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The Effects of an Evidence-Based Intervention with English Language Learners in Phonological Awareness

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Abstract

This research study examined the effects of an evidence-based intervention in phonological awareness with first grade English language learners (ELLs). The study had 6 participants ranging in age from six to seven. Of the participants, three were ELL and the other were native English speakers, or non-ELL. The intervention group received explicit phonological awareness instruction for eight weeks. There were two major findings from the research: all students experienced growth in their phonological awareness and ELLs made similar gains in their phonological awareness as their non-ELL peers. The results indicate that evidence-based phonological awareness interventions are valuable for ELLs and non-ELLs.
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 CHAPTER ONE

One way children develop language is through the modeling of phonological awareness used by teachers and caregivers. Phonological awareness is the knowledge that oral language is made up of individual words and sounds (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). Phonological awareness is an important predictor of a child’s future reading success and decoding skills. Supporting students in their phonological awareness development will lead to better reading comprehension in the future. I propose through the use of small group interventions of phonological awareness, ELL students will make similar gains as their English-only peers in their phonological awareness. This chapter will provide information about Jones Elementary School, data about reading at the school, as well as an overview of research related to my study.

Jones Elementary School is a public school located in an urban part of the Midwestern United States. Jones offers four-year-old kindergarten through fifth grade and includes a Head Start program. In 2011, there were 285 students enrolled at the school and 13 fulltime classroom teachers. The school is a diverse school with a population of 21.5% black students, 29.5% Hispanic students, .4% Native American students, and 45.6% white students.

Jones Elementary is a low income Title I school, which means it qualifies to receive additional federal funding to help students achieve academic goals. For a school to qualify for Title I assistance, over 40% of students must be enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. In 2011, Jones Elementary had 74% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Also, the district receives Title III funds as a part of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Title III funds are used to help English Language Learners (ELLs) develop their English proficiency, typically through the use of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.
The district and Jones Elementary have a program to serve the needs of ELLs the school serves. In 2011, the school had 13% of its student population who were ELLs. The Language Acquisition Program (LAP) is a district program that serves the needs of the district’s ELL population.

For the 2012-2013 school year, the Jones Elementary is separated into family groupings. The families are expected to differentiate student learning by creating and teaching groups of students who are at similar ability levels. Kindergarten and first grade are a family and have four classrooms and teachers. The second and third grade family has three multi-aged classrooms and the fourth and fifth grade family has four classrooms.

The school uses direct instruction as its primary model of teaching. Teachers deliver lessons using explicit modeling and guided instruction. The district and school provide teachers with the materials to use direct instruction to teach reading, math, social studies, and science. The district and school require teachers to use and implement the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) in their instruction. For reading and language arts, teachers are expected to use the *Journeys* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011) reading series as a tool as well as a reading workshop model to instruct students. Students’ independent reading levels are determined through the use of the Fountas and Pinnell *Benchmark Assessment System* (Heinemann, 2011). Writing is taught through the use of *Write Source* (Great Source, 2007) as well as through the use of a writing workshop model. Math is taught with *Everyday Math* (Wright Group/ McGraw-Hill, 2007), which uses a variety of manipulatives to help deliver instruction.

All grades are expected to have uninterrupted 90-minute reading blocks in which teachers are using the reading workshop model. In the reading workshop model, teachers provide a mini-
lesson for the whole group and then transition into guided reading, where the teacher provides
guided instruction to small groups of students at their reading levels. All grades are expected to
have 90 minutes of math. Science and social studies are expected to be taught one day per, week
as well as be incorporated into the other subject areas. All grades are expected to have three 30-
minute intervention times. These times Elementary is also transitioning to include the Response
to Intervention (RtI)( RTI Action Network, 2012) program within the school.

The Language Acquisition Program (LAP) serves the needs of the ELL population in the
district and at Jones Elementary. The LAP at Jones Elementary is currently in transition. In
previous years, the LAP had one teacher who served all of the ELLs in the school. The teacher
was a certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who was also a certified K-12
teacher. Their role was to provide support to ELLs in the classroom through a co-teaching and
collaboration model in which they would use language goals based on the World-Class
Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)(The Board of Regents of the University of
Wisconsin System, 2014) standards. Small group pull-out instruction was also used in supporting
ELLs. However, for the 2012-2013 school year, the LAP at Jones has changed. The program has
changed to include two English as Second Language (ESL) teachers who are full-time classroom
teachers. The ESL teachers are required to provide the same services as the previous teacher/staff
member.

Students identified as ELLs are required to take the Assessing Comprehension and
Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) for English language learners (The Board
of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2014)The ACCESS assesses students’ ability
levels in four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students’ scores
from the ACCESS test are used in determining students’ individual English proficiency level.
English proficiency levels range from 1 to 6. If a student scores a 6 on the ACCESS, the LAP teacher/staff member then monitors them for three years. Students who have reached a 6 are no longer required to take the ACCESS and are considered fully English proficient. Results from the ACCESS are shared with the classroom teachers and parents as well as put into student’s cumulative folders to be referenced throughout the students schooling careers.

The district school board and Jones Elementary use a shared decision making process. This means that there are multiple stakeholders in the decision making process. School board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members are all involved in making decisions for the district as well as the school. When decisions are made at the district level, they are shared with the principal who then relays the information to the staff. When decisions are made within the school, they are first discussed with the leadership team, which consists of eight staff members. Upon discussion in the leadership team, decisions are then discussed with the staff and implemented in the classrooms.

The school board in the district establishes policies and procedures regarding students, staff, and educational programs. Once the policies and procedures are decided, district administrators and principals are informed and are expected to implement the policies in their schools. Principals and instructional coaches are expected to attend monthly meetings about policies and procedures, which are to be implemented. One day a week, school staff is expected to participate in professional development for two and a half hours. During this time, the principal and instructional coach share important information about policies and procedures with the staff.

Jones Elementary has a staff of 14 teachers for four-year-old kindergarten through fifth grade, including two special education teachers. In addition to the teachers, there is an
instructional coach, a part time speech and language pathologist, a part time counselor, a part time technology aide, and a bilingual liaison. All of the teachers on staff are certified elementary teachers and a majority have a master’s degree. In the past three years, there has been a large turnover rate among staff, with only half of the teaching staff remaining from the 2011-2012 school year. There are also two ESL teachers on staff who provide services to ELLs. The bilingual liaison helps aide teachers in the classroom as well as helps support office staff with translations.

For my research, I will be working with a first grade class. The students in the study will range in age from six to seven years old. There are 7 ELLs and 20 native-English speakers. Of the ELLs, 6 speak Spanish. All of the ELLs in the class qualify for LAP services. Additionally, all students have taken the ACCESS and have English proficiency scores.

The total enrollment in the school district was 23,122 for the 2010-2011 school year with a population 8.8% ELLs. As previously mentioned, 13% of the students at Jones Elementary are ELLs. A majority of the students are Spanish speaking. Classroom instruction is carried out in English. If students qualify for the LAP based on their English proficiency levels, the classroom teacher and the LAP teacher/staff member provides extra support. In previous years, students in the LAP would be supported through co-teaching and collaboration in the classroom, small group pull-outs, or individual support based on the student needs. However, this year LAP teachers are in classrooms full time and are unable to support all students through co-teaching or small group pull-outs.

Since the ACCESS is given early in the year, I examined the scores from the kindergarten as I will work with first graders. In 2011-2012 at Jones Elementary, seven kindergarteners were given the ACCESS test. Overall, the students’ scores were about the same in both reading and
literacy. Figure 1 shows the results from the 2011-2012 kindergarten ACCESS test. Students are scored on a 6 point scale, with 1 being limited in English and 6 being proficient in English. Most students scored between and 1.0 and 1.5 in their reading and literacy proficiencies. Most students scored slightly higher on their overall English proficiency with scores ranging from 1.4 through 2.5. The students’ overall scores were higher because the other language domains were factored into their scores. There was one student who was more advanced in both reading and literacy than the other students.

![Kindergarten ACCESS results in 2011-2012](image)

Figure 1  
*Kindergarten ACCESS results in 2011-2012*

Students in grades three, four, and five are required to participate in the Wisconsin Knowledge Concepts Examination (WKCE) (Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination, 2011) This assessment tests students’ knowledge in the content areas of reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students in third and fifth grade participate in the reading/language arts and math tests while students in fourth grade participate in all content areas. Since my study is going to deal with first grade students, I am going to focus on the third
grade data since it is the closest data to the grade and age level of the students. Figure 2 shows the results of all students and ELLs students at Jones as well as at the district and state levels.

Figure 2  
*Third grade WKCE results for reading in 2011-2012*

Out of the third grade students to take the WKCE in the 2011/2012 school year, 10.8% were minimally proficient in reading, 40.5% were basic in reading, 29.7% were proficient in reading, and 18.9% were advanced proficient in reading. The subgroup of ELLs had about the same percent of minimally proficient students compared to all third graders at Jones, however, there were more ELLs who were basic in reading, with fewer students reaching proficient and advanced proficient levels in reading. Out of the ELLs at Jones, 12.5% were minimally proficient, 62.5% were basic, 12.5% were proficient as well as advanced. Compared to district and state ELLs, the ELLs at Jones had more students who were basic in reading, however, there
were less students who reached proficient or advanced in reading compared to the district and state ELLs. Of the ELLs in the district, 7.9% were minimally proficient, 38.1% were basic, 37% were proficient, and 16.9% were advanced. Of the ELLs in the state, 8.1% were minimally proficient, 27.2% were basic, 41.6% were proficient, and 16.2% were advanced. Since the reading scores of the ELLs were low, a focus for Jones Elementary is improving reading in earlier grades. The school is now implementing interventions to help improve reading scores.

There is a great deal of research available relevant to the study I will carry out. When learning early literacy skills, it is imperative that teachers use interventions to assist students in developing these important skills. Response to Intervention (RtI) is one type of intervention that uses data to assist teachers in creating interventions for students. There are three tiers in RtI. Tier one is a whole group intervention in which the teacher provides interventions to the whole class. Tier two is a small group intervention for students who are struggling in similar academic/behavioral areas. Tier three is an individual intervention for students who need the most support. Tier two interventions are one way teachers can help support early literacy knowledge and development in ELLs (Kamps et al, 2007). Through the use of interventions, teachers can explicitly model and scaffold student learning to meet the needs of specific students.

There are many skills students should be taught when acquiring early literacy skills. Especially with ELLs, teachers need to focus on and explicitly develop specific literacy skills (Walter, 2010). Interventions need to be focused and carried out with purpose. During small group interventions, the explicit teaching and modeling of different literacy skills such as phonological and phonemic awareness, letter and sound recognition, alphabetic decoding, reading fluency, and reading comprehension should be taught to help develop ELLs literacy skills.
Small group interventions are a way to help ELLs develop and make gains in reading. Typically, ELLs struggle the most in their reading ability due to the fact that they are acquiring and developing a second language. Interventions focused on reading growth should begin with the explicit teaching and modeling of letter recognition and sound recognition and incorporate guided reading, shared reading, writing, independent reading, and the explicit instruction of reading strategies (Siegel, & Maggi, 2004). During small group interventions, incorporating explicit teacher questioning will help ELLs achieve growth in their reading.

Teacher questioning during small group interventions can help ELLs to make gains in their literacy knowledge and reading growth. Research suggests students understanding of what they have read and their overall recall of text can be influenced by teacher questioning (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Incorporating explicit teacher questioning during small group interventions will help ELLs achieve reading growth (Youb, 2010). It is crucial for teachers to use explicit modeling and teaching of early literacy skills explicit teacher questioning during small group interventions. The research described above relates directly to the next section, an overview of my study.

The purpose of this study is to describe the evidence-based interventions and outcome for ELLs compared to their native English-speaking peers in phonological awareness. My hypothesis for research is that through the use of small group interventions of phonological awareness, ELL students will make similar gains as their English-only peers in their phonological awareness. Evidence from the research will be analyzed for all students in the experimental and control groups.

I will gather data on the students’ phonological awareness knowledge during whole group instruction and interventions in a small group setting. I will evaluate whether a small learning
group contributes to students successful progress towards gaining phonological awareness knowledge. I will examine whether students’ are able to identify words and syllables within a word, segment and blend phonemes, break words into onset and rime, apply knowledge of phonological awareness to reading skills.

For 8 weeks in a whole group setting, students will receive regular instruction during the classroom reading block. During the reading block, students will be guided through and independently practice phonological awareness skills 10 minutes daily, 4 times a week. The phonological skills being practiced will specifically focus on identifying words, breaking words into syllables, onset and rime practice, and segmenting and blending phonemes. I will observe, record, and keep track of individual student progress on an observational recording sheet during the whole group instruction. The observational recording sheet will contain the phonological awareness skills taught and students will receive a check if they are able to successfully complete the task.

Also for 8 weeks, I will instruct a small intervention group of 5 students for 20 minutes daily, 4 days a week. During the small intervention group, the daily phonological awareness task taught during whole group will be re-taught. Students will be working more in-depth on the phonological awareness task learned. Data will be collected through an observational recording sheet.

In conclusion, Jones Elementary is a Title I school in which 13% of the student population are ELLs. The kindergarten ELLs who took the ACCESS in 2011-2012 scored relatively low in their reading and literacy proficiency. Of the third graders who took the WKCE, ELL students had a higher percentage of basic students in reading as compared to the district and state population of ELLs. Reading is an area that Jones Elementary struggles. Therefore, it is
necessary for teachers to provide students, especially young ELLs, with the explicit teaching of phonological awareness skills, early literacy skills such as letter/sound recognition, and during small group interventions (Kamps et al, 2007, Walter, 2010). By providing ELL students with explicit instruction in phonological awareness and early literacy skills, I can improve their reading fluency. Through small group evidenced-based interventions focused on phonological awareness and early literacy skills, I hope to increase my first graders independent reading levels. This chapter gave an overview of the school where the study will take place as well as student population involved in the study. The following chapter will review research based on interventions and improving reading growth in ELLs.
CHAPTER TWO

Since young ELLs are simultaneously learning two languages, it is imperative they receive proper instruction in their second language at school. Most ELLs struggle with phonological awareness as well as reading. Teachers can help ELLs acquire their second language and improve their phonological awareness and reading skills by providing specific interventions for them in the classroom. Small group interventions can help play a role in the development of phonological awareness in ELLs. This chapter will discuss previous research on the effects of small group interventions as well as previous research on phonological awareness.

Some students, especially ELLs, struggle to grasp phonological awareness concepts such as letter sound knowledge, rhyming, onset and rime, and phonemes. If students do not have the skills or knowledge of these critical concepts, it will make reading difficult for these students. This section examines the effects of phonological awareness.

The research, conducted by Karyn Carson, Gail Gillon, Therese Boustead, Marilyn Nippold, and Gary Troia, entitled Classroom Phonological Awareness Instruction and Literacy Outcomes in the First Year of School (2013) investigated the effects of an intense phonological awareness intervention performed by classroom teachers for only a short period of time. The interventions were performed with and without students who had spoken language impairments (SLI).

The purpose of the research was to observe the results of an intensive phonological awareness program and its effects on children with and without SLI. Phonemes would be the main focus of the phonological awareness program which would take place in addition to regular classroom instruction. The researchers hypothesized that immediately following as well as over the course of the school year, students would exhibit more knowledge of phonemes, reading, and
spelling skills when compared to students who were not involved in the additional phonological awareness program.

The sample consisted of 129 kindergarten students from New Zealand with 54 boys and 75 girls from 12 different classrooms as well as the classroom teachers who participated in the research. The participants were broken into three groups: A, B, and C. Groups A and B implemented the phonological awareness program whereas group C followed the normal literacy curriculum.

Before implementing the phonological awareness program, students were assessed in their language skills, phonological awareness knowledge, and early literacy skills. Mid and post assessments were also given in phonological awareness knowledge, reading, and spelling. Each assessment was given to students individually. Once the baselines were complete, the classroom teachers were trained on how to deliver the Gillon Phonological Awareness Training Program (PAT), (2005) which was the program used for additional phonological awareness instruction in groups A and B. There were adaptations in the PAT so that classroom teachers could accommodate for ranges in students’ ability levels as well as the amount of time needed for the instruction.

The phonological awareness instruction in groups A and B took place during the classroom literacy block taking about 20% of the literacy block time. Instruction took place four days a week in 30-minute sessions for ten weeks. During the first week of instruction, teachers focused on time oddity and the remaining nine weeks focused on phoneme-level skills. Instruction followed the same routine daily: a five-minute review of the previous lesson and listening for sounds in words, a ten-minute phonological awareness activity which targeted a
specific skill, and a ten-minute activity in which the phonological awareness skill was practiced using print (writing and reading).

The normal literacy block from groups A, B, and C consisted of guided reading, whole class reading, silent reading, and a phonics program which taught letter-sound knowledge. During the literacy block, teachers spent 15 minutes with students in small group guided reading where students were explicitly taught reading strategies. Approximately 10-15 minutes were devoted to whole group reading where students practiced strategies learned in guided reading. Students silently read daily for up to 15 minutes and the phonics instruction lasted 20-25 minutes.

The results from the research showed students who were in groups A and B and were involved in the additional phonological awareness instruction performed considerably better than their peers who only received the normal classroom literacy curriculum. The end-of-the-year assessments given to students in reading and spelling showed students in groups A and B significantly outperformed their peers in group C. The results also showed that students involved with the phonological awareness instruction showed improvements immediately and six months after instruction in reading.

One implication the researchers suggest is to implement shorter periods of phonological awareness instruction in the classroom to be used alongside current literacy curriculum. The short and intense phonological awareness instruction done for the research proved that shorter periods of instruction are beneficial to students not only immediately, but also have positive long-term effects. Another implication the researchers suggest is for teachers to have a broad focus when teaching phonemic awareness. Understanding and using phonemes are an important
part of phonological awareness and through the support of an additional phonological awareness program focused on phonemes, students’ phonemic awareness can be improved.

Since the previous research concluded that interventions in phonological awareness in addition to the normal classroom curriculum showed improvements in reading immediately after and 6 months after the interventions, the following study will examine how phonemic awareness interventions affect ELLs reading achievement.

The research conducted by Nancy Walter titled *The Effects of Intervention in Phonemic Awareness on the Reading Achievement of English Language Learners in Kindergarten* (2010) investigates the effects of intervention in phonemic awareness on kindergarten students labeled “at risk” for reading failure. The researcher wondered if interventions for language arts and phonemic awareness had an effect on the early reading skills for English Language Learners (ELLs).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether phonemic awareness was a predictor of early reading skills in Kindergarten ELL students. The study also measured whether English Language Arts (ELA) and phonemic awareness played a role in the development of early reading skills for Kindergarten ELLs.

Twenty ELL Kindergarten students were used as the sample for this study. Since these students attended elementary school in southern California, Spanish was the primary home language of all students. Students were given the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)(2002) test for the winter benchmark assessment and the subtests administered were those listed below. As a result, all students in the study were labeled as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and were identified as “at risk” for future reading difficulties according to the DIBELS.
The DIBELS assessments that students were given were: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Initial Sound Fluency (ISF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Students were also assessed with their districts Multiple Measures assessments which were used to identify students who were “at risk” for reading failure. Once the sample of students was determined, small groups of no more than eight students were formed. Each small group was instructed by a certified teacher for 20 minutes four times per week for ten weeks. All teachers followed the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program which focused on phonemic awareness and phonics. The use of themed books taught the development of fluency, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension. Students also participated in classroom activities which focused on developing word learning strategies, concepts, and oral language. The DIBELS subtests of PSF and NWF were administered bi-weekly and were used to monitor the progress of the interventions for the students. For their assessments to determine the progress, student portfolios, student artifacts, teacher lesson plans, observation notes, and assessments were used to determine the progress of ELLs in their interventions.

The results from the DIBELS spring benchmarks indicated that the ELL students who participated in the study made improvements in their phonemic awareness skills. All ELLs in the study started as “at risk” for future reading failure in PSF and after the interventions, half of the students had made gains and were at or above average in PSF. All ELLs in the study also started as “at risk” in NWF and after the interventions, nearly half of the students were above average. However, the participants showed low improvements on LNF - only 40% had improved to average. One factor that may have impacted student achievement was student absences. Overall, the results found that small group interventions in phonemic awareness had a positive effect at
the end of the year literacy skills for ELLs. It was also concluded that phonemic awareness measures were predicative of end of Kindergarten reading skills for ELLs.

Implications of these results and on the basis of these findings, it is recommended that the continuation of interventions focusing on phonemic awareness skills for ELLs labeled “at risk” should be continued. Leadership within the schools would need to continue with and expand the intervention program, such as having the duration last longer than ten weeks or have ongoing cycles of ten week interventions, allowing students to join or exit the program depending on their progress. It is also recommended that the intervention program be expanded to include first through third grades which would allow ELLs who are struggling in other grades to improve on their phonemic awareness skills as well. Teachers as well as support staff need to be explicitly trained in how to administer and teach implementation strategies so consistency across schools would exist.

The previous research concluded that small group interventions in phonemic awareness proved to be effective for ELLs. The following study will examine the relationship and connections between literacy interventions, social-economic status, and word-reading achievement in ELLs.

*Literacy Instruction, SES, and Word-Reading Achievement in English-Language Learners and Children with English as a First Language: A Longitudinal Study* (D’Angiulli, Siegel, and Maggi, 2004) investigated the effects of literacy-intensive instruction and the development of word reading skills in English Language Learners (ELLs) and native English speakers (L1 students) with varying socioeconomic status (SES). The study took place in the North Vancouver School District in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and was a longitudinal study, which followed students from Kindergarten through 5th grade.
The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between SES and the development of word-reading skills in ELLs and L1 students but also investigated were the effects of developing reading skills in ELLs and L1 students who were involved with literacy-intensive instruction. The study also investigated whether the literacy-intensive instruction reduced reading failure risk in ELL and L1 students from low SES backgrounds.

The students in this study were Kindergarten students through 5th grade students pulled from the North Vancouver School District. The study of 1,108 students’ (ELLs and L1 students) word-reading assessments were gathered from 30 different schools across the district. Students had to have parent consent to be considered for the study, and only children who took at least three out of the six assessments were included in the study.

All the students were exposed to a district-wide, literacy-intensive program which consisted of three parts. The first part involved instructional activities with explicit modeling of letter recognition and letter-sound recognition as well as cooperative story composition, and journaling with inventive spelling. The second part involved six reading program components: guided reading, shared reading, reading/writing connection, a home reading program, independent reading, and read aloud and respond. The third part involved the explicit instruction of “12 reading strategies” (called the “daily dozen” or Reading 44)” (D’Angiulli, Siegel, & Maggi, 2004).

All students were involved with whole group and small group instruction of all three parts. Instruction was also focused on phonological processing skills such as rhyming, segmenting phonemes, blending phonemes, and the manipulation of phonemes, as well as oral language practice. Classroom teachers and school resource teachers practiced with students in Kindergarten three times a week for 20 minutes and with students in 1st through 5th grade four
times a week for 20 minutes. As students progressed through the grades, the structure of the activities stayed the same and only the content and developmental appropriateness of activities changed.

According to the research, three significant areas of results were found. The findings for word-reading achievement related to SES differed for ELL and L1 students. L1 students’ word-reading scores improved in correlation to SES. However, ELL students’ scores resulted in three different relationships groups. The first group of ELLs showed high word-reading achievement regardless of their SES. The second group of ELLs showed that their word-reading scores improved in correlation with their SES. The third group of ELLs showed that their word-reading achievement was either very high or very low at the extremes of SES. For example, if a student had a low word-reading achievement, they also had low SES. In sum, as students progressed from Kindergarten through 5th grade, ELLs word-reading scores became similar to their peers who were L1. By 5th grade, both groups of students were high in word-reading, regardless of their SES, showing that with more instruction, SES disappeared from both ELLs and L1 students.

The findings showed four types of developmental trajectories for word-reading achievement among all students. The first trajectory showed students who had continuously high word-reading scores throughout the study. The second trajectory showed students who began with low scores and improved to the achievement of their grade level. These two trajectories were considered outside of the “at risk” zone of reading failure. The third trajectory showed students who achieved low word-reading scores continuously throughout the study. These students were predicted as not being proficient in basic reading skills after 5th grade. The fourth trajectory showed students who started with low word-reading scores and improved in 1st
through 3rd grade. These students were predicted to still be low achieving in 5th grade. These two trajectories are considered the “at risk” zone and students within these trajectories are unlikely to exit this zone.

Findings also showed that there were more ELLs than L1 students in the first two trajectories than the third or fourth trajectories. The same amount of ELLs and L1 students who were considered mid-SES were considered “at risk” or not at risk. Overall, literacy-intensive programs may have reduced the negative effects of SES for ELLs on word-reading development.

Implications the authors stated that educators need to continue effective instructional programs for ELLs who have diverse SES backgrounds. Instructional programs need to include explicit and intensive reading instruction to help promote reading success for all ELLs, regardless of their SES. The implementation of intensive literacy instruction, small group interventions, and systematic assessments need to begin in Kindergarten. Through these implications, there is the potential to reduce literacy inequality among ELLs and L1 students with varying SES backgrounds. These implications can also prevent the consequences from underassessment and the need for intense and explicit interventions. This connects well to my interest in word-reading research in that ELLs, regardless of their SES, should have explicit and intensive reading instruction to promote reading success.

The previous research concluded that reading achievement and growth depends on explicit literacy instruction and small group interventions. The following study will examine how phonics interventions play a role in students’ word recognition skills.

The research conducted by Amity Noltemeyer, Laurice Joseph, and Claire Kunesh titled *Effects of Supplemental Small Group Phonics Instruction on Kindergarteners’ Word Recognition Performance (2013)* investigated the effects of small group intervention in phonics on
kindergarteners who were targeted as low emergent readers. The research also reviews how flashcards can help improve student’s word decoding skills.

The researchers had two objectives when conducting this research. The first objective of the research was to observe the effects of flashcard drill and practice on the amount of words read correctly after immediately being taught the words. The second objective of the research was to determine whether students were able to retain the words learned during the flashcard drill and practice after one week. The third objective of the research was to determine whether a small group setting was effective for learning.

The sample consisted of seven Kindergarten students from a school that surrounded a large midwestern city in which 60 percent of the population is considered economically disadvantaged. Of the participants, two were African American males and four were African American females. The students, recommended by their teachers because of their low emergent reading abilities, were then randomly put into two different experimental groups.

The words chosen to be used in the small group instruction were from a McCormick reading textbook (1999). There were 270 words chosen based on comprehension and then randomly grouped for instruction. The dependent variables in the study were the number of words students remembered after each small group session as well as one week later and the number of control words students read correctly. Students were assessed individually on six words and were given three seconds to read each word. The independent variable was the instruction approaches used which were the phonics method and the control condition. In the phonics method, the teacher showed a small group of students a word card, segmented each letter sound of the word, and then blended the sounds together to read the whole word. Students were individually asked to read the presented word within three seconds. This continued for ten
minutes. In the control condition, students were asked to read six words that were not previously taught during the instruction sessions.

At the beginning of each week during the study, students were pre-assessed using a list of 20 words to determine a common list of words unknown to all students. Once a common group of six words was found, students were taught in small groups of 3. The phonics method of instruction as well as the control instruction both took place once a week during the 5-week study.

The results from the research showed students making gains in the amount of words read compared to the number of pre-tested words and control words during the phonics instructional method. The researchers noticed that the ability levels of the students in the study lead to frustration as well as boredom. Students who were most delayed needed repetitive practice and grew frustrated easily whereas students with a higher skill level did not need as much practice and would become bored while waiting. The results from the research also suggested that students benefit from small group instruction that allows teachers to model and provide feedback and for students to respond. The phonics instruction was proven effective at improving students’ ability to recall words directly following small group instruction. In contrast, the research showed that gains made recalling words immediately following instruction were lost by the end of the week. There were no meaningful gains from the two 10-minute weekly sessions.

The researchers suggest that in order for noticeable gains to occur, small group sessions should ideally take place for at least 20 minutes three to five times weekly with three to four students in each group who are at similar ability levels. The small group interventions should also take place over a longer period of time and should contain review sessions in order to practice previously taught words. Another implication to consider would be to monitor student
progress made during the small group interventions as well as rules to determine whether a student would benefit from more intense instruction.

The findings from the previous studies indicate that students, including ELLs, are able to increase their overall literacy knowledge, especially phonological awareness knowledge and phonemic knowledge. (Carson, 2013; D’Angiulli, 2004; Noltemeyer, 2013; Walter, 2010). Interventions in which teachers were explicitly teaching and modeling early literacy knowledge such as phonological/phonemic awareness, letter and sound recognition, alphabetic decoding, fluency (letter naming, initial sound, phoneme segmentation, nonsense, and reading), and comprehension prove to be crucial for young students (Carson, 2013; D’Angiulli, 2004; Noltemeyer, 2013; Walter, 2010).

Small group interventions are important when wanting to increase students’ performance in reading. Small group interventions allow the teacher or instructor to deliver explicit instruction to a small number of students. It also allows the teacher to focus on skills that students’ need help to develop. This section examines the effects of small group interventions.

For the research summary titled, *Use of Evidence-based, Small-group Reading Instruction for English Language Learners in Elementary Grades: Secondary-Tier Interventions*, authors Debra Kamps, Mary Abbott, Charles Greenwood, Carmen Arreaga-Mayer, Howard Wills, Jennifer Longstaff, Michelle Culpepper, and Cheryl Walton (2007) investigate the effects of Response to Intervention’s (RTI) tier 2 interventions with English Language Learners (ELLs). The study examines different schools that implemented specific small group, or tier 2 interventions, for first and second grade ELLs. The interventions focused on targeting specific literacy skills with comprehension in which ELLs were struggling.
The purpose of this study was to describe the effects and evidence related to tier 2 interventions. Tier 2 interventions are interventions which targets students who need explicit instruction of specific skills. The research also describes the outcomes in schools with ELL populations. The results were analyzed for all students and schools and then were analyzed for just ELLs compared to their English-only peers.

The research was conducted with two different groups of first and second graders: an experimental group and a comparison group. Within the different groups, there were two groups of students: students identified for being at risk for reading failure and students identified for not being at risk for reading failure. For the experimental group, there were two urban and one suburban schools participating in the study. Each school served students with varying socioeconomic status (SES). The total number of students in the experimental group were 104 ELLs and 62 native English students. For the comparison group, there were also two urban and one suburban schools participating in the study. Each school also served students with varying SES. The total number of students in the comparison group were 66 ELLs and 76 native English students.

During the research, the experimental schools implemented RTI’s three tiers of interventions within the first and second grade classrooms of ELL and native English speaking students. Classroom teachers implemented tier 1 interventions which included primary reading instruction to all students. During tier 1 interventions, the classroom teacher used direct instructional strategies, modeling, and repeated activities to practice and reinforce new skills being taught. Teachers explicitly taught and targeted early literacy skills during tier 1 such as phonological/phonemic awareness, letter and sound recognition, alphabetic decoding, fluency, and comprehension. School staff implemented tier 2, which included small group interventions.
The small groups consisted of three to seven ELL students. The staff used a balanced literacy approach using leveled readers, word study, comprehension, and writing to reinforce the skills learned during tier 1.

The comparison schools used a combination of balanced literacy and guided reading approaches while incorporating tiers 1 and 2. The research was conducted in first and second grade classrooms of ELLs and native English speaking students. The use of balanced literacy was used during tier 1 and groups consisted of 12 or more students. ELLs received tier 2 interventions within a group of five to 12 students with a focus on word study as well as group and individual reading and writing. Teachers also used a guided reading approach during tier 2 in which the students were reading at their instructional level. The focus of the approach was to incorporate “teachable moments” of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction and to have the students continue reading instructional level books that addressed specific reading skills.

The findings for the research involving tier two interventions with ELLs were positive. Tier two interventions proved to be effective in early literacy for the first and second graders in the study, and the results proved for ELLs at risk for reading failure, critical early literacy intervention is crucial. All students improved in their early literacy skills and the interventions were especially highly effective for ELLs. The research also found that the same early literacy instruction interventions used with native English speakers were just as effective for ELLs. The school staff who implemented and conducted the interventions did so within a high fidelity range. Some first grade students who were involved with interventions were able to transition to less structured interventions but still required tier two interventions. Also, ELL students who were enrolled in programs with the title of “ESL literacy services” did not do as well as students who were enrolled in programs with direct instruction during the interventions. The research
suggested that there was a need for more interventions directly targeting reading interventions in addition to interventions directly supporting ELLs.

No implications were stated in the article, but the selection suggested schools examine their current literacy interventions with all students as well as ELLs. Schools need to consider implementing tier two interventions in their first and second grade classrooms to help all students develop their literacy skills. The research from this article proved that direct interventions with small groups of students was beneficial for ELLs, who need the critical early literacy support. The implementation of literacy interventions for ELLs would help support what is being taught during whole group instruction so students can practice new skills learned during inventions and/or guided reading.

The previous research concluded that small group interventions for ELLs proved to be positive and increased students’ knowledge of early literacy skills. The following study will explore the effects of small group and individual reading fluency interventions on ELLs.

The research conducted by John Begeny, Abigail Yeager, and Rebecca Martinez titled *Effects of Small-Group and One-on-One Reading Fluency Interventions with Second Grade, Low-Performing Spanish Readers (2001)* investigated the effects reading fluency for Spanish-speaking students who participate in small group and individual interventions. The research also investigates and compares the effectiveness of small group and individual interventions.

The purpose of the research was to assess and compare the effectiveness of two different types of reading fluency interventions. The research investigates how interventions in reading fluency affects Spanish-speaking students in Costa Rica. In addition, the researchers wanted to compare small group reading fluency instruction to individual, one-on-one reading fluency instruction.
The sample consisted of six second-grade native Spanish-speaking students from an urban school in San Juan, Costa Rica. There were three males and three females whose average age was eight. The students were identified by their teachers as low performing readers and were reading below average. Students were also identified as having scored low on a Spanish screening assessment, AIMSweb (2008b).

The research consisted of two interventions (small group and individual) and a baseline. Researchers implemented each intervention seven times and the baseline four times throughout the ten-week study. The baseline consisted of students reading a passage in Spanish twice, in which the second reading took place directly after the first. The small group and one-on-one interventions were conducted in the same manner with the same components, only the small group consisted of three students with one teacher and the individual interventions was one student with one teacher. Both interventions incorporated best-practice reading strategies: repeated readings, modeling, systematic error-correction, and retelling and lasted 5.75 to 8 minutes. The teacher began each intervention by modeling fluent reading while the students followed by pointing to the words in their book. After teacher modeling of the story, students were asked to read the story out loud and retell the events in the story. The teacher recorded incorrect words per minute and the modeled the error correction procedure, in which the teacher modeled how to correctly read a misread word in a story. The student practiced the procedure and reread the story a second time. The same procedures were used in the small group interventions, however, adaptations were made (one student selected to read the passage out loud and the others read along quietly, each student would recall one thing from the passage, and during error-correction, students all read together and out loud).
The pre-test and post tests for each intervention were passages read by students right before and right after each intervention. The passage students read was the passage that was taught during the intervention. While the student read, the teacher counted the number of words correct and incorrect per minute. Four days later, the student was asked to read the passage again as a retention assessment. The retention assessments were not given during the baseline.

The results from the research showed that the interventions (both small group and individual) lead to increased reading fluency in students and most students preformed equally well after small group and individual interventions. Students were able to retain their fluency when tested four days after an intervention. When small group inventions were compared to individual interventions, results indicated students benefited from small group interventions just as much as they did from individual interventions.

One implication the researchers suggest is that teachers who are working to improve students’ reading fluency should implement either small group or individual interventions in similar ways as the researchers did in the study. Schools, in which staff is scarce for individual interventions, can easily perform small group interventions, especially since innervations can be implemented in six-eight minutes. Another implication the researchers suggest is the amount of time spent on interventions. The brief interventions showed results in reading fluency and could easily be integrated into classroom intervention time.

The previous research concluded that both small group and individual reading fluency interventions for ELLs proved to have increased students’ reading fluency. The following study will examine how small group interventions impact struggling readers’ reading fluency.

The research conducted by John Begeny and Brian Martens titled *Assisting Low-Performing Readers with a Group-Based Reading Fluency Intervention* (2006) investigated the
effects several different instructional methods using during small group interventions to increase reading fluency among students with low reading abilities. The research also investigated the effects of reading accuracy and fluency of trained words during interventions.

The purpose of the research was to assess whether small group reading interventions incorporating repeated reading, passage previewing, practicing words in isolation, and phase-drill error correction had an affect of reading fluency. The researchers wondered whether students preforming below average in reading would increase their reading fluency on familiar and unfamiliar passages as well as their reading comprehension due to small group intervention. Also, the researchers examined the role interventions played in reading accuracy and fluency on familiar words from a word list.

The sample consisted of 12 third-grade students from an urban school in the northeastern United States. There were six males and six females, nine were African American while three were Hispanic. The average age of the students was eight years. Teachers identified students’ who needed reading support and were reading below level.

Students were broken into two groups and the researchers tried to make each group similar in terms of students’ sex, classroom, and instructional level. The interventions were 15 to 20 minutes and took nine weeks for one group and 11 weeks for the other group (approximately three to four sessions per week). Pre-tests for intervention were fluency-based reading probes, the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement, Third Edition (WJ-3; Woodcock, McGrew & Mather, 2001), and word lists, each with 30 words from target intervention passages.

During the baseline session, students received regular classroom instruction which included guided reading, independent reading, whole group and small group discussion, and writing activities. Also during the baseline session, students individually read familiar passages
from their classroom reading curriculum to a teacher that they had read one to three days prior. This was done to determine the difficulty level of the passages and to allow teachers to instruct students as they typically would.

The interventions consisted of the following routines: word list training, phase-drill error correction, listening passage preview, and repeated reading. During word list training, students chorally read a word (words were taken from the passages students read as well as from lists of real and nonsense words). Also during the word list training, one to three students were taken to work individually on the phase-drill error correction. Phase-drill error correction uses a repeated reading of a phrase that contains a word the student previously read wrong. The next part of the intervention was the listening passage preview. The teacher would read a passage while the students tracked the words on their own copy of the passage. The last part of the intervention was the repeated reading. During this part of the intervention, paired students took turns reading the passage to each other. One student read while the other student tracked the print. Both students read the passage twice and listened twice during repeated reading.

After the final intervention session, students were given the fluency-based reading probes, the Woodcock-Johnson subtests, and word lists as post-tests.

The results from the research showed students reading fluency on familiar passages increased due to the reading fluency intervention compared to the practices used in their regular classrooms. The results also show that the interventions had a positive effect on students reading comprehension of familiar passages when compared to practices used in their regular classrooms. In addition, the results also showed interventions helped students’ fluency on non-familiar passages.
One implication the researchers suggest is that fluency reading interventions are effective at addressing multiple reading skills at once and can be used with students with different ability levels. Teachers can include different instructional reading components during this sort of intervention and only requires one to two teachers. Also, the interventions only require 15 to 20 minutes approximately three times per week. Teachers could readily implement small group interventions into their daily routines to help students increase their reading abilities.

The previous research concluded that interventions in reading fluency for struggling readers had a positive effect for students who participated in the study. The following study will examine the effects of small group and individual interventions on ELLs reading fluency.

The research conducted by Sarah Ross and John Begeny titled *Improving Latino, English Language Learners’ Reading Fluency: The Effects of Small-Group and One-on-One Intervention* (2001) investigated the effects of two different types of reading fluency interventions - small group and individual – on English language learners (ELLs). The researchers also examined whether these reading fluency interventions could be implemented and show positive results when compared to other reading fluency interventions that are more time consuming.

The purpose of the research was to observe whether two different reading fluency interventions had positive implications for Spanish-speaking ELLs. One of the interventions was designed for a small group of students and the other intervention used the same techniques taught in a small group, but was administered individually. The research also examined whether the interventions could be implemented in less time and yield the same results as other effective reading fluency interventions.

The sample consisted of five second grade Spanish-speaking ELLs from a rural school in the Southeastern USA. All students received English as a Second Language (ESL) services at
the school. Of the five students involved in the study, four of the students were labeled “at risk” in reading fluency based on their Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) score.

There were three different conditions of the study: the small group intervention, the individual intervention, and the no treatment control condition. Students were involved in at least seven of each the small group and individual interventions and four of the no treatment condition. The three conditions of the study all lasted about 13 minutes and were randomized so that students participated in one of the conditions each day. Before beginning the interventions as well as at the end of the intervention period, students were given two assessments to measure their reading fluency progress. The assessment were the DORF Benchmark passages (2002) and the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) (1999). The small group and individual reading fluency interventions followed the same procedural order. The students were involved in a listening passage preview, repeated reading, passage retell, phrase-drill error correction, and vocabulary instruction. Immediately following the small group and individual interventions, students were assessed for immediate retention of words (read) correct per minute (WCPM) by reading a previously learned passage and a new passage. When students’ were involved in the no treatment condition, they were not involved in any reading fluency intervention but were assessed for retention. The session lasted about 13 minutes, the same amount of time as the other interventions.

The results from the research showed that the individual intervention in reading fluency increased all students immediate and retention of WCPM and was effective for all but one student. The results also showed that the small group intervention increased two students’ immediate and retention of WCPM. There was, however, no difference between the individual
and small group intervention group for four of the students. One student did significantly improve his/her reading fluency due to the individual interventions. All of the students did improve on at least one of the post tests.

The findings from the research showed that small group and individual interventions were effective for improving reading fluency. One implication was the amount of time for the interventions. Since each intervention only lasted about 13 minutes, it was a time-efficient and effective at targeting students struggling in reading fluency. Teachers could easily perform an intervention with a small group of students lasting for 13 minutes daily. Another important implication is that both the small group and individual interventions were effective. However, most schools do not have the staff or the time to always implement an individual intervention. Since the results from the study proved both interventions were effective, students would still benefit from a small group reading fluency intervention.

The findings from the previous studies indicate that small group interventions as well as individual interventions are key when wanting to increase students’ reading performance. (Begeny, 2006; Begeny, 2011; Kamps, 2007; Ross, 2011). The research showed that small group interventions were just as effective as individual interventions and the amount of time spent on delivering interventions in the classroom ranged from 13 to 20 minutes (Begeny, 2006; Begeny, 2011; Kamps, 2007; Ross, 2011). Through the use of interventions, students’ were able to increase their knowledge of early literacy skills.

In conclusion, chapter 2 focused on the findings from the numerous studies, which indicate that ELLs are able to make gains in their reading growth during small group interventions. Teachers used a number of different strategies to deliver the interventions but each study showed that students benefited from learning in a small group setting. The focus for this
research will be specifically teaching ELL students the needed phonological awareness skills, using a small group intervention format, based on the reviewed research previously conducted on literacy-focused interventions as well as research on improving reading growth for ELLs. Overall, the research suggests that small group interventions have a positive result on students’ phonological awareness. The next chapter will discuss the sample population, the procedures and how data for the research was collected.
CHAPTER THREE

The purpose of this study was to describe the evidence-based interventions and outcomes for ELLs compared to their native English-speaking peers in phonological awareness. My hypothesis for research with teaching phonological awareness and early literacy skills was done through the use of small group interventions of phonological awareness. ELL students will make similar gains as their English-only peers in their phonological awareness. In this chapter, I will discuss the sample population, the instructional steps used in the research, and how the data was collected.

The research was conducted with a group of first grade students. There were 27 students in the class at the time of the research. Students in the class ranged in age from 6 to 8 years old. Of the students in the classroom, 9 were Hispanic, 8 were African American, 9 were Caucasian, and 1 was Asian/Pacific Islander. Out of the population of students in the classroom, 7 students were native Spanish speakers and were considered ELLs and those students received LAP services from the school. Students who were considered ELLs took the ACCESS test and have English proficiency scores. The remaining students were considered native English speakers and did not receive additional support. For the research, phonological awareness instruction to the whole class and then 6 students worked in a small group on phonological awareness. Of the 6 students, 3 were Spanish-speaking ELLs and the others were native English speakers.

The purpose of the research was to see whether ELLs made similar gains in phonological awareness as their peers when they were in a small group intervention. In order to set a baseline, the students’ Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS, Invernizzi, Joanne & Juel, 1999) scores from September were used. The PALS measures students’ knowledge of phonological awareness, the alphabet and letter sounds, spelling, concepts of words, and oral
reading. There are three levels of the PALS and the first level measures students’ general reading abilities in accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. If a student fails to meet the benchmark, students’ beginning reading foundations, such as alphabetic knowledge and concept of word, are assessed. Furthermore, if students’ beginning reading foundations benchmark is not met, students’ phonemic awareness skills are assessed. After completing the PALS, the students’ scores were analyzed to determine which students needed specific interventions in phonological awareness.

After analyzing students’ PALS data, some students scored poorly on the third level, or the phonemic awareness level, of the PALS and needed further instruction in phonological awareness. All students would be taught whole group and the students whose PALS scores were low would be in the intervention group. For 8 weeks in a whole group setting, students received regular instruction during the classroom reading block. During the reading block, students were guided through and independently practiced phonological awareness skills 10 minutes daily, 4 times a week.

The program used to deliver the phonological awareness lessons was from Reading A-Z (Reading A-Z, 2013). The program contained 30 prepared lessons in phonological awareness. The beginning lessons started with identifying rhyme and identifying words. Throughout the lessons, the phonological awareness skills continually progressed from sounds of words to manipulating sounds of phonemes. The phonological skills practiced were specifically focused on identifying and creating rhyme, discriminating initial, medial, and final sounds and words, blending and segmenting syllables and onset and rime, and blending, segmenting, and manipulating phonemes. Observations were recorded and an observational recording sheet was used to keep track of individual student progress during whole group instruction. The
observational recording sheet contained the phonological awareness skills taught and students received a check if they were able to successfully complete the task. Students in the small group intervention also participated in the whole group lesson.

Also for 8 weeks, a small intervention group of six students focused on phonological awareness for 20 minutes daily, four days a week. During the small intervention group, the daily phonological awareness task taught during whole group was re-taught. Students worked more in-depth on the phonological awareness task practiced during the whole group lesson. Student data was tracked through an observational recording sheet similar to the one used during the whole group lesson.

To see what growth students had made after the 8 weeks, all students were given the PALS again. Students in both the whole group and intervention groups were given the PALS to see what progress they had made in their phonological awareness. The September PALS was re-administered so the data could be compared and to see what growth students had made.

In sum, data on the students’ phonological awareness knowledge was gathered during whole group instruction and interventions in a small group setting. The data was evaluated to determine whether a small learning group contributed to students’ successful progress towards gaining phonological awareness knowledge. It was examined whether students’ were able to identify words, syllables within a word, rhyme, segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes, break words into onset and rime, and apply knowledge of phonological awareness to their reading skills. The next chapter will review the data and results from the phonological awareness intervention.
CHAPTER FOUR

In the previous chapter, the sample population, procedures, and data collection were outlined. In this chapter, the data and results of the evidence-based intervention in phonological awareness are reviewed. The results from the September and December PALS (Invernizzi, Joanne & Juel, 2003) will be discussed and compared. There were three levels of the PALS which were evaluated: the entry level, level B (alphabolics), and level C (phonemic awareness). The data from the pre and post PALS will be discussed and analyzed.

For the entry level tasks on the PALS, students were asked to spell a set of 16 words, read a set of 20 words from a preprimer word list, and name 26 letter sound (Appendix C). On the spelling, students were scored on spelling features, such as their ability to correctly identify beginning sounds, ending sounds, digraphs, blends, short vowels, long vowels, and nasals. A score was also awarded if the student was able to correctly spell the word. The total spelling score was a combination of the students’ feature score and the number of correctly spelled words. On the preprimer word list, students read a list of 20 words in isolation. A score was given based on the number of words read correctly in 5 seconds. On the letter sounds assessment, students were scored on the number of correct letter sounds they were able to identify. Students were asked to identify all of the sounds each letter in the alphabet makes as well as three digraphs (sh, ch, th). Scores for the spelling, word list, and letter sounds were then added together to get a total entry level score. If students did not meet a certain score, they then had to complete the level B tasks in alphabetics.

If students scored below a certain score on the entry level tasks, they then completed the level B tasks. For the level B tasks in alphabetics on the PALS, students were asked to identify 26 letters, 26 letter sounds, and were assessed on their concept of word (COW). The COW
consisted of three subcategories: pointing to words while reading (5 points), correctly identifying words in text (10 points), and reading a list of words featured in a text (10 points). COW scores were awarded by adding all three subcategory scores together and equaled a total of 25 points.

Students’ scores in alphabet recognition, letter sound identification, and concept of word were added together. If students did not meet a certain score, they were then asked to complete level C tasks in phonemic awareness. The assessor orally segmented a word and the student had to correctly identify the word. There were a total of 20 words and Points were awarded if the student was able to correctly identify the segmented word. The assessor then said a word and asked the student to identify the sound in the beginning, end, or middle of the word. Points were awarded if the student said a word with the same letter sound (1 point) or if the student correctly identified the letter sound (2 points). this had a total of 20 words (40 points). Most students involved in the small group intervention preformed all three levels of the PALS.

Students who were in the small group intervention had low scores on the entry level tasks based on the PALS data from September. Table 1 shows the entry level results of students in the intervention group. The ELLs had an average spelling score of 9, were able to read an average of 5 out of 20 words correctly, and identify an average of 17 letter sounds. The non-ELLs had an average spelling score of 10, read an average of 4 words correctly, and identified an average of 17 letter sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Spelling score</th>
<th>Preprimer word list</th>
<th>Letter sounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>21/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>14/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (ELL)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>18/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>17/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (ELL)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>22/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (ELL)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5/20</td>
<td>13/26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – September PALS - Entry Level Scores
Results from the September PALS indicated that both ELL and non-ELL students averaged around the same spelling score, read about the same number of words, and recognized the same amount of letter sounds. As indicated in Table 1, all students scored low in spelling, reading the preprimer word list, and recognizing their letter sounds. As a result, most students had to perform the level B tasks.

There were five students in the intervention group who had to perform the level B tasks. Table 2 shows the scores of students in the intervention group on the level B tasks based on the PALS data from September. The ELLs correctly identified an average of 17 letter sounds, recognized an average of 18 letters correctly, and scored an average of 12 on the COW. There were only two non-ELLs in the intervention group assessed at level B and identified an average of 17 letter sounds, recognized an average of 22 letters correctly, and scored an average of 10 on the COW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Letter sounds</th>
<th>Letter Recognition</th>
<th>COW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>21/26</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14/26</td>
<td>22/26</td>
<td>3/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (ELL)</td>
<td>18/26</td>
<td>19/26</td>
<td>13/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>17/26</td>
<td>23/26</td>
<td>18/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (ELL)</td>
<td>22/26</td>
<td>23/26</td>
<td>16/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (ELL)</td>
<td>13/26</td>
<td>13/26</td>
<td>9/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – September PALS - Level B Scores

Results from the September PALS indicated ELLs on average identified about the same number of letters and letter sounds their non-ELL peers. However, ELLs average COW score was higher than the non-ELLs score. Since the five students who took the level B tasks did not reach a certain score, they also performed the level C tasks.

There were five students in the intervention group who performed the level C tasks. Table 3 shows the scores of students in the intervention group on the level C tasks based on the
PALS data from September. The ELLs on average blended 10 words correctly and scored an average of 36 on the sound to letter assessment. The non-ELLs who performed the level C tasks on average blended 9 words correctly and scored an average of 23 on the sound to letter assessment.

Table 3 – September PALS - Level C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Blending</th>
<th>Sound to letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>10/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (ELL)</td>
<td>14/20</td>
<td>34/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>13/20</td>
<td>36/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (ELL)</td>
<td>8/20</td>
<td>39/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (ELL)</td>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>35/40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from the September PALS indicated all students on average scored about the same on the word blending tasks. However, non-ELLs on average scored lower on the sound to letter assessment than their ELL peers.

With the exception of one student in the intervention group who did not perform the level B and C tasks, the September PALS data for all students in the intervention group showed they were weak in all areas of phonological awareness. For both ELLs and their non-ELL peers, the areas on the assessment where their performance was the weakest was in reading the preprimer word list, their knowledge of concept of word, and their ability to blend letter sounds. After the scores were reviewed, the interventions took place for 8 weeks.

After the phonological awareness intervention took place for 8 weeks, the PALS was re-administered in December to all students in the intervention group. The PALS was re-administered in the same way as in September and students were asked to complete the same tasks they did for the initial test. The first task students performed was the entry level tasks. All
All students spelling scores increased after the intervention period. Table 4 indicates students’ scores on the entry level tasks before and after the intervention. The ELLs average spelling score was 20 whereas before it was only 9, which indicated a growth of 55%. The non-ELLs average spelling score was 23 whereas before it was only 10, which indicated a growth of 56%. Students also showed an increase in the amount of words they could read on the preprimer word list. The ELLs were able to read an average of 16 words from the word list whereas before they were only able to read an average of 5 words, indicating a growth of 68%. The non-ELLs were able to read an average of 14 words from the word list whereas before they were only able to read an average of 4 words, indicating a growth of 71%. Besides the growth made in both spelling and reading words, there was also an increase in the amount of letter sounds all students were able to identify. The ELLs were able to identify 23 letter sounds on average but were only able to identify on average 17 letter sounds before, a growth of 26%. Similar to their peers, non-ELLs increased their ability to identify letter sounds. They were able to identify an average of 22 letter sounds but were only able to identify 17 prior to the intervention, which indicates a growth of 23%.

Table 4 – Pre and Post Intervention PALS Scores – Entry Level Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Spelling score (Pre)</th>
<th>Spelling score (Post)</th>
<th>Preprimer word list (Pre)</th>
<th>Preprimer word list (Post)</th>
<th>Letter sounds (Pre)</th>
<th>Letter sounds (Post)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>19/20</td>
<td>21/26</td>
<td>24/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>14/26</td>
<td>21/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (ELL)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>14/20</td>
<td>18/26</td>
<td>23/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>14/20</td>
<td>17/26</td>
<td>23/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (ELL)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>18/20</td>
<td>22/26</td>
<td>24/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (ELL)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5/20</td>
<td>17/20</td>
<td>13/26</td>
<td>23/26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The PALS data from the pre and post intervention indicated that all students experienced growth. Overall, both ELLs and non-ELLs experienced similar amounts of growth in all areas on the entry level tasks. However, ELLs experienced greater growth in identifying letter sounds than their non-ELL peers whereas the non-ELLs experienced greater growth in reading the preprimer list of words than their ELL peers.

The students who performed the level B tasks also showed growth in all areas. Table 5 indicates students’ scores on the level B tasks before and after the intervention. The ELLs average spelling score was 20 whereas before it was only 9, which indicated a growth of 55%. The non-ELLs average spelling score was 23 whereas before it was only 10, which indicated a growth of 56%. Prior to the intervention, ELLs recognized an average of 18 letters but after the intervention recognized an average of 25 letters, a growth of 28%. However, non-ELLs recognized an average of 22 letters prior to the intervention and recognized an average of 23 letters after the intervention, indicating a growth of only 4%. Compared to their ELL peers, the non-ELLs did not make as much growth on recognizing their letter. Before the intervention, ELLs scored an average of 12 on their COW and after the intervention scored an average of 23, indicating a growth of 47%. The non-ELLs scored an average of 10 on their COW prior to the intervention and scored an average of 18 after the intervention, a growth of only 44%. Even though they did experience growth, the non-ELLs did not make as much growth as their ELL peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Letter Sounds (Pre)</th>
<th>Letter sounds (Post)</th>
<th>Letter Recognition (Pre)</th>
<th>Letter Recognition (Post)</th>
<th>COW (Pre)</th>
<th>COW (Post)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>21/26</td>
<td>24/26</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14/26</td>
<td>21/26</td>
<td>22/26</td>
<td>22/26</td>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>14/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (ELL)</td>
<td>18/26</td>
<td>23/26</td>
<td>19/26</td>
<td>24/26</td>
<td>13/25</td>
<td>24/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The PALS data from the pre and post intervention indicated that all students experienced growth. Overall, both ELLs and non-ELLs experienced similar amounts of growth in all areas of the level B tasks. However, the ELLs made greater growth than their peers in letter recognition, showing a growth of 28% compared to a growth of only 4% for their non-ELL peers. ELLs also experienced slightly greater growth in their COW than their non-ELL peers, showing growth of 47% compared to 44%.

The students who performed the level C tasks also showed growth in all areas. Table 6 indicates students’ scores on the level C tasks before and after the intervention. The ELLs were able to blend an average of 10 words prior to the intervention and were able to blend an average of 16 words after the intervention, a growth of 38%. Their non-ELL peers were able to blend an average of 9 words prior to the interventions and were able to blend an average of 13 words after the intervention, indicating a growth of 31%, which was not quite as much growth as the ELLs experienced. The ELLs were able to identify where the letter sounds in the word were for an average of 36 words prior to the intervention and were able to identify an average of 39 prior to the intervention, which shows a small growth of 8%. Their non-ELL peers were able to identify where the letter sounds in the word were for an average of 23 words prior to the intervention and were able to identify an average of 34 prior to the intervention, showing a 33% growth which was a larger growth than their ELL peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Blending (Pre)</th>
<th>Blending (Post)</th>
<th>Sound-to-Letter (Pre)</th>
<th>Sound to letter (Post)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The PALS data from the pre and post intervention indicated that all students experienced growth.

Overall, both ELLs and non-ELLs experienced similar amounts of growth in all areas on the level C tasks. However, the ELLs showed greater growth in their ability to blend words, growing 38% compared to their non-ELL peers who grew only 31%. The non-ELLs experienced greater growth in their sound-to-letter-tasks than their ELL peers, growing 33% whereas the ELLs only grew 8% on the task.

Overall, the tables throughout this chapter illustrate several results. All students who participated in the phonological awareness intervention made growth in all areas of the PALS. However, ELLs experienced greater growth in identifying letter sounds, letter recognition, and their ability to blend words than their non-ELL peers. The non-ELLs also experienced greater growth then their ELL peers in their ability to read the words on the preprimer word list as well as in their sound-to-letter tasks. In the next chapter, the results will be discussed along with a deeper look at relevant connections to current research. The next chapter will discuss the strengths and limitation experienced in the study and will conclude with recommendation for future research.
The purpose of this study was to examine whether ELLs made similar gains in phonological awareness as their non-ELL peers when taught in a small group. This chapter will discuss the effectiveness of the small group phonological awareness intervention, using the results of the September and December PALS (Inverenizzi, Meier, Swank, & Juel, 1999) for the six students in the control group. Connections to existing research and the state’s common core standards will be discussed followed by an explanation of the results of the study. The strengths and limitations of the current research followed by recommendations for future research in the area of phonological awareness will also be discussed. Concluding the chapter will be a summary as well as my plans for future practice and educational leadership in professional development for educators.

The concept of phonological awareness can be developed through attending to awareness of words, syllables, onset and rimes, and phonemes. Initially, children acquire a shallow understanding of phonological awareness but which eventually develops into a deeper understanding (Pullen & Justice, 2003). The concepts associated with phonological awareness can be organized into a systemized hierarchy of linguistic units. This hierarchy focuses on the sounds of words, holding words in the child’s working memory, while encouraging the child to manipulate the sounds of words. It is a continuum of phonological awareness skills that move children from learning the least difficult units of sound such as syllables, towards the most difficult unit which is segmenting phonemes in words (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). Teachers must understand the role of attention and memory as it relates to the hierarchy of linguistic units so they are able to provide systematic and explicit instruction in phonological awareness.
Educators are able to teach children phonological awareness through instruction that is developmentally appropriate as well as systematic and explicit. In order for a child to develop phonological awareness, the teachers’ instruction should progress from the largest linguistic units of sound to the smallest linguistic units of sound. Initially, children’s phonological awareness is limited to attending to identifying words and gradually moves towards attending to identify syllables within words. Once children are able to identify syllables, they are ready to attend to onsets and rimes and eventually to attending to individual phonemes in words (Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 1999). However, it is not imperative that children master one linguistic unit before learning about the other linguistic units (Yopp & Yopp, 2009). Knowing this, teachers must explicitly teach students in developing phonological awareness at the students’ level of progress. Instruction should be clear and direct as well as modeled to allow students the opportunity to progress through their phonological awareness development.

Most importantly, students must have an understanding of phonological awareness before they are able to read. When teaching reading to young students, phonological awareness should be built into the lesson. Phonological awareness helps students develop their automatic word recognition (Cadwell & Leslie, 2009). Once students are able to automatically identify words, they are not focusing most of their attention on decoding and therefore, can spend more time on comprehension.

In developing the action research, I initially had to identify an area of concern in my school and in my teaching. My school was identified as a low performing school in reading according to WKCE scores (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2011) and has been taking action by implementing reading interventions in the classroom. Research indicates small group interventions in which teachers were explicitly teaching and modeling early literacy
knowledge such as phonological/phonemic awareness, letter and sound recognition, alphabetic decoding, fluency (letter naming, initial sound, phoneme segmentation, nonsense, and reading), and comprehension prove to be crucial for young students (Carson, 2013; D’Angiulli, 2004; Noltemeyer, 2013; Wlater, 2010). To provide the first grade students in my study with the foundational skills in phonological awareness, I wanted to focus on a reading intervention that would accomplish that because the students’ pre-test scores were lows.

Throughout the eight week intervention period, explicit teaching and modeling of phonological awareness skills were integrated in every lesson. Research confirms that small group interventions are essential when looking to increase students’ reading performance. (Begeny, 2006; Begeny, 2011; Kamps, 2007; Ross, 2011). The interventions were based on the phonological awareness concepts students develop. The following concepts of phonological awareness were the main focus: attending to awareness of words, syllables, onset and rimes, and phonemes.

While conducting the research, I also learned that the Common Core Standards relate to phonological awareness so students were actively working towards three of the first grade Common Core Standards. First, students at the first grade level are expected to orally blend phonemes in single-syllable words (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). During the interventions, students worked on orally blending phonemes in a single-syllable word I had dictated to them as well as blending consonant blends. The students were able to perform this task independently at the end of the intervention.

Another Common Core Standard that was covered during the phonological awareness intervention was orally segmenting phonemes in a single-syllable word (National Governors
Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). During interventions, students practiced orally segmenting phonemes in a word and students used Elkonin boxes to help them visualize where each phoneme in the word was placed. Again, students were able to perform this task independently at the end of the intervention and results from the post-test indicated growth in this area.

The third Common Core Standard students worked on during the phonological awareness intervention was first isolating initial, medial, and final sounds in a spoken single-syllable word as well as producing the initial, medial, and final sound in a single-syllable word (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). During the intervention, students used Elkonin boxes to first segment the phonemes. Once the phonemes were segmented, students were able to identify and orally produce the initial, medial, or final phoneme in a word. At the end of the intervention, students were able to orally identify and produce the phonemes independently. The next section will discuss the findings related to the results from the phonological awareness intervention and research.

According to the research performed, there were some major findings as a result of the phonological awareness intervention. The research was aimed to examine whether ELLs would make similar gains in their phonological awareness knowledge as their non-ELL peers. According to the data from the research, all students, both ELL and non-ELL, experienced growth in their phonological awareness knowledge. Also, ELL students’ experienced similar growth in their phonological awareness knowledge when compared to their non-ELL peers.

The results from the pre-test indicated that student’s phonological awareness skills were lacking. The six students chosen for the intervention in phonological awareness had low scores on the pre-test. During the course of the eight week intervention, students in the intervention
group worked on letter and sound recognition, identifying and producing rhyming words, identifying and producing onset and rime, and blending, segmenting, and manipulating phonemes in single-syllable words. As a result, all students in the intervention group had experienced growth in their phonological awareness as indicated on the post-test.

In the intervention group, there were three ELLs and three non-ELLs. Although all students experienced growth, there were some areas where the ELLs experienced greater growth than their non-ELL peers. As indicated on the post-test, the three ELLs experienced more growth in their letter identification, their letter sound identification, and their ability to orally blend segmented words. ELLs made greater growth than their peers in letter recognition, showing a growth of 28% compared to a growth of only 4% for their non-ELL peers. ELLs were also able to identify 23 letter sounds on average after the intervention whereas they were only able to identify on average 17 letter sounds prior to the intervention, indicating a growth of 26%. ELLs also showed greater growth in their ability to blend words, with a 38% growth compared to their non-ELL peers with only 31% growth. ELLs typically struggle in phonological awareness because they are learning a second language whereas their non-ELL peers are working to increase their first language. ELLs experienced greater growth in these areas because they struggled with these areas prior to the intervention.

The three non-ELL students in the intervention experienced growth similar to their ELL peers in all areas of phonological awareness according to the PALS’ results. However, the non-ELLs experienced greater growth in their ability to identify individual phonemes in words. The non-ELLs experienced greater growth in their ability to identify initial, medial, and final phonemes than their ELL peers, growing 33% whereas ELLs showed an 8% growth on the task.
Although this was their only area in which greater growth was recorded, the non-ELLs did grow in all areas of phonological awareness.

One factor may have had an impact on the results from PALS (Inverenizzi, Meier, Swank, & Juel, 1999). All students were administered the entry level tasks for both the pre and post-tests. However, according to the results from the pre-test, one of the non-ELL students did not have to complete the tasks for levels B or C. When averaging the scores from the level B and C tasks, there were only two scores to average for the non-ELLs compared to three scores for the ELLs.

One of the non-ELL students was recommended for special education, a direct result of the intervention. After working for eight weeks in the phonological awareness intervention, student B did not make as much growth as the other students in all areas of the PALS. Although student B’s scores were low on the pre-test, his scores on the post-test were significantly lower when compared to his peers. As noted before, this led to his special education entry. In the next section, the strengths and limitation of the research will be discussed.

This research study had a number of strengths as well as limitations. A strength of the research was that the intervention allowed the instructor to teach specific tasks to students lacking in their phonological awareness foundation. Research recommends that phonological awareness instruction be provided in a sequence to help children develop an awareness which builds upon the previous concept learned (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). The program used to deliver the intervention, Reading A-Z, was sequential, which followed the phonological awareness development continuum of word awareness, syllable awareness, onset-rime awareness, and phonemic awareness. The beginning lessons focused on word awareness and
rhyming words, the middle lessons focused on syllable awareness and onset-rime activities, and the final lessons focused on phonemic awareness tasks.

Another strength of the research involved the scaffolding and modeling used to deliver the intervention. The students who were involved in the intervention, both ELL and non-ELL, were determined based on their pre-test scores. When the research was conducted, whole group phonological awareness lessons were delivered to everyone. However for the intervention, the instruction was scaffolded to provide students with instruction at their level. Through the use of scaffolded instruction, students were provided with structure they are able to use to build their foundation (Freeman & Freeman, 2001) of phonological awareness. During the weeks of intervention, teacher modeling of phonological awareness was also used during every lesson to provide not only the ELLs, but also the non-ELLs examples of what tasks should look like. Modeling provides students with clear examples and expectation of what they are expected to do during a lesson (Trumbll & Farr, 1993). Before students were asked to practice a phonological awareness task, the instructor always provided oral examples of tasks the students would be asked to perform.

A limitation of the research was the environment in which the intervention took place. The instruction took place in the classroom where the intervention group was pulled to work at a table with the instructor and the rest of the class had a task to compete independently. There were times when the instruction was interrupted and the instructor had to stop the intervention to deal with issues that arose in the classroom. If the research were to be conducted again, it would be recommended that the intervention take place outside of the classroom environment in a quiet setting where instruction can be devoted solely to the small group of students. Therefore, the next section will discuss recommendations for future research.
After the completion of the research, it is recommended that future research be conducted with ELL students in the area of phonological awareness and its relation to reading success. Phonological awareness development is crucial to young students learning and their success with reading (Adams, 1990). Although there is research on non-ELLs and how their knowledge of phonological awareness affects their ability for future reading, there is not much research for ELLs and how phonological awareness development affects their reading ability and success. In addition to research with ELLs in phonological awareness in English, future research with ELLs in phonological awareness and their native language is recommended. When working with phonological awareness, students may already have some sort of understanding in their native language which they could transfer to their second language. Having knowledge of a student’s abilities in their first language could help teachers create specific interventions based on the information (Trumbull & Farr, 1993). The results from the research showed that ELL students had the ability to increase their phonological awareness in their second language, however, no information was known about what their phonological awareness was in their native language.

Another recommendation for future research is to see whether instructors fully understand the concepts of phonological awareness before teaching students. It is essential for educators to have a solid understanding of the concepts of phonological awareness to provide systematic and explicit instruction to young students. Children begin to develop a broad sense of phonological awareness and progress to deepen their understanding as they become more aware of words, syllables, onset and rime, and phonemes. This awareness is crucial in developing future reading and writing skills. However, if teachers are unaware of the concepts, they may not be able to fully develop students’ understanding and progression in acquiring phonological awareness.
This chapter has reviewed the results of the study on ELLs’s phonological awareness development compared to their non-ELL peers. Students who participated in the research and intervention made great gains in their letter and letter sound identification, their ability to identify rhyming words, segment words into onset and rime, and manipulate phonemes. I believe the work I have done with the students is essential for their future reading success. The research conducted also helped determine that ELLs made similar gains in their phonological awareness as their non-ELL peers.

In sum, as a result of my research, I was able to learn that through explicit teaching in a small group intervention, ELL students were able to successfully make gains in their phonological awareness. The information from the research will change my instruction because I now understand the importance of providing explicit phonological instruction. Not only do ELL students benefit from the explicit instruction in a small group setting, but all students lacking in phonological awareness will benefit. As a direct result of the research, I will continue to teach phonological awareness to all students in my class, however, I will routinely assess the students’ phonological awareness and provide explicit instruction in a small group when needed. In the future, I hope to use the skills I have gained within this Master’s program to support colleagues in literacy instruction as well as to continue to be an advocate for ELL students and their literacy development.
References


Appendixes

Appendix A

Parent Permission Form (English)

Dear Parents,

I am conducting a research project as a part of my work in the Literacy/ESL masters program at Cardinal Stritch University and would like to include your child in the study. I have the support of the school and the principal. Below is the information outlining the research project.

Title: How knowledge of rhyming words effects reading fluency
Dates: October 1st through November 25th

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to see how students’ knowledge of breaking words apart, blending words, and reading rhyming words transfers to their reading fluency. I believe I can support my students’ by providing direct instruction in breaking and blending words as well as rhyming words in order to help increase their reading fluency.

Procedure: Student’s will receive their regular guided reading during the 8 week study. One group will specifically focus on rhyming word work.

Confidentiality and Use of Information: All information obtained will be recorded in confidential form and the results will not be released in any way that could identify the student in this project. I agreed to protect the confidentiality of data collected. Students will not be individually identifiable. The results of the data will be presented to a group of my peers and teachers at Cardinal Stritch University.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to the students.

Benefits: Students will increase their reading fluency. Since they are in a small group during guided reading, they will receive individualized support with learning skills to break and make rhyming words as well as the other skills they will learn during guided reading.

Voluntary Study: Participation is voluntary! If the student/parent wishes to withdraw from the study at any time, they may do so without prejudice or penalty, and the information collected will be destroyed upon request.

Who to Contact: If there are any questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact me:
Kaitlin Payne
kpayne@kusd.edu
262-498-5958
If you have any questions about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write: Joan Whitman COEL, IRB Chair Cardinal Stritch University, 6801 N. Yates Rd, Box 375, Milwaukee, WI 53217, 414-410-4343, jlwhitman@stritch.edu
NOTE: All complaints are kept confidential.

This research has been approved by Cardinal Stritch University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants for a period of 18 months

I have received an explanation of the study and understand that participation is voluntary. Please initial next to your choice below:

_____ I agree to ALLOW my child __________________________ to participate in the study.

_____ I DO NOT allow my child _________________________ to participate in the study.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian _________________________________ Date: ________
Queridos padres,

Conduzco un proyecto de investigación como una parte de mi trabajo en el programa de maestros Literacy/ESL en la universidad del Cardinal Stritch y me gustaría incluir a su niño/a en el estudio. Tengo el apoyo de la escuela y la directora. Abajo es la información sobre el proyecto de investigación.

**Título:** Cómo el conocimiento de palabras que riman efectos fluidez en la lectura  
**Fechas:** 1 octubre a 25 noviembre

**Objetivo:** El objetivo de este estudio es ver cómo los conocimientos de los estudiantes de romper palabras aparte, mezclar palabras y palabras que riman de lectura transfiere a su fluidez en la lectura. Creo que puedo apoyar mis estudiantes proporcionando instrucción directa en rompiendo y mezclando palabras así como palabras que riman con el fin de ayudar a aumentar su fluidez en la lectura.

**Procedimiento:** Estudiante recibirá su lectura guiada regular durante el estudio de 8 semanas. Un grupo se centrará específicamente en trabajo de palabras que riman.

**Confidencialidad y uso de la información:** toda la información obtenida se registrarán en forma confidencial y los resultados no se liberará de ninguna manera que pudiera identificar al estudiante en este proyecto. Accedi a proteger la confidencialidad de los datos recopilados. Los estudiantes no será identificables individualmente. Se presentarán los resultados de los datos a un grupo de mis compañeros y maestros en Cardinal Stritch University.

**Riesgos:** No hay ningunos riesgos previsibles para los estudiantes.

**Beneficios:** Los estudiantes aumentarán su fluidez en la lectura. Ya que se encuentran en un pequeño grupo de lectura guiada, recibirán asistencia individualizada con habilidades de aprendizaje para romper y hacer palabras que riman, así como las otras habilidades que se aprenden durante lectura guiada.

**Estudio voluntario:** La participación es voluntaria. Si el estudiante/padre desea retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento, pueden hacerlo sin prejuicios ni pena, y la información recopilada será destruido a petición.

Quién es la persona de contacto: Si tiene alguna pregunta, duda o queja, por favor póngase en contacto conmigo:

Kaitlin Payne  
kpayne@kusd.edu  
262-498-5958
Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre su tratamiento como un participante en este estudio, por favor llame o escriba:

Whitman COEL, IRB Chair Cardinal Stritch University, 6801 N. Yates Rd, Box 375, Milwaukee, WI 53217, 414-410-4343, jlwhitman@stritch.edu
NOTA: Todas las quejas son confidenciales.

Esta investigación ha sido aprobada por el Cardinal Stritch University Junta de Revisión Institucional para la Protección de los participantes humanos en un período de 18 meses

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

He recibido una explicación de que estudiar y entender que la participación es voluntaria. Por favor inicial junto a su elección a continuación:

______Estoy de acuerdo con PERMITIR QUE mi niño/a ___________________participar en el estudio.

______Yo NO PERMITIR que niño/a _________________________participar en el estudio.

Firma del padre o tutor legal__________________________ Fecha:_____________________
Appendix C

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener (PALS)
## Entry Level Task 1: Spelling Inventory (Grades 1, 2 and 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Grade Only</th>
<th>2nd &amp; 3rd Grade Only</th>
<th>digraphs</th>
<th>blends</th>
<th>short vowels (CV)</th>
<th>nasals</th>
<th>CV/CVe</th>
<th>long vowels</th>
<th>e- and i- influenced</th>
<th>ambiguous</th>
<th>vowels</th>
<th>syllable</th>
<th>juncture</th>
<th>affixes</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>mop</td>
<td>mop</td>
<td>mop</td>
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<td>mop</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>wig</td>
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**FIRST GRADE STOP HERE**

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**SECOND GRADE STOP HERE**

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### EFFECTS OF EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTION

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</table>

#### THIRD GRADE STOP HERE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE SCORES</th>
<th>beginning sounds</th>
<th>ending sounds</th>
<th>beg/ved sounds</th>
<th>digraphs</th>
<th>blends</th>
<th>short vowels (CV)</th>
<th>nasals</th>
<th>CVe</th>
<th>long vowels</th>
<th>r- and l- influenced</th>
<th>ambiguous vowels</th>
<th>syllable juncture</th>
<th>affixes</th>
<th>TOTAL Feature Score*</th>
<th>TOTAL Words Correct *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>(4)</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; 3rd Grade</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
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</table>

*Includes scores for required grade level words only.

#### Fall Benchmarks: Spelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Spelling Words 1–16
Spelling Words 1–20
Spelling Words 1–24

#### Calculate Total Spelling Score

\[
\text{Total Feature Score} + \text{Total Words Correct} = \text{Total Spelling Score}
\]

#### Interpreting Feature Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6–1 absent</th>
<th>2–3 used but confused*</th>
<th>4 correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Transcript to page 1, Step 1]
### Entry Level Task 2: Word Recognition in Isolation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preprimer</th>
<th>Primer</th>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Fourth Grade</th>
<th>Fifth Grade</th>
<th>Sixth Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cat</td>
<td>bird</td>
<td>1. hand</td>
<td>1. candy</td>
<td>1. forget</td>
<td>1. disease</td>
<td>1. humble</td>
<td>1. considerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>2. girl</td>
<td>2. bone</td>
<td>2. toast</td>
<td>2. although</td>
<td>2. vehicle</td>
<td>2. substitute</td>
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<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>home</td>
<td>3. shadow</td>
<td>3. party</td>
<td>3. bucket</td>
<td>3. green</td>
<td>3. solid</td>
<td>3. influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>into</td>
<td>4. off</td>
<td>4. because</td>
<td>4. alarm</td>
<td>4. period</td>
<td>4. convention</td>
<td>4. monitor</td>
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<td>is</td>
<td>pet</td>
<td>5. garden</td>
<td>5. family</td>
<td>5. juice</td>
<td>5. mounds</td>
<td>5. stationary</td>
<td>5. accomplishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>mother</td>
<td>7. again</td>
<td>7. hurt</td>
<td>7. swallow</td>
<td>7. tough</td>
<td>7. pollution</td>
<td>7. appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>8. walk</td>
<td>8. country</td>
<td>8. matter</td>
<td>8. starve</td>
<td>8. settlement</td>
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<td>it</td>
<td>eat</td>
<td>10. colors</td>
<td>10. stone</td>
<td>10. cheese</td>
<td>10. legend</td>
<td>10. audience</td>
<td>10. determination</td>
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<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>11. dance</td>
<td>11. easy</td>
<td>11. lesson</td>
<td>11. avoid</td>
<td>11. scholar</td>
<td>11. enable</td>
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<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>15. step</td>
<td>15. reach</td>
<td>15. banana</td>
<td>15. leather</td>
<td>15. splendid</td>
<td>15. programmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>saw</td>
<td>17. today</td>
<td>17. reach</td>
<td>17. hammer</td>
<td>17. uniform</td>
<td>17. dew</td>
<td>17. occupation</td>
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<td>feet</td>
<td>18. big</td>
<td>18. dear</td>
<td>18. repair</td>
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<td>did</td>
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<td>20. pony</td>
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<td>20. daughter</td>
<td>20. explode</td>
<td>20. emergency</td>
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(Transfer scores to page 1, Steps 1 and 2)

### Entry Level Task 3: Letter Sounds
(First Grade only)

| Letter Sounds Score: 26 possible |

### Fall Benchmarks: Word Recognition in Isolation

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<thead>
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Preprimer Word List: First Grade Word List: Second Grade Word List

### Fall Benchmark: Letter Sounds

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</table>
### Level C Phonemic Awareness Task 1: Blending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>You Say</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Points (0 or 1)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my</td>
<td>m-i</td>
<td>my</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. say</td>
<td>s-á</td>
<td>say</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. eat</td>
<td>é-t</td>
<td>eat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. show</td>
<td>sh-o</td>
<td>show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. new</td>
<td>n-ó</td>
<td>new</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>You Say</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Points (0 or 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. sad</td>
<td>s-d-d</td>
<td>sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. fat</td>
<td>f-t-t</td>
<td>fat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. sick</td>
<td>s-í-k</td>
<td>sick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. mean</td>
<td>m-é-n</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. fish</td>
<td>f-i-s-h</td>
<td>fish</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>You Say</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Points (0 or 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. stick</td>
<td>s-t-t-k</td>
<td>stick</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. flag</td>
<td>f-l-k-g</td>
<td>flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. stop</td>
<td>s-t-o-p</td>
<td>stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. freeze</td>
<td>f-r-e-e</td>
<td>freeze</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. space</td>
<td>s-p-a-s</td>
<td>space</td>
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</table>

**Subtotal:**

<table>
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<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Points (0 or 1)</th>
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<td>17. left</td>
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<td>left</td>
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<td>18. just</td>
<td>j-o-s-t</td>
<td>just</td>
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<td>19. soft</td>
<td>s-o-f-t</td>
<td>soft</td>
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<td>20. real</td>
<td>r-e-a-t</td>
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**Subtotal:**

**Blending Total Score:** (20 possible)

### Level C Phonemic Awareness Task 2: Sound-to-Letter

**BEGINNING**

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<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Student's Response</th>
<th><strong>Points</strong> (0, 1, or 2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. top</td>
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<td>2. man</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. face</td>
<td>f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. pig</td>
<td>p</td>
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**Subtotal:**

**ENDING**

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<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Student's Response</th>
<th><strong>Points</strong> (0, 1, or 2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. bus</td>
<td>s</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. mad</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. car</td>
<td>r</td>
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<td>10. bell</td>
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**Subtotal:**

**MIDDLE**

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<tr>
<td>12. fun</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>short u</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. light</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>long i</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. red</td>
<td>e or a</td>
<td>short e</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. coat</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>long o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. kick</td>
<td>i or e</td>
<td>short i</td>
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<td>a</td>
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<td>18. keep</td>
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<td>long e</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19. tub</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>short u</td>
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**Subtotal:**

**Fall Benchmarks:**

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(Transfer score to page 1, Step 2)
Word Recognition in Isolation

cat
see
red
my
is
big
will
yes
the
it
but
and
run
dog
we
by
she
you
get
did
Letter Sounds

Practice

B S R F W

to J A H

K Sh V I P

Z L C T h U

E D Y G N

Ch
Lower-Case Alphabet Recognition

m  g  i  z  r
v  h  b  w  c
x  l  s  d  n
e  j  u  t  q
f  a  k  p  o
y
COW Word List

on
Humpty
put
horses
sat
men
king’s
wall
had
fall