THE ADAPTABILITY OF READ ALOUDS

by

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CERTIFICATION OF THESIS WORK

We the undersigned certify that this thesis by Rachel Palmer,
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ABSTRACT

The basis for this research is to examine the topic of the adaptability and flexibility of read alouds in the elementary classroom. question, how of elementary teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all their students is best answered through an extensive literature review. The synthesis of the review produced several pertinent findings: that active engagement in read alouds appears to increase the vocabulary size and word meaning of early elementary students, that an interactive read aloud approach has positive effects on the vocabulary development and comprehension of English language Learners, that teachers frequently use the interactive read aloud approach with narrative texts to focus on language plan and development, and that impactful read alouds occurs as a result of teacher's explicit planning and involving frequent cognitively challenging questioning to improve students' comprehension, These findings have a strong application to teacher practice in the elementary classroom and therefore will be presented to elementary teachers through and in person professional development workshop.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The area of inquiry for this capstone project is the flexibility of read alouds which allows for their adaptability within an elementary classroom. The problem being researched is that while read alouds are being prescribed and marketed as for use by parents with preschoolers, very few "operating instructions" about how to conduct read alouds are being given to parents. Research suggests that "merely reading books aloud is not sufficient for accelerating children's oral vocabulary development and listening comprehension" (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007, p.742). The difference between read alouds and effective read alouds appears to be in "the way books are shared with children" (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007, p.742). For many classroom teachers, the problem is how they can find a "way" to share books with children, how they can adapt the read aloud strategy to meet effectively the literacy needs of their students. One way to address this problem is to ask the question, how can elementary teachers capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all their students? This question is best answered through an extensive literature review and synthesis.

Background

I have chosen the topic of read alouds because, based on my own experiences and observations; I feel that when teachers make read alouds interactive, students appear to benefit

from the experience. I care about this issue because I have seen the positive outcomes of interactive read alouds. Throughout my educational training, I have been in many classrooms that have allowed me to see how teachers approach the strategy of read alouds. I have had the opportunity to observe a teacher who believes strongly in "interactive" read alouds, ones that involve questioning, predicting, and discussing during the reading. Every day he conducts an interactive read aloud during "circle time." Through these interactive read alouds, he is able to involve students in the reading by asking questions, answering questions, and making predictions. Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) indicate that when teachers read aloud to students, they are supporting and building the students' listening and speaking abilities in order to enhance their overall language development. McGee and Schickendanz (2007) acknowledge that "the most effective read-alouds are those in which children are actively involved asking and answering questions and making predictions rather than passively listening" (p.742). Knowing this, I want to explore the flexibility of the read aloud strategy and how teachers could adapt it to suit their teaching styles and their students.

Terminology

To help in understanding and defining read alouds, Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) provide a definition of a read aloud as "an instructional practice where teachers, parents, and caregiver read texts aloud to children" (p.111). During a read aloud, a reader "incorporates variations in pitch, tone, pace, volume, pauses, eye contact, questions, and comments to produce a fluent and enjoyable delivery" (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009, p.111). Zucker, Cabell, Justice, Pentimonti, and Kaderavek (2012) refer to read alouds as "shared reading" which they define as

"interactions and discussions that occur when an adult and a child (or children) look at a book together" (p.1425). For this research, Morrison and Wlodarczyk's very clear definition of read alouds will be used. The term "read aloud" will be taken as synonymous with "shared reading," but the word "read aloud" will be used throughout this study. As for the components of a read aloud activity, this study recognizes those identified by McGee and Shickendanz (2007) who indicate that for a read aloud or shared reading to be effective, it should "include a systematic approach that incorporates teachers' modeling of higher-level thinking, asking thoughtful questions calling for analytical talk, prompting children to recall a story in some way within a reasonable time frame, reading a single book repeatedly, and reading books related by topic" (p.742-743).

During this study, the term "read aloud" has been seen in multiple spelling variations including "read-aloud." For this study, the spelling of the term "read aloud" is used throughout unless directly quoting an original source. As another point of clarification, the terms Title 1 Schools and Head Start Programs have been frequently found in studies as criteria for participant selection. According to Tony Evers, Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Title 1 Schools are associated with the Title 1 program which is explained as a "federal program that provides funds to school districts with high numbers or high percentages of children who are disadvantaged to support a variety of services" (Department of Public Instruction, n.d.). Head Start Programs are explained as a "federal program that promotes the school readiness of children birth to 5 [years] from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.p.).

Theoretical Framework

Interactive read alouds relate to Vygotsky's learning theory of social constructivism, the belief that "children learn as a result of social interactions with others" (Tracy & Morrow, 2006, p.108). Read alouds embody Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism through the interactive conversations that may take place during the read aloud. Read alouds also relate to a group of theories that follow an interactive model of reading. This group of theories explain the reading process as involving the writer, the text, and the reading, comprehension emerges as the reader actively brings his or her prior knowledge to the reading of a text and "interacts" with the text (Beard, 1988; Samuels, 1984/2002; Rumelhart, 2004;).

Rationale

The area of inquiry for this capstone project is the flexibility of read alouds that allows for their adaptability within an elementary classroom. The problem to be researched is how teachers can adapt the read aloud strategy to effectively meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. One way to address this problem is to ask the question, how can teachers capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all elementary students? This question is best answered through an extensive literature review and research synthesis that will generate new knowledge about how to adapt this instructional strategy most effectively. This knowledge is important to reading specialists because it will enhance their ability to coach and mentor classroom teachers. As L'Allier and Elish-Piper (2012) note, many reading specialists are required to "provide ongoing

professional development for classroom teachers in order to improve student performance"

(p.45). This knowledge is also important because the Listening and Learning Strand of the New

York State curriculum for pre-kindergarten through second grade focuses on teacher read alouds,

class discussions, and vocabulary work.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To answer the research question, how elementary teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all their students, the researcher has conducted an extensive review of the literature. The research literature in this chapter is a collection of studies that examine the effectiveness of read louds on elementary students' literacy achievement. Relevant databases for searching this topic include Educational Journals from ProQuest, ERIC Database, and Academic Search Complete. "Read aloud" is one key word used while searching the databases. Of the many research studies found, I selected the following articles based on their content and its close relevance to the research question. From the articles collected for this review emerge four key areas related to the research question: read alouds and literacy skills, read alouds with all students, read aloud components, and read alouds as an instructional approach.

Read Alouds and Literacy Skills

One of the literacy skills impacted by the read aloud strategy is the attitude of children towards reading. Barnyak (2011) conducts qualitative research on the verbal and physical interactions of children and their parents during read alouds and the literacy attitudes and beliefs of the parents. Participants of this study are eight children ages two through seven years and their parents from a rural community in the United States. The methods used in this study were "semi-structured interviews with parents and children and direct observation of the dyads while reading storybooks aloud" (p.151). Reading within families' everyday lives, reading supported through

parents' positive outlooks, and reading supported through fostering storybook extensions were three main themes identified throughout parent interviews. Results indicate that parents who participated in this study had positive attitudes and beliefs in regards to reading a story with their child. During child interviews, attitudes and beliefs towards reading and sharing books were two emerging themes. Results indicate that children who participated in the study hold a positive attitude towards sharing storybooks with parents when parents have a positive attitude.

Another literacy skills impacted by the read aloud strategy is vocabulary knowledge. Senechal, Thomas, and Monker (1995) assess how children with different vocabulary knowledge learn new vocabulary from listening to stories read aloud. This study consisted of two experiments. Participants of this study were 32 four-year-old children in experiment one, and 48 four-year-old children in experiment two. Each participant was classified as either high in word knowledge or low in word knowledge as determined using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R). Experiment one consisted of children listening passively or labeling pictures using novel words during a read aloud session. Experiment two consisted of children listening to a text, pointing to pictures, and labeling pictures during the read aloud. Data were collected after the read aloud sessions using the PPVT-R. Results in both experiments show that children who actively participated in the read aloud process, through asking questions or labeling and pointing to pictures, learned more words than the children who passively listened to the reading of the text. Therefore, the results of this study support the concept of active participation in a read aloud sessions as a means to enhance vocabulary acquisition.

In a similar study, Wasik and Bond (2001) evaluate the effects of "interactive book reading on the language and literacy development of four-year-olds from low-income families" (p.243). Researchers designed an experiment with 121 four-year-old children from a Title 1 early

learning center in Baltimore, Maryland. Two teachers of these children were assigned to a control group, and two teachers were assigned to an intervention group. The teachers in the intervention group received professional development in interactive book reading techniques and book reading extension activities. Data were collected pre and post intervention using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT). Results of this study indicate that "children in the intervention group also scored significantly better on the PPVT-III compared with children in the control group" "(p.247). Therefore, results of this study show that the interactive read aloud strategy can be taught to teachers and have a positive effect on the language and literacy development of four-year-old children when used as an instructional strategy with those children.

Further examining instructional strategies, Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, and Kapp (2009) "compare the effects of two interventions that differed in their approach to direct vocabulary instruction for young students" (p.5). Participants of this study include 42 kindergarten students who attend a pre-Kindergarten to grade eight elementary school in a large northeastern city. The design of the study consisted of two "within-subjects factors" (p.6) type of instruction and time. Researchers created three instructional conditions; two intervention conditions and a comparison (or control) condition. Researchers created three versions of the intervention condition: three words to be taught using extended instruction, three words taught using embedded instruction, and three words receiving incidental exposure. Each group of words to be taught in the intervention included two nouns and one adjective. Participants were randomly assigned to each version of intervention. All participants listened to three readings of a text and were exposed to all target vocabulary words during each reading. Intervention was delivered in small groups and data were collected through pretest, post-test, and a delayed post-test eight weeks after intervention. Results indicate that there are significant differences between

pretest and post-test scores that favor vocabulary words taught with extended and embedded instruction over words that receive incidental exposure. The extended and embedded instruction closely resemble the interactive read aloud strategy.

Looking specifically at the type of vocabulary learned during the read aloud strategy, Leung (2008) explores children's vocabulary acquisition of scientific terms from participation in repeated interactive read alouds of informational picture books. Participants of this study are 32 three and four year olds enrolled in preschool at an urban YWCA Child Development Center in the southeastern United States. Data were analyzed through the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Third Edition (PPVT-III) and the Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT) administered at the beginning of the study as a pretest and later as a post test. The Free Recall Target Word Test was also used as a posttest. Materials for this study were three information picture books that were read aloud for three consecutive days. From these three books, 32 target words were selected. Some target words appeared in more than one book. Results indicate that children who participate in interactive read alouds of informational picture books attained a significant increase in expressive vocabulary. Results also show that children were also better able to explain the meaning of target vocabulary words and use those words during a retelling after participating in one-on-one book retellings. Although results reflect positively on the use of interactive read alouds, a major limitation of this study is the lack of a control group.

Looking at how the classroom environment plays a role in vocabulary acquisition, Fien, Santro, Baker, Park, Chard, Williams, and Haria (2011) examine the effectiveness of small group instruction on vocabulary and comprehension of first grade students who are labeled with low language and low vocabulary skills. Participants of this study consisted of 106 students from 18 first grade classrooms enrolled in Title 1 schools in the Pacific Northwest United States. The

control group contained 52 students, and the remaining 54 students were in the intervention group. All students received the read aloud curriculum in whole-class instruction. In addition to the whole class instruction, the students in the intervention group also received small group instruction. The read aloud curriculum consisted of 28, 30 minute lessons that used narrative and expository texts throughout an 8 week period. The intervention group received an additional 20 minutes of instruction on text comprehension and vocabulary. Measures included narrative and expository retellings and a researcher-developed vocabulary knowledge assessment. To measure language proficiency, researchers used TOLD-P-3. Results of this study support the concept that "small-group instruction appears to enhance the vocabulary knowledge and expository retellings of students identified with vocabulary and language skills" (p.315); however, the intervention did not appear to have an effect on narrative retelling. The intervention group scored higher on the expository retelling and on vocabulary knowledge assessments compared to the control group.

Focusing on teacher-students interactions during a read aloud strategy, Sipe (2000) reports on the constructing of literacy understanding by the oral response of children during read alouds of picture story books. The participants of this study included 18 first grade students and nine second grade students enrolled in a public elementary school in a working class residential community in the midwestern United States. Data were collected through videotaped storybook read alouds in three contexts: whole group read alouds, small group read alouds, and one to one read alouds. The sessions were transcribed and combined with observational field notes. Data were then analyzed according to the "threefold process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding described by Strauss and Corbin (1990)" (p.263). Results represent five categories of children's talk in relation to literacy understanding: analytical talk, intertextual, personal talk, transparent talk, and performative talk. Analytical talk, where all responses deal

with the text, represented over 70% of students' response. Results also indicate that the

"children's conversational turns in this study occurred during the reading of the story; whereas

one third of the turns occurred after the reading" (p.272). These results indicate that encouraging

students to listen to the story as a whole before beginning a discussion may result in less

discussion and "lower level literary understanding" (p.268) than when following an on-going

interactive read aloud strategy.

Read Alouds with All Students

The following studies address the oral language dvelopment of English Langauge

Learners and the possible role of read alouds. Wu (2009) investigates how a bilingual teacher

uses the dicourses of the students to facilitate language learning during read alouds. Participants

of this study were 947 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade in a transitional public

school with bilingual classes at each grade level. Of the 947 participants, 33% were from low

low socioeconomic background and 33% were non-English speaking students. Data were

collected through interviews, participants observations, teacher and student artifacts, and a series

of videotaped classroom discourses (verbal interactions and discussions). Three major themes

emerge from the data analysis: the teacher is a language guide and model, the teacher involves

the students' personal experiences, and the teacher and students are interactive and dynamic

discourse learners. Each of these themes offers implications for classroom practice. Theme one

indicates the role of the teacher as a language guide and model for both English speaking and

non-English speaking students; theme two indicates the actions of the teacher to involve

students' personal experiences to help students integrate their prior knowledge in order to

influence their reading comprehension. Theme three indicates the actions of the teacher and students as being "interactive and dynamic" (p.113). Together these themes show that the students have the power to construct their own interpretations of a text through the use of discussion that provides "multiple opportunities for them to speak" (p.113) during a read aloud activity.

Similar to Wu (2009), Worthy, Duran, Hikida, Pruitt, and Peterson (2013) explore the "literature discussions in a fifth-grade bilingual classroom, in which the teacher valued, supported, and faciliated hybrid language practices" (p.311). The participants of this study were 15 fifth-grade students at a Texas elementary school serving a high poverty community. All students participants came from Spanish-speaking homes. These students were classified as bilingual and biliterate at varing degrees. The study focused on the read aloud and discussion portion of a lesson. Researchers observed students "engaging in a variety of hybrid language practicies during this time, including code-switching, translating for each other, responding in Spanish to an English text (and vice versa)" (p.316). Data for this study consists of video and audiotapes, transcripts, and field notes of 19 read aloud discussions on the novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munnoz Ryan. Results of this study indicate that there is a positive relationship between students' learning and their teachers who value their clultural and linguistic diversities. Results also affirm the findings of previous studies in that hybrid linguistic practices appear to reflect student use and understanding of skills valued in school.

Using the discourses of ELL students, Gort, Pontier, and Sembiante (2012) explore the "nature and distribution of dual-language preschool teachers' questions across parallel Spanish- and English- medium read-aloud activities" (p.258). Participants of this study included four teachers from two prekindergarten classrooms in a multilingual/multicultural community in the

southeastern United States and the students in their classrooms. Data was collected through

digital video recordings of 13 daily 15 minute read alouds sessions each. Five of the read aloud

sessions were in English and eight were in Spanish. Data were coded using "*Atlas.ti* (Muhr,

2004) qualitative analysis software and analyzed using the constant-compartative method"

(p.263). Transcripts were originally coded for questions or nonquestions. Questions were then

coded furthur for their purpose and their form, *i.e.,* open ended, closed, etc. Results indicate that

the functions of the questions represented varied levels of cognitive challenge and that some

questions functions were more prevalent in one langauge context. Results also showed that the

interactive nature of read alouds allowed teachers to ask a variety of questions exhibiting a

multitude of functions.

Previous to the Gort, Pontier, and Sembiante (2012) study, Ulanoff and Pucci (1999)

consider the improvements in "second language vocabulary as a direct result of different literacy

lessons implementing two bilingual methodologies: concurrent translation and preview-review"

(p.409). Participants of this study are 60 students identified as English Language Learners in

three third grade classrooms from the greater Los Angeles area. All students in the three

classroom participated in the study, however only those with Spanish as their primary language

were included in the analyzed sample. Participants were split into three groups: a control group,

a concurrent translation group, and a preview-review group. The control group heard a story in

English with no explanation or intervention. The concurrent translation method involved

translating from one language to another while reading. The preview-review method involved

previewing the story in the participants' native language, reading the text in English, and

reviewing key point in their native language after reading, Students in each group were given a

pretest to assess their knowledge of 20 preselected vocabulary words from a specific text. All

groups were given a post-test, with the same vocabulary items as the pretest, immediately following the read aloud and again one week later. A regression approach was used to analyze the data from the pre- and post-test. A MANOVA was used to determine the differences between the groups and a one way ANOVA was used to determine where significant differences lie. Results indicate that "the control group showed larger gains than the concurrent group and that the concurrent group actually scored higher on the delayed post test one week later" (p.416); however the preview-review group showed significant gains over the control and concurrent group. These results suggest that students perform better when they receive instruction that builds background knowledge and provides scaffolding activities during a read aloud.

Specifically looking at vocabulary development for diverse learners, Silverman (2007) investigates the effectiveness of vocabulary intervention through storybook read alouds in kindergarten classrooms. Participants of this study were 44 English-only and 28 English Language Learners in five elementary schools in a northeastern, urban, public school district. Silverman developed the Multidimensional Vocabulary Program (MVP) curriculum for this study. MVP included the following components:

(1) introduction of words through the rich context of authentic children's literature;
(2) clear, child-friendly definitions and explanations of target words; (3) questions and prompts to help children think critically about the meaning of words; (4) examples of how words are used in other contexts; (5) opportunities for children to act out the meaning of words when applicable; (60 visual aids illustrating the meaning of words in authentic contexts other than the book in which the word was introduced;
(7) encouragement for children to pronounce words; (8) guidance for children to notice

the spelling of target words; (9) opportunities for children to compare and contrast

words; and (10) repetition and reinforcement of the target word (p.371).

Data were analyzed through the Test of Language Development P:3 and researcher-developed

assessments. Results indicate that English-only students and English Language Learners both

made significant growth in knowledge of target words while English Language Learners'

knowledge of target words grew faster than English-only students. These findings show that

provided with appropriate instruction methods, English Language Learners can learn vocabulary

from instruction fast or faster than English-only students.

Also looking at the vocabulary development for linguistically diverse students,

Echevarria (1995) examines the "effects of an interactive approach, instructional conversations

(IC), on the language and concept development of hispanic students with disabilities" (p.536).

The participants of this study were Hispanic students from an urban school district in the

metropolitan Los Angeles area who were classified as "students with learning disabilities" and

had been placed in self-contained classrooms. Students participate in one of two groups which

present the material in two different approaches: the IC approach and the basal approach. The IC

approach encouraged teachers to formulate their own questions for a lesson in order to generate

maximum discussion. The basal approach was conducted according to the guidelines of the basal

teacher's manual and only the questions that were specified in the manual were used. Results for

"proximal measures indicate higher levels of discourse and greater participation with IC than

with a basal approach" (p.544). The findings also indicate that "students with learning

disabilities used higher levels of discourse when given the opportunity to do so, and were able to

adjust the discourse to the context at hand" (p.551). Therefore, results of this study show a

positive relationship between the read aloud strategy and the comprehension of English

Language Learners.

Read Aloud Components

This section focuses on the read aloud instructional strategy itself and the various

components and techniques involved in its use. Corcoran and Mamalakis (2009) investigate

student attitudes towards reading and the various techniques, including read alouds, used to

encourage reading. Participants consisted of "26 fifth grade students from two single-gender

classrooms" (p.137) that were selected due to their teacher's outstanding reputation. However,

this was the teacher's first year teaching a single gender classroom. Data collection involved

independently completed surveys that examined student perceptions. The surveys included 12

"forced choice questions" (p.139). Findings of the survey indicate that 88% of the participants

responded that their classroom teacher conducted read alouds a few times a week, but their desire

was for their teacher to conduct a read aloud daily. These results indicate that even upper

elementary fifth grade level students have preferences for frequent teacher read alouds.

Building on the results of Corocoran and Mamalakis, (2009), Zucker, Cabell, Justice,

Pentimonti, and Kaderavek (2012) examine "the longitudinal relations between frequency and

features of reading experiences within the preschool classroom to children's language and

literacy outcomes in kindergarten and 1st grade" (p.1425). Participants in this study were 28

preschool, kindergarten, and grade 1 teachers and their students from a mid-Atlantic and a

midwestern state. Participants were required to conduct four whole class book readings of 30

pre-selected texts; these shared readings were to contain before, during and after reading

discussions. The language and literacy skills of all students were assessed pre, during, and post participation. In preschool, researchers used the Expressive Vocabulary subtest of the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Preschool to assess vocabulary, and the Uppercase and Lowercase Alphabet Knowledge task of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool to assess letter knowledge. Kindergarten and first grade students completed the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III to assess receptive vocabulary and the Letter-Word Identification subtest along with the Passage Comprehension subtest of the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement to assess literacy skills. The results of this study show preschool students that on average participated in two shared reading sessions per day resulted in an increased expressive vocabulary. Results also show that teachers' before, during, and after reading discussions promoted skills in language and literacy development both short-term and long-term. Therefore, this study contributes to the previous literature on shared-reading practices and their benefits on young children's language and literacy skills.

Looking at the discussion components during the read aloud strategy, Wiseman (2010) researches teachers' approaches to facilitate interaction in the classroom when students read and make sense of stories. Findings of this study describe how "interactive read alouds were important learning opportunities for emergent readers because they provided opportunities for open-ended response combined with specific reading instruction" (p.431). Participants of this study were 21 African American students in an urban public kindergarten classroom in a northeastern metropolitan city. Results of this study illustrate "the importance of providing readers with active ways to contribute to the curriculum in ways that build on students' own ways of conceptualizing reading and literacy" (p.437).

Two years later, Wiseman (2012) focuses on the response to interactive read alouds by

one five year old African American male student in a Title 1 urban public elementary school. Wiseman used qualitative research methods and data analysis in three phases: descriptive analysis of the classroom, analysis of emergent themes, and categorical analysis of comprehension levels. Data were collected through informal interviews with the student and his teacher, student journals, and 54 read alouds that were audio taped and transcribed. Results indicated that the student showed an increase in understanding due to the encouragement to respond with his own ideas during the interactive read aloud. Overall, findings show that the interactive component of a read aloud can have a positive aspect of reading instruction for five year old minority males and can influence a student's comprehension development.

Specifically looking at the component of text selection and types of texts used in a read aloud session, Pentimonti, Zucker, Justice, and Kaderavek (2010) analyze the types of texts used in classroom read alouds in order to generate an understanding of the informational expository texts used and how they relate to content area topics and state standards. Participants were female teachers of classrooms funded through a Head Start program and privately funded programs that serve at-risk students located in Ohio and Virginia. Data were collected through written teacher logs where teachers recorded the types of texts used during whole-class read aloud sessions. For data analysis, each text used was "first coded for four genre categories: narrative, expository, mixed, and other" (p.659). Within each category, texts were determined to be informational or non-informational. The informational texts were then coded further to estabilish their relations to content areas and state standards. Reaserchers coded 733 texts randomly selected from the teacher logs. Results indicate that the majority of texts coded were narrative (82%) followed by a mixed genre (13%). Only 4% of texts coded were determined to be informational texts. These results indicate that "progress has not been made in increasing the

amount of time devoted to informational texts" (p.661) since a previous study by the same researchers in 2000. Analysis of the informational texts reveals that "some dominate categories align with prevailing topics emphasized in the teachers' state standards, but other important content areas were infrequently targeted with read-alouds" (p.661). Results of this study confirmed that narrative texts tend to dominate read alouds at the preschool age.

Similarly, Pentimonti, Zucker, and Justice (2011) describe read alouds in the preschool classroom in terms of the types of texts that children are exposed to. Participants of this study were 13 female teachers who worked in a "publicly funded preschool classroom designed specifically to serve disadvantaged children, primarily children reared in poverty" (p.205) located in a mid-Atlantic state. The study was conducted over a 30 week period in which teachers received a new trade book each week that represented a range of genres. Teachers were to keep a written log of whole group read aloud sessions for the 30 week period. This log included a "record of how many books teachers read to their pupils each day above and beyond assigned books and the titles of these additional books" (p.207). Data for this study involved coding of text titles reported in teachers' reading logs for genre and instructional focus. Results indicate that narrative texts were read most frequently representing 85%, followed by mixed genre representing 8.5 %, and informational texts representing 5.4 % of read aloud sessions. Results also show that the instructional focus of the texts in the read aloud session was language play *i.e.* rhyming.

Focusing on teacher practices, Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004) examine the read aloud practices of expert teachers to identify common procedures. Participants of Phase I of this study were 25 teachers of urban schools in the San Diego County selected by their administration as expert teachers. Researchers defined "expert teacher" as "someone who [sic] the administrator

would select as a model for other teachers to emulate, a teacher who regularly presented his or

her instructional strategies in professional development forums, or one who was generally

recognized for excellence in teaching" (p.9). Participants of Phase II of this study were 120

teachers randomly selected from 15 schools in which San Diego State University faculty places

student teachers. Data were collected through teacher interviews and observations of the read

aloud process. Data from the expert teacher observations in Phase I were reviewed and a rubric

was developed that listed essential components of a read aloud. This rubric was then used to

review the read aloud process of the teachers in Phase II. All of the expert teachers referred to

seven components in their read aloud:

> (1) Books chosen were appropriate to students' interests and matched to their
>
> development, emotional and social levels. (2) Selections had been previewed and
>
> practiced by the teacher. (3) A clear purpose for the read-aloud was established.
>
> (4) Teacher modeled fluent oral reading when they read the text. (5) Teachers were
>
> animated and used expression. (6) Teachers stopped periodically and thoughtfully
>
> questioned the students to focus them on specifics of the text. (7) Connections were made
>
> to independent reading and writing (p.10-11).

Results indicate that the teachers in Phase II consistently use the components identified by the

expert teachers. Specifically, Phase II teachers were highly consistent in including text selection,

text discussions, and incorporating animation and expressions during read alouds.

Read Alouds as an Instructional Approach

The following studies address read alouds as an instructional approach. Kindle (2011) explores "the impact that teacher instructional approaches and decisions may have on learning by describing and comparing the practices of four preschool teachers during a shared reading of a common text" (p.14). The participants of this study were four teachers and their students from an urban school district in a midwestern state. The students in this study all heard the same text; however they had different experiences due to the four teachers having "immensely" different styles for shared reading. The findings of this study imply that "in order to derive the maximum benefit from shared reading experiences, teachers should approach reading with greater intentionality and purpose" (p.27). Results from this study may lead to further research to help teachers use language in effective ways during shared reading and to training teachers to promote language development through conversations.

More recently, Baker, Santoro, Chard, Fien, Park, and Otterstedt (2013) present the results "of a read aloud intervention in grade 1 designed to make read aloud lessons systematic and explicit" (p.331). Participants for this study are 12 first grade teachers and the 225 students in their classrooms from three school districts in the Pacific Northwest. These participants were randomly assigned to an intervention or "comparison condition" (p.337). The read aloud intervention was based on four features developed for explicit instruction: "books that first-grade teachers commonly read to their students were used for the read alouds," "narrative and expository texts were integrated systematically throughout the intervention," "teachers were provided a set of prescriptive lessons for the intervention," and "dialogic interactions during read aloud lessons occurred between teachers and students, and among students" (p.338). Teachers in

the comparison condition continued their usual read aloud procedures that they felt would promote student comprehension. Researchers "examined the impact of the read aloud intervention on four student outcomes: listening comprehension, narrative retell, expository retell, and vocabulary" (p.344). Results of this study indicate that the read aloud intervention had a "statistically significant" (p.346) effects on the students' narrative retelling and vocabulary outcomes.

Looking at the focus of the read aloud approach, Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2008) investigate "how teachers used shared reading and what patterns emerged in their application of this instructional strategy" (p.549). This study implies that expert teachers focus their modeling during shared reading on four factors: comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features. Participants of this study are 25 teachers of grades 3 to 8 who were randomly selected from 25 different sites after being nominated as an expert teacher. The instruments in this study consist of observations while the teacher conducted a shared reading and think aloud with his or her students and interviews that focused on understanding the teacher's planning process. Results of this study indicate that "no shared reading lesson focused solely on one of the four factors and that each of the 25 teachers demonstrated each of the four factors at some point in the three observations" (p.555). Therefore, results of this study show that students are positively impacted when the read aloud instructional strategy contains all four key components in each session.

Looking at questioning used during the read aloud approach, Heisey and Kucan (2010) consider the possible effects of planned questions posed during or after a read aloud of a scientific, informational text. Specifically, researchers looked at the differences of text ideas after each reading, the differences of text ideas after all three read alouds, and how student talk differs in during reading discussion and after reading discussions. Participants of this study consisted of

first and second grade students in a multiage classroom in the northeastern region of the United

States; they were randomly assigned to during-reading and after-reading discussion groups.

Three scientific, information texts were selected for this study based on their depiction of

scientist at work, coherence of the text, clarity of ideas, and appropriateness of content for first

and second grade students. Each text was edited as to not disrupt the narrative presentation or

eliminate important ideas but to create a 20 minute read aloud session. Researchers developed

measures to assess the students' understanding of the content and the concept of what a scientist

does. Students were individually assessed orally and responses were recorded. Data collection

included after-story test, pre- and posttests, and read aloud discussion transcripts. Results from

the after-story tests indicated that "although students in both groups indicated that they would

consider each person portrayed in the texts to be a scientist, more students in the during-reading

group were able to provide evidence to support their answered than students in the after-reading

group" (p.672). Pre- and posttest data showed that students in the during-reading group also

showed greater gains in understanding. The transcripts of reading discussions indicated that

"students in the during-reading group talked about important text ideas with greater frequency

than students in the after-reading group" (p.674). Overall, students in the during-reading group

had more opportunities to discuss important ideas and were able to remember those ideas to

build a greater understanding.

Similarly, Massey, Pence, Justice, and Bowles (2008) collect data on "ways to

characterize the frequency of teacher questioning in at-risk preschool classrooms and to

investigate the extent to which preschool educators used cognitively challenging questions"

(p.34). Also, the researchers determine "the extent to which teacher questioning, in terms of both

frequency and type, varied across different classroom contexts, namely storybook reading, child-

directed contexts, and teacher-directed contexts" (p.345). Participants of this study were 14

teachers working in public preschool programs that served at-risk children. This program

enrolled 192 children, all age four years. Results of this study indicate that "more cognitively

challenging questions represented only a small proportion of the language children experienced

in the at-risk preschool classroom, representing about 10% of preschool educators' utterances"

(p.354). These results provide rationale for professional development to promote changes in

preschool teachers language use within the read aloud instructional strategy in a classroom.

Specifically looking at the type of questioning in read aloud instruction, Zucker, Justice,

Piasta, and Kaderavek (2010) examine the use of literal and inferential questions by teachers

during classroom-based shared reading. Specifically researchers looked at the relation between

the levels of literal and inferential language within a text and the relationships of literal and

inferential questions on a child's vocabulary development. Participants of this study consisted of

25 preschool teachers who worked in classrooms serving three to five year old children

experiencing developmental risks and the students within their classrooms. Data were collected

through videotaped read aloud sessions. The videotaped session from week 26 (of the 30-week

program) was selected to be analyzed. This session was the third reading of a specific text that

was selected based on the range of literal and inferential language in the printed text. Participants

were instructed to conduct the read aloud using their typical instructional strategy. Data were

measured through observational measures representing behaviors of the teacher and student

during reading and direct measures representing the vocabulary skills of the students. Results of

the study indicate that teachers used 45% inferential questions during a read aloud and that 57%

of total text-related questions were inferential. Given the at-risk classification of the participating

students, these results suggest that the level of teacher questioning is in response to level of

student competence.

Looking at the impact of questioning, Shealy and Cook (2009) conducted two experiments to explore the "impact of cognitive demand level, placement, and an approximation to scaffolding" (p.294) on learning unfamiliar words during read alouds. Experiment 1 focused on the effectiveness of low or high demand questions on learning new words and experiment 2 focused on the value of a scaffolding approach: shifting from low demand to high demand questions as students become more familiar with the words. Participants of this study were 60 students ranging in age from 2 years, 10 months to 4 years, 1 month and from four different urban preschools that serve middle class families. The materials used in each experiment consisted on target words, storybooks, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III, and the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test-III. Results from experiment 1 showed that vocabulary knowledge "did not moderate the effectiveness" (p.298) of low versus high demand questions but that students learned more target words when they were exposed repeatedly to the words. Experiment 2 results showed that "children in the scaffolding-like condition had significantly higher definition scores than did children in the low and high demand conditions combined" (p.300). Therefore researchers determine that children benefit from shifting from low to high demand questions over time.

Focusing on the teacher, Pentimonti and Justice (2010) research the perceptions of preschool teachers on their use of high and low scaffolding strategies during read alouds and the extent to which preschool teachers actually use the "high and low support scaffolds" (p.241) during whole group read alouds. Specifically, this study looks at the use of generalizing, reasoning, and predicting as low support scaffolds, and co-participating, reducing choices, and eliciting as high support scaffolds. Participants of this study were five female teachers who

worked in a Head Start classroom in a rural region of a midwestern state and who were participants in a larger study of preschool classroom instruction. Data were collected through videotaping whole class read aloud sessions. Each session was coded to determine the use of each scaffold strategy. Teachers completed questionnaires to determine their perception of their use of scaffolding activities. Analysis of the questionnaires revealed the majority of teachers reporting the use of both low and high scaffolding activities. Questionnaire data show that "80% of teachers felt they used high and low support strategies about the same amount" and that "20% of teachers felt they utilized high support strategies more frequently' (p.245). However, results from the videotape sessions revealed that the majority of strategies used by teachers were low scaffolding strategies. Of the 138 scaffolding strategies identified during the videotape analysis, only 4% were high scaffolding strategies. Results of this study indicate that varying types of scaffold strategies are used disproportionately during read aloud strategies and that teacher perception of scaffolding use differed greatly from what was observed.

Focusing on the student, Cote, Goldman, and Saul (1989) critique "children's strategies for processing informational text to understand and remember new information" (p.1) through two experiments. Participants in this study include 12 fourth-grade students from two classrooms and 12 sixth-grade students from two classrooms at a public elementary school. Participants in experiment 1 thought aloud as they read an easier and a harder passage. The think alouds were analyzed for processing activities such as paraphrasing, elaborating, explaining, monitoring, and identifying and resolving problems. Participants in experiment 2 read the same passages as the participants in experiment 1 but silently. Results from experiment 1 indicate that students engage in a variety of active meaning-constructing processes and have the ability to differentiate what they understand from what they do not understand. Results of this study propose that children's

strategies for processing informational text are flexible and adaptive and that children engage in a range of problem-resolution strategies.

Looking at the read aloud component of discussion during the read aloud, Varelas and Pappas (2006) explore the inter-textual connections that children and teachers contributed during informational book read aloud sessions that were based on the "states of matter" and the "water cycle" units in their elementary curriculum. Participants of this study were 23 first grade students and 30 second grade students from diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds, and their classroom teachers. Teachers read six children's literature information books based on the topic of states of matter and the water cycle. Data were collected through videotaped and transcribed lessons and researcher field notes. Analysis was conducted based on a constant comparative method. Results indicate that event inter-textual links dominated read aloud sessions and represented the largest percentage of all links. Results also show that the teacher was the primary initiator of inter-textual talk. Furthermore, results indicate that the type of student inter-textual links within a read aloud session tend to reflect the teacher's style of teaching.

Similarly, Price, Bradley, and Smith (2012) compare the extra textual talk of read aloud sessions with informational texts and with storybooks. Participants of this study were 27 preschool teachers who were employed in an urban community school in the midwestern United States. Participants chose from a preselected group of books, one storybook and one informational text that they had not previously read to their class. Participants were instructed to conduct the read aloud of these texts as they typically would. Each read aloud session was recorded for analysis. Analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, the Kruskal-Wallis test of differences, and the Mann-Whitney U test. Results indicate that teachers use higher rates of talk during informational book read alouds compared to storybook read

alouds. Research specifically shows that teachers' extra textual discussions during both read aloud sessions involved print and book conventions, and explanations of unfamiliar concepts.

Focusing on the literacy skill to be improved by the read aloud approach to instruction, Justice, McGinty, Piasta, Kaderavek, and Fann (2010) explore the effectiveness of a print-referencing style used by teachers during whole class read alouds with respect to a child's print-knowledge development. Participants of this study consisted of 59 teachers who were employed by preschool programs for "children who were considered academically at risk as a function of having one or more socio-economical risks factors (e.g., family income below federal poverty levels, family stress due to unemployment, parental incarceration) or suspected or diagnosed development difficulties" (p.508), and 379 children who were between the ages of 3 years, 6 months and 4 years, 11 months, who did not possess an individualized education plan that would impair their ability to be tested, and were able to be tested in English. The data of this research are the instructional qualities of the child's classroom, child language, and child print knowledge ability. The classrooms were measured using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System – Preschool Version to assess instructional quality based on the interactions between adults and children. The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals–Preschool 2 was administered to assess child language ability. Print knowledge was assessed using the Preschool Word and Print Awareness test (PALS–PreK), Upper-Case Alphabet Recognition subtest, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool, and the PALS–PreK Name Writing subtest. The child's print knowledge was tested using hierarchal linear modeling to assess the effectiveness of print-referencing reading style during read alouds. Results examining the impact of the use of print-referencing style used by the teacher on the print knowledge of a child indicate that "print referencing positively influenced children's gains in print knowledge" (p.512). Specifically,

results indicate that children who were older of had high print knowledge scores in the beginning

of the academic year and demonstrated greater gains in print knowledge.

Summary of the Review

For this literature review, a total of 32 studies have been found that are related to the

thesis question, how elementary teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud

instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all their

students. Of the 32 studies, 26 have been published in the last 10 Years. The other 6 articles were

published prior to 2000. From the articles collected for this review, four key categories emerged

related to the research question: read alouds and literacy skills, read alouds with all students, read

aloud components, and read alouds as an instructional approach. In the read alouds and literacy

skills category, the seven articles found were published from 1995 to 2011. In category two, the

five articles were published from 1995 through 2013. In the, read aloud components category,

the seven articles found were published from 2004 through 2012. In category four, read alouds as

an instructional strategy, the 12 articles found were published from 1989 through 2013.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Data Collection

To answer the research question of how teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all elementary students, an extensive literature review was completed. The literature review presented in this thesis is a collection of the relevant studies. The information gained from the literature review is the data for this thesis project. The data have been analyzed and synthesized into new knowledge about the flexibility and impact of the read aloud strategy. The next section presents the data coding and analysis process and results.

Data Analysis

Initial data analysis began when, from the articles collected for this review, emerged found key areas related to the research question: read alouds and literacy skills, read alouds with all students, read aloud components, and read alouds as an instructional approach. These key areas them formed the categories for the literature review. A synthesis of the findings from each of the studies within each category reveals some interesting findings for this thesis project.

One category of studies is those that examine read alouds and literacy skills. Of the seven studies in that category, six explore the effect of interactive read alouds on the literacy skill of vocabulary acquisition (Sipe, 2000; Fien, Santro, Baker, Park, Chard, Williams, & Haria, 2011; Leung, 2008; Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, & Kapp, 2009; Wasik & Bond, 2011; Senechal,

Thomas, & Monker, 1995). The combined range of participants for all six studies is pre-kindergarten to grade eight, and all studies found that students who actively participate in read aloud sessions increase their vocabulary. Another literacy skill studied in relation to vocabulary is word comprehension. Two qualitative studies (Sipe, 2000; Fien *et al*, 2011) find that students in first grade are able not only to use newly acquired vocabulary during a retelling of the story but are able to explain the meaning of the vocabulary word. Another literacy skill studies in relation to read alouds is the attitudes of children towards reading. Children who participate in read alouds have a positive attitude towards reading and sharing storybooks (Barnyak, 2011). A synthesis of the findings from the studies in this category shows that active engagement in read alouds by early elementary students increases their vocabulary size and word meaning knowledge.

In relation to read alouds and all students, teacher-led interactive read alouds appear to have a positive impact on bilingual students (Wu, 2009) and elementary students in high poverty areas (Worthy, Duran, Hikida, Pruitt, & Peterson, 2013). The use of read alouds also positively impacts the literacy skills and motivation of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten English Language Learner students (Silverman, 2007; Gort, Pontier, & Sembiante, 2012) and third grade ELL students increase their literacy performance when the read aloud sessions built their background knowledge and provided scaffolding activities (Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999). With the interactive read aloud approach, ELLs appear to have the ability to construct their own knowledge through the discussion which increases their comprehension of the text. A synthesis of the findings from these six studies in this category show that an interactive read aloud approach has positive effects on the vocabulary development and comprehension of English Language Learners.

The category of read aloud components finds that a significant component of read alouds

is text selection (Pentimonti, Zucker, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010; Wiseman, 2012; Pentimontie, Zucker, & Justice, 2011), with narrative texts being used most often with the instruction focus on language play (Pentimonti, Zucker, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010). Another component is teacher actions during read aloud. These actions include encouraging student response (Wiseman, 2010; Wiseman, 2012) and generally conducting highly interactive read aloud sessions (Zucker, Cabell, Justice, Pentimonti, & Kaderavek, 2012). Synthesis shows that teachers frequently use the interactive read aloud approach with narrative texts to focus instruction on language play.

Successfully using read alouds as an instructional approach appears to involve a teacher's specific intent and purpose to make the instruction explicit (Kindle, 2011; Baker, Santro, Chard, Fien, Park, & Otterstedt, 2013; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008). Another instructional approach is for teachers to plan in advance the type of discussion that will take place during a read aloud (Heisey & Kucan, 2010; Massey Pence, Justice, & Bowles, 2008; Zucker, Justics, Piasta, & Kaderavek, 2010). Six studies looked at how teachers encourage conversation through their talk and questioning. (Heisey & Kucan, 2010; Massey Pence, Justice, & Bowles, 2008; Zucker, Justics, Piasta, & Kaderavek, 2010; Shealy & Cook, 2009; Varelas & Pappas, 2006; Price, Bradley, & Smith, 2012). The type of questioning, high and low demand, teachers used during the read aloud approach reflected their perceptions of student competence. However, student comprehension is positively influenced when cognitively challenging questions are frequently used. Synthesis finds that explicit teacher planning and frequently asking cognitively challenging questioning during read alouds improve elementary students' comprehension.

Overall, this synthesis finds that frequently using the interactive read aloud strategy that promotes active engagement by early elementary students, including ELLs, may increase their

vocabulary size, word meaning and comprehension of the text when teachers plan explicit

instruction that involves frequent cognitively challenging questioning.

Chapter 4: Results and Application

Results of the Review

This research synthesis examined studies relating to the research question of how teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all elementary students. These studies formed the data for this synthesis. Analysis of the data produced four findings. The first finding is that that active engagement by early elementary students in read alouds will increase their vocabulary size and word meaning. The second finding is that an interactive read aloud approach has positive effects on the vocabulary development and comprehension of English Language Learners. The third finding is that teachers frequently use the interactive read aloud approach with narrative texts to focus instruction on language play. The fourth finding is that teacher planning should be explicit and involve frequent cognitively challenging questioning to improve students' comprehension. These findings have a strong application to the classroom. Early childhood and childhood educators would likely benefit from the flexibility of the read aloud approach in their classroom to create instruction that improves multiple literacy skills for students in elementary school.

Application of Results to a Professional Development Project

The results from this research study indicate there are several literacy skills (vocabulary size, vocabulary meaning, and comprehension) influenced by the use of read alouds. These

findings have relevance and therefore an application to elementary teachers because teachers would likely benefit from knowing and students from experiencing the flexibility of the read aloud strategy in the classroom. The most effective way to disseminate these results to teacher is through a professional development project which will take the form of an in person workshop complete with read alouds.

Design of Professional Development Project

The professional development project that is most appropriate for delivering the findings of this research is an in person workshop, which will allow participants to practice the read aloud approach to literacy development. This workshop is intended for early childhood and childhood educators. This in person workshop will be a four hour interactive session taking place at participants' school district. The workshop focuses on the read aloud instructional strategy and how research shows the impact and adaptability of this strategy. Participants will have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge gained throughout the workshop by engaging in an interactive activity targeted to increase the educators' skills to capitalize of the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all elementary students. Participants will receive instruction and engage in activities that support the findings of this research project.

Literacy coaching workshop goals and objectives

The goal of this professional development workshop is to increase the knowledge of elementary teachers in the area of adaptability and flexibility of read alouds. The objectives and learning outcomes are such that as a result of participating in this workshop, elementary teachers will be able to adapt the read aloud strategy to explicit instruction and collaborate with other teachers to develop read aloud practices that will likely improve the skills of students who participate in the read aloud session.

Proposed audience and location.

The intended audience for this workshop includes elementary teachers. The proposed teacher to instructor ration is 20:1, with room for slight fluctuation. This in person workshop will be held in a facility with access to a lap-top cart, projector, a large viewing screen, and at least four large tables conducive to group work.

Proposed workshop format and activities.

The proposed workshop format is a four hour in person session divided into one two hour session, a break, then a two hour session (see Appendix A for Agenda). Prior to attending, educators will be asked to bring copies of text that they have previously used or plan to use as a read aloud. The workshop will begin with an activity in which participants create a list of students skills that would likely benefit from the read aloud process. Participants will then be

asked to share their reflections with colleagues. After the initial activity, the facilitator will begin a Power Point presentation introducing information on student benefits from the read aloud approach and research-based interactive read aloud practices of teachers, and ideas on how teacher can plan and adapt the read aloud to their own courses and grade levels. After the PowerPoint presentation, participants will work with peers to create and present lesson plans for a read aloud session. At this time, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions they may have regarding the read aloud approach. Participants will be provided with a copy of the PowerPoint and a list of high quality children's books for teachers to use with the read aloud strategy.

Proposed resources for workshop.

To conduct this workshop, the facilitator will need access to a computer, a projector, and a large viewing screen to show a PowerPoint presentation. The facilitator will bring a variety of high quality children's literature for participant use during workshop activities. Participants will receive a paper copy of the workshop agenda and a copy of the PowerPoint. As an additional resource, the participants will receive a handout listening suggestions of high quality children's books to be used with the read aloud strategy.

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Proposed evaluation of workshop

Evaluation of the workshop will include an in person questionnaire (see Appendix B) for participants to complete at the closure of the workshop. This questionnaire will provide

participants with the learning outcomes of the workshop and ask for participants' to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the workshop and allow for feedback on whether or not the workshop met the outcomes. Evaluation forms will be collected and used to inform future workshop sessions. Participants will also be given the opportunity to write suggestions for future presentations.

Workshop Ties to Professional Standards

With the new knowledge gained from the workshop, participants will be able to prepare their students to meet the Common Core State Standards. Read alouds are designed to meet the Common Core Stare Standards by assisting students to build prior knowledge and vocabulary critical to listening and reading comprehension.

Workshop participants will also meet the standards found in the *Standards for Reading Professionals* by the International Reading Association (IRA) (2010) as they apply to elementary teachers. Participants will meet Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge which states that "candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction" (IRA, 2010). Participating teachers will meet Standard 1 as they learn about research studies that have been conducted and analyzed to determine how to capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all elementary students. Participants will use their content knowledge to create lesson plans that will teach and enhance literacy skills such as vocabulary meaning and comprehension of elementary students by incorporating research findings into their instruction.

Participants will meet IRA Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction, which states that "candidates use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing" (IRA, 2010). Participants will meet this standard when they engage in collaborative discussion to facilitate learning of literacy skills by elementary students. Participants will collaboratively create lesson plan with colleagues that focus on explicit literacy instruction while using the read aloud approach. Participants will use a range of high quality children's literature to create instruction to support student's literacy skills.

Participants will also meet IRA Standard 4: Diversity, which states that "candidates create and engage their students in literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect, and a valuing of differences in our society" (IRA, 2010). Participants will meet this standard when they learn about research studies that have been analyzed and conducted to determine how the read aloud approach can be used to meet the needs of English Language Learners. Participants will then use this information to create lesson plans that will enhance the literacy skills of English language Learners within their classroom.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Overview of Study and Findings

The basis for this research is to examine the topic of the adaptability and flexibility of read alouds in the elementary classroom. The question of how elementary teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all their students is best answered through an extensive literature review. The synthesis of the review produced several pertinent findings: that active engagement in read alouds appears to increase the vocabulary size and work meaning of early elementary students, that an interactive read aloud approach has positive effects on the vocabulary development and comprehension of English language learners, that teachers frequently use the interactive read aloud approach with narrative test to focus on language plat and development, and that impactful read alouds occur as a result of a teacher's explicit planning and involving frequent cognitively challenging questioning to improve students comprehension . These findings have a strong application to teacher practice in the elementary classroom and therefore will be presented to them through an in person professional development workshop.

Significance of the Findings

These findings from the synthesis are significant to the classroom practice of elementary teachers because the findings offer direct research-bases input to classroom practice by building teacher knowledge of how to capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional approach

in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of elementary students. Knowing these findings may enable an elementary teacher to implement the read aloud instructional approach to aid in oral literacy development, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension of his/her students.

Limitations of the Findings

Although the research has shown that the read aloud approach has benefits to the reading skills of students, there are a few limitations to the findings. While many studies explore and determine the benefits of read alouds on various aspects of students literacy skills and development, few studies exist that explicitly explore specific instructional methods, explore how teacher conduct the read aloud itself. Many of the found studies discussed in this research focus on teacher question during the read aloud, yet no clear information appears to be given regarding *how* the read aloud should be conducted from start to finish, addressing thins like timing, sequencing, pace.

Conclusion: Answer to the Research Question

The research question developed for this thesis is how can elementary teachers capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy in order to enhance reading motivation and literacy skills of all their students? To answer this research question, an extensive literature review and synthesis have been conducted. The synthesis has produced several pertinent findings: that active engagement in read alouds appears to increase the vocabulary size and word

meaning of early elementary students, that an interactive read aloud approach has positive effects on the vocabulary development and comprehension of English Language Learners, that teachers frequently use the interactive read aloud approach with narrative texts to focus on language play and development, and that impactful read alouds occur as a result of a teacher's explicit planning and involving frequent cognitively challenging questioning to improve students' comprehension. Therefore, the answer to the question is that teachers can capitalize on the flexibility of the read aloud instructional strategy by knowing the literacy areas impacted by read alouds then frequently using the interactive read aloud strategy that promotes active engagement by early elementary students, including ELLs, may increase their vocabulary size, work meaning and comprehension of the text when teachers plan explicit instruction that involves frequent cognitively challenging questioning.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the results of this research yield several findings connected to factors that influence the use of the read aloud approach, the limitations of these findings are that few studies exist that explicitly explore specific instructional methods, explore how teacher conduct the read aloud itself from start to finish. Therefore the recommendation is that future research explore how read alouds are conducted from start to finish, addressing aspects like timing, sequence, pace.

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Appendix A: Agenda for Professional Development Workshop

The Adaptability of Read Alouds

10:00-10:15: Teacher check-in
- Sign in, take a name tag,

10:15-12:00: Introduction & Welcome
- Reflect on prior knowledge of read alouds
- Definition of key terms: What is a read aloud?
- Benefits of the read aloud approach
- Common read aloud practices

12:00-1:00: Break

1:00-2:30: Creation and Presentation of Lesson Plans
- Form collaborative groups to reflect on knew knowledge
- Select texts brought to workshop and develop lesson plans that focus on explicit instruction
- Present lesson plans to the whole group

2:30-3:00: Conclusion
- Wrap up, review of workshop content, and questions
- Evaluation form for professional development workshop
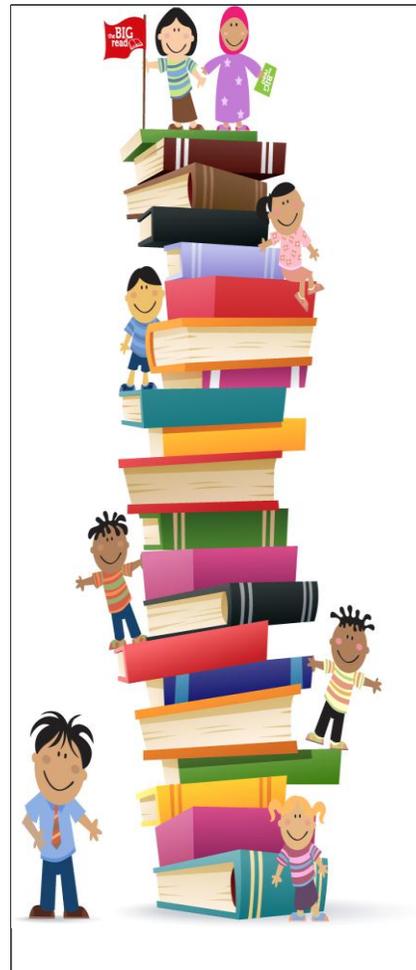
Appendix B: Workshop Evaluation

The Adaptability of Read Alouds

Learning outcomes for workshop participants:
- Increase knowledge in the area of adaptability read alouds to create explicit instruction
- Use knowledge gained during the professional development workshop to guide instructional planning
- Collaborate with other teachers to develop meaningful lesson plans to implement in content area classrooms

For each of the following areas, please place a check mark in the appropriate column.

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
Practical to needs and interests of participant					
Instructor's knowledge of content					
Clarity of objectives stated					
Participant's active involvement in learning					
Organization of workshop					
Useful visual aids and handouts					
Overall learning experience					
Overall rating of workshop session					

What would you like to have seen in this workshop that was not here?

Do you feel the lesson plans created during this workshop will serve to enhance the instruction in your classroom? Why or why not?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Thank you for your participation and feedback concerning this workshop.