers' making other links that contributed to successful reading and successful comprehension during the introduction of the text in this study. According to Clay (1998), "Good book introductions explore, test out, and draw on children's knowledge (p. 174). The introduction of some of the teachers in this study was inconsistent with the literature. Although the teachers introduced the books,

they did not make full use of book introductions in order to maximize vocabulary learning and comprehension.

Modeling Comprehension Strategies

Parkes (2003) noted that students developed a range of strategies. Using a variety of strategies was important for reading and understanding text. Clay (1991) emphasized, "In order to read with understanding we call up and use a repertoire of strategies acting upon stores of knowledge to extract messages from print" (p. 326). The teachers in the study demonstrated during interviews and observations that they understood the value of prediction and rereading. Other strategies that promoted comprehension such as retelling and self-monitoring were not observed or discussed by the teachers in this study.

Each teacher in the study provided a copy of the text or made sure the text was visible for his or her students. Alpha provided a copy of the Scholastic magazine for each student and used the Promethean Board ™ to illustrate the importance of taking care of ones' teeth, the topic of the article in the scholastic news. Ann used a big book and a chart poem and then connected the big book to a similar piece of text about slugs. Bee utilized a big book during her shared reading lesson. Carla provided leveled books for each student during the shared reading lesson that was observed. Lucy used a big book and the Promethean Board ™ while Cee Jay and Watts employed big books.

The researcher observed teachers modeling comprehension strategies as their students' explored language and literacy during shared reading. Examples of teaching strategies used by teachers included choral reading and picture walks. Although the students in each teacher's classroom varied, all were given opportunities to read and re-read text with their teacher in order to build confidence and motivation to further engage

in the learning task of shared reading. In each of the participant teacher's classrooms, students were given opportunities to read together using the same text, to decode words, and to demonstrate comprehension about what they read. Before the shared reading lesson, Ann read a poem to the tune of *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947) that she had written on a large sheet of chart paper. Later, she encouraged students to sing with her about love from the poem.

Specific strategies were described by the teachers during the interviews and observed by the researcher during the site observations. For example, Lucy described the strategies she used before, during, and after shared reading lessons. She stated that, "We predict and then during the reading, we discuss you know [*sic*] things that are happening." Lucy noted that she was trying to teach students to predict and build comprehension during lessons. Lucy stated too… "We check our predictions and change if we have to change." Making predictions before her shared reading lesson was evident in Lucy's shared reading observation.

Explicit modeling instruction. In effective shared reading, children read a text along with an adult, whom provided the needed support and assistance. Reading instruction given through the shared reading technique offered a zone of proximal (ZPD) development for beginning readers. The zone of proximal development was defined as those functions that have not yet matured but were in the process of maturation (Vygotsky, 1978).

Social interaction with others was an essential element in the learning process and the development of a child's thinking abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). This interaction between adult and child was important because without adult assistance the child might

not make progress (Vygotsky, 1978). As a student observed the modeling of a teacher or more capable individual, s/he began to understand the relationship of the task and connected it with a previously learned activity (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). This understanding was developed as the student and teacher engaged in conversation while the task was being completed. The teacher questioned the students and offered feedback as the students expressed and understanding of the undertaking. This process of questioning and feedback was known as scaffolding (Bruner, 1983; Wood et al., 1976).

The gradual release of responsibility was related to social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Shared reading was mirrored by Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) concept of the gradual release of responsibility to the students. Initially, teachers provided strong support by reading aloud to students. Next, the teacher modeled how good readers used metacognition to construct meaning from the text. Metacognition was defined a "thinking about thinking" which included using strategies to help students to move past a place of being baffled when reading a text.

The researcher observed teachers making the maximum use of explicit instruction in learning communities that promoted teacher and student interaction during shared reading (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Explicit instruction scaffolds the interaction between teachers and students. Assistance from a more able individual (the teacher) insured progress to comprehend text while reading (Vygotsky, 1978). Each teacher in the study modeled explicit instruction to maximize student learning.

Watts explicitly modeled Concepts About Print (CAP) as she read and moved her pointer from left-to-right and from top-to-bottom during her lesson. She read with excitement as she modeled explicitly how good readers think while reading. Watts spoke

aloud what her "thinking" was while she said, "I see something in this picture that we use for seasoning." [salt and pepper shakers] She read with expression and used pictures from the text as she modeled her thinking about the story. She engaged students and asked them to, "Think about what happen when you eat a lot? Why do you think the fox is feeding the pig?" After a student responded, Watts changed her tone and smiled sheepishly, "I might need the fox at my house." Watts explained to the students that the fox massaged the pig's back and sprinkled salt and pepper on it because he wanted the pig to taste good. She modeled what the pig did by attempting to massage a student's leg. Watts continued to read and encouraged students to read a familiar phrase repetitively along with her.

The researcher also observed how the teachers promoted students' metalinguistic abilities during shared reading lessons. Teachers modeled print referencing and used nonverbal references by "pointing to" and "tracking" print within the text. Lucy was observed during a shared reading lesson as she pointed with her finger to pictures and each word while reading. She modeled using her hands to illustrate the technique of "threading" as she pointed to the word "threading." She demonstrated with her voice how to use strong intonation as she pointed to each word from left-to-right and top-to-bottom within the text. As the lesson continued, Lucy slid her right pointer finger from left-to-right while orally blending the words swim, swimming, sit, sitting, march, and marching. During the researcher's observation, Ann pointed to pictures of animals sleeping in the text as she read during her shared reading lesson. Ann pointed to each word in the poem, "Love Somebody" with a pointer. This was evidence of verbal references. It included questions about print in the text. Ann commented about the print

and modeled strategies that correlated with the shared reading lesson plans that she gave to the researcher. Some examples of modeled strategies included: phonemic awareness, Concepts (conventions) About Print (CAP), expanding vocabulary, choral reading, tracking (pointing), and questioning were highlighted in her lesson plans. Cee Jay also used her pointer finger to "track" words during shared reading.

The seven teachers implemented clear and concise language as they explicitly modeled strategies during shared reading lessons. Bee shared how she provided opportunities for students to "turn-and-talk" with a partner during the interview with the researcher. She said that students tell her what they understood about the text or what they thought about what was read to them. Ann also engaged students in "turn-and-talk" as they were asked to quietly tell a partner three words they recognized from the poem they read. Next in the observation by the researcher, they were requested to turn back around to the teacher for further instruction. Adequate examples were provided for students to understand the text they were reading. Ann read the poem from the chart, "Love Somebody." Afterward, she allowed students to point to words they knew and they read them. Ann substituted each student's name in the text and clapped out the number of syllables in each student's name.

Each teacher invited frequent responses from their students. This prompted student and teacher interaction through the use of questioning. While observing in the classroom Alpha said to her students, "Let's look and listen. Let's see why sharks don't need a dentist." Cee Jay noted to her class, "There was a lot of water in the school's parking lot. Is that an ocean?" Each teacher carefully watched students during the lessons while they provided feedback to students' responses. Affirmations and

acceptance of approximations were evident in all of the classroom observations during shared reading. Carla praised students for making predictions about the text. What she said was, "I like your predictions." As students engaged in conversation about the text, Carla signaled, "Good thinking." Bee praised her students for being attentive during shared reading, "I like the way you know what we're going to do." Ann admired the way in which her students responded to questions asked. Carla also praised a student for using a simile during shared reading without being prompted. Lucy commended her students for reading words with gerunds "ing" at the end by saying simply, "Good, good, job." She also applauded students for being so smart when she exclaimed happily, "You're going to make me dance. You're so smart!" Alpha thanked her students for differentiating how humans are different from dogs.

Cee Jay modeled linking students' prior knowledge to new ideas about the themes in the text. She asked her students, "What is a treasure?" and "What can you tell me about the ocean?" Next, she explicitly demonstrated how to use pictures to help students derive meaning from the text. Alpha guided students through nonfiction text to find text features and any amazing facts they encountered by saying explicitly, "Let's look and listen. Let's see why sharks don't need a dentist." In the observation lesson, Alpha connected the main topic of the scholastic reader with a video that was shown on the Promethean Board ™.

During the observation Ann smiled as she read the text and tried to explicitly engage students in a big book about animals. She praised students and showed students how looking at pictures would help them figure out unknown words.

Instructional techniques that include modeling. Instructional techniques were modeled by the teacher participants in this study. The researcher observed three teachers as they modeled choral reading. Four teachers modeled a picture walk. Three teachers, Alpha, Ann, and Carla chose not to model a picture walk during this study.

Choral reading. Allington (2001) recorded that students should reread texts in pairs or chorally along with their teachers. Teachers may highlight word structure and patterns of language with sticky notes. Lucy used a pointer to help students review Concepts About Print (CAP) during her shared reading lesson. She engaged students in choral reading as they read the refrain "…but I can't get my turtle to move" to help them become more fluent while reading about a slow turtle in their big book. She also encouraged students to read gerunds, action words, found in the text such as, "swim," "purr," "sit," "peck," "shout," and "hop." Alpha guided her students in choral reading as they read the title and amazing facts about teeth within the text about sharks. She encouraged students to listen as she read the first paragraph.

Bee shared that her class interacted in choral reading, "If there's an interactive part, I'll read a part and they'll read a part

Picture walk. Marie Clay (1991) discussed the concept of a "Picture Walk" to use with students before reading what a new book is likely to be about. Picture walks relied heavily on meaning, language, and predictable story structures. Cee Jay modeled a picture walk to help students' observations about what happened in the story. She pointed to a palm tree and asked, "What's different about the illustrations? What are you noticing?"

She continued to point to pictures while questioning students:

> What do you think? Could that be the ocean? What is this here? [The Sun.] It is setting? We can see it's dark over here. Remember the title said *Out of the Ocean.* What does this look like? [The teacher continued to point to pictures with her finger]… I see the water making waves. Do you think it's waving to us? It's coming to the shore.

Lucy engaged the students in a picture walk and asked what the different animals in the text were doing. "What is the turtle doing? What are the fish doing? What are the cats doing?" Sometimes teachers attended to pictures in ways that did not promote comprehension of text. Lucy stated for example, "Let's count the number of puppies and rabbits." Not knowing what she meant, she may have been trying to build the students' adding skills during shared reading.

Watts focused on the text's pictures at the beginning of her shared reading lesson. "As you *look* at the pictures in the book with me, I want you to discuss why the pig had the fox to do certain things." Ann prompted her students to look at pictures as she said to them, "Let's look at the pictures to see what it [lug] might mean." A slug inside the jug was very hard for them to "lug." Ann demonstrated with her hands how to pull (lug). During the observation lesson, Carla listened attentively to how a student in Team One used pictures in the text to make visual connections. Bee modeled using pictures during shared reading to aid her students' comprehension of the text. She chose five scenes from the story for students to discuss and arrange sequentially as they occurred in the story. Lucy encouraged the use of a picture to solve an unknown word during the reading of the text. She asked the students this question, "What are the fish doing? Let's blend the word "swim." Lucy asked next, "What did she tell the fish to do? She noted then, "Swim" is an action word." This use of pictures was a way to encourage beginning readers to attend to the context of the picture in order to solve words. Shared reading was

a technique that was used to show beginning and or struggling readers how to solve words.

Modeling strategies for student use.

Decoding. Decoding was an important strategy because it predicted a students' ability to comprehend text (Stanovich, 1986). Students' recognition of letter-sound relationship was important during reading (Holdaway, 1979). Data were collected that indicated teachers in this study were aware of how to teach decoding in context during shared reading. The researcher observed as Lucy worked to scaffold students' learning. She pronounced each phoneme in the word "sit" /s/, /i/, /t/ as she wrote the word on the Promethean Board ™. Next, she pronounced each phoneme in the word "sip" /s/, /i/, /p/. She focused on how she changed the "t" in "sit" to the "p" in "sip." Furthermore, Lucy helped students read an unfamiliar word in text, "slip," when she read, "She was about to slip." She also asked students to look for ways to chunk words. So when the students came across words that were unfamiliar, they could look at particular aspects such as, /ar/ and /ch/ to help with the pronunciation, as those found in the word "march."

The words moving, munching, and threading were also written on the Promethean Board ™, was visible to all students. Lucy asked specifically, "What chunk do you see?" as she slid her right pointer finger under each word from left-to-right. Lucy praised her students for thinking and chunking in order to pronounce the word by saying loudly, "You're going to make me dance. You're so smart!" Cee Jay shared how she helped students decode the word "hibernate" by scaffolding how to learn new words, "Let's find out what we know here. What is this word? /hi/ You already know /er/. Let's put the /b/ in front… we have hiber. You know /ate/. Let's put /n/ in front of it." Cee Jay confirmed

that her students were able to pronounce the word "hibernate." Alpha shared that she writes words on the board and asks students "What's alike about these words? What's different about these words?"

Rereading. Rereading was another key element of shared reading (Weaver, 2002). As students engaged in repeated readings, self-confidence is increased. Repeated readings increased fluency, word familiarity, phonemic awareness, and phonics (Tompkins, 2006). Repeated readings also helped students with the integration of word identification skills, which promoted comprehension (Moyer, 1982). Cee Jay reread the text and helped students recall what was read. Lucy encouraged students to reread a familiar phrase with her during shared reading, "But I can't get my turtle to move." Watts encouraged students to reread repetitive phrases about Mr. Fox. Ann read and reread text to and with her students as they read *Zug the Bug's Big Book* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995) and *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947) from a teacher-made chart. The students in Carla's class read the last paragraph of a text about Charlie and his dog with her students. There was no evidence of rereading in the groups during shared reading. Bee guided students as they read aloud the repetitive phrase with her, "I'm having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

Summarizing the shared reading lesson. Several of the teachers in this study implemented sound summarizing at the end of their shared reading lesson. One teacher was not as effective in this area. Boyles (2009) emphasized, "Planning begins long before the lesson is written out" (p. 13). Several teachers illustrated an activity, used the gradual release of responsibility, reviewed objectives, or made connections to end their shared reading lessons. Effective endings of shared reading maximized instruction and

subsequent readings. Bee ended her lesson by reviewing sequencing skills. She used the following transitional words, first, next, then, after, after that, finally, final, and last. Next, she used a large white sheet of self-stick chart paper and called on different students asking them to sequentially arrange pictures on the chart from *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972). Bee exclaimed proudly, "I love the way you used the sequencing words." Afterward, she praised students for arranging the pictures in correct order according to the story and gave them an opportunity to choose a reading center to work at with a partner.

Ann made a connection with nonfiction text about slugs as she used strong intonation and questioning. She asked as she showed the book, "What do we think we know about slugs?" "Do you think this is a fiction or nonfiction book?" "Tell me why you think it's nonfiction; give me a reason." "Do you think slugs wear ribbons in their hair?" Ann read to and with students about slugs before ending with a Valentine Poem to the tune of, *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947). Each student was given an opportunity to use the pointer as they read the poem.

Participants' descriptions: Strategies. In addition to observations of strategy instruction, the teachers in this study often mentioned strategy instruction in their interviews, particularly the way they taught children how to use different strategies before, during and after reading. Ann shared that the strategies she used during shared reading depended on "what we're reading at the time." She shared that she incorporated math as she used matching and sorting with a previously read book, *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989.

Bee emphasized before shared reading she used a picture walk and vocabulary to introduce complex concepts in the text. She noted during shared reading:

> I also use [sometimes] cloze reading, where I use the sticky notes to cover a word that's going to be there. We do echo reading and choral reading where they sometimes read after me. If there's an interactive part, I'll read a part and they'll read a part. Or if they are not reading it [text] right, I'll have them read after me.

After shared reading she further emphasized that she used "follow-up" questions to check on comprehension through the use retelling and graphic organizers. She stated books that were read during shared reading were placed in centers for students to revisit. Bee shared that, "I have a big book center or a reading center and they [students] have access to those books during our literacy center time… they sometimes have accountability forms that they have to complete concerning the texts."

Other emergent ideas: Cloze reading. Cloze reading procedure allows children to make predictions of missing words. Positive teaching was illustrated during this procedure because teachers do not discourage students' predictions (Holdaway, 1979). Although cloze reading did not emerge as a strong emphasis with this group of teachers, two teachers acknowledged their use of the technique. Ann used cloze reading to engage her class in problem solving and self-monitoring when she read, "*Slugs in Love* (Pearson, 2006), they all had milk from a ____ jug." Ann used a pointer as she sounded out words in the text. She also encouraged students to look at pictures to gain meaning during shared reading. Bee noted that she sometime used sticky notes to cover up a word during shared reading.

Engaging Students

Engagement was crucial because it adds to the purpose of students' lives as they construct knowledge without fear of physical hurt if their actions or responses are not fully correct (Cambourne, 1995). Engagement was evident in this study as teachers interacted with students through questioning to assist them in understanding selected text. The researcher observed seven teachers during shared reading lessons. Teachers' high-expectations of students and their attempts to engage children at high levels of understanding were evident and illustrated in the various levels of questioning. Teachers in this study questioned students and offered feedback. The process of questioning and feedback they used was similar to "scaffolding" as described by Tharp and Gallimore (1991).

Questioning. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) noted generating questions is important during comprehension instruction. Metacognitive awareness include: developing the plan of action before reading, monitoring the plan during reading and evaluating the plan after reading through questioning (Frey & Fisher, 2007).

The researcher used Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956) as a framework to analyze primary grade teachers' questioning during shared reading. Bloom's Taxonomy included the following six levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The first three levels: remembering, understanding, and applying were the lower-order thinking skills. The last three levels: analyzing, evaluating, and creating were higher-order thinking skills. The researcher analyzed each question asked by the teachers during the shared reading lesson observation. The analyzed data were used to determine if the teachers in the study made

effective use of questioning during shared reading to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

Although engagement was evident in this study as teachers interacted with students through questioning, each teacher did not make effective use of questioning during shared reading to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Each teacher "talked" about shared reading. However, some of the teachers' practice did not support the idea of higher-order questioning to promote comprehension. Data mined from the seven teachers' questions revealed a total of 115 questions asked in the study during shared reading observations. Of the questions asked, 72 were lower-order thinking and 43 were higher-order thinking questions. Several teachers used questioning techniques effectively to promote thinking while the others did not.

Watts asked the highest number of high-order thinking questions. Lucy asked the lowest number of high-order thinking questions. Alpha used nonfiction text to focus on text structures. Alpha asked the lowest level of higher-order questions. Cee Jay and Watts each asked 14 lower-order thinking questions of students about the text during shared reading. The data in Table 4 illustrate the different levels of questions asked by each teacher.

Table 4
Levels of Questioning

Participant	Grade	Questions Asked (*n*)	Lower	Higher
Alpha	2	21	17	4
Ann	K	10	6	4
Bee	1	9	2	7
Carla	3	13	10	3
Lucy	K	11	9	2
Cee Jay	1	24	14	10
Watts	K	27	14	13

The researcher analyzed each question asked by the primary grade teachers during the shared reading lesson observations. The analyzed data revealed that the teachers in this study asked 115 questions in seven observation sessions. A total of 72 lower-order questions were asked and a total of 43 higher-order questioned were asked. The researcher's data from the observations revealed that all of the teachers in the study did not make use of effective questioning during shared reading to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

In this study, more lower-order thinking questions were asked than higher-order thinking questions. Data demonstrated that three teachers in this study would benefit by improving the strategy of higher-order thinking questioning. Evidence revealed that four teachers asked a fewer amount of questions during shared reading. However, the researcher observed that three teachers asked more than 20 questions in each reading session. One of the three teachers asked 21 questions with 17 being lower-order thinking questions. The other two of the three teachers' lower-order and higher questions were almost equal. For example, Cee Jay asked 24 questions: 14 lower-order thinking and 10 higher-order thinking. Watts asked 27 questions: 14 lower-order thinking and 13 higher-order thinking. The same two teachers asked 10 or more higher-order thinking questions. Teachers who provide opportunities for students an increased number of higher-order thinking questions enable them to construct higher thinking levels (Bloom & Krathwhol, 1956; Piaget, 1973).

It is difficult to make too many deductive summaries from the analyzed data set as this is a record of the questions from only one observational session of each teacher by the researcher. The researcher did not set out to specifically count the number of types of

questions so this is ancillary data. Furthermore, the purpose of the lessons may have been superseded by the foci on questioning. As the grade level appeared to have made some difference in the questioning data, this too was a variable in this qualitative study.

Making connections. Using the theory of Holdaway (1979), teachers can begin with fairytales because they can be used during reading to build on what beginning readers already know which include rhyme, rhythm, and repetition (Zemelman et al., 2005). Holdaway (1979) suggested shared reading transactions be implemented as the center of literacy in the classroom. Holdaway further suggested that in order for shared reading or any teaching to occur, the environment must be conducive to learning. Students' reading abilities improve when teachers support how they read; before, during, and after (Boyles, 2009; Taberski, 2000). Students can use what they learn from teachers to construct meaning and to make connections as they read and build their reading skills and strategies (Zemelman et al., 2005).

Making connections included text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world. The researcher analyzed how each of the seven teachers "made connections" during shared reading. Each teacher provided opportunities for students to make connections in a risk-free learning environment during the time in which the researcher observed.

The researcher observed as Alpha encouraged students to make text-to-self connections. She stated, "Our parents teach us how to live and survive." Alpha provided opportunities for students to engage in purposeful reading by saying, "Let's investigate." She helped individual students as she pointed to specific words on a chart. She also provided opportunities for students to answer questions orally. Alpha prompted students

to make text-to-self connections as she stated, “Let’s look and observe. Look at those teeth, amazing! Is he a mammal? Are we mammals?”

Ann used a pointer to help students read from left-to-right and from top-to-bottom. She facilitated students’ learning during shared reading by asking, “What is a pug?” and then “Let’s see if you were right.” Ann modeled text-to-self when she stated, “It’s a kind of dog.” Additionally, she shared a picture of her pet dog with the students. Ann’s dog was a black and white Boston Terrier named Ruby. Ann modeled text-to-text three times to help students gain a deeper understanding of the words: tug, slug, and lug. She read the text and modeled how fish tug on fishing lines.

Bee read the title with strong intonation, which prompted students to make connections. She nodded her head to imply that a connection had been made as she repeated a familiar phrase in the text, “I’m having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.” Bee directed the students back the ‘business machine.’ Bee referred to the text as the ‘business machine.’

During the interviews, five of the seven teachers described how they used connections to engage students in shared reading. Alpha smiled as she described how she engaged students to make connections during shared reading. She emphasized that her students immediately informed her if they had an experience with the topic that was being discussed. Her students made connections to text when reading about familiar topics. Alpha noted during the study of Antarctica, students shouted, “Mrs. Alpha, I’ve been there!” She added, “Now, we know that they [students] have not been to Antarctica, but they are making a connection to a place where they have gone where the climate was extremely cold and in their minds, it was Antarctica.”

During questioning, Ann engaged students by providing them with opportunities to draw on their experiences during shared reading. Students used text-to-self connections and shared them with someone next to them. Bee described how she listened to her students comments to determine if they were making connections with the lesson or to what she was saying. She listened to see if students were making text-to-text connections relative to understanding character traits of specific characters within the text.

Participants' description: Engaging students. Engagement was important because it adds to the purpose of students' lives as they perform without fear of physical hurt if their actions or responses are not fully correct (Cambourne, 1995). During the interview, five of the seven participants described what they did to engage their students as they asked questions and made connections during shared reading. Ann reported that she used themes to engage students by asking questions. She explained that the questions asked drew students' attention to the text that allowed them make text-to-self connections. Ann described that she used different questions to review skills learned by lower and higher level students. Bee described how she engaged students through the use of open-ended questions. She stated, "I am facilitating their [students'] learning in the respect that I'm making sure I'm asking specific questions to help guide their understanding for whatever skill we're working on during the shared reading experience." She smiled as she continued to emphasize how she used questioning during shared reading to assess students' background knowledge. Carla noted that she constantly asked questions to help her students make connections.

Lucy described what she did to try to keep students engaged during shared

reading. She stated, “I have them read after me or answer questions about the text.” She further stated, “I might ask them a few things – if you have ever been here or have ever done that.” Cee Jay shared that her students like to talk about their experiences. Therefore, she engaged them by asking different kinds of questions. She asked how and what questions. For example, “What do you think would happen?” Cee Jay described, “I’ll read it [text] to them and ask questions to help them develop the concept and understand what it is that the story is asking about.” Cee Jay engaged her students by allowing them to answer questions about a specific theme. She described how students answered questions in response to the theme of “change.” She stated, “I’ll ask a question like what changes or how have you changed since you have been in school?” Cee Jay stated she used questioning before, during, and after reading to help students respond to text by writing and drawing illustrations about the text.

Implementing Instructional Methods

The researcher of this study observed how teachers provided opportunities to raise their students’ awareness of metacognition as they engaged them in the language of thinking and learning. Each teacher described how they balanced phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, not all teachers’ descriptions reflected their practice of shared reading. Teachers engaged students in planned activities that helped them to assimilate, understand, and relate new information with what they already knew. The researcher also observed how teachers’ vocabulary and comprehension instruction provided opportunities for students to think about their thinking and assimilate previous knowledge with new knowledge.

Balancing all aspects of reading instruction during shared reading. A well-balanced literacy program includes four metalinguistic categories. Metalinguistic is the "ability to think about and manipulate the structural features of spoken language" (Tunmer et al., 1988, p. 136). The four metalinguistic categories include: phonological and word awareness and syntactic and pragmatic awareness. Phonological and word awareness refers to the ability to think and use phonemes and words. Syntactic awareness is the ability to think about the structure of language. Pragmatic awareness involves the purposes for which we use language (Lightsey & Frye, 2004, p. 29). Lightsey and Frye (2004) emphasized that children learn that new knowledge is acquired from language skills, "Children learn about language through social interaction" (p. 28).

The Literacy Framework for Early Literacy Learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) is a planning and organizing tool for teachers in grades one through three. In the Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative, children use language to learn new concepts. Shared reading is a part of the balanced learning, which requires children to share control with the teacher (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In the Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative (1996), shared reading has a role in creating a community of readers who experience pleasure from reading.

Ann balanced phonics instruction with vocabulary and comprehension by working with themes and overarching ideas and by picking skills for each content area. Ann slowly spelled the words "man" and "hot" and stated that she starts by teaching specific letters and words that are related to specific stories for example, *The Gingerbread Man* (McCaffety, 2002) and the word "man," and *The Three Little Bears* (Ranson, 2002) and the word "hot". She begins with phonic sounds and move on to sight

words, word families and reading the text. She emphasized that her instruction is "sequential."

Lucy asserted that she tries to incorporate all three aspects: phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. She specifically stated the following:

> I try to teach as much vocabulary as I can. That really holds them back when they get older. With great emphasis she noted how she focused a lot on comprehension by questioning, but phonics is important too. I do phonics for just about everything we read trying to draw their attention to some of the phonetic concept in that book.

Watts stated phonics instruction is integrated with vocabulary and comprehension. She emphasized that, "I don't separate it. I've found out, [if I separate it] students will master phoneme segmentation, or they may master 'letter-sound' connection, and then they're not able to blend." She explained further, "If I'm trying to help them [students] move toward independent reading, then I've got to integrate all those skills. I've found out over the years, that that works best when I don't isolate a particular skill."

Bee explained how she carried out "balanced literacy," which was evident in a "well-rounded" reading instructional program. She noted that she tries to make sure she is "not doing too much of one thing." Bee further indicated she did not focus heavily on spelling tests and spelling words. Rather, she provided students with different texts to enhance their vocabulary throughout the day, to increase fluency, and to help them know what a good reader does. She defined "Balanced Literacy" as all of the components of what good readers do – what the reading looks like and sounds like.

Vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary has a lifelong impact on student learning (Beck et al., 2002). Blachowicz and Fisher (2004) suggested teachers provide daily vocabulary instruction in their classrooms to improve students' vocabulary knowledge.

The vocabulary that children need to know can be learned in classrooms where effective vocabulary instruction is evident (Biemiller, 2001; Snow, 1991). Stone and Urquhart (2008) shared their view of what effective vocabulary instruction looks like in the classroom. They noted that teachers decide which words are crucial for students to learn and when they should be taught.

Teachers model vocabulary strategies and provide students with feedback as they encounter words in text. There are two strategies used in learning and using words: explicit and implicit (Dispenza, 2007). Explicit strategies include vocabulary terms, phrases, details, and the organization of ideas. Implicit strategies include processes, skills, and tactics. Teachers help students improve their vocabulary in two ways: indirect (implicit) and direct (explicit). Indirect (implicit) vocabulary acquisition was illustrated when students participated in oral social interactions with teachers and peers during reading. Direct (explicit) vocabulary acquisition was illustrated when students learned new words from teacher-directed instructional strategies (Beck et al., 2002). Alpha introduced the nonsense word "scissorated." She asked students to give her a synonym for the word. The word "sharp" was given as a synonym for the nonsense word "scissorated."

Cee Jay used questions and various prompts to teach vocabulary. The following questions were asked by Cee Jay, "Who can tell me what the ocean is? If I didn't know what it was what would you tell me?" and "What do you think 'tumbling' means?" In response to a student's answer, Cee Jay asked this, "I have students in here who tumble. Do you think they are floating?" The question was asked to clarify students understanding of the word "tumbling." Cee Jay also used text-to-world connections to

help students understand the definition of the word "splintered." She held up a blue pencil, "If I break this pencil, it will have splinters. When breaking the lead out of pencils, we can say it's splintered. In reference to the text, Cee Jay noted that the characters in the story used splinters to build a castle. Carla worked to scaffold students' learning as they focused on the task of learning new words. Students were given many opportunities to gain new knowledge with their teachers' help (Bruner, 1962; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). Carla noted the following, "I'm thinking of a dog's tail. I want to know what silky means. What does silky mean? [Dry] What more can you say? [It's soft and smooth]."

The teacher gave definitions by scaffolding the learner. Silky is soft. Toby wags its tail. Lucy reviewed the following vocabulary words: threading, tangling, and hiking. She used her hands to model the word threading by moving them in and out. Lucy gave short explanations for each word and continued to enjoy reading with her students. Bee used context clues to help students understand the meaning of a new word. She asked, "What do you think the word 'scolded' means?" Bee shared two examples, "She scolded me for fighting and she fussed at him because he was fighting his brother."

Comprehension instruction. Comprehension instruction was an issue that cannot be put off until later grades because postponing comprehension instruction is believed to cause irreversible damage to many primary grade students (Teale et al., 2007). Comprehension instruction was crucial to help readers understand complex text. Across the nation, little comprehension instruction was evident in kindergarten through third grade (Neuman, 2001). Comprehension instruction changed from teaching strategies in isolation to teaching a "set" of strategies in highly interactive, engaged, and

collaborative settings (Pearson & Duke, 2002). The new instructional setting was similar to that of shared reading. The researcher observed how Ann incorporated understanding of text features to help students understand the text. She asked children, "What is snug?" She referenced that the zzz's in the speaking bubble in the text represented snoring. Next, she placed two fingers on her throat to model a snoring sound. Finally, she revisited the text to show pictures of animals sleeping snugly underneath covers. Alpha directed students to find amazing facts as they read the text. She used questions to help students obtain meaning as they used nonfiction text features. Alpha said to the group, "Let's compare and contrast." She asked them, "How are our teeth like sharks' teeth?" and "How are sharks' teeth different from human teeth?" The following sentences were discussed that:

1. Sharks' teeth don't have to be brushed.

2. Our teeth are not made with fluoride.

3. They have sharp teeth.

The researcher observed that Alpha valued her students' opinion when she said, "Help me to understand what the words mean. Are there any opinions given to us?" She asked, "How would you compare an omnivore, herbivore, and carnivore?" Alpha guided her students in a discussion to help them gain meaning about the three different types of animals. She concluded, "We are omnivores. We are the highest form of omnivores, and we have teeth." Gradual release is defined as a "change that occurs as the teacher carefully withdraws support as the responsibility of learning shifts from the teacher to the student" (Brown, 2004, p. 10). Gradual release was evident in Alpha's class during shared reading as she carefully released support of the responsibility of learning from her

to the students. After discussing which animal is most like humans: tiger, horse, and chimpanzee, Alpha asked students to find evidence in the text on how omnivores are most like humans. Alpha's effectiveness in engaging students in vocabulary was evident after this lesson. Her face gleamed with pride at a student who commented excitedly about sharks' teeth from the shared reading lesson before lining up for a restroom break.

Cee Jay led her class into understanding when she asked this question, "How is Mom going to take home the sun?" and "How is she going to know that these are the wonderful things she got from the beach?" After hearing students' response Cee Jay concluded, "She's going to have the memories [treasures] of what came from the beach. Remember the treasures are not what we all can see, but the treasures are the memories that we hold in our hearts."

Carla encouraged students to continue reading to gain meaning from text. She introduced the following words using a large sheet of self-stick easel paper: 'commanded,' 'nudging,' and 'lazily.' Carla created a "word web" for students to write and share related words on colorful sticky notes. While Carla provided strong examples of effective vocabulary instruction with the word webs and the use of the words throughout the day, she also indicated she was still tied to less effective instruction when she informed students that they had to write a sentence using each vocabulary word. Beck et al. (2002) emphasized that "asking students to look up words in the dictionary and use them in a sentence is a stereotypical example of what students find uninteresting in school" (p. 13). Additionally, the authors noted that students need to develop an awareness of vocabulary beyond words that are learned inside the classroom.

Participants' description: Vocabulary and comprehension. The researcher noted participants' descriptions of how they used vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Watts noted that she used definitions to help students learn new words. She also used graphic organizers to help students understand vocabulary. She increased students' comprehension by giving them opportunities to express themselves. Watts shared that re-teaching and paired reading was used to increase students' comprehension. She stated that, "Sometimes after I've explained and given them opportunities to work with me… they will learn better from one of their peers."

Bee stated sincerely, "I have students use the vocabulary word in a sentence or different context to make sure they understand it." However, "the instructional goal should be to use context to gain information about the meanings of new terms" (Vacca et al., 2008, p. 292). As Beck et al. (2002) noted earlier, "asking students to look up words in the dictionary and use them in a sentence is a stereotypical example of what students find uninteresting in school" (p. 13).

Bee added that, "I either clearly define the word or have them to repeat it and give me some type of way to let me know that they understand it [word] before going on." Bee shared that she asked open-ended questions to help students deepen their comprehension of the text.

Ann shared that she taught vocabulary by making it relevant to students' lives. She used the word 'flexible' as an example. She stated also, "Today, we're going to be flexible because we missed P.E. and lunch. So, we're going to have to be flexible today

with our schedule." Ann increased students' comprehension by using themes to help them make connections and to understand new concepts.

Summary

Chapter four described statements given by the primary grade teachers in the study and information gained from the researcher's observation of each classroom. Some of the teachers indicated a good understanding when they were interviewed, but observations revealed their practice did not match what they talked about during the interview. Each teacher described the ways they practice shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. The primary grade teachers described shared reading, 21st century learning communities: instructional methods, planning instruction, using texts matters, modeling comprehension strategies, engaging students, and implementing instructional methods.

During observations conducted in the classrooms, primary grade teachers demonstrated how shared reading was used during literacy instruction to build vocabulary and comprehension with the support of a more experienced other (the teacher). Statements given by the primary grade teachers illustrated their understanding of the value of shared reading instruction and its link between vocabulary and comprehension.

The seven teachers described shared reading as an interaction between the teacher and students as they read the same text. One of the seven teacher's description of shared reading had several elements of guided reading. The teachers created student-friendly classrooms where students were given opportunities to learn in nonthreatening

environments. Most of the teachers in this study referred to using the standards in the State Course of Study as they planned shared reading lessons. Six of the seven teachers submitted lesson plans and used the State Course of Study (SCOS) to effectively develop objectives. The lessons observed were consistent with the plans shared with the researcher. However, one teacher included vocabulary and comprehension objectives in her observed lesson. The researcher observed the use of various texts during shared reading lessons. In some cases, the various genres were clearly related to shared reading activities, in other cases, many genres of books were evident, but the use for shared reading was not clear. Although the teachers in this study introduced books, they did not make full use of book introductions to maximize vocabulary learning and comprehension.

The teachers in this study demonstrated in both interviews and in observations that they understood the value of prediction and rereading. Other strategies that promoted comprehension such as retelling and self-monitoring were not discussed or observed by the researcher. Instructional techniques were modeled in this study. Teachers were observed making the maximum use of explicit instruction in learning communities that promoted teacher and student interaction during shared reading (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Teachers in this study provided opportunities for students to engage in the text during shared reading by asking questions. Teachers' effectiveness of questioning varied. A total of 115 questions were asked in seven sessions during shared reading lessons. Teachers asked more lower-order thinking questions than higher-order thinking questions. Teachers (and students) made connections: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to world. In this study, more text-to-self connections were made than text-to-text and text-to-world connections. Teachers described how they balanced all aspects of

reading instruction during shared reading. However, all teachers' descriptions did not reflect their practice of shared reading. Overall, some of the teachers in this study indicated a sound understanding when they were interviewed. Observations uncovered that their teaching practice often did not support what they explained about shared reading during the researcher's interview. Shared reading is linked to vocabulary and comprehension (Brown, 2004). It can be effectively implemented as the teacher provides explanations of words in context, which leads to students' understanding and applications of words (Brown, 2004).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Research advances only when it is accompanied by theory and logical inquiry.

(Yin, 2009, p. xiii)

Chapter five presents the discussion for the study. It is organized in six sections: (a) major themes and sub-themes, (b) research questions, (c) implications, (d) implications for future research, (e) implications for practice, and (f) findings.

To remind the reader, the purpose of this case study was to describe primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system. The researcher used a qualitative case study methodology. The data were collected from three different sources: interviews, classroom observations, and a document analysis of lesson plans. Participants were selected from a purposeful sampling of teachers who practiced shared reading. Participants included three kindergarten teachers, two first grade teachers, one second grade teacher and one third grade teacher.

The following central question guided the study: How do primary teachers in a southeastern urban school system describe the ways in which they practice shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction? Further research sub-questions included the following:

1. How do primary grade teachers define shared reading?
2. How do primary grade teachers describe the strategies they use to determine students' comprehension of text during shared reading?

3. What do primary grade teachers do to provide vocabulary instruction during shared reading?
4. How do primary grade teachers describe what they do to provide comprehension instruction during shared reading?
5. What is the observable practice of shared reading in these primary grade classrooms?

This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Within the 12-week data collection period, seven participants were interviewed and observed in their classrooms. After the observed lessons, the researcher asked for and received a copy of the shared reading lesson plans.

Major Themes and Sub-themes

Analysis was performed on the data gathered from three different sources, including: interviews, observations, and lesson plans. Seven themes were identified as emergent from the analysis of the data to describe teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction: (a) describing shared reading, (b) creating 21st century learning communities: instructional methods, (c) planning instruction, (d) using text matters, (e) modeling comprehension strategies, (f) engaging students, and (g) implementing instructional methods.

Describing Shared Reading

The primary grade teachers in this study described shared reading as an instructional method, instructional strategy, or as a reading strategy. The teachers'

descriptions of shared reading provided a definition from their perceptions. Teachers modeled what good readers do by reading with intonation and fluency from fiction or nonfiction texts. One teacher's description of shared reading included many elements of guided reading. Alpha described shared reading as a teaching strategy used to enhance and monitor comprehension. She said that, "It is an enjoyable time for everybody to share, to participate, to interact, and to engage in particular skills." Lucy described shared reading as a time when the teacher reads with children from a text that they can all look at. She noted that, "It is used to teach a skill or just to read for enjoyment. It engages all students. Shared reading holds students' attention and increases their comprehension, vocabulary, listening, and speaking skills." Cee Jay described shared reading as a time when the teacher reads a text to the students usually with a big book. She explained that, "In some cases teachers and students read together individual texts." Watts described shared reading as an interaction between the teacher and the student where the teacher usually reads from a big book. Ann affirmed that, "I really think that shared reading is one of the best ways to teach children how to read because it is more aligned to the way that you can really sit down and convey – let's enjoy this text together."

Out of the seven teachers, six teachers' descriptions during interviews were consistent with the literature. Holdaway (1979) noted that the main purpose of shared reading was for enjoyment. The child interacts with the teacher as he or she reads from the text without experiencing pressure. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) noted that students read texts in unison from a personal or enlarged copy such as a big book. Holdaway (1979) indicated that big books (enlarged texts) may be used so that all students can see

the text as they share and participate in all aspects of reading. Hoyt (2002) described shared reading as a communal text experience. Short et al. (2000) described shared reading as a rich "interactive reading experience that can be enjoyed in whole classes, groups, or in pairs as students view the same text that is read by the teacher or an experienced reader to support literacy and comprehension skills" (p. 287). Shared reading instruction was grounded in Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which focused on zones of proximal development (Frey & Fisher, 2007).

Creating 21st Century Learning Communities: Instructional Methods

It was evident that the primary grade teachers in this study created learning communities in the classroom to enhance instructional methods [Figures 2-8]. Evidence also illustrated the organizational layout of books, chairs, tables, computers, Promethean Boards ™ (interactive boards), and other materials within the classrooms. Each primary grade classroom was colorful and well-lit. Three of the classroom environments were designed to clearly support shared reading activities, [Figures 3, 4, 6] while others were less effectively designed [Figures 2, 5, 7, 8].

From classroom observations, it was evident to the researcher that these seven teachers placed great value on reading. Each classroom contained an array of fiction texts strategically arranged in storage bins or containers. The researcher did not observe as much nonfiction in some of the classrooms. Students' art, classwork, and anchor charts were displayed in three of the seven classrooms. Most of the teachers in the study demonstrated many elements of shared reading instruction. However, Carla's practice of shared reading included many elements of guided reading. For example, Carla conducted

shared reading in small homogeneous groups while other students worked at their desks or in literacy centers.

Cee Jay noted that she created a learning community in the classroom by permitting students to assist each other when they got "stuck on something." Bee explained how she allowed students to stop her during shared reading to ask questions or to make connections with the text. Bee's strategy was evident to the researcher during the observation of the shared reading lesson.

Piaget (1973) noted that self-regulated autonomy should be the aim of education. After shared reading, students were encouraged to choose a reading center and a partner to work with. In Bee's classroom, reading centers included "Technology Center" (iPad, Kindle, Promethean Board ™, and computer); "Writing Center"; "Word Hunt"; "Overhead Center (Making Words)"; "Classroom Library"; and "Eat Your Words". The reading center "Eat Your Words" was a clearly designed kinesthetic literacy center where students were encouraged to create high-frequency using Cheerios. Afterward, students ate the high-frequency words that they created. In shared reading, students approximated a rendition of the text by joining in when they can and dropping back when the support of other readers and/or the teacher is needed (Cambourne, 1995). When teachers accept student approximations, students feel empowered and become involved in the text (Mooney, 1990). Ann expressed that she allowed all her students to participate while learning in a risk free environment. This was evident during shared reading as each student was given the pointer to read *"Love Somebody"* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947) in the classroom as explained in chapter 4. Learning to read in a low-risk, environment was one of the basic qualities of best practice in reading instruction defined by Zemelman et

al. (2005). Cee Jay stated that she provided opportunities for students to listen to each other respond to questions during shared reading. There was evidence of consistency as Cee Jay encouraged students to respond to questions during shared reading. This was consistent with Prescott-Griffin and Witherell's (2004) statements about the necessity of asking questions for students to make predictions or conclusions. These were examples of essential elements that teachers used during shared reading. However, there were inconsistencies in Cee Jay's description of students assisting each other when they did not understand something. For example, the researcher did not observe Cee Jay providing opportunities for students to assist one another during shared reading. This was closely aligned to what Weaver (2002) reported, concerning a contradiction between what teachers said reading was and what they did in the classroom during reading instruction. Observation in Cee Jay's classroom showed some inconsistency between her oral descriptions in the interview and her actual classroom practice. Lucy shared that she created a learning community by not permitting students to make fun of one another. She encouraged students to think in a nonthreatening environment where students were not criticized for sharing incorrect responses to questions. For example, Lucy encouraged students' participation as she said, "Keep thinking, you're almost right."

Students benefit from environments where teachers have high expectations of them (Cambourne, (1995). Geekie et al. (1999) indicated students would grow with words in their own time because they believe in their own ability to grow and learn.

Best practice for shared reading recommended by Holdaway (1979), Clay (1993) and Fountas and Pinnell (1996) included careful teacher observations of students in a supportive and safe environment. Holdaway (1979) suggested that "an effective learning

environment for the acquisition of learning should be alive with activity which is felt deeply purposeful in all ways of human learning" (p. 14). Holdaway (1979) further suggested that in order for shared reading or any teaching to occur, the environment must be conducive to learning. In a risk-free environment conducive to learning, skills are modeled by teachers and effectively practiced by students. Holdaway (1979) concluded that if the environment was not conducive to learning, the result was ineffective teaching that often led to learning failure. For example, Ann stated that, "The way children learn is by doing. They are able to do that with minimal risk 'cause they've got other people reading with them." Ann further noted, "There's a lot of repetition, and a lot of rhyme, and a lot of predictability, so they're able to jump right in there with you and have success from the very beginning."

Piaget's (1973) idea of autonomy also was evident in the observations and interviews. Students read independently and selected reading centers after shared reading in some of the classrooms observed. Additionally, in relationship to autonomy in education, teachers in this study avoided imposing *right* and *wrong* answers. Rather, students were encouraged to respond to questions in risk-free learning environments. For example, during the reading of the text, Alpha said, "monkey" instead of chimpanzee.

The students corrected Alpha without expressing fear. Alpha smiled and accepted her students' correction.

Expectation is one of Cambourne's (1995) "Seven Conditions of Literacy Learning." This element appeared frequently in the teachers' classrooms. Expectations were messages teachers communicated to their students. Students benefited from environments where teachers have high expectations of them and were conscious of

building their confidence as readers. Lucy shared that, "You don't just tell children they're wrong. I just let them tell me whatever they need to tell and if they get it wrong, there's a way to say it so you're not scaring them." As children interacted with their environments, they constructed their own understanding of the world (Piaget, 1955). Students in Cee Jay's class constructed their own understanding of the world as they responded to questions about treasures, the ocean and the sun? For example, Cee Jay asked the question, "What is a treasure?" "What do you think…could that be the ocean?" and "What is this here…Is it [sun] setting?" Piaget's idea of autonomy was reflected as children independently selected and read stories that had been read previously by the teacher. Vygotsky's theory of social interaction was evident as students worked in pairs while engaging in reading center activities following shared reading.

Approximation was one of Cambourne's (1995) "Seven Conditions to Literacy Learning," that was evident in each of the teachers' classrooms. For example, Ann accepted students' approximations as they read "*Zug the Bug's Big Book*" (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995). Approximation in speech was illustrated by students when they took reading risks. For example, Lucy encouraged students to read *I Can't Get My Turtle to Move* (O'Donnell, 1989).

Students joined in when they could and dropped back when they needed the teachers' support.

Building students' background knowledge. Most of the primary grade teachers in this study described strategies they used to build students' background knowledge. Lucy shared that predictions can be used to access students' prior understanding of the text topic or theme. Alpha explained that she used students' personal experiences to

bridge the gap between students' background knowledge and the text. Watts shared that she questioned students and allowed them to illustrate what they knew about a particular subject or text. Bee stated that she accessed students' knowledge by asking questions. Cee Jay and Lucy also accessed students' background knowledge by asking questions. Carla's interview did not reflect a concern about building background knowledge. The researcher's observation of her lesson provided evidence of her awareness of building background knowledge as comprehension strategy in shared reading.

For the most part, findings of this study supported literature definitions of shared reading and its characteristics. Shared reading was similar for both younger and older children where teachers provided enjoyable reading experiences, modeled and scaffold solving challenges the text offers, and shared the task of reading the text.

Building students' knowledge of new words. Vocabulary development, comprehension skills, and the development of reading strategies through modeling (Fisher et al., 2008) were evident in this study. In order to build students' knowledge of new words during shared reading, Carla, Cee Jay, Bee, Lucy, Ann, and Watts illustrated different instructional methods while the researcher observed in classrooms. Carla shared that she used "related words" to help students make connections with unfamiliar words. Watts expressed that she used pictorial explanations to help build students' knowledge of new words. Bee explained how she used graphic organizers before shared reading to help students understand new words. Cee Jay stated that she used homophones to explain new words and that she used words in a sentence just to see if students understand them. "For instance, [It's not necessarily a new word] but we had their vocabulary word "know", I wrote "no" and asked students to use it in a sentence. A student responded,

"My mother no's how to cook." Cee Jay stated, "I'll put words on the board and I'll ask them [students] to always clarify by using it [words] in a sentence." Lucy shared that she selected and discussed unfamiliar words to model.

Findings in this study reflected the literature that children must engage in rich language and discussion in order to develop vocabulary and meaning (Weizman & Snow, 2001). For example, Lucy read to and with her students. She asked students questions before, during, and after shared reading: "What do you think this story is going to be about?" "What is the turtle doing?" and "What chunk do you see?" [-ing, mov*ing*, munch*ing*, and thread*ing*] Lucy also guided students to read chorally during shared reading. Additionally, Cambourne (1995) noted the importance of teachers' saturating students' environments with language and literate behaviors. The layout of Ann and Bee's classroom was "print rich". For example, Ann's classroom illustrated big books, leveled books, students' art work and classwork from shared reading activities.

Building students' knowledge by differentiating instruction. Differentiated instruction, a means to build students' knowledge, was discussed by all of the participants during their interviews. However, not all of the participants enacted differentiated instruction when the researcher observed in classrooms. Bee, Watts, Carla, and Ann described how they differentiated instruction to build students' knowledge. Bee shared that she used a wide variety of texts to assist struggling readers in her classroom. This was consistent with Bee's use of realistic fiction during shared reading and other types of texts available for students to select for independent reading in centers with a partner. Science big books were also evident in Bee's classroom as was shown in Figure 4. Watts noted that she used texts with lots of pictures and high frequency words. Watts'

description was consistent with observed practice. Watts modeled what good readers do by reading aloud from a big book with lots of colorful pictures. Watts modeled "tracking" during the researcher's observation. In her interview Watts stated she allowed students to model "tracking" during shared reading. Watts provided opportunities for students to "track" with their eyes as she carefully used a pointer to focus on print from left-to-right and top-to-bottom as she or they read.

What most of the participants stated and what was observed was consistent with the literature reviewed with regards to how shared reading allowed students to be successful by careful planning, text selection and asking questions. The careful selection of text provided students with many opportunities to be successful in their roles as readers and writers (Clay, 2005; Mooney, 1990; Prescott & Griffin-Witherell, 2004). Weaver (2002) noted that a key procedure in shared reading was "tracking," a practice in which the teacher "runs" his or her finger or pointer under the words. This was one means of differentiated instruction.

Another form of differentiated instruction was questioning. Most of the primary grade teachers in this study asked a mix of different levels of questions. The exception was Alpha, who asked 21 questions. She asked 17 lower level questions and four higher level questions. The National Reading Panel NRP (2000) noted generating questions is important during comprehension instruction. Most of these teachers made good use of questioning during shared reading.

Planning Instruction

Of the seven primary grade teachers in this study, six teachers submitted lesson plans to the researcher after the researcher observed shared reading lessons. Alpha, Ann,

Carla, Lucy, and Watts submitted written plans that correlated with the observed shared reading lesson. Bee did not submit lesson plans after the observed shared reading lesson, although, the researcher made three inquiries to secure them. Cee Jay, Watts, and Alpha submitted weekly plans that illustrated state standards and objectives. Carla, Lucy, and Ann submitted plans that were specific to the researchers' observation of the shared reading lesson modeled in their classrooms. Alpha's, Watts' and Cee Jay's plans were not as specific, but evidence showed some consistency with what the researcher observed. Carla's and Lucy's plans included a strategic objective for before, during, and after shared reading. Each of these two teachers included two sets of standards: (a) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and (b) State Course of Study (SCOS). Ann's plans included objectives with no numerical state specified standards, but they were related to the state course of study. The varied lesson plans were evident in the numerous ways shared reading was practiced as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in each primary grade teacher's classroom.

The only teacher that chose not to submit lesson plans was Bee. Carla, Lucy, and Ann submitted specific shared reading lesson plans. Carla's and Lucy's plans included objectives for before, during, and after shared reading. Their plans correlated with the observed shared reading lesson. Ann's lesson plans included objectives; however, they did not include before, during, or after objectives. Alpha's, Cee Jay's, and Watts' plans included state standards, but they were not specific to shared reading. Ann, Carla, and Watts submitted lesson plans for the observed lesson that addressed vocabulary and comprehension in some way. Alpha, Cee Jay, and Watts plan addressed comprehension,

but not vocabulary. Each teacher who submitted lesson plans for the observed lesson had addressed vocabulary and comprehension in some way.

These findings for planning instruction during shared reading were inconsistent with recommendations and descriptions by Boyles (2009). According to Boyles, it was suggested planning lessons must begin before they are written. Effective planning was more powerful than plans written on paper. Good instruction began when teachers knew *why* they did what they did and not only *what* and *how* they implemented planned lessons. Activities of a 30-minute shared reading included before, during, and after shared reading. Lessons may incorporate students' participation and reflections. Bee's implementation of the shared reading lesson did not reflect her planning for teaching vocabulary and comprehension because she did not submit plans of her observed lesson to the researcher during this study. Cee Jay and Watts used a lesson plan template designed by their principal. The objectives for shared reading were evident and written in the "Opening of Lesson" section. However, they did not include a detailed shared reading lesson. Cee Jay and Watts' plans addressed comprehension; however, they did not address vocabulary.

State Course of Study. Of the seven teachers in this study, six teachers used the State Course of Study (SCOS) to develop lesson objectives. Lucy confirmed her role of standards in her planning, "Everything I do is located in the course of study: predicting, retelling, and the phonics and the Concepts About Print (CAP). All that's in there." Lucy's description of using the State Course of Study (SCOS) was consistent with her description of planning during instruction. She modeled predicting, phonics, and CAP during shared reading. Cee Jay stated that the State Course of Study had a wide range of

grade level words. She noted that she wrote the words on little cards for students' use in reading centers to review and complete different activities. Cee Jay's description of the use of the State Course of Study was inconsistent with the researcher's observation in this study. The researcher did not observe students' review of grade level word cards in reading centers

Of the seven teachers, six teachers used the SCOS effectively to develop objectives, and they implemented the lessons well to address those objectives. The lessons observed were consistent with the plans shared with the researcher. However, vocabulary and comprehension objectives only were included in one of the lesson plans and lessons observed. For example, Ann's objectives noted that, "Students will exhibit expanded vocabulary and sentence awareness." Ann's lesson also focused on new words in the "ug" family such "tug", "lug" and "jug," clarifying and scaffolding use of the new words using the text, gestures, questions and examples where appropriate and/or needed. Additionally, Ann's lesson expressed meaning through a variety of activities: reading decodable stories to illustrate, creating an interactive chart "Love Somebody Yes I Do," and writing valentines.

The literature reviewed regarding planning substantiated what the teachers shared and what was observed in classrooms by the researcher. The Literacy Framework for Early Literacy Learning was a planning and organizing tool for teachers. Teachers' own learning was important in the literacy framework. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) noted as teachers used the framework specific factors were considered: students' strengths and needs, students' materials, and curriculum standards. Additionally, the teachers' own experiences, backgrounds, and levels of confidence were important factors. The evidence

collected in this study reflected effective planning, but not planning that emphasized vocabulary and comprehension development objectives. Of the seven teachers, evidence showed that one teacher's objectives reflected planning that emphasized vocabulary and comprehension development objectives.

Incorporating content areas: Shared reading. The incorporation of content areas into shared reading and literacy instruction has become increasingly crucial (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Each of the seven teachers in this study addressed ways they integrated content areas into reading instruction. The researcher noted that six of the seven teachers identified using shared reading as a tool for integration. Watts acknowledged that she implemented social studies, math, and science during shared reading. Lucy stated that she used shared reading in other subjects such as social studies and science. Cee Jay indicated that, "If I can find a big book on the different concept in social studies or science, then I'll use it for that. It's not on a daily basis, but I do use shared reading in other areas." Ann stated emphatically, "It is part of our day, because our reading block is integrated, it's a part of everything we do."

Data collected from teachers' descriptions in this study supported that they understood the value of shared reading across content areas and that they implement nonfiction into shared reading to some degree. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) noted the practice of integrating literacy across the content area. Two teachers' practice of integrating literacy across the content area during shared reading was consistent with the literature. Lucy's use of a counting big book and Alpha's use of nonfiction science text during shared reading was consistent with Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) argument about integrating literacy across the content areas.

Instructional challenges. Challenges during instruction that were revealed in this study included the different levels of students' learning abilities and the lack of time. Carla and Watts noted various levels of students' abilities as a challenge when planning instruction. It was further noted that the wide differences in student ability levels in the classroom contributed to the teachers' planning of multiple lessons within one day. Alpha, Lucy, Ann, and Cee Jay concluded that time was a big challenge when planning instruction. They felt pushed with little time to implement instruction. Bee noted that coordinating time with her English as a Second Language (ESL) and Latino students during shared reading was a challenge because of students who participated in "pullout" programs.

Alpha, Ann, Bee, Carla, Cee Jay, Lucy, and Watts mentioned how they faced instructional challenges that included the different levels of student learning abilities and the lack of time. These findings were consistent with the suggestion in the literature presented that because of the limited time frame, teachers must remain focused as they plan shared reading lessons (Boyles, 2009). The big picture required teachers to pay close attention to the selected objective as they engaged students in explicit instruction (Boyles, 2009). Challenges faced by teachers indicated the different levels of student learning abilities. Radencich and McKay (2001) indicated that although whole class instruction might create shared reading experiences, small group settings better address the diverse needs of students. Small group settings provided opportunities for teachers to scaffold and support students *beyond* materials at a given grade level.

Reflections. Reflections on the part of teachers about their lessons and on the part of the students about what they have read can be beneficial (Fountas & Pinnell,

1996). Teachers in this study pointed out several considerations as they reflected on shared reading lessons. Lucy described the different levels of her students. Watts discussed the observation of student performances. Alpha reflected on re-teaching specific skills. Bee described observation of student learning. Carla discussed self-assessment and her use of time during instruction and Ann reflected on students' responses. All of the participants reflected on past shared reading lessons as consistent with the literature that teacher reflection was important for quality shared reading instruction. In 1984, The Literacy Framework for Early Literacy Learning name was changed to The Literacy Collaborative which was designed for group implementation in the classroom. Its developers included Reading Recovery teachers and trainers who organized eight research-based components, one of which included shared reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The Literacy Collaborative team met weekly at Ohio State University to share and analyze their teaching (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In addition to the self-reflection of teachers, Bee, Ann, Lucy, Cee Jay, and Watts asked specific questions of students after shared reading to encourage reflection, to drive instruction and to assist them in planning more effective future lessons (Prescott-Griffin & Witherell, 2004).

Communications. Communication with others also affected teachers' planning for instruction. Communication with administrators, peers, and parents was important because it could make a positive difference in preschoolers' vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Communication among administrators, peers, and parents varied with the teachers in this study. Bee, Carla, and Watts indicated that they had close contact with their principals, peers, and parents. Cee Jay and Lucy shared that they did

not communicate with others about the implementation of shared reading in their classrooms. Alpha communicated with parents and stated that, "My principal and my reading coach are 100% in the know. They were knowledgeable about the importance of shared reading, how it should be done, and the ways it should be done." Ann noted that she communicated with the parents of her students every Friday, but she did not indicate that she communicated with her principal or colleagues.

The communication of shared reading instruction within the teachers' classrooms varied. Two teachers emphatically stated that they did not communicate about shared reading with their principals, parents, or colleagues. Alpha was the only teacher who stated specifically that she communicated with the principal and reading coach about the importance of shared reading. Bee, Carla, and Watts communicated with parents, colleagues and their principals in general. However, they did not state that they communicated information about shared reading instruction or ideas with them.

These findings reflected the literature reviewed in many ways. Parent involvement that keeps parents apprised of the instruction their children are receiving and the progress they are making was important (Boyles, 2009). Alpha, Ann, Bee, Carla, and Watts communicated with parents. Alpha's communication with principals and colleagues about shared reading instruction was consistent with recommendations in the literature reviewed for this study. Communication between principals, colleagues, and parents about literacy instruction was important. Communication among colleagues and administrators about literacy instruction was evident when Marie Clay was asked by the inspector of New Zealand Schools to help the educational system find solutions to reading problems in the inner city and suburb (Holdaway, 1979). The importance of

colleague communication was also evident in the collaboration of Gay Su Pinnell and Charlotte Huck. The two educators helped to introduce Reading Recovery in the United States. Reading Recovery was an early intervention program designed to provide intensive individual instruction and assistance to the lowest performing in first grade in elementary school (Ohio State University, 2012).

Some form of communication was addressed by teachers in all interviews. None of the teacher; however, reported or demonstrated the full range of communication with parents, principals/administrators, and colleagues.

Using Text Matters

All of the primary teacher participants noted that the selection of text mattered for effective shared reading instruction. Although, in one case, the selection of leveled fiction text from the Scott Foresman Basal Reading Series (2008), was not clearly related to shared reading. Selecting and introducing text for diverse learners were important when primary grade teachers described their practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction (Frey & Fisher, 2007; Mooney, 1990).

The researcher observed that some of the texts selected were well-suited to the lesson plan objectives. For example, Lucy's objectives "enjoy the story"; "read repetitive phrases and high frequency words"; "blend phonemes"; and "read action words" were evident in her lesson as she read, *I Can't Get My Turtle to Move* (O'Donnell, 1989). Alpha's objectives identification of nonfiction text features and comparing and contrasting, were clearly evident as she read, *Say Aaaahh!!* (Scholastic News, 2013). Various texts were observed in each teacher's classroom during shared

reading observations. In some cases, the various texts were clearly related to shared reading activities. In other cases, many genres of books were evident, but the use for shared reading was not clear.

Most of the primary grade teachers in this study illustrated that text mattered as they read nonfiction and fiction texts. The researcher observed that some of the texts selected were well-suited to the lesson objectives. Specific texts included interactive reading of poetry: *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947); realistic fiction: *Alexander, and the Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972); leveled readers (humorous fiction): *Smart Dog* (Anderson, 2008) and *My Lucky Day* (Kasza, 2003); counting book: *I Can't Get My Turtle to Move* (O'Donnell, 1989); informational text: *Say Aaaahh!!* (Scholastic News, 2013); and fiction: *Slugs in Love* (Pearson, 2006), *Zug the Bug's Big Book* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995), and *Out of the Ocean* (Frasier, 1998). During the observation all but one of the teachers selected a text appropriate for both shared reading and for the lesson objectives. The remaining teacher selected a good text for lesson objectives, but not entirely suitable for shared reading. Most, but not all of the teachers' classrooms included a variety of texts and text types suitable for shared reading.

These findings mirrored Mooney's (1990) belief that teachers' careful selection of text during shared reading afforded students many opportunities to be successful as they become convinced of their roles as readers and writers. Teachers must carefully choose text that will allow them to focus on a text feature or a specific comprehension strategy (Frey & Fisher, 2007). Additionally, Clay (1991) suggested teachers should carefully select texts to focus on specific reading skills and strategies to promote life-long reading. Selecting text for diverse learners and introducing text are important when primary grade

teachers describe their practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. The researcher observed a variety of texts in bookcases, baskets, and bins displayed within classrooms as shown in Figures 2-8. However, the researcher had no evidence that teachers used the texts in their classrooms to support different instructional objectives.

Observations and descriptions of selected text. During shared reading, the primary grade teachers in this study read from texts which included the following formats: colorful leveled fiction text, nonfiction text, and big books with rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. The colorful pictures in these text and the excellent black and white illustrations in Bee's selection appeared to help students to make predictions about the text. Kindergarten teachers, Lucy, Ann, and Watts, read from big books with the children. Selected texts in all observations provided opportunities for students to read print from individual or enlarged text with their teachers. Pictures were colorful and engaging in texts selected by the teachers in this study. Although Bee chose to read a big book with black and white illustrations during shared reading, the illustrations were engaging.

Most teachers carefully chose texts that allowed them to focus on a feature or a specific comprehension strategy as suggested by Frey and Fisher (2007). Alpha focused on nonfiction text features and comparing and contrasting. Lucy focused on repetitive phrases, high frequency words, action words and words with "-ing". Mooney (1990) noted that teachers' careful selection of text provided opportunities for students to authentically engage in text that was modeled by the teacher. Bee used realistic fiction to help students understand sequence as she read, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No*

Good, Very Bad Day (Viorst, 1972). Mooney (1990) further noted that texts selected by teachers encourage students to enjoy reading as they act as readers and writers. Students in Lucy and Bee's class appeared to enjoy the text as they exhibited the characteristics of readers and clapped as their teachers read the end of the story. The choice of using high-interest texts encouraged students to make predictions and construct meaning. Teachers' selections of text with the "Three R's: rhyme, rhythm, and repetition" encourage students to join in reading with their teachers (Manning, 1997). Data collected for this study demonstrated evidence that four teachers out of seven selected text with the "Three R's: rhyme, rhythm, and repetition" which encouraged students to join in reading with their teachers. Each of the seven teachers selected texts which facilitated students' predictions and allowed students to construct meaning. Additionally, six of the seven teachers carefully selected text that provided opportunities for students to authentically engage in the same text modeled during shared reading.

Students' personal enjoyment is the overall purpose of text selection during shared reading (Holdaway, 1979; Mooney, 1990). Use of this type of big book reading was a *tool* for shared reading and not an approach. The teachers' approach to the text used to support students' active participation was more important than the idea of a "big book" or regular-sized book during shared reading (Mooney, 1990). Teachers in this study used different text formats, not just big books. Two of the seven teachers selected different types of texts. One teacher selected a magazine from Scholastic and another teacher selected leveled text from the reading series for shared reading that were consistent with the objectives of the lesson. However, her instructional approach

included many elements of guided reading. Five teachers in this study used big books with students during shared reading experiences.

Selection of text for diverse learners. The primary grade teachers in this study chose shared reading text to meet the needs of diverse learners with varying degrees of thoughtfulness. The researcher observed Ann's use of three different texts during shared reading: *Zug the Bug's Big Book* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995), *Slugs in Love* (Pearson, 2006), and *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947). Carla noted the "vast array of levels" of students in her particular classroom as a challenge during shared reading. However, the researcher observed Carla's use of the same text with different groups during shared reading.

Attention to vocabulary in the texts selected varied. Carla and Lucy shared that they considered vocabulary when selecting text along with text complexity. Bee stated that she selected familiar text and text related to students' background knowledge. Careful teacher attention to text vocabulary was observed by the researcher as to *how* the primary grade teachers selected text for diverse learners during shared reading in some, but not all of the lessons. Ann chose *Zug the Bug's Big Book* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995), *Slugs in Love* (Pearson, 2006), and *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947) for diverse learners during shared reading. The texts supported vocabulary development as students learned new words such as 'pug', 'lug', 'slug' and 'tug'.

Watts' description of how she selected text was inconsistent with the fiction text selected for shared reading. In her interview, Watts mentioned the use of nonfiction text which was not confirmed by the observation, either in her selection for the lesson or in the books observed in her classroom. Cee Jay indicated that she did not consider which

text to select because she used big books that accompanied the basal reader. Cee Jay's description in the interview of how she selected texts was consistent with the big book she selected during shared reading, which was part of the basal series. The attention of teachers in this study to vocabulary difficulty and text construction was consistent with Clay's (2005) notions, "For learning to occur it is very important to ensure that the difficulty level of the reading materials presents challenges from which the child can learn and not difficulties that disorganize what he already knows" (p. 24). Teachers used selections to teach word analysis, vocabulary, and punctuation. Students read texts in unison from a personal or an enlarged copy. Texts could include poems, drama, or short stories (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). One must not assume that children will learn to read just by providing books and encouraging them to explore books. "The process of reading must be dynamically supported by an interaction of text reading and good teaching" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 9). In all the classrooms observed, the shared reading lesson supported engagement and careful teaching.

Introduction of selected texts. The purpose of text introduction is to assist students in successful first readings before engaging them in specific skills or strategies. A successful shared reading introduction included elements of comprehension as well as support for an accurate rendition of the text. In the interviews, primary grade teachers in this study described the introduction to the text using various instructional techniques before shared reading. Alpha explained that she asked questions, showed pictures on the Promethean Board ™, or used hard copies to show pictures of characters, setting, or story maps. Ann shared that she made predictions at the beginning of the text by looking at the cover of the book. She also stated that she asked questions. Ann asked questions and

allowed students to make predictions about the text. Bee reported that she used "picture walks." Additionally, she communicated that she modeled a "read aloud" and used vocabulary and concepts to give students some background of the text.

During the observations rich introductions to shared reading were used by only four of the primary teachers as they introduced the text using various instructional techniques before shared reading. One teacher, Carla, seemed to skip the introduction because of her focus on "related words." Ann chose not to use a picture walk. Another teacher, Cee Jay, gave an in-depth introduction while the researcher was observing. Cee Jay reviewed the theme 'treasure', made connections and modeled a picture walk.

Clay (1995) noted that as teachers used rich introductions to introduce new texts, students engaged in the enjoyment of shared reading. The data revealed that these teachers' practice was consistent with recommendations in the literature regarding book introductions, although not all recommendations were evident in any of the book introductions observed. Enjoyment of the text was an essential element during shared reading (Holdaway, 1979). All the teachers observed were successful in developing student engagement. Enjoyment was promoted by Ann when she gave each student an opportunity to use the pointer as they read *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947). Some of the students modeled the teacher when they chose to use a melodic tune when they pointed and read. Bee, Lucy, and Watts' students appeared to enjoy reading repetitive phrases with their teachers from the text. To reiterate, according to the literature, teachers introduce the story to students before engaging them in the text (Clay, 1993). Clay (1998) recognized that as teachers use rich introductions to introduce new

texts, students engage in the enjoyment of reading and are encouraged to become independent readers.

Modeling Comprehension Strategies

The primary grade teachers in this study modeled various strategies during shared reading. Teachers used explicit modeling to teach children to decode, reread, summarize and perform cloze activities, which involved predicting a word through context clues. Additionally, they employed a variety of instructional techniques that involved modeling. These techniques included explicit teaching (I do, we do, you do), choral reading, and picture walks.

During explicit instruction, the teachers modeled social interaction and the gradual release of responsibility, which were related to social interaction (Pearson & Gallagher; 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). Watts, Lucy, and Ann explicitly modeled the Concepts of Print (CAP) as they pointed and moved from left-to-right and from top-to-bottom. Lucy used her finger as a pointer during shared reading. She did not ask students to come forward and point as they read the big book. Ann, however, invited students to come to the text and use a pointer. Ann's students eagerly pointed to words as they read the poem, *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947). Carla demonstrated the use of clear language as she guided students through shared reading when she used clear statements about the lesson's purpose. Additionally, explicit shared reading lesson plans were evident in Carla's use of context clues and related words. Carla stated clearly, "We're going to see these words in our story: commanded, nudging, lazily, and silky." Afterward, she gave each student a sticky note and asked them to write one word that was related to the word "silky." Carla asked the question, "What do you think it [silky]

means?" She confirmed students' responses: It's like fabric. She encouraged students to read the word in text.

Several of the teachers' voices dropped out allowing children to demonstrate their growing competence. Lucy provided an excellent example of this practice while reading *I Can't Get My Turtle to Move* (O'Donnell, 1989). Consistently in the observations, during shared reading instruction, teachers provided a zone of proximal development when needed (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, Lucy used a known word 'sit' to help students pronounce the word 'sip'. She later added letter 'l' to introduce the word 'slip'. Social interaction with others is an essential element in the learning process and the development of a child's thinking abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). Social interaction was reflected in each classroom as teachers provided opportunities for students to read, make predictions, and answer questions about the text. This interaction between adult and student was important because with adult assistance the student was able to make accelerated progress (Vygotsky, 1978). To teach word analysis, teachers used text selections that were read in unison by students from enlarged or personal copies of texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Instructional techniques that included modeling. Choral reading and picture walks were instructional techniques that included modeling. Lucy, Alpha, and Bee guided their students to read chorally during shared reading. In a choral recitation of the text Lucy guided students as they chanted the repetitive phrase, "But I can't get my turtle to move!" Cee Jay, Watts, Bee, and Lucy modeled a picture walk to review and discuss pictures before reading fiction text. During the picture walk the four teachers asked questions to help students make predictions about the text. Alpha chose not to model a

picture walk using nonfiction text, while Ann mentioned that she chose not to model a picture walk because she did not want her students to see the end of the book before they had actually looked at the text. This comment indicated to the researcher that Ann did not understand that a picture walk could leave the last page or pages to be discovered by the reader on a first reading attempt.

Modeling strategies for students' use. In an effort to demonstrate "thinking-while-reading", some teachers modeled strategies designed to enable students to decode and comprehend text. Lucy, for example, modeled decoding. She pointed to pictures and read word for word. When she came to the word 'march', Lucy pointed to 'ar' and said /ar/. Next, she pointed to letter 'm' and said /m/. Afterward, she slid her finger under the word 'march' and allowed students to pronounce it. She and the students read 'march' in the text, "Seven ants talking nose to nose. 'March', I say, and they do." In this classroom, rereading was a key element of shared reading. Lucy, Watts, Ann, and Bee reread and encouraged students to reread repetitive phrases from fiction text. Bee read, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972) and invited students to read with her, "It was a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day." Cloze reading was the least demonstrated strategy used by teachers in this study. Ann read *Zug the Bug's Big Book* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995) as she modeled cloze reading. She pointed and read, "Home at last with Slug, they all had milk from a ____ [jug]. Bee and Ann acknowledged the use of the strategy during the interview. Bee stated that she used cloze reading to engage her students in problem solving and self-monitoring. Additionally, Ann stated that she used sticky notes to cover up words during shared reading to enable the cloze strategy.

The teachers in this study modeled and provided opportunities for students to participate in choral reading, picture walks, decoding, rereading, and cloze reading. Some teachers demonstrated modeling in more than one way. For example, Lucy demonstrated modeling as an instructional technique that included choral reading. She also demonstrated modeling as a decoding strategy so students could make it their own when they predicted words in sentence structure and context. Ann was observed modeling in only one way. She modeled cloze reading as a strategy to help students make it their own. However, she did not model any instructional techniques such as a picture walk or choral reading. Her failure to model a picture walk did not promote comprehension strategies such as making predictions, looking for interesting or difficult words in the text. However, Ann did promote engagement as she encouraged reading by reading with her students and by providing opportunities for them to independently read a poem to the tune of *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947).

These findings reflected concerns in the literature reviewed for this study. Allington (2001) noted the importance of pairing students to reread text and to engage them in choral reading. Rereading was a key element of shared reading (Weaver, 2002). Repeated readings helped students with the integration of word identification skills, which promoted comprehension (Moyer, 1982). As students engaged in repeated readings, their self-confidence was increased due to the more fluent and error free repetitions of the text. Repeated readings increased fluency, word familiarity, phonemic awareness, and phonics (Tompkins, 2006). One of Cambourne's (1995) "Seven Conditions of Literacy Learning" was "immersion." Immersion was evident as the teachers engaged the students in multiple opportunities to read and hear various texts read

aloud. Picture walks relied heavily on meaning, language, and predictable story structures (Clay, 1991). Cloze reading allowed children to make predictions of missing words. Positive teaching was illustrated as teachers accepted all student predictions without criticism (Holdaway, 1979). Decoding was important because it was predictive of students' ability to comprehend text (Stanovich, 1986). Lucy modeled decoding during shared reading as she "chunked" the word 'march' into onset and rime.

Summarizing the shared reading lesson. Ann, Bee, Carla, Cee Jay, Lucy, and Watts summarized their shared reading lessons in several different ways. These included the following: (a) reviewing sequence, (b) reviewing cause and effect, (c) making connections and asking questions, (d) making text-to-text connections, and (e) reviewing the theme "treasures". Bee ended her lesson by engaging students in a sequencing activity. Watts ended her lesson by reviewing cause and effect. Carla chose making connections and responding to questions about the text as a means of closure. Lucy ended her lesson by making connections to action words from the story. Ann concluded her lesson with a text-to-text connection. She rearranged the song *Love Somebody* (Whitney & Kramer, 1947) which she used as a poem. On an interactive chart students read or sang as they used a pointer to match spoken words to text. Cee Jay ended her lesson by reviewing the theme "treasures". Afterward, she asked students to write about what they treasured. Some primary grade teachers in this study reviewed instructional objectives related to text at the end of their observed shared reading lesson. Boyles (2009) noted that good instruction begins when teachers know *why* they do what they do and not only *what* and *how* they implement planned lessons. She further noted that after

shared reading lessons, teachers could provide "follow-up" activities which may include: responding to the focus question in writing or independent reading.

Participants' descriptions: Strategies. Teachers described their practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Teachers mentioned strategies during interviews, particularly about how they taught students to use different strategies before, during, and after reading. Ann shared that the strategy she used during reading depended on the text. She described how she used literature to match and sort while making text-to-text connections with math from a previously read book entitled, *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989). Alpha noted that she created visual "anchor charts" with vocabulary to assist her students before reading. She also explained that during reading, students independently engaged in researching the meaning(s) of vocabulary found in text. Bee stated that she used picture walks and vocabulary to introduce complex concepts in the text. She also indicated that she used cloze, echo, and choral reading. Additionally, Bee emphasized that she asked "follow-up" questions, used retelling, and employed graphic organizers to check students" comprehension. She noted that books were placed in reading centers for students to revisit.

Strategy instruction in the classroom was discussed by the teachers during their interviews. Teachers in the study demonstrated their use of strategy instruction when they were observed in the classroom. Teachers' descriptions of strategies before, during, and after were evident in their practice. Teachers modeled or described the following strategic approaches: use of text characteristic in content area literature; use of teacher-created anchor charts for vocabulary instruction; making predictions and connections

during picture walks to introduce vocabulary and complex text; cloze, echo, and choral reading; lesson "follow-up" using retelling and graphic organizers; reading centers that extended lesson objectives; "buddy reading"; authentic conversations; and questioning before, during, and after reading.

As the reviewed literature in chapter two substantiates, during shared reading, teachers in this study were observed using strategies as they provided support as needed to help students independently. Shared reading was supported by three learning processes, which were evident in the teachers' classrooms. The learning processes were strengthened by social interactions that included the zone of proximal development, scaffolding information, and the gradual release of responsibility to the young readers (Brown, 2004).

Sometimes the teachers' oral descriptions of strategies did not reflect characteristics and recommendations in the reviewed literature related to shared reading such as: anchor charts, researching for vocabulary meaning, "follow-up" through retelling, graphic organizers, and reading centers. The researcher noted that although the strategies or instructional approaches were not evident in the literature these strategies were implemented often to build students' vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

Engaging Students

Primary grade teachers described questioning and making connections as strategies used to engage students during shared reading. They used these strategies to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Cambourne (1995) noted that engagement was important because it added to the purpose of students' lives as

they constructed meaning without fear of physical or mental pain if their actions or responses were not fully correct. Engagement was evident in this study as teachers provided opportunities for students to respond to questions and made connections with selected text.

Questioning. Primary grade teachers also used questioning to engage students in the practice of shared reading to build their vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction, however, the effectiveness of the questioning varied. The researcher used Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) and Frey and Fisher (2007) as a framework to analyze primary grade teachers' questioning during shared reading. The researcher observed primary grade teachers as they asked a total of 115 questions during seven shared reading sessions. Of the questions asked, 72 questions were lower-order thinking questions and 43 questions were higher-order thinking questions. Kindergarten teacher, Watts, with students from the same ethnic background asked the greatest number of higher-order thinking questions. Second grade teacher, Alpha, with students from the same ethnic background, asked the greatest number of lower-order thinking questions.

Kindergarten teachers, Ann, Lucy, and Watts asked a total of 48 questions in three reading sessions. Of the questions asked, 29 were lower-order thinking questions and 19 were higher-order thinking questions. Watts' asked the most higher-order thinking questions (13). Lucy was observed asking two higher-order questions, the least asked in this study. Alpha's 17 lower-order thinking questions were the most asked in the study and Bee's two lower-order thinking questions were the least asked during this study. First grade teachers, Bee and Cee Jay, asked a total of 33 questions in two reading sessions, with 16 questions being lower-order thinking questions and 17 questions being

higher-order thinking questions. Alpha asked 21 questions in a single shared reading session, with 17 requiring lower-order thinking and four asked were for higher-order thinking. Carla asked 13 questions in the one shared reading session observed. Carla asked nine questions that were lower-order thinking and three were higher-order thinking questions. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) emphasized that generating questions was important during comprehension instruction. The primary grade teachers in this study asked lower and higher-order thinking questions during shared reading, however, all teachers did not balance lower and higher order questions effectively. Some teachers asked mainly lower-order questions. They modeled definitions, engaged in conversations, and offered feedback to students' responses. For example, Cee Jay asked these questions, "What is a splinter?"; "What could I get a splinter from?"; "What are trees made of ?"; and "If something is splintered what do you think it is?" Cee Jay asked the previous question three times and later stated confidently, "Let's see, we'll find out in a few minutes."

Primary grade teachers asked a total of 115 questions during shared reading observations accomplished by the researcher. Of the questions asked, 72 were lower-order thinking questions and 43 were higher-order thinking questions. Some teachers were more proficient in asking higher order questions. Others asked mostly lower-order knowledge questions. As previously stated, these teachers relied heavily on lower-thinking questions. This practice in general was inconsistent with the literature.

Making connections. The researcher observed primary grade teachers, Alpha, Ann, Bee, Carla, Lucy, Cee Jay, and Watts during shared reading as they engaged students in making connections. Connections included: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-

to-world. Each teacher provided opportunities for students to make connections in a risk-free environment. All teachers, with the exception of Cee Jay, engaged students in making connections. For example, Carla said that, "I can 'nudge' someone when they are talking in the auditorium." She asked later, "Have you ever flopped down 'lazily'?" Carla observed as students used pictures in the text to make predictions. Ann engaged students in text-to-text connections with *Zug the Bug's Big Book* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995) and *Slugs in Love* (Pearson, 2006). Before reading the previous book, Ann asked confidently, "What do we think we know about slugs so far?"

During the interview, Alpha, Ann, Bee, Cee Jay, and Carla described how they implemented connections to engage students during shared reading. Ann and Cee Jay shared how they implemented text-to-text connections to engage students during shared reading. Bee described how she listened to see if students were making text-to-text connections. Carla described how she constantly asked students to make many connections. Alpha shared how students engaged in text-to-text connections.

These findings were consistent with the literature reviewed that students were able to utilize what they learn from teachers in order to construct meaning and make connections as they read and build reading skills and strategies (Zemelman et al., 2005). Making connections provided opportunities for teachers to engage students in fiction and nonfiction text.

Findings regarding teachers' engagement were consistent with literature reviewed in this study. As previously stated, engagement through the implementation of questioning was important because it added to the purpose of students' lives as they constructed knowledge (Cambourne, 1995). The teachers in this study provided

opportunities for students to engage in the text by asking questions. They provided opportunities for students to make text-to-self and text-to-text connections. Text-to-world connections were observed in Cee Jay's classroom. For example, "What is the ocean? If I didn't know what it was, what would you tell me?" The researcher noted that more readings from nonfiction text could promote additional engagement through classroom discussion. A table of participants observed by the researcher, the number of questions each asked, and the number of higher-order thinking and lower-order thinking questions for each was listed in Table 4.

Implementing Instructional Methods

In this study the teachers provided opportunities for students to engage in metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness activities in their classroom teaching of shared reading. Frey and Fisher (2007) defined metacognition awareness as being conscious of what one knows and what one does not know. Metalinguistic awareness was explained as the ability to think about and manipulate the structural features of spoken language (Tunmer et al., 1988). The primary grade teachers in this study described how their teaching practice of shared reading aimed to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

Balancing all aspects of reading instruction during shared reading. The primary grade teacher participants in this study implemented instructional methods by balancing all aspects of reading instruction during shared reading. All participants shared with the researcher how they balanced the aspects of reading instruction during shared reading. Ann said that she balanced phonics with vocabulary as she focused on specific letters and words related to the text. She further explained, that her instructional

approach to phonics was sequential, because it began with phonics sounds, sight words, word families, and then moved to the reading of text.

Ann's description was consistent with her practice. Ann focused on specific letters and words related to the text [/b/ug and /j/ug]. The researcher observed Ann read to and with her students. She provided opportunities for students to make connections with the text as she questioned students and modeled cloze reading. Ann demonstrated the theme "love" as she read from three different texts.

Lucy said that she incorporated phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension while reading. Her description was consistent with her practice during shared reading. Lucy used repetitive phrases and high frequency words to build fluency. She blended three to four phoneme words [sit, sip, and slip] and read action words [mov*ing*, munch*ing*, and thread*ing*]. Lucy introduced new vocabulary words to help students develop a deeper understanding of the text.

Watts stated that she integrated phonics instruction with vocabulary instruction. Additionally, she noted the importance of mastering phoneme segmentation or "letter-sound" connections. Watts emphasized the importance of the student's ability to transfer skills and to use vocabulary in different sentences to illustrate knowledge and the ability to utilize words in context. Her description was inconsistent with her practice. The researcher did not observe Watts' integration of phoneme segmentation, phonics, and vocabulary during shared reading.

Some examples from interviews and observations of participants observed were consistent with the literature reviewed; while others were inconsistent. A well-balanced literacy program included four metalinguistic categories: phonological awareness, word

awareness, syntactic awareness, and pragmatic awareness. Metalinguistic was the "ability to think about and manipulate the structural features of spoken language" (Tunmer et al., 1988, p. 136). Lightsey and Frey (2004) noted that phonological and word awareness was the ability to *think* about phonemes and words. Syntactic awareness was the ability to *think* about the structure of language. Pragmatic awareness focused on the reasons we use language. "Children learn about language through social interaction" (p. 28). The authors also emphasized that children learn that new knowledge was acquired from language skills.

Shared reading was a part of balanced learning, which required children to share control with the teacher (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). A section entitled, *The Framework for Early Literacy Learning Initiative*, the authors shared that shared reading provided an opportunity to create a community of readers who experienced pleasure from reading. *The Literacy Framework for Early Learning Initiative* was a planning and organizing tool for teachers in grades one through three. When put to practice, the framework assisted teachers to build language that children used as they learned new concepts.

Vocabulary instruction. The researcher observed all seven as they modeled vocabulary strategies during instruction. They provided various types of support for particular students when they encountered new words in the text. Lucy gave short explanations for words during shared reading. She appeared to enjoy reading the text. For example, Lucy gave a definition for the word 'nibbling' "to take a little bitty bite." Ann asked this question, "What is a pug?" She made a text-to-self connection while she shared a photograph of her dog Ruby, a black and white Boston Terrier. Ann asked inquiringly, "What is this word [tug]?" Ann modeled an example of the word when she

"pulled on a rope" to help students understand the meaning of the word 'tug.' Watts, asked this, "What is a piglet?" She responded to students happily, "That's right a baby pig." Watts stated also, "I heard them say the fox was exhausted. What do you think exhausted mean?" ; "Have you ever been exhausted?"; "What caused you to be exhausted?" Alpha, enabled vocabulary development using nonfiction text during shared reading. For example, Alpha directed the students' attention to a picture of a shark. She asked her class, "Is he a mammal?"; "Are we mammals?" She also asked students, "How is a carnivore different from an omnivore?"

This data from observations and interviews reflected in some ways the reviewed literature regarding vocabulary. Beck et al. (2002) indicated that vocabulary has a lifelong impact on student learning. It was essential for teachers to provide daily vocabulary instruction to improve students' word knowledge (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004). Carla stated that, "They [students] see the words constantly, throughout the week, for their homework, with assignments that they have and they're encouraged to use words daily in their vocabulary."

Ann noted the following:

> We talked about the word 'flexible' that we had read just the other day in a book. We talked about being 'flexible' today. [Ann gave an example by using the word 'flexible' in a sentence relevant to students.]Today, we're going to be flexible because we had missed P.E. and missed lunch. So, we were going to be flexible today with our schedule.

The vocabulary necessary for insuring word understanding and comprehension can be learned when effective vocabulary instruction was put into practice (Biemiller, 2001; Snow, 1991). The National Reading Panel NRP (2000) suggested that teachers provide students with opportunities to learn new words before encountering them in text.

Carla demonstrated that she introduced vocabulary words before students read the text when she stated explicitly, “Today, we’re going to see some special words.” She wrote the word ‘command’ and asked students to write a “related word” on colorful sticky notes. Next, she wrote the words, ‘commanding’ and ‘commanded’ to clarify students’ understanding of the word ‘command’. Carla made a text-to-self connection with the word. She stated that, “My grandfather always commanded me to wash my hands before I brought him a glass of water.” Afterward, she wrote the words, ‘silk’ and ‘nudge’. She asked this, “What does the word ‘nudge’ mean?” “Can you think of something we can nudge?” Carla stated further, “We’re going to see if we can read it [nudge] during reading.

Having familiarity with new words, helped students when they heard, saw, or read difficult words in text. Teachers could activate students’ background knowledge as they learned new words in the content areas. Teachers could provide scaffolding techniques to help students learn new words (Stone & Urquhart, 2008).

Bee used pictures from the text to help students visually organize the concept of sequencing. Bee stated that:

> Since we’ve been talking about sequencing, what does it mean? [It is the order of the story.] There are clue words when we are talking about something: first, next, then, after, and after that. Tell me another word to let me know we [you] know about sequencing. ‘Finally’ is the final or very last thing we learn in a story. There are two words we can use to tell about that, ‘final’ and ‘last’. We’re going to sequence the story *Alexander and the Terrible, No Good Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972). I’ve got five pictures. I want us to sequence the story with the pictures.

Bee modeled sequencing for students: first, next, after, after that. She called on students to match pictures with what they saw on the opened pages of the book. Bee

restated the directions: “When we get to a page that matches our pictures, raise your hand and give us a sequence word and details about what happened. For example, “First, he [Alexander] woke up. He woke up and had gum in his hair.” Finally, Bee stated that, “We have gone through our sequencing words: first, next, then, after that, and finally.

Ruetzel and Cooter (2004) developed the following principles for effective vocabulary for teachers to consider:

- Principle 1: Vocabulary was learned best through *direct*, hands-on experience.
- Principle 2: Teachers should offer both definitions and context during vocabulary instruction.
- Principle 3: Effective vocabulary must include a depth of learning component as well as a breadth of word knowledge.
- Principle 4: Students need to have multiple exposures to new reading vocabulary words (pp. 125-127).

Principle I of Ruetzel and Cooter (2004) effective vocabulary instruction suggested that vocabulary was best learned through direct, hands-on experience. Of the seven teachers, the researcher observed instruction in only one teacher’s classroom that reflected the elements of Principle I. The use of realia (actual objects) and pictures to help learn words and build background knowledge was evident in Ann’s classroom. Ann asked happily, “What is a pug?” She showed a photograph of her pet named Ruby, a Boston Terrier to help build students’ background knowledge.

Principle II noted that teachers should offer both definitions and context during vocabulary instruction. Of the seven teachers, five used a balance to provide a definition

which helped students use context clues. For example, Ann asked the students, "What is this word?" [tug]. She illustrated an example by pulling a 'rope' with her hands. Next, she began to read the word in context to the students. Bee asked the question, "What do you think the word 'scolded' mean?" Afterward, she read the word in context. "She 'scolded' me for fighting." Bee listened to students' responses. Finally, she used a synonym of the word in a sentence, "She 'fussed' at him because he was fighting his brother."

Principle IV of Ruetzel and Cooter's (2004) effective vocabulary instruction suggested students needed to have multiple exposures to new reading vocabulary words (pp. 125-127). Of the seven teachers, two teachers showed the vocabulary words before the lesson began. Cee Jay read the words: 'ocean', 'treasure', 'tumbling', 'rarest', 'waves', and 'splintered' before modeling a picture walk. Carla wrote the words 'commanded', 'silky', 'nudging', and 'lazily' on a large white, self-stick chart paper for students to write "related words". The words were also seen by students as they read the text. The researcher did not see evidence of teachers using words in a sentence on a chart or sentence strips that could be used for a "reading around the room". Texts used by the seven teachers were available for students to read again in Ann's and Bee's classroom during center time. Of the seven teachers, evidence reflected a word wall in five classrooms. Ann's classroom included a phonics word wall. One teacher, Cee Jay, exposed the vocabulary words to students three times: before the lesson, during the lesson, and in a writing center.

Data regarding how the teachers in this study implemented Ruetzel and Cooter (2004) principles revealed that all teachers included vocabulary instruction in their shared

reading lesson. However, the types of vocabulary instruction observed did not clearly reflect best principles of vocabulary instruction. The National Reading Panel suggested (2000) it was important for teachers to provide multiple exposures to words in order for students to learn, retain and use word meanings. The panel also suggested that students' vocabulary improved when they frequently encountered vocabulary words. The panel further noted using restructuring strategies in different ways could increase the acquisition of vocabulary among students who are low-achievers.

Comprehension instruction. The researcher observed as the teachers implemented comprehension strategies during shared reading sessions in their classrooms. Alpha incorporated text features and directed students to find amazing facts using nonfiction text. For example, she asked confidently, "What's the headline?" She asked questions to help students obtain meaning from the text. For example, "How many teeth do we have?" Alpha provided opportunities for students to compare and contrast concepts in the nonfiction text. Alpha demonstrated that she valued her students' opinions by asking them to help her understand the meaning of a new word. Additionally, Alpha guided students in a discussion to help them gain a deeper understanding of the text. She gradually released her responsibility as she carefully withdrew her support and shifted the responsibility of learning to the students as they read independently.

Ann read to and with her students to help them answer questions about the text. For example, she asked calmly "What is a pug?" She also asked this, "What happen if a fish was at the end of a line?" She prompted students to look at the pictures to see what the word 'lug' might mean. Cloze reading was also modeled to help students gain a

deeper meaning of the text. For example, Ann read the following from the text, "Home at last with Slug, they all had milk from a ____ [jug].

Lucy asked questions and used pictures to help students understand the text. She provided opportunities for students to make predictions to help deepen understandings of the text. For example, Lucy asked emphatically, "What do you think the story is going to be about?"

Watts asked higher-order thinking questions to check students' understanding of the story. Evidence from the researchers' observation demonstrated that Watts asked 13 higher-order thinking questions out of 27. For example, "Why do you think the fox is feeding the pig?"

Findings from this study were consistent with recommendations in the reviewed literature discussed in chapter two. Comprehension instruction was not an issue that could be put off until later grades because it was believed to cause irreversible damage to many primary grade students (Teale et al., 2007). The primary grade teachers in this study were not "putting off" comprehension instruction. Comprehension instruction was evident in their lessons and its importance was communicated in their interviews. Neuman (2001) indicated that nationwide, little comprehension instruction was evident in kindergarten through third grade. In this shared reading document study conducted by the researcher in 2013, comprehension instruction was evident in every lesson observed. Comprehension instruction has changed from teaching strategies in isolation to teaching a "set" of strategies in a highly interactive, engaged, and collaborative setting (Pearson & Duke, 2002). The new instructional setting referred by Pearson and Duke was very

similar to shared reading and was the type of comprehension instruction the researcher observed in the target classrooms.

Participants' description: Vocabulary and comprehension. Each of the seven primary grade teachers described how they implemented shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Three kindergarten teachers shared their descriptions. Watts noted that she used definitions and graphic organizers to help students learn new words and used re-teaching and paired reading to increase comprehension. Lucy emphasized that she selected unfamiliar words from the text to teach vocabulary. Retelling and predictions were also methods used to help students comprehend text. Lucy encouraged students to visualize the text by "putting pictures in their minds". Ann taught vocabulary by making it relevant to students' lives. She used themes to help students make connections and increase comprehension of text. Bee and Cee Jay described how they included shared reading during literacy instruction to teach vocabulary and comprehension.

Cee Jay noted that she used unfamiliar words from texts to teach vocabulary. Students found synonyms for unfamiliar words and used them in sentences. Writing, questioning, and making connections were used to help students understand the text. Bee asked her students to write sentences as well. Beck et al. (2002) reported that, "Asking students to look up words in the dictionary and use them in a sentence is a stereotypical example of what students find uninteresting in school" (p. 13). This particular approach was not a research-based best practice in teaching vocabulary. Bee did note that she also used vocabulary words in different contexts to support students understanding of meaning. Additionally, Bee noted that, she explicitly defined words and had students

repeat them and asked students to give her some type of indication to let her know they understood before she continued with the lesson. Bee shared that she asked open-ended questions to deepen students' understanding of the text.

The researcher noted participants' descriptions of how they practiced shared reading to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Cee Jay spoke about how she identified words that her students might have difficulty with in the text. She used synonyms, and encouraged students to use the new words in sentences to increase their vocabulary. She asked questions, made connections, and used writing to help her students understand the text. Discussing the vocabulary of unfamiliar words, asking questions, and making connections were evident as the researcher observed these behaviors while in her classroom. Cee Jay shared the text *Out of th*e *Ocean* (Fraisier, 1998) with her students. Cee Jay's use of synonyms and allowing students to use words in sentences was not evident during the researchers' observation. Although, students were asked to respond to the following question in writing, "What do you treasure?"

Rereading was a key element in shared reading (Weaver, 2002). Children reread favorite selections in unison (Weaver, 2002). Kindergarteners, first graders, and second graders enjoyed reading poems, chants, and other favorite texts (Routman, 2003). Students could use what they learned from teachers to construct meaning and make connections as they read and build reading skills and strategies (Zemelman et al., 2005). The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) noted that teachers' generation of questions was important during comprehension building instruction. Asking students to find one or two new words in the text after he or she has said what letter he or she would expect to see at the beginning of the word was also important (Clay, 1991). Metacognitive

awareness included developing a plan of action before reading, monitoring the plan during reading, and evaluating the plan after reading through questioning (Frey & Fisher, 2007).

As noted previously, vocabulary has a lifelong impact on student learning (Beck et al., 2002). Good readers learn approximately seven words per day in contrast to struggling readers who learn approximately two words per day. Students who enjoy reading will read more. Therefore, the number of new words they read and learn will increase. Without intervention, students with lower vocabularies at the end of kindergarten translate to having a lower vocabulary throughout schooling (Beck et al., 2002). According to Reutzel and Cooter (2004), there are three ways to directly teach vocabulary. First, engage students in oral language by providing opportunities for them to participate in conversations with others. Second, read aloud to students because it is a powerful tool in helping them define unfamiliar words before, during, and after reading. Third, students can read independently to learn new words. Using graphic organizers can also help students develop a deeper understanding of new words. Establishing a framework provided an ongoing opportunity for students to organize vocabulary, use, and review words (Stone & Urquhart, 2008).

Teachers in this study reflected many good practices and characteristics that relate to comprehension instruction. However, in regard to vocabulary instruction, the teachers did not consistently reflect the best practices for vocabulary instruction. Although, the teachers in this study provided instruction during shared reading, the instruction did not reflect the four principles for effective vocabulary instruction as suggested by Ruetzel and Cooter (2004).

Research Questions Answered

"How do primary grade teachers in a southeastern urban school system describe the ways in which they practice shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction?" This was the sole question guiding this inquiry. The primary grade teachers described how they used shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Kindergarten teachers, Ann, Lucy, and Watts, described that they asked students questions, discussed definitions, and identified unfamiliar words to build students' vocabulary. Graphic organizers were also used to increase students' understanding of vocabulary during shared reading. Only one teacher modeled cloze reading. Re-teaching, paired reading, retelling, visualizing, predicting, and the use of themes were generally employed to help students make connections to build comprehension.

First grade teachers, Bee and Cee Jay, noted that they selected unfamiliar words in texts, used synonyms, graphic organizers, and context clues to teach unfamiliar words and provided opportunities for students to use vocabulary words in sentences. Additionally, students were asked higher-order questions to help them make connections to build comprehension.

Second grade teacher, Alpha, described that she included the use of games, graphic organizers, and interactive notebooks to increase students' vocabulary. She increased students' comprehension as she asked them questions about the text, provided opportunities for them to visualize, skim and scan, infer, dramatize, draw conclusions, and employ themes to make connections and understand new concepts.

Third grade teacher, Carla, described that she increased students' vocabulary as she taught them to use resources such as a dictionary, glossary, and peer assistance. She provided opportunities for students to engage in conversations to increase their vocabularies. Carla asked questions to build students comprehension.

Primary grade teachers' definitions of shared reading. While some teachers viewed shared reading as an instructional method, others explained it as an instructional or reading strategy. Overall, six of the seven teachers defined shared reading as an instructional reading strategy that involved the teacher and student reading from the same text. The text used may or may not be enlarged. Specific descriptions of shared reading included the following definitions: (a) a teaching strategy used to enhance and monitor comprehension where teachers and students interact and engage to enhance skills at all levels, (b) the whole class comes together and looks at the same text, (c) interactive reading sessions between teacher and child, (d) interactive strategy where students read with teacher from the same text, (e) teacher reads texts to and with students as they look at the same texts together, (f) teacher reads text with children in a text they could all view, (g) text was read to teach a skill or for enjoyment, and (h) interaction between teacher and student usually with a big book where strategies could be later implemented independently.

Primary grade teachers' description of strategies used to determine students' comprehension of text during shared reading. Teachers' descriptions of strategies before, during, and after were evident during the researcher's observation. Kindergarten teachers' descriptions noted that: (a) the strategy used during shared reading depended on the text, (b) use of literature to match and sort while making text-to-text connections

with math from a previously read text, (c) use of predictions before reading the text, (d) discussion of text during reading, and (e) opportunities for students to retell the story.

First grade teachers' descriptions included the following: (a) use of picture walks and vocabulary to introduce complex concepts in the text; (b) use of cloze, echo, and choral reading, "follow-up" questions, retelling, and graphic organizers to check students' comprehension; (c) texts placed in reading centers for students to revisit; and (d) use of questions before, during, and after reading.

The second grade teacher's description included the: (a) creation of anchor charts with vocabulary to assist students before reading, and (b) students independent engagement in researching the meaning(s) of vocabulary found in text.

The third grade teacher 's descriptions included following: (a) use of 'word webs' during shared reading, (b) engagement of students in authentic conversations to help them gain a deeper understanding of vocabulary words in various content areas, and (c) 'buddy reading.'

Primary grade teachers' description of vocabulary instruction during shared reading. Kindergarten teachers indicated that they enjoyed reading to students. One participant gave a short explanation of each new word. First grade teachers modeled explicit vocabulary instruction as they asked questions and used various prompts. They modeled text-to-self connections to help students understand the meaning of vocabulary in the text and used context clues during vocabulary instruction. The second grade teacher taught vocabulary from nonfiction text during shared reading. The third grade teacher implemented skills to scaffold students' learning as students focused on the task

of learning new words. Students were given opportunities to construct new knowledge with teachers' assistance.

Primary grade teachers' description of what they do to provide comprehension instruction during shared reading. Kindergarten teachers' descriptions included the following: (a) themes to help students make connections and understand new concepts, (b) re-teaching and paired reading, (c) retelling and predictions, and (d) visualization were all responses. First grade teachers' descriptions included the following: (a) writing, questioning, and making connections to help students understand the text; and (b) writing sentences and asking open-ended questions to deepen students' understanding of the text. Alpha's descriptions included the following: (a) asking questions about the text; and (b) allowing students to visualize the text's content, skimming, scanning, inferring, dramatizing, and drawing conclusions. Carla's descriptions included asking questions to cause students to think more deeply by making text-to-self connections.

Observable practices of shared reading in these primary grade classrooms. Observable practices of shared reading were evident in these primary grade classrooms. The literature reviewed indicated the following best practices in shared reading that supported the development of vocabulary and comprehension: a risk-free environment that promoted a community of learners; communication among administrators, teachers, and parents; text selection for diverse learners and text introduction; model and scaffold strategies that could be used to monitor and improve comprehension; skills modeled by teachers and effectively practiced by students; student engagement; implementation of effective questioning to promote thinking; rich vocabulary instruction and comprehension

instruction in a risk-free environment conducive to learning. Holdaway (1979) concluded that if the environment was not conducive to learning, the result was ineffective teaching that often led to failure. Teachers in this study provided opportunities for students to be a part of learning communities within the classroom. Teachers also provided risk-free environments while the researcher observed in the classroom and seemed to hold high-expectations for students. Some of the classroom environments were designed to clearly support shared reading activities, while others were less effectively arranged.

Communication among administrators, peers, and parents was important because they could make a positive difference in preschoolers' vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Communication between principals, colleagues, and parents about literacy instruction was important. Although some forms of communication were evident with each teacher, no teacher reported or demonstrated the full range of communication with parents, principals/administrators, and colleagues.

Selecting text for diverse learners and introducing text were important when primary grade teachers described their practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction (Frey & Fisher, 2007; Mooney 1990). During the observation phase of this study, all but one of the teachers selected a text appropriate for both shared reading and for the lesson objectives. The remaining teacher selected a good text for lesson objectives, but not entirely suitable for shared reading. Most, but not all of the teacher's classrooms, included a variety of texts and text types suitable for shared reading. These findings mirrored Mooney's (1990) belief that teachers' careful selection of text during shared reading afforded students many

opportunities to be successful as they become convinced of their roles as readers and writers (Clay, 2005; Mooney, 1990; Prescott & Griffin-Witherell, 2004).

The primary grade teachers in this study read from texts which included the following formats: colorful leveled fiction text, nonfiction text, and big books with rhyme, rhythm, and repetition during shared reading. Selected texts in all observations provided opportunities for students to read print from individual or enlarged text with their teachers. Pictures were colorful and engaging in texts selected by the teachers in this study. Although one teacher chose to read a big book with black and white illustrations during shared reading, the illustrations were engaging.

Most teachers carefully chose texts that allowed them to focus on a feature or a specific comprehension strategy as suggested by Frey and Fisher, 2007. Students' personal enjoyment was the overall purpose of text selection during shared reading (Holdaway, 1979; Mooney, 1990). The primary grade teachers in this study selected shared reading text to meet the needs of diverse learners with varying degrees of thoughtfulness. Teachers used selections to teach word analysis, vocabulary, and punctuation. According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), teachers must not assume that children would learn to read just by providing books and encouraging them to explore books. "The process of reading must be dynamically supported by an interaction of text reading and good teaching" (p. 9).

A successful shared reading text introduction included comprehension as well as support for an accurate rendition of the text. During the observations rich introductions to shared reading were used by only four of the primary teachers as they introduced the text using various instructional techniques before shared reading. One teacher seemed to

skip the introduction because of her focus on "related words" while another chose not to use a picture walk. The researcher observed while another teacher gave an in-depth introduction. The data revealed that these teachers' practice was consistent with recommendations in the literature regarding book introductions, although not all recommendations were evident in any of the book introductions observed. Clay (1998) recognized that as teachers use rich introductions to introduce new texts, students engage in the enjoyment of reading and are encouraged to become independent readers.

The primary grade teachers in this study modeled and scaffold strategies that students could use to monitor and improve comprehension. Teachers used explicit modeling to teach children to decode, reread, summarize and perform cloze reading activities, which involved predicting a word through context clues. During explicit instruction, the teachers modeled social interaction and the gradual release of responsibility, a concept related to social interaction (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). Three teachers explicitly modeled the Concepts About Print (CAP) as they pointed and moved from left-to-right and from top-to-bottom. Additionally, they employed a variety of instructional techniques that involved modeling. These techniques included explicit teaching (I do, we do, you do), choral reading, and picture walks. Another teacher demonstrated the use of clear language as she guided students through shared reading when she used specific statements about the lesson's purpose. Additionally, explicit shared reading lesson plans were evident in the teachers' use of context clues and related words.

Consistently in the observations, reading instruction using shared reading provided a zone of proximal development when needed (Vygotsky, 1978). For example,

one teacher used a known word by changing the final consonant to help students generate a new word. She then used a consonant blend to identify a new word in the selected text. Social interaction with others was an essential element in the learning process and the development of a child's thinking abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). Social interaction was reflected in each classroom as teachers provided opportunities for students to read, make predictions, and answer questions about the text. This interaction between adult and child was important because without adult assistance the child might not make progress (Vygotsky, 1978). To teach word analysis, teachers used text selections that were read in unison by students from enlarged or personal copies of texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Choral reading and picture walks were instructional techniques that were modeled. Some teachers modeled strategies so the students could make them their own. One teacher modeled decoding. She pointed to pictures and read word for word. Rereading was a key element of shared reading. Three teachers reread and encouraged students to reread repetitive phrases from fiction text. Two teachers stated that they used cloze reading to engage students in problem solving and self-monitoring. However, only one individually was actually observed using this technique. In general, the teachers in this study modeled and provided opportunities for students to participate in choral reading, picture walks, decoding, rereading, and cloze reading. Some teachers demonstrated modeling in more than one way. These findings reflected the same concerns in the literature reviewed for this study.

As reported in the literature, Cambourne (1995) noted that student engagement in constructing knowledge was important even when their questions or responses were complete or contained some error. Engagement was evident in this study as teachers

provided opportunities for students to respond to questions and made connections with selected text. In this study the teachers provided opportunities for students to engage in metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness activities in the classroom teaching of shared reading.

As previously noted, 115 questions during shared reading were asked by participants in this study. However, of the questions asked, the majority were lower-order thinking questions. Only 43 questions were related to higher-order thinking. Some teachers were more proficient than others in asking higher order questions. This performance in general was inconsistent with the literature recommendations for effective questioning.

In regard to vocabulary instruction, the teachers did not consistently reflect the best practices for vocabulary instruction. Although all the teachers in this study used their observed shared reading lesson as an opportunity to teach vocabulary, and it appeared from lesson plans and classroom artifacts that vocabulary instruction was a regular part of instruction in each teacher's classroom. When the observed vocabulary instruction was compared to literature descriptions of best principles of vocabulary instruction, one teacher demonstrated a good understanding of these principles, two other teachers were observed to implement some elements of good vocabulary instruction in some elements of less effective instruction. Four teachers actually described as their typical vocabulary instruction practices that are inconsistent with the literature descriptions of best practices in vocabulary instruction.

The teachers reflected many good practices and characteristics that relate to comprehension instruction. Vocabulary development, comprehension skills, and the

development of reading strategies through modeling (Fisher et al., 2008) were evident in this study. Findings reflected the literature that children must engage in rich language and discussion in order to develop vocabulary and meaning (Weizman & Snow, 2001). What most of the teachers said and what was observed was consistent with the literature reviewed with regards to how shared reading allowed students to be successful by careful planning, text selection and asking questions. However, in regard to vocabulary instruction, the data from teachers did not reflect the best practices for vocabulary instruction. On the whole, the primary teachers provided vocabulary instruction, but the instruction did not reflect the principles and statements in this study.

Implications

This qualitative research case study described primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading from interviews, observations, and lesson plans. The primary grade teachers echoed their use of questioning during shared reading instruction. However, not all teachers demonstrated effective use of questioning during the lesson that was observed. While studying a unit on 'treasures' a teacher asked this, "How is Mother going to know what wonderful things she got from the beach?" After listening to students' responses the teacher replied confidently, "She's going to have memories [treasures] of what came from the beach. Remember the treasures are not what we all can see, but the treasures are the memories we hold in our hearts." On the other hand, one of the teachers asked only two higher order questions out of 11. Data collected in this study suggested that the teachers will benefit from more support in learning to question effectively in order to promote comprehension.

Data indicated that the practice of teachers in this study were aware of and able to implement good support for comprehension during shared reading and that they provided comprehension instruction in the early grades. Overall, comprehension instruction was evident in the teachers' classrooms and practices. The importance of comprehension was communicated in the interviews in this study.

During the interviews, four primary grade teachers expressed a lack of time to plan for instruction. Carla noted that, "The vast array of levels in my classroom causes me to have to plan of course definitely more than one lesson." Ann expressed her concern that, "Time wise, just so many things to pull you." In addition Alpha stated frankly:

> My number one problem is time T-I-M-E Exclamation Point! I don't feel that I have enough time to actually implement the instruction that I need because the schedule is so broken up…but those are the things we work around and make use of time the best way we can.

These data suggest that some teachers and administrators may need to work collaboratively to better coordinate "pull out" programs that disrupt instructional time. Quality reading instruction cannot be delivered with disorganized and fragmented time frames. Shared reading requires an uninterrupted time allotted for maximum student benefits.

Another concern identified in this study related to the teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Only one participant made use of nonfiction text during shared reading. This tendency to rely solely on fictional text in context should be addressed as a possible shortcoming of teachers' practice. Only two other teachers reflected regular use of nonfiction in shared

reading. Integrating literacy across all content areas is important (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The researcher noted another concern related to the inconsistencies of primary grade teachers practices during shared reading. Few teachers incorporated science, social studies, and other content areas during shared reading. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) noted the importance of guiding teachers to integrate early literacy across the content areas. Shared reading can be used to help students unlock meaning and integrate content reading strategies in a text (Brown, 2004). This lack of evidence of use of nonfiction text in shared reading suggested these teachers may benefit from professional development that may help them learn the importance of the use of nonfiction, the nonfiction text features typically used in nonfiction appropriate for the ages they teach, and the text structures typical of nonfiction.

The data collected here revealed that while all the teachers included vocabulary instruction in their shared reading lesson, the types of vocabulary instruction were not always clearly related to the best principles of vocabulary instruction. These teachers will benefit from professional development on vocabulary instruction best principles, strong examples of vocabulary instructional strategies that reflect the principles, and additional ways to intensify the breadth and depth of vocabulary instruction during shared reading.

Some of the information gleaned by the researcher to share with educators includes the following:

- Primary grade teachers must demonstrate effective use of questioning during shared reading.

- Primary grade teachers must integrate math, science and social studies during shared reading
- Administrators need to work collaboratively with primary teachers to develop uninterrupted scheduling during the reading block.
- Primary grade teachers must integrate the use of nonfiction text as they implement best practices of vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction.

Implications for Future Research

Further research is needed in the area of describing primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. This study was limited to teacher participants in a southeastern urban school district. It would add to the body of knowledge to conduct this type of study with teachers in a suburban school district in the same geographical area. Additional research in this area of shared reading might include schools from other settings such as rural schools in smaller school districts.

Future studies should include longitudinal studies to explore the effects of shared reading on students in primary grades and upper grades in comparison to teachers and students' descriptions, studies of long-term effects of students from kindergarten through high school, and studies of first year teachers' practice of shared reading. Quantitative [Over 200 Early Childhood Education ECE) teachers] or correlational studies that compare vocabulary development and comprehension abilities in shared reading primary classrooms to other types of instruction will be of benefit.

Implications for Practice

Suggested implications for practice include the following:

1. Because of the varied responses given concerning the definition of shared reading among the participants in this study, there is a need for on-going professional development in the area of shared reading, helping teachers understand the concept and the typical practices of this instructional technique.
2. There is a need to provide professional development that builds teachers' awareness of best practices for vocabulary instruction and how to implement those practices in the context of shared reading.
3. There is a need to educate local, state, and federal administrators on how to implement shared reading practices effectively in all primary grade classrooms.
4. Round-table discussions between school administrators and teachers are necessary to allow teachers to voice their concerns about the time necessary to plan and implement shared reading.
5. There is a need for teachers to incorporate writing and shared reading across content areas with Common Core State Standards while using nonfiction text.

Findings

The National Reading Panel NRP (2000) expressed a need for explicit and systematic vocabulary and comprehension instruction in primary grades. Students must know the meaning of words in order to comprehend text; therefore, vocabulary is essential to reading (NRP; 2000). In many urban schools across the United States there is

a comprehension instruction gap in primary grades (Teale et al., 2007). Primary grade teachers who engage students in sound early literacy will enhance positive literacy results in later years. It is essential for primary grade teachers to rethink their foci to systematically engage students in comprehension instruction (Teale et al., 2007).

Shared reading has the potential to address the gap in comprehension strategy instruction in urban primary schools. This study found that the teachers interviewed and observed were enthusiastic in their beliefs that implementing shared reading was important for their primary aged students. The findings also indicated that the teachers were aware of and were active in supporting comprehension during shared reading by using modeling and other forms of support. The findings for this study also suggested that although the teachers (as a group) were aware of the need to use questioning, book introductions, and vocabulary instruction during shared reading, they were not always able to implement the best practices for these aspects of instruction.

Reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading (Block et al., 2002; Clay, 1991; Nation & Angell, 2006). Rarely does one read the words "comprehension instruction" in the same sentence because many current reading advocates believe that comprehension instruction is not necessary for learning to read (Pearson & Duke, 2002). The researcher described primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction and she found that the teachers studied were well aware of the importance of this instruction.

"Shared reading invites us to learn about language by using language in the context of stories and meaningful texts" (Fisher & Medvic, 2000, p. 71). It is the researcher's wish that primary grade teachers are able to describe and implement shared

reading as an early literacy strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension and provide opportunities to equip students to “learn to love reading as they learn to read” (p. 71).

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF CONSENT

XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX

RE: Permission to Conduct Study

Dear Superintendent,

My name is XXXXXXX. I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This is a letter of request to conduct a study in the XXXXXXX School System. The study is entitled: "Describing Primary Grade Teachers' Practice of Shared Reading as a Strategy to Build Vocabulary and Comprehension during Literacy Instruction in a Southeastern Urban School System". **Protocol X121210002.**

Flyers will be given to teachers at the following schools which represent geographically diverse schools: XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, and XXXXXXX. The study will include seven primary grade teachers. Data will include transcriptions from one audiotaped face-to-face interview, which will last approximately 50 – 60 minutes, and a follow-up interview. One observed Shared Reading lesson, which will last approximately 30 – 35 minutes. Documents will include lesson plans from the observed Shared Reading lesson. Data will be collected from January 2013 through May 2013.

All data will be gathered in a confidential and professional manner. Numbers and pseudonymous names will be used to protect the identity of participants throughout the study. The data collected will cause no harm or potential risk to participants. Professional care will be taken so as not to identify the names of principals, teachers or the XXXXXXX School System in any oral or published form.

The study under consideration has been approved by the University of Alabama at Birmingham Internal Review Board. (IRB) This approval will cover all recruitment and informed consent materials, procedures for collection and storage data and how ethical issues will be addressed.

Specifically, I need a letter stating your agreement to provide your permission for the study, a letter of introduction and approval to the nine principals.

Respectfully submitted,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPAL'S CONSENT LETTER

Date:

RE: Permission to Conduct Study

Dear Principal,

My name is XXXXXXXX. I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This is a letter of request to conduct a study in your school. The study is entitled: "Describing Primary Grade Teachers' Practice of Shared Reading as a Strategy to Build Vocabulary and Comprehension during Literacy Instruction in a Southeastern Urban School System. **Protocol X121210002.**

With your permission, I will place a flyer regarding my study in each primary grade teacher's mailbox and ask for their voluntary participation.

Each teacher participant will engage in one face-to-face interview for approximately 50 – 60 minutes, a follow-up interview and one Shared Reading lesson that will be observed by the researcher for approximately 30 – 35 minutes. Lesson plans from the Shared Reading lesson will be collected.

Data will be collected from January 2013 through May 2013. All data gathered will be conducted in a confidential and appropriate manner. At no time will participants be subjected to risk or harm during the study. Your name, the teachers' name, as well as the name of your school will not be revealed orally or in any published form.

Attached is a letter from XXXXXXXXX providing permission for me to conduct this study.

Your attention to this request is greatly appreciated. I hope to use this information to gain a deeper understanding about how primary grade teachers' instructional practice during shared reading and vocabulary building contributes to comprehension.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You have the option to end the study at any time should you choose to do so. Please sign the attached consent form if you give consent for me to conduct my study in your school. Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

XXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL'S CONSENT FORM

As the current Principal (Instructional Leader) of _____ School, I agree to serve as the person whereby the researcher will gain access to the school for this study. I, _____, give consent for XXXXXXXXXX to conduct research at this school. I understand data from primary grade teachers will include: one face-to-face teacher interview, one follow-up interview, and one observation of a Shared Reading lesson with accompanying lesson plans.

_____

Date

APPENDIX D

TEACHER'S RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Participant:

This letter serves as a formal invitation for you to participate in a research study focused on ways in which primary grade teachers describe their practice of Shared Reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. The study is being conducted by a University of Alabama at Birmingham doctoral student. The title of the qualitative case study is: "Describing Primary Grade Teachers' Practice of Shared Reading as a Strategy to Build Vocabulary and Comprehension during Literacy Instruction in a Southeastern Urban School System." **Protocol X121210002.**

The information you provide will be useful in describing primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system. This information will most likely provide instructional information that will inform classroom teachers, reading coaches, school administrators, and policy makers.

The data for this study will be collected in the form of one face-to-face interview, one follow-up interview and one observation of a 30 – 35 minute shared reading lesson. The interview will last approximately 50 – 60 minutes. The questions asked during the interview will be open-ended and pre-determined. The interview will be audiotaped, transcribed and coded to assess categories and themes in order to inform the researcher's exploration of primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction. Additional data will include accompanying lesson plans of the observed lesson.

This study will help the researcher develop a deeper understanding about how primary grade teachers' instructional practice during shared reading and vocabulary building contributes to comprehension.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. I understand the importance of confidentiality when addressing primary teachers' practice of shared reading. You can be assured that I will take all precautions to maintain your confidentiality.

Please feel free to contact me at the contact information provided below by January 22, 2013 if you would like to participate or require any additional information. I look forward to your response.

Warmest regards,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

APPENDIX E
TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Place of Interview: _____

Researcher: _____

Participant: _____

Participant's Position: _____

Introduction:

(Name of Participant), I want to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Please know that everything we say is on record unless you request otherwise during the interview. As stated in the recruitment letter, as a student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, I am conducting a qualitative case study for research. The purpose of my study is to describe primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system. Remember, I am audiotaping as well as taking notes during the interview. It is very important that my writing is a reflection of what you mean to say; therefore, I will ask you to review the transcriptions to make sure I correctly represent your views. Audiotapes will be transcribed in their entirety for review by the researcher. At the conclusion of this interview, I will ask you for a pseudonym that you would like me to use to protect your anonymity when referencing you in the study. Please let me know if you are ready to begin.

(Background Knowledge, Context, and Rapport Building)

1. How long have you been teaching? _____
2. What is your highest degree? _____
3. What kind of elementary school did you attend? ex. urban, rural, suburban, etc. _____
4. What grades have you taught and how long did you teach each grade? _____
5. How many students are enrolled in your class? _____
6. What is the ethnic background of your students? _____

1. What is your definition of shared reading?	
2. What is your theory about how students learn? How is it connected to the way you implement shared reading and the reasons you use shared reading as an instructional method?	
3. What kinds of text and/or materials do you use during shared reading?	
4. How do you engage students in the text during shared reading?	
5. What factors do you consider when selecting text to accommodate the diverse needs of your students?	

6. Which instructional techniques or teaching moves do you use to help your students make meaning of the text before, during, and after shared reading?	
7. Which methods, or instructional moves do you use shared reading to develop your students' understanding of new words?	
8. How do you develop a nonthreatening atmosphere and promote a classroom community in your classroom during shared reading?	
9. How do you use shared reading to differentiate instruction?	
10. What are some different contexts you use shared reading for instruction throughout the day? (For example, is shared reading always a part of your reading block or do you use it for other subjects?)	

11. What strategies do you implement before, during, and after shared reading?	
12. What do you do to increase students' vocabulary during shared reading?	
13. How do you access students' background knowledge during shared reading?	
14. How do you increase students' comprehension during shared reading?	
15. When you reflect on your shared reading lessons, what factors do you consider?	

16. How do the group's responses to shared reading lessons affect your planning for the next lesson?	
17. How do you integrate the state course of study (SCOS) and district pacing guide into your shared reading instruction?	
18. How do you balance phonics instruction with vocabulary and comprehension instruction?	
19. What are the biggest challenges you face in planning and implementing shared reading instruction?	
20. How do you communicate with your principal, reading coach, and parents about your use of the shared reading context for reading instruction?	

21. Why have you selected shared reading as an instructional method?	
22. Is there anything else you would like to share about shared reading in your classroom?	

Thank you again for your time today. May I contact you should I have any follow-up questions? If you have any additional thoughts please don't hesitate to contact me.

APPENDIX F
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Setting: _____

Observer: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Role of Observer: _____

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVAL FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Institutional Review Board for Human Use

Form 4: IRB Approval Form
Identification and Certification of Research
Projects Involving Human Subjects

UAB's Institutional Review Boards for Human Use (IRBs) have an approved Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The Assurance number is FWA00005960 and it expires on January 24, 2017. The UAB IRBs are also in compliance with 21 CFR Parts 50 and 56.

Principal Investigator:	CHANDLER, DAISY L.
Co-Investigator(s):	
Protocol Number:	**X121210002**
Protocol Title:	*Describing Primary Grade Teacher's Practice of Shared Reading as a Strategy to Build Vocabulary and Comprehension During Literacy Instruction in a Southeastern Urban School System*

The IRB reviewed and approved the above named project on 1-4-13. The review was conducted in accordance with UAB's Assurance of Compliance approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. This Project will be subject to Annual continuing review as provided in that Assurance.

This project received EXPEDITED review.

IRB Approval Date: 1-4-13

Date IRB Approval Issued: 1-4-13

Marilyn Doss

Marilyn Doss, M.A.
Vice Chair of the Institutional Review
Board for Human Use (IRB)

Investigators please note:

The IRB approved consent form used in the study must contain the IRB approval date and expiration date.

IRB approval is given for one year unless otherwise noted. For projects subject to annual review research activities may not continue past the one year anniversary of the IRB approval date.

Any modifications in the study methodology, protocol and/or consent form must be submitted for review and approval to the IRB prior to implementation.

Adverse Events and/or unanticipated risks to subjects or others at UAB or other participating institutions must be reported promptly to the IRB.

470 Administration Building
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205.934.3789
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The University of
Alabama at Birmingham
Mailing Address:
AB 470
1530 3RD AVE S
BIRMINGHAM AL 35294-0104

APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Informed Consent Document

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Describing Primary Grade Teachers' Practice of Shared Reading as a Strategy to Build Vocabulary and Comprehension during Literacy Instruction in a Southeastern Urban School System

IRB PROTOCOL: **X121210002**

INVESTIGATOR: Daisy Chandler

SPONSOR: University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Education

Explanation of Procedures

The purpose of this qualitative study will be to describe primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading as a strategy to build vocabulary and comprehension during literacy instruction in a southeastern urban school system. At this stage of the research, the description of shared reading will be generally defined as the framework during primary grade teachers' literacy instruction. This study is being conducted by a University of Alabama at Birmingham doctoral student. If you agree to participate, you will be asked about your implementation of shared reading in the classroom.

The data for the study will be collected in the form of one face-to-face audiotaped interview. The interview will last approximately 50 – 60 minutes. The questions asked during the interview will be open-ended and pre-determined. The face-to-face audiotaped interview will be transcribed and coded by the researcher to assess categories and themes. Once the interviews are transcribed, you will be asked to verify accuracy of the transcription. You will be asked to plan a shared reading with accompanying lesson plans. The lesson will be observed by the researcher. The observed shared reading should last approximately 30 – 35 minutes which will be coded to assess categories and themes.

This study will help the researcher develop a deeper understanding about how primary grade teachers' practice of shared reading and vocabulary building contributes to comprehension with youngsters.

Risks and Discomforts

There is a minimum risk of loss of confidentiality.

Benefits

You may not directly benefit from taking part in this study. This study may help determine how shared reading and vocabulary building contributes to reading comprehension in children.

UAB IRB

Date of Approval 1-4-13

Not Valid On 1-4-14

Participant's Initials:_____