Increasing comprehension strategies through reciprocal teaching

Kathlyn Garcia Benosa

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INCREASING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES THROUGH
RECIProCAL TEACHING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Reading/Language Arts

by
Kathlyn Garcia Benosa
December 2006
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RECIPROCAL TEACHING

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December 2006

Approved by:

Dr. Diane Brantley, First Reader

Mary Jean Comadena, Second Reader

11-28-06
ABSTRACT

There are many research-based methods of instruction that have been implemented across the nation in hopes of improving the comprehension skills of struggling readers. Often these strategies are for native English speakers with little regard for the struggling readers who are also English Language Learners (ELLs). In an attempt to fill the gap in the research literature in this area the following study was conducted. The purpose of this study was twofold. First it describes two research-based instructional strategies that have been effective in increasing reading comprehension: a) reciprocal teaching, and b) readers' response journals. Second, a quasi-experimental research design was created to determine the educational impact of these two strategies on the reading comprehension levels of elementary-aged ELLs. The data was collected from a low socioeconomic elementary school, specifically looking at a second grade classroom. The classroom demographic included eighteen students, ten of which were English Language Learners. Both informal and formal assessments were used to determine growth across time. The overall findings gleaned from the formal assessments revealed that the ELLs significantly increased their reading comprehension scores.
by 12%. Using both strategies has demonstrated not only the increase in reading comprehension with non-English speaking students but also with English speaking students. Therefore, if both reciprocal teaching strategies and readers' response journals are used systematically, consistently and explicitly, if mastered, students will be able to utilize these comprehension skills with any type of text they encounter, whether they are struggling reader, proficient reader or an English Language Learner.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After completing an exhaustive research project such as this one, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the College of Education, specifically the readers, Diane Brantley, Assistant Professor of Literacy Education, Steve Comadena and Mary Jean Comadena, lecturers for reading through the thesis project and helping through the completion of this study.
DEDICATION

First and foremost I would like to thank my husband and parents for supporting me throughout the thesis project process.
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

"The research on comprehension strategy teaching provides powerful evidence that most struggling readers (and many not so struggling readers) benefit enormously when we can construct lessons that help make the comprehension processes visible" (Allington, 2001, p. 98). For this reason, educators need to provide research-based instruction to improve English Language Learners', which are also struggling readers, comprehension skills, and seek to make visible to the reader the reasons for using these strategies. There are a variety of interventions educators can utilize in their classrooms to improve comprehension. The question is which ones are most effective?

Background to the Study

As a teacher of 5 years, I have seen many English Language Learners (ELLs), who are struggling readers or not so struggling readers, go through the process of reading and experience difficulty with comprehension processes. I have taught them the strategies needed to read words through a phonics-based curriculum. However,
when it comes to the California Standardized Tests (CST's), the children often score below basic or far below basic in reading. Throughout the years, I have used many different interventions to help improve the struggling readers' comprehension skills, but have yet to find one that is effective with the majority of my students.

Statement of the Problem

According to Rustic Lane Elementary's 2004-2005 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) about 19% of English Language Learners, as opposed to the 38% of White (not Hispanic) students, achieved at the Proficient or Advanced level (meeting or exceeding the state standards) on the English-Language Arts portion of the California Standards Tests (CSTs). This type of data makes one wonder why only 19% of the school population of English Language Learners scored at the Proficient or Advanced level. What does this say about the teacher's who teach ELLs? What does it say about the students' lack of basic reading comprehension skills? Students may be able to decode the words, however are they understanding what they read?

From my experience, many children have difficulty with comprehension because they don't have the skills to transfer what they have learned to other settings in their
lives. Also, they don’t relate what they have learned to the text they are reading. In addition, the phonics-based curriculum today focuses only on rote learning and recall of low level facts. Nevertheless, the focus shouldn’t be, “drilling students for state tests” as Wiggins & McTighe (2005) states, this is a failing strategy (p. 43). So, what can I do as a teacher to better help my English Language Learners who are struggling readers and not so struggling readers increase their comprehension skills; so they can better transfer their understandings to other settings?

Research Questions

The focus questions to be used are as follows:

- What interventions are most effective in increasing the student’s comprehension?
- What are the benefits of reciprocal teaching?
- How effective is reciprocal teaching?
- Is there a difference in how effective reciprocal teaching between EO’s and ELL’s?
- What instructional strategies lead students to use RT effectively and independently?
Significance of the Project

Based on my experience and current research on comprehension such as Klingner and Vaughn (1996), Goodman, Y., Watson, D., & Burke, C. (1996) and Palincsar, A. S. & Brown, A. (1984), support the reasons many students have difficulty comprehending the text they read because they are not able to transfer what they have learned to other situations. Klingner and Vaughn (1996) have stated this very eloquently that, “Because many students with LD are inefficient learners who are unaware of their own cognitive processes or of how to determine the particular tasks demands within a learning situation, their lack of knowledge about when and how to apply strategies prevents them from using their abilities most advantageously” (p. 276). For this reason, educators need to provide effective research-based interventions to improve struggling readers' comprehension skills. While many strategies are useful it is my belief that one of the best strategies to teach comprehension is reciprocal teaching. Because of this, it is my plan to find the research that support reciprocal teaching and prove that it works if taught implicitly. As Klingner and Vaughn (1996) describes, “One approach to teaching comprehension that holds promise for second-language readers is Palincsar and
Brown's (1984) reciprocal teaching model" (p. 276). The reciprocal teaching model is one of the strategies that has been implemented in classrooms over the years and has shown how effective it is in the classroom.

Organization of the Chapters

The remaining chapters of the project will be as follows: Chapter Two will be a review of the literature related to effective reading comprehension strategies. Chapter Three will go over the curriculum reform for increasing comprehension in English Language Learners at the beginning and early intermediate levels. In addition, it will describe the methodology to be used, provide samples of the population, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Chapter Four will be a report on the findings of how effective reciprocal teaching proved to be for ELLs. Chapter Five will be a summary of the research and recommendations for instruction and future research based on the findings of the present study.

Definition of Terms

CST-California Standards Tests show how well students are doing in relation to the state content standards.

Student scores are reported as performance levels.
ELL-English Language Learners are students who speak another language other than English.

EO-English Only are students who speak only English and is the primary language used in their homes.

RT-According to Lori D. Oczkus (2003) who also quoted Palinscar and Brown (1984) states "Reciprocal Teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique that is built on four strategies that good readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing."

LD-Learning Disability refers to psychological and neurological conditions that affect a person's communicative capacities and potential to be taught effectively.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

According to Diane Henry Leipzig (1998) "[a]bout 20 percent of elementary students have significant reading difficulties. The rate of reading failure for African-American, Hispanic, limited-English speakers, and poor children ranges from 60 to 70 percent." This is relevent in many classrooms today. Many educators have observed numerous English Language Learners, who are struggling readers and not so struggling readers go through the process of trying to understand the text they read. The ELLs have a difficult time with comprehension because they are not able to take the strategies they have learned and transfer it over to other types of settings. As educators, they need to first understand how they learn how to use reading comprehension strategies in order to successfully teach their struggling readers.

Theoretical Framework

Other people have found a variety of ways to view these issues and have undertaken ineffective comprehension strategies with struggling readers. For example, Weaver (1994) focuses on the different definitions of learning to
read. She states that, “Learning to read means learning to bring meaning to a text in order to get meaning from it (p. 15). In other words, struggling readers need to be able to use their background knowledge and make a connection with the text in order to understand what the text is articulating. In addition, Weaver’s theory in socio-psycholinguistics says a reader uses background knowledge and experiences to create meaning from print. It is like learning to talk for the first time. Children acquire the basic structure of language through conversations they have with individuals they encounter. These learners are developing their own ideas through their interactions with the world. It is in these interactions with the world, which children is developing their own concepts and understands and connects to text. Comprehension becomes difficult when reading becomes simply workbook pages or reading unnatural language like “Pat sat on the mat.”

Furthermore, based on Halliday (1978) socio-psycholinguistics theory supports the idea that teaching comprehension involves interaction and cooperatively sharing ideas and schema. According to Halliday, he states “Language, does not consist of sentences; it consists of text, or discourse. People in
their everyday linguistic exchanges act out the social structure, affirming their own statuses and roles, establishing and transmitting the shared systems of value and knowledge” (Halliday, 1978, p. 15). The connection between teaching effective comprehension strategies and the socio-psycholinguistics theory is helping the readers to develop the ability to use a variety of comprehension strategies in order to understand the world around them. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to have some knowledge of how students understand language so they can better choose strategies that is developmentally appropriate for the student.

Effective Comprehension Strategies

**English Language Learners**

In light of all the ideas that have just been presented, the focus of this research will be on two particular approaches that are consistent with the socio-psycholinguistic idea previously discussed. Therefore, these strategies are reciprocal teaching and reader’s journal. The four key areas of focus are as follows: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting as these strategies are related to reciprocal teaching. These types of strategies may be used in any
type of reading, whether non-fictional or fictional. Before reading any text, teachers need to teach students to make predictions. When teachers allow students to make predictions they are activating what the students' already know and are building on their schemata. They will also be able to tell how much help students need in order to get the meaning from the text. During reading, teachers can teach students how to generate questions, monitor, and clarify their understanding of the text. They will be able to learn how to use metacognitive processes as they read. After reading, teachers need to allow students to respond to the reading via reading response journals. In addition, teachers need to allow the students to retell and summarize the story so they gain a better understanding of what the story is about. By allowing the students to summarize they can try to connect their own experiences and link it with the main characters in the story.

Struggling Readers


For instance, in an analysis of the impact of higher-quality instruction Bembry et al. (1998) found
that students enrolled in classrooms offering higher-quality instruction achieved standardized reading tests scores after three years that were approximately 40 percentile ranks higher than students enrolled in classrooms with lower-quality instruction. (p. 112)

This illustrates how important it is to provide high-quality instruction. Therefore, for teachers to develop a more effective program for struggling readers they need to continually develop their expertise in teaching. In addition, they need to know how good readers read. Teaching struggling readers to read efficiently as good readers; is the ultimate goal. Those teachers, who understand and observe how good readers read texts, are able to give effective comprehension strategies.

According to Duke and Pearson (2002), a good reader “[a]s they read, good readers frequently make predictions about what is to come. They draw from, compare, and integrate their prior knowledge with material in the text” (p. 205-206). These are only a few strategies good readers use to help them read a difficult or not so difficult text. In addition, summarization, questions/questioning, predicting, and read-aloud are all part of another strategy that can be used for any text. This type of
strategy is called Reciprocal Teaching. Reciprocal Teaching includes four comprehension strategies which focus on the gradual change of responsibility from teacher to student. These same strategies can also be used to teach struggling readers and help them become better readers.

One instructional activity to support this is reciprocal teaching (RT). RT is an instructional procedure developed by Palincsar and Brown (1984), which is designed to develop students' comprehension of text as they work in small groups to collaborate in understanding a selection of text. Palincsar (1986) describes reciprocal teaching as, "an instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading this dialogue. The purpose of reciprocal teaching is to facilitate group effort between teacher and students as well as among students in the task of bringing meaning to the text" (Reciprocal Teaching section, para. 1 & 2).
Therefore, in teaching struggling readers how to use strategies to comprehend the text, through reciprocal teaching, they will be able to connect to the text and read more deeply and thoughtfully. Now, this doesn’t mean the students will develop and use these strategies within a year. According to Hashey and Connors (2003), “It is more beneficial in the long run” (p. 225). Therefore, teachers need to realize that reciprocal teaching is a time-consuming process. However, once the struggling learners have developed the strategies they will be able to use it throughout their lifetime and become independent readers.

In Depth Look at Reciprocal Teaching

I will now discuss reciprocal teaching in more detail. One strategy used in reciprocal teaching is predicting. Predicting helps the reader hypothesize what is going to happen next in the text. As they read more of the text they can confirm if their hypothesis was proven or disapproved. This can also be linked with activating prior knowledge. In discussing prediction, Allington (2001) states, “It is important that students develop the habit of reflecting on what they already know about a text or the topic of a text before they begin reading” (p. 99).
In order to do this, educators can simply use a graphic organizer to help students organize their thoughts.

One type of graphic organizer used for prediction in my classroom is called "Predicting with Evidence." It's basically a two-column chart (See Figure 1).

<table>
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Figure 1. Predicting Graphic Organizer
In one column the heading says “What do you think?” and in the second column it says “Why do you think so?” However, before the readers start to write, the educator would talk about what the readers know about evidence and how it is used (by scientists, police, etc.). Then they would discuss how it is used in reading texts and why it is important. Next, I would proceed with a mini-lesson, modeling how they would use a text to predict what will occur next. The readers would continue reading the rest of the text and then use the graphic organizer to write down what they predict along with supporting evidence. This is great for struggling readers because it helps them to build on their schema and also to help revisit and clarify the literature. In addition, it gives the students something to refer back to as needed.

Clarifying

Another strategy used in reciprocal teaching is clarifying. Many readers are asked to clarify what the author is saying and what the author means. There are several ways readers can do this: reread, look at word parts, visualize the situation, etc. Students can also use the Clarifier sheet to write the words they don’t understand (See Figure 2).
They will write the sentence that contains the word. Then they will write what they think the word means. Last, they will find the dictionary definition. They can keep a
log of all the words they cannot comprehend and refer to it when they need it.

**Summarizing**

A third strategy used in reciprocal teaching is summarizing. According to Allington, he states “Summarizing is perhaps, the most common and most necessary strategy. It requires that the student provide a general recitation of the key text content” (p. 99). A great way for students to summarize a text is to use a story matrix, another type of graphic organizer (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Classroom Example of a Story Matrix
The story matrix shown in Figure 5 is something I use at the end of each story. After students complete a story they will each be given a key content such as the title of the story, main characters (See Figure 3), beginning of the story, middle of the story, ending, main idea, setting (See Figure 4), and genre.

![Figure 4. Student Example](image)

Depending on the grade level, the story matrix can be done with a partner, individually, or an individual can complete all parts of the story matrix for one text. The student would take their part and write either a sentence or a paragraph, depending on the grade level, that describes their part. They would then draw a picture to go along with the written text.
Question Generating

The fourth strategy used in reciprocal teaching to promote comprehension in struggling readers is question generating. First, the struggling reader has to identify the significant information to provide the substance for a question. One way struggling readers can generate questions is to use a KWL chart. The K stands for what the student knows about the particular subject. The W stands for what the student wants to know about the subject. The L stands for what the students learned after reading about the subject. The chart will help students write down information that they know and then generate questions about the text. Some types of questions can be On-the-Surface questions which the answer or clues to the answer is found in the text. The other type of questioning is called the Under-the-Surface questions which is where the answer is not obvious (See Figure 5). Furthermore, the student will need to use their own schema to formulate their own questions. Students who form their own questions using their schema can better comprehend the text. Gerald Grow (1996) supports this by stating “A reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives a good account of the objects and events described in the message” (Comprehension section, para. 1). So when
Figure 5. Sample of What Struggling Readers Would Use to Help them Generate Questions

readers activate their own prior knowledge it makes the reading process easier to comprehend.
All strategies mentioned in this text (predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing) are only a few parts of reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is a way for students to interact with each other and the teacher, so they can better understand the text they are reading.

Summary

The strategies mentioned above regarding the reciprocal teaching technique is just one technique to help struggling readers comprehend the text. In using the RT technique the readers are able to check their own understanding of the material by asking questions and summarizing. As the Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment states in their booklet called Self-assessment, "Metacognition is the process of being aware of one's own learning: good learners monitor their learning and thinking processes through self-monitoring. It focuses the pupil's evaluation on his or her own performance rather than in comparison with others, which we know is more likely to maintain motivation" (p. 5). By having the students self-assess will help increase ownership in their learning process. In addition, after a lot of modeling of the RT technique by the teacher, readers should be able to then work
collaboratively with other students of different ability levels. In using the RT technique effectively, readers will not only comprehend the text but be able to monitor their own learning and thinking in any text they encounter. This is not only great for all learners but specifically for ELLs; the RT technique can be used to enhance and develop their reading skills. A way for the readers to monitor their own understanding of the text is to write in their reading journals. The reading journals can also be used as an informal assessment for teachers to assess the readers' comprehension of the text. However, before students are to be left using the RT technique independently, the teacher needs to continuously monitor and evaluate the group discussions until the students are more capable of monitoring their own performance. As many researchers like Hashey and Connors (2003) exclaim “Be patient—it’s worth it. Palincsar et al. (1989) recommended that students be taught in small, heterogeneous groups, allowing each student to practice while receiving feedback about his or her performance” (p. 231). Teachers need to be patient as the reciprocal teaching technique is a long process but worth the wait.

In summary I have focused on the theoretical framework for effective comprehension strategies for both
struggling readers and English Language Learners. In order for teachers to teach effective strategies to these students they must first observe and grasp the knowledge of what a good reader does to read. They should also produce high-quality instruction using strategies such as reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is effective at increasing comprehension of the text.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Freck and Meier (2005) say "Children come to our classroom from so many different ability levels and backgrounds. As a teacher, it is important to recognize and know what to do to help a struggling reader." As a teacher I agree. I work in a school district where the students are of so many different ability levels and backgrounds. Within my own classroom, I have students who are proficient to far below basic according to the state exams. According to the California Department of Education, the students’ performance levels are based upon how well they do on the test, which their score is not compared to other students. For the Second Grade English-Language Arts part of the STAR, students must have a scale score range of 350-401 to be proficient. In addition, a scale score range of 150-261 is considered to be far below basic. The students in my classroom come from affluent to deprived families. Their reading levels are from above grade level to below grade level. However, no matter the differences in abilities or backgrounds it is important as a teacher to teach reading explicitly and
systematically to those students who are struggling readers. Therefore, teachers must find effective strategies to teach reading, specifically reading comprehension.

Background of Study

As I mentioned in Chapters One and Two, I will continue to take a look at what strategies are effective in teaching English Language Learners, who are struggling readers or not so struggling readers, to comprehend difficult text. The reason I would like to focus on ELLs is because I work in a low socioeconomic area and the school population is comprised of 83.6% Hispanic or Latino, 9.4% white, 0.9% Asian, and 4.9% African-American, (Jurupa Unified School District, School Accountability Report Card, 2004-2005).

Study Design

In order to investigate each question posed in Chapter 1, I will use my class population of ELLs, who are struggling readers, to assess their reading comprehension and find out which strategies are most effective. The reason for this study is too many students, especially non-English speakers struggle with reading comprehension.
They may be able to read, but they don’t grasp the concept of what they are reading.

Throughout the years, there has been many research done on finding which specific strategies is most effective in increasing reading comprehension with struggling readers or not so struggling readers. The research I’m going to conduct will aim to document some of the past research that has proven specific strategies to be effective. Additionally, those specific strategies will then be implemented in a social context to prove or disprove the effectiveness of the strategy amongst struggling readers, specifically non-English speakers. If the strategies prove to be effective and have helped improve reading comprehension with struggling non-English speakers then it may be beneficial to society.

It will especially benefit students who are non-English speakers because not only do they struggle with reading the English language but they also struggle to understand the meaning of what they read. I believe they have difficulty understanding the text because they don’t have the skills to transfer what they have learned to other settings in their lives. Therefore, it is important for educators to find strategies that will help the non-English speaker not only read but to comprehend
what they read. If the student accomplishes this they will be able to succeed in society.

Sample Population

There are a total of 18 students in the second grade classroom. Out of the 18 there are a total of 10 second grade English Language learners: 1 Beginner, 2 Early Intermediate, 1 Intermediate, 5 Early Advanced, and 1 Advanced level. The six males and five female students all speak Spanish as their first language. According to the California Department of Education, the levels are defined according to the reading comprehension strand. The beginning ELD level is defined by the student responding orally to stories read aloud using physical actions and other means of non-verbal communication. The beginner also responds orally to the stories read aloud by giving one-to two-word responses in answering factual comprehension questions. The intermediate level is when the student can read the text and orally identify the main ideas and draw inferences about the text by using detailed sentences. They also can respond to comprehension questions by using detailed sentences. The advanced level readers are able to read and orally respond to familiar stories and other text by answering factual comprehension questions about
cause-and-effect relationships. I have found with the ELLs who are at the beginning, early intermediate, and intermediate levels, have difficulty with comprehension skills. The reason, according to Klingner and Vaughn (1996), "These students often exhibit more problems with reading comprehension than do fluent speakers of English of comparable ability, because of differences in background knowledge relevant to what is read in school and limited English language proficiency" (p. 275). Therefore, these students don’t have enough schemas to make the connections between the text and themselves. So, teachers need to provide them with the strategies to comprehend the text. One type of strategy is reciprocal teaching. In addition to reciprocal teaching, students should use journal response books to help keep track of their own learning and thinking process.

Data Collection Procedures

As for ELLs, who are struggling readers, reading is a skill I expect them to improve the more they do it; it helps to have a process to document that growth. As an educator I know there are various formal and informal methods for assessing reading comprehension. The different types of assessments, teachers use, to name a few are
authentic, quantitative, criterion-referenced, and norm-referenced assessments. The activities and methods I’ve chosen to emphasize are reciprocal teaching and readers’ journal. I believe one way to assess reading comprehension is through the readers’ journal, which would be a type of informal assessment. The readers’ journal is a great way to provide a powerful means of evaluating their own work. For teachers it gives evidence of progress. For struggling readers, it helps them interact with the text to improve their comprehension. According to Strube (1996), “A literature response log of reader’s journal is the place where readers record their personal reactions to text. It is where they may document their feelings as they interact with the text, construct meaning, and digest their new thoughts, ideas, and connections.” (Strube, 1996, p. 49) Responding to literature in this personal way gives readers control over their experiences with the story. It also develops their schemas. Students are able to express themselves freely, producing creative and cognitive writing.

In addition, Hashey and Connors (2003) supports this by stating from the San Diego County Office of Education that “Listening to students during dialogue is the most valuable means for determining whether or not students are
learning the strategies and whether the strategies are helping them. Most informal data came from listening to students and reading their learning journals” (p. 230). Having ELLs keep a learning journal is a great way to provide a powerful means of evaluating their own work. The students will use the learning journals on a daily basis to write about topics provided, summarizing, or free writing, which students will be allowed to write about anything. The learning journals will then be collected weekly at the end of each story per quarter. All journal entries pertaining to the story read for the week will be collected for this research. The grading criteria for the journal entries will be based on a Journal Response and Comprehension Rubric, which was created by NCTE: Read Write Think, 2004. The scale used will range from a score of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent) (See Figure 6). The summaries, written responses to teacher questions, and personal responses to text show how much the students understand the story and are able to make connections, retell, or summarize (See Figure 7 & 8).
Journal Response and Comprehension Rubric

Use this rubric to assess students' abilities to complete the journal activities assigned for this lesson. Share this assessment with students prior to completing the journal-writing lesson so they will understand how they will be assessed. You can also use the rubric as a basis for discussion and feedback with each student.

Student name: ___________________________ Date: ______________________

1. The student writes journal responses in complete sentences. ______

2. The student writes three or more sentences to answer questions. ______

3. The student responds to questions by self-questioning, retelling, predicting, or assuming the role of a character. ______

4. The student's experiences and opinions are clear. ______

5. The student works with a peer to share journal responses and to develop a combined response when requested. ______

Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student completes the task with no major errors.
The student demonstrates a full understanding of the concepts.

The student completes the task with only a few major errors and some minor errors.
The student demonstrates a strong understanding of the concepts.

The student completes the task with some major errors and many minor errors.
The student has difficulty understanding the concepts.

The student fails to complete the task.
The student does not understand the concepts.

Include anecdotal notes in the space below:

Figure 6. Journal Response and Comprehension Rubric Sample
The school mural is about two kids who make a school mural. And they start to make it then they finish the mural.
The district's formal assessments used to assess these standards are criterion-reference tests, summative tests, selections tests, and theme skills. All four types of assessments will be used to assess the students' comprehension skills. To clarify, Criterion-referenced tests "determine what test-takers can do and what they know, not how they compare to others. Criterion-referenced tests report on how well students are doing relative to a predetermined performance level on a specified set of educational goals or outcomes included in the curriculum" (Gunning, 2002, p. 74). These tests are given to students each quarter for four quarters. Summative tests are, according to ERDG-632, "assessment that is done at the
conclusion of a course or some larger instructional period (e.g., at the end of the program). The purpose is to determine success or to what extent the program/project/course met its goals" (2006, p. 2 #22). These tests are given four times a year, in the beginning, the middle, third quarter, and at the end of the year. As for the selection and theme skills test, they are given at the end of each theme in the language arts curriculum. These will be used to determine how well the student understood each selection.

Data Analysis Procedures

After teaching the students to use these types of strategies to improve their comprehension skills, I will use both formal and informal assessments such as criterion-referenced tests (CRTs), theme skills tests, summative tests, informal reading inventory, journal entries, and teacher observations to assess ELLs. These assessments assesses if the struggling readers are able to make judgments, problem solve, make inferences, find the main idea, topic, and supporting details of the reading. According to California State Board of Education, the second grade standard for English-Language Arts Content standard 2.0 Reading Comprehension states:
Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources).

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 State the purpose in reading (i.e., tell what information is sought).

2.3 Use knowledge of the author's purpose(s) to comprehend informational text.

2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition (e.g., why, what if, how).

2.5 Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas.

2.6 Recognize cause-and-effect relationships in a text.

2.7 Interpret information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.

2.8 Follow two-step written instructions (2006, pp. 11-12).

These are some strands from the second grade state standards for reading in language arts.
Other types of assessments that are used in the classroom to assess comprehension are informal assessments. These informal assessments are teacher observations, informal reading inventories, and journals. According to Thomas G. Gunning (2002), teacher observations are what teachers use when “observing students in a discussion in class, noting students’ performance on teacher-made comprehension tests or on end-of-book unit tests provides an overall sense of a student’s ability to comprehend what has been read” (p. 120). These can be used to assess and identify each individual’s needs in reading comprehension. Teachers can use anecdotal notes, journals or daily logs to assess the students’ comprehension.

However, I have found in my experience, along with the second grade team, that the tests does not always depict how well the teacher has taught the specific skill or how well the ELL learned the skill, if at all. This is consistent with W. James Popham’s (2001) statement “...Students’ scores on existing standardized achievement tests do not provide an accurate way of judging how well teachers are teaching. There are mismatches between what’s tested and what’s taught” (p. 125). This is exactly the problem. What teachers teach in the classroom is different
from the way the test is formulated. Especially, the way the problems or questions are formed.

Another problem with the state tests is the content that is used to test the students' comprehension. Sometimes the content that is used is unfamiliar to the ELLs' prior knowledge (See Figure 6). As Sandra R. Hurley and Josefina V. Tinajero (2001) explains "Comprehension is likely to suffer when a student's background knowledge is substantially different from or culturally incongruent with the author's perspective" (p. 25). Therefore, if the stories included in the assessments are unfamiliar to the ELL then they will most likely have difficulty comprehending the questions asked of the student. ELLs come to school with a variety of reading experiences, background, and prior knowledge about the reading and most of the time they don't share or have the same language as the text.
Figure 9. Sample Test which Depicts the Type of Reading

So in order for students to comprehend the content, teachers must use explicit and indirect instructions when building the students' vocabulary and comprehension skills. Through explicit instruction, ELLs will be able to share their ideas or find words to use in certain contexts to share their ideas; in other words building vocabulary.
It also allows them to have the opportunities to improve their language. These experiences will improve their reading skills, such as reading fluency and comprehension.

Overall, the state tests are invalid and not useful to the students because it does not match what they are learning in the classroom. As Hurley and Tinajero (2001) states "[s]tandardized tests are limited in that they tend to assess lower-order skills" (p. 66). The students are to fill in multiple choice answers which prohibit them from generating short responses or explain their thinking, which will show their understanding of the content (See Figure 7). Instead of using only state tests to determine the students' comprehension of the content, teachers should use other assessments that are more authentic and performance-based. These types of assessments will benefit both the students and teachers. In addition, the tests should use reading passages that include a lot of the vocabulary that was used in the classroom. Therefore, students know what to expect on the test and there shouldn't be any surprises. In this way the students are and will feel more successful. Most of all, the students will be more motivated and confident in taking state tests if they are actively involved with self-monitoring.
Warthogs often dig in the dirt. They do this because they eat grasses, roots, berries, and bark. Their digging breaks up the dirt and mixes it with air. This helps plants grow.

1. Why do warthogs back into their burrows?
   - **A.** to rid themselves of pests
   - **B.** to look for food
   - **C.** to find a new home
   - **D.** to look out for a lion

2. Why do warthogs run out of their burrows as fast as they can?
   - **F.** because another animal is chasing them
   - **G.** to get a start at digging up dirt
   - **H.** to be ready in case of attack
   - **J.** because they are always hungry

3. What happens when a bird eats pests from a warthog’s body?
   - **A.** The bird gets sick, and the warthog gets more warts.
   - **B.** The bird gets food, and the warthog gets rid of pests.
   - **C.** The bird gets warts, and the warthog goes to sleep.
   - **D.** The bird sings, and the warthog digs in the dirt.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENTATION

Introduction

Lori D. Oczkus (2003) exclaims "The Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States reports that U.S. school children are lacking in basic reading comprehension skills. Students can decode words, but they have difficulty understanding what they read" (p. 1). This is becoming more evident in many schools throughout the United States. Many children may possess decoding skills but they do not possess the skill to understand the content. Furthermore, not only is it a problem for English speakers but also for non-English speakers. For one, they are having trouble decoding the English language let alone trying to find meaning in the text. However, once non-English students master decoding skills it may be much easier for them to comprehend the text. Therefore, teachers must find ways to model and guide non-English speakers to clarify unknown words and work on answering and asking comprehension questions about the text. One technique that may benefit both English and a non-english speaker is reciprocal teaching, which helps guide students through four strategies: predicting, questioning,
clarifying, and summarizing (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Another technique is through journal responses. Journal responses help the students to write and respond to questions they have about the text which allows them to better understand what they are reading.

Throughout the past year, I have implemented the techniques, reciprocal teaching and journal responses, in the classroom. At the end of each quarter or theme, both informal and formal assessments have been given to all students. The results of the different informal and formal assessments given throughout the year, demonstrates that implementing reciprocal teaching and keeping a readers' journal does help English Language Learners, who are also struggling readers, increase their reading comprehension skills through informal assessments. However, using those strategies does not show that students can transfer those skills when taking formal assessments, like high-stakes tests. Regardless, the data substantiated and provided support that by implementing the instructional activities reciprocal teaching and readers' journal, it has shown not only non-English students but all students can improve their reading comprehension by using the strategies mentioned in Chapter Three.
A total of 18 students completed the H.M. Summative tests, CRTs, Theme Skills Test, Selection Tests, and readers' journal responses. The H.M. Summative tests and the District Criterion Referenced Tests are reports of only the English Language Arts portion of the test and not inclusive of the mathematics portion.

Findings

Houghton Mifflin Summative Tests for English Language Learners

The chart below outlines the ten English Language Learners and their scores on the Midyear Summative Test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Total Score/*</th>
<th>Percent Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average score</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total possible score is 79

Figure 11. Ten English Language Learners Total Score and Percent Score on the Midyear Summative Test
Each student’s language level ranged from 1-3 (1-beginner, 2-early intermediate, and 3-intermediate). All students completed the Language Arts Midyear Summative Test given in January 2006. A summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a course. It is used to assign students a course grade. Therefore, the findings show all ELL students scored between 33%-80%. The total average score for all students was 56%. According to the performance levels on the District’s Data Director, an assessment tool that accumulates all assessments throughout the year, the students’ performance levels range from far below basic to proficient (far below basic 0-36, below basic 36-61, basic 61-78, and proficient 78-87). In order for students to be advanced to the next proficiency level they would need scores that range between 87-100. In accordance with the California Standards Test (CST), the five performance levels are defined as advanced (exceeds state standards), proficient (meets state standards), basic (approaching state standards), below basic (below state standards), and far below basic (well below state standards) (Jurupa Unified School District SARC, 2004).
End-of-the-Year Houghton Mifflin Summative Test

The chart below outlines the ten English Language Learners and their scores on the End-of-the-Year H.M. Summative Test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Total Score/*</th>
<th>Percent Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>c/o</td>
<td>c/o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>c/o</td>
<td>c/o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average score</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c/o = checked out of school)
* Total possible score is 79

Figure 12. English Language Learners on the End of Year Summative Test

At the end of the year, the ELLs improved their scores, which now ranged from 41%-89%. The total average score was 68%. Student 4 and 8 did not take the end of the year test because they exited the school. The students' performance levels improved from a range of far below
basic through proficient to a range of below basic through advanced.

According to the students' test results on the midyear and end of the year Summative tests, the English Language Learners did well overall in language arts. Most of the ELLs scored between 33%-89% on both the Summative tests (See Figures 11 & 12). The total average score on the midyear summative test was 56% and by the end of the year the students' average score was 68%. As a result all students did improve their scores in language arts by 12%.

Whole Class Summative Tests

The charts below depict both the midyear and end of the year summative scores for the entire second grade class. It only shows the reading comprehension portion of the Houghton Mifflin Summative tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard/Cluster</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th># Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rdg Comp:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
<td>144/270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. Houghton Mifflin Summative Grade 2 Quarter 2 (Midyear)
Figure 14. Total Score for Reading Comprehension Strand for the Houghton Mifflin Summative End of the Year Test

As a whole, about 53% of the second grade class has a performance level of below basic on the reading comprehension strand on the Midyear Summative test. In addition, by the end of the year 45% have a performance level of below basic in the same strand. (See Figures 13 and 14) Therefore, it illustrates that about 8% of the students progressed from a performance level of below basic to either basic or proficient within the year.

Theme Skills Tests

Whole Class

The Theme Skills Test assesses students on specific skills learned throughout a particular theme. The chart below depicts the scores of the 2nd Quarter Theme Skills Test for all 18 second grade students in Mrs. Benosa’s class. The chart shows seven strands that are components of the language arts standards.
In revisiting the entire class scores on the specific strands pertaining to comprehension, making judgments, main idea, problem solving, and making inferences (see Figure 15) the total scores range from 25% to 98% for all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4th Quarter Theme Skills Test</th>
<th>Figure 15: Overall Score in Mrs. Benson's Class on the 2nd</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>45.5% F</td>
<td>51.8% F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Syllables** -ture, -tion Test 5 points
- **High Frequency Words** Test 10 points
- **Making Judgments** Test 5 points
- **Topic, Main Idea, Det** Test 5 points
- **Problem Solving** Tests 5 points
- **Making Inferences** Test 5 points
- **Information Skills** Test points
English Language Learners

The outline below show scores for English Language Learners for both 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter Theme Skills test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter Theme Skills Test</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
<th>3rd Quarter Theme Skills Test</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>44.5/110</td>
<td>56.7/110</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>43.6/110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>45.5/110</td>
<td>47.8/110</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>35.5/110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>38.2/110</td>
<td>58.9/110</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>24.5/110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>68.2/110</td>
<td>88.9/110</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>79.1/110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>76.4/110</td>
<td>70/110</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>26.4/110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average score</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16. Overall Scores for 2nd and 3rd Quarter Theme Skills Test

The results show the total average score for the second quarter theme skills test was 48\% and the total average score for the third quarter was 57\%. Overall, the students, as a total average score, increased their scores by 9\%. Individually, the students either increased or decreased their scores (See Figure 16).
Criterion Referenced Tests

Criterion Referenced Tests are intended to measure how well a person has learned a specific body of knowledge and skills. The table below depicts the District ELA CRT beginning and end of the year tests, specifically focusing on the comprehension components of the tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th># Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R2.6: Recognize cause-and-effect relationship in a text</td>
<td>62.67%</td>
<td>47/75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.5: Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
<td>16/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3.1: Compare and contrast plots, settings, and characters presented by different authors</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
<td>35/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3.3: Compare and contrast different versions of the same stories that reflect different cultures</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>15/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.4: Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition (e.g. why, what, if, how).</td>
<td>57.78%</td>
<td>26/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.3: Use knowledge of the author's purpose(s) to comprehend informational text.</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>4/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.1: Use titles, tables of contents, and chapter headings to locate information in expository text.</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>25/45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17. Beginning of the Year Tests Comprehension Strand Scores for the 2005-2006 Grade 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th># Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R2.6: Recognize cause-and-effect relationship in a text</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75.56%</td>
<td>68/90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.5: Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>18/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3.1: Compare and contrast plots, settings, and characters presented by different authors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68.52%</td>
<td>37/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3.3: Compare and contrast different versions of the same stories that reflect different cultures.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61.11%</td>
<td>22/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.4: Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition (e.g. why, what, if, how).</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>36/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.3: Use knowledge of the author’s purpose(s) to comprehend informational text.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
<td>7/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.1: Use titles, tables of contents, and chapter headings to locate information in expository text.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68.52%</td>
<td>37/54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18. End of the Year Tests Comprehension Strand Scores for the 2005-2006

All students in the second grade class have a total score ranging from 26.67% to 77.78% for each standard/cluster at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, the total score ranged from 38.89% to 75.56% for each standard/cluster (See Figure 17 & 18).

Overall Summary of the Findings

Overall, English Language Learners scored an average of 56% on the Midyear H.M. Summative Test and 68% on the End-of-the-Year H.M. Summative Test. Therefore, ELLs demonstrated a significant increase in scores by 12% in language arts. As for the whole class, 53% of the students scored a performance level of below basic on the Midyear
H.M. Summative Test and 45% on the End-of-the-Year H.M. Summative Test. This depicts that about an 18% of the students progressed from below basic to either basic or proficient within the year. As far as the 2nd Quarter Theme Skills Test, the entire second grade class scored between a range of 25%-98%. Specifically, on both the 2nd and 3rd Quarter Theme Skills Tests, ELLs total average score increased from 48% to 57%. In addition, on the Criterion Referenced Tests, the entire class has a total score ranging from 26.67% to 77.78%. By the end of the year, the total score ranged from 38.89% to 75.56%. This shows a slight increase of 12.22% in the total score.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study of English Language Learners, who are also struggling readers was to find which interventions are most effective in increasing the student’s comprehension. Based on the two types of instructional activities mentioned in the above chapters, the findings have provided some insight as to how effective these strategies are in the classroom. Reciprocal teaching techniques were used systematically and explicitly throughout the year. Informal and formal assessments were used to monitor the students’ progress in reading comprehension throughout the year.

The results were as follows, the scores on the formal assessments did not prove or disprove that the strategies were directly correlated to the increase or decrease in the students’ test scores. It also doesn’t depict how well a teacher teaches or how much the students really understood the concepts. The students have these difficulties because they don’t possess the skills to transfer what they know to other texts. Often, English Language Learners don’t possess the academic language used in these high-stakes tests, which makes comprehension more
difficult. Basically as Bielenberg and Fillmore (2004) state

English Language learners must acquire the language skills needed for everyday communication—skills that native speakers of English usually bring to school—as well as those needed for subject-matter learning. Children do not learn this kind of language on their own or through immersion in an English-speaking environment. (p. 47)

Consequently, what do these scores say about the students’ understanding of the concept or the teacher’s teaching? Is it fair to say that based on these scores the students did not comprehend the skill and the teacher poorly taught the concepts? While, this doesn’t say anything about how well the teacher teaches or how many of the students understood the skill or not on the high-stakes tests, it does demonstrate an increase in comprehension skills through the use of District mandated and classroom tests. The way the concepts were taught in the classroom did not match the way it was tested on the high-stakes tests. Thus, I believe policymakers and administrators should not base the way students comprehend the content solely on district mandated scores but to consider using performance-based and authentic
assessments, too. In addition, these scores should not be the sole determination of their reading comprehension grade. According to the Second Grade Reading Grade Rubric, the Comprehension component is worth 10% (See Figure 19). To determine this score, the teachers use only Themes Skills and California Summative Tests scores only. There are no performance-based or authentic assessments used in addition to the percentage. Again, teachers should use other assessments, such as anecdotal records, IRI (Informal Reading Inventories), and journals to get a more valid comprehension score.
## Reading Grade Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Houghton Mifflin reading Level 40%</td>
<td>MN and above: 100%</td>
<td>KL: 80-89%</td>
<td>Below AB: 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AB: 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CD: 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HI: 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Fluency 20% Average hot readings from fluency reading</td>
<td>1st Q: 102 wpm and above</td>
<td>92 wpm</td>
<td>82 wpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Q: 120 wpm and above</td>
<td>110 wpm</td>
<td>100 wpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Q: 138 wpm and above</td>
<td>128 wpm</td>
<td>118 wpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th Q: 144 wpm and above</td>
<td>134 wpm</td>
<td>124 wpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Frequency Words 20% Theme Skills Test California Summative Test*</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 1 90-100%</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 2 and 3 80-89%</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 4 and 5 70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Frequency Word List 1</td>
<td>High Frequency Word List 2</td>
<td>High Frequency Word List 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension 10% Theme Skills Test California Summative Test*</td>
<td>Selection Test &amp; Theme Skills Test 1 90-100%</td>
<td>Selection Test &amp; Theme Skills Test 2 and 3 80-89%</td>
<td>Selection Test &amp; Theme Skills Test 4 and 5 70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics 5% Theme Skills Test California Summative Test*</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 1 90-100%</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 2 and 3 80-89%</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 4 and 5 70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary 5% Theme Skills Test California Summative Test*</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 1 90-100%</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 2 and 3 80-89%</td>
<td>Theme Skills Test 4 and 5 70-79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 19. Second Grade Reading Grade Rubric

As W. James Popham exclaims "That’s the chief mission of classroom tests: to capture the kind of information teachers need so they can make better instructional
decisions" (2001, p. 28). Teachers should use the tests mentioned earlier to help guide their instruction. As well, they should use both informal and formal assessments to create a valid reading grade, not solely base the grade on formal tests. This will benefit both students and teachers. In this way, teachers can easily assess the students and specifically focus on the problem areas students are having difficulty in.

Therefore, teachers need to provide instructional activities, such as reciprocal teaching, that promote language development in any difficult content. Thus, it is safe to say that the instructional activities, reciprocal teaching and response journals, does help both English Language Learners and English only students to utilize the comprehension skills through out any type of text they encounter, whether they are struggling or not so struggling readers. They are tools that can help students to better understand any text they come across. In addition, reciprocal teaching is a technique that offers students the tools to strengthen their reading comprehension through the use of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. For that reason, the instructional activities used can be effective if used systematically and explicitly.
In conclusion, reciprocal teaching and response journals are instructional activities that may be used by the classroom teacher. However, there are many downfalls for both instructional activities. First, the amount of time it takes for students and teachers to master the activity. Students cannot master the strategies within a day or two; it takes time to first model and guide the students through reciprocal teaching process. Then it takes more time to allow the students to go through the process without teacher modeling. Due to the Language Arts and Mathematics state mandated hours teachers are required to teach, there is not much time to have reciprocal teaching groups. Second, depending on the districts who are under the program improvement plan or not, teachers may not be able to implement reciprocal teaching or journal responses due to the pacing guide. Reciprocal teaching is especially time consuming because it is a technique students need time to master. Despite those drawbacks, if taught explicitly, both the teacher and students will benefit in the long run.

I recommend, because of time constraints, that teachers use the different strategies from reciprocal teaching: summarizing, predicting, clarifying, and question generating and incorporate them into their
lessons instead of going through the whole process. Teachers can use the reciprocal teaching technique in a whole class setting instead of small groups. In addition, teachers should also use journal responses to allow students to reflect on their own thinking after a text is read. In this way the story is fresh in their minds and can easily respond to the text if they have questions or comments they want to make about the text.

These strategies can be used for all readers, struggling or not. Once students have acquired the skills to improve their reading comprehension they will be able to apply it to anything they read. In addition, if students continue to use these strategies throughout their school years, they will be able to utilize it once they enter the workforce. Fundamentally, students will be able to apply these skills in a civilization full of electronic sources, print materials, and complicated texts when faced with a plethora of data.
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT
PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT

You are being invited to participate in a study which will be carried out by Kathlyn Benosa under the supervision of Dr. Diane Brantley, Assistant Professor of Literacy Education California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, and San Bernardino.

In this study you will be given some tests and asked to answer some comprehension questions and write a short sentence based on the books read in class. Depending on the types of tests it will take 30-40 minutes to complete. The answers you provide will be kept secret by the researcher. Your name will not be reported with your answers. You may receive the group results of this study at the end of the 2006-2007 school year at the following location California State University, San Bernardino, Office FO135, 5500 University Pkwy San Bernardino, CA 92407.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. You are free not to provide your test results for the study or you may decide to withdraw your test results any time during this study without punishment. When you have finished the study, you will get information describing the study in more detail. There are no benefits to you which may reasonably be expected from the research. There are no known risks to your participating in this study because this is part of your normal classroom routines.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Professor Diane Brantley at (909) 537-5605.

Your signature shows that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and stop participation without consequence, that you have received a copy of this form.

Print Name ____________________________________________
Child signature ____________________________________________
Parent's signature ____________________________________________
Date ____________________________________________

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CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO: Niños bajo edad 18/padres

A te invitan que participes en un estudio que sea realizado por Kathryn Benosa bajo supervisión del Dr. Diane Brantley, profesor auxiliar de la educación de la instrucción. Este estudio ha sido aceptado por el comité examinador, la universidad de estado de California, y el San institucionales Bernardino.

En este estudio te darán algunas pruebas y serán pedido contestar a algunas preguntas de la comprensión y escribir una oración corta basada en adentro la clase leída los libros. Dependiendo de los tipos de pruebas tomará 30-40 minutos para terminar. Todas tus respuestas serán mantenidas secretas por el investigador. Tu nombre no será divulgado con tus respuestas. Todos los expedientes serán divulgados en forma del grupo solamente. Puedes recibir los resultados del grupo de este estudio en el final del año escolar 2006-2007 en California State University, San Bernardino, Office FO135, 5500 University Pkwy San Bernardino, CA 92407.

Tu participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntaria. Estás libre no proporcionar tus resultados de la prueba para el estudio o puedes decidir retirar tus resultados de la prueba en cualquier momento durante este estudio sin el castigo. Cuando has acabado el estudio, conseguirás la información que describe el estudio más detalladamente. Para demostrar la fuerza del estudio, preguntamos que tú para no hablar de este estudio con otros estudiantes o participantes. No hay ventajas a ti cuál se puede razonablemente esperar de la investigación. Habrá riesgos mínimos a ti porque éste es parte de tus rutinas normales de la sala de clase.

Si tienes cualesquiera preguntas o las preocupaciones por esto estudian, satisfacer la sensación libre entrarme en contacto con Diane Brantley en (909) 537-5605.

Tu firma demuestra que has leído y entiendes la información proporcionada arriba, que acuerdas dispuesto participar, que puedes retirar tu consentimiento en cualquier momento y parar la participación sin consecuencia, que has recibido una copia de esta forma.

Impresión Name____________________________________________________

Signature del niño____________________________________________________

Signature del padres____________________________________________________

Date____________________________________________________

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN BERNARDINO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE
APPROVED 6/15/06 3% VOTO NEGADO: 3/25/06 3%
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APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
October 09, 2006

Mrs. Kathryn Benosa - a.k.a. Mrs. Kathryn Garcia
c/o: Prof. Diane Brantley
Department of Education-Language, Literacy, and Culture
California State University
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Mrs. Benosa:

Your application to use human subjects, titled, “Increasing Comprehension Strategies through Reciprocal Teaching” has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Your informed consent document is attached. This consent document has been stamped and signed by the IRB chairperson. All subsequent copies used must be this officially approved version. A change in your informed consent requires resubmission of your protocol as amended.

You are required to notify the IRB if any substantive changes are made in your research prospectus/protocol, if any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and when your project has ended.

Your project is approved for one year from the letter approval date listed above. If your project lasts longer than one year, you (the investigator/researcher) are required to notify the IRB by email or correspondence of Notice of Project Ending or submit a Request for Renewal at the end of your approval end date. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, IRB Secretary. Mr. Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-5027, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgilsp@csusb.edu. Please include your application identification number (above) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Samuel S. Kuthner, Chair
Institutional Review Board

JL/mg

cc: Prof. Diane Brantley, Department of Education-Language, Literacy, and Culture
REFERENCES


Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment. Self-assessment. North East Region.


