WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE APPROACHES FOR
SUPPORTING EMERGENT LITERACY IN STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK FOR
READING FAILURE?

by

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Abstract

This master's project, "What are effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy in students who are at risk for reading failure?" reviews the professional literature on the most current instructional practices and approaches that effectively meet the reading development needs of all young students, especially those who are put at risk for reading failure as the result of a disconnect between the student's instructional needs and the instruction she or he receives. The history of reading instruction in the United States and the history of instruction and intervention for students who are at risk for reading failure is explored to provide background for the literature review. This history describes how reading instruction and intervention programs have always been influenced by cultural climate. The studies included in this paper are organized into two major sections, the first section focuses on overall effective approaches to supporting emergent literacy in the classroom and the second section looks at those approaches specifically focused on students who are at risk for reading failure. The findings reveal that the teacher is a critical variable in any examination of an effective instructional or interventional approach. The effectiveness of any particular approach to supporting emergent literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure is dependent upon the style, intensity and fidelity with which the particular teacher or teachers implements it.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

All young people are not learning to read in the United States. Success or failure in reading ultimately decides a student's academic path for the rest of her life because literacy skills permeate the entire school curriculum. Numerous educational research studies (Bursuck, et al., 2002; Graves, Gersten, &, Haager, 2004; Lynch, 2002; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004, & Mathes et al., 2003) have shown that reading ability determines overall academic success in all other subjects and disciplines. Statistics from government reports and educational research also show that elementary school students are moving through classrooms and grade levels and transitioning into middle schools and high schools, often with little to no reading ability. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported in 2000 that 38% of fourth graders and 26% of eighth graders failed to meet basic reading standards on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). It was also reported that 88% of students who read below grade level at the end of first grade continue to read below grade level through the fourth grade, and approximately 75% of students who read below grade level in third grade will still be poor readers at the end of high school. Due to the critical nature of reading instruction in the primary grades the most important job teachers of these young students have is to ensure that all students become competent readers. (Bursuck, et al., 2002; Graves, Gersten, &, Haager, 2004; Lynch, 2002; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004, & Mathes et al., 2003).

The time span from when a student enters school in kindergarten through the completion of third or fourth grade is considered the time when literacy skills emerge and young people learn to read. Due to the strong implications that both reading acquisition and the development of reading skills have during this time have for a young person's success later in life and the importance of emergent literacy skills for the development of skilled reading, it is crucial that teachers of elementary aged students understand both how all young people learn to read and which approaches are most effective for supporting their diverse literacy needs (Lonigan, et al., 1999; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004). Teachers must take into account the fact that all students do not come to school with the same experiences with literacy. In fact, many teachers do just the opposite by expecting that their students will come to school with a uniform set of academic skills, such as basic concepts of print, an exposure to literature, and certain behavioral skills that are suited to traditional public school classrooms. Students who enter schools with deficits in these areas as a result of their diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds are immediately put at risk for poor relationships with their teachers and low achievements in reading (Lane & Menzies, 2002; Roser, Hoffman, & Farest, 1998).

Historically, the public schools in the United States have predominantly upheld the dominant and mainstream values of the group of U.S. citizens who identify as white, middle class and English speaking (Spring, 2005). As a result of this, the uniform set of expectations that many educators hold for their students are derived from the mainstreamed values of dominant U.S. culture. Students who are predisposed to experiencing difficulties in life and in school because they cannot or do not identify as a member of the dominant group, from an educational perspective, are at risk for academic

and societal failure. These students who are often at put at risk for reading failure include young people identified as poor readers, low-performing readers, reading disabled, mildly disabled, language delayed, English-language learners, and students of color, to name a few of the labels that young people receive as they move through the primary grades (Johnson, 1997; Kameenui, 1998; Spring, 2005).

The students included in the list above have a greater potential for being put at risk for reading failure because the type and intensity of the literacy instruction they receive in the U.S. public schools often is not meeting their needs as developing readers. And if their instructional needs are not being met then these students are most likely behind in their development of critical reading skills and must face the challenge of catching up with their peers in order to succeed academically. The lines for at-risk status are not easily drawn. It is not enough to say that all English-language learners are at risk for reading failure, nor is appropriate to make the same general claim for students of color, or for low-performing readers. A student is not at-risk as a part of who they are; rather a student is put at risk by the nature of their educational situation (Howard, 2003; Kameenui, 1998).

In individual classrooms in every community in our country there are teachers working who obtain wonderful results with students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. At this point in time, educational researchers have found and studied a number of teachers of literacy who are able to meet the needs of all of their students. Unfortunately, the larger body of research and statistics points in the other direction, showing that young people in the United States are not learning to read at an acceptable level (Howard, 2003). As previously mentioned, public schools historically focused

instruction towards the language, culture and values of white, middle class, English-speaking citizens and it is the students who identify in this group who find their instructional needs are met. The NAEP report for reading in 2005 shows at both grades 4 and 8, white students scored higher, on average, than black and Hispanic students. The reading scores for white students are substantially higher than the scores for the black and Hispanic students, but the number of white students rated at or above proficiency in reading increased from 35 to 40 percent, while those rated as below basic in reading skills dropped from 29 to 27 percent. Students who were not eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch scored higher, on average, than students who were eligible, at both grades 4 and 8. The statistics suggest that literacy programs in the public schools are not adequately meeting the needs of all students and that perhaps the academic expectations and instructional goals are too narrow for this country's diverse group of young people (Howard, 2003; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

It is important to note, when looking at the reading scores of these students, that low levels of performance in reading speak not only to a deficit in the student's progress, but also to a deficit on the part of the teacher. If the teacher holds expectations that are based in cultural or social values foreign to the student, than the students cannot achieve academic success and are therefore put at risk for reading failure. When teachers, schools, or our public school system as a whole are looking for appropriate interventions for students who are not developing adequate reading skills, they should be looking to program designed to also target the teacher's variables of classroom management and type and intensity of literacy instruction (Heath, 1983; Lane & Menzies, 2002; Shannon, 1989).

Definition of Key Terms

Emergent Literacy

This paper defines emergent literacy as the stages in a young person's development as a reader where she or he moves from basic concepts about print towards independent reading and writing skills. During the emergent literacy stage young people gain awareness of the alphabetic principle, the understanding of the relationship between sounds and symbols, mostly through the experiences with practical uses of print. This is also the time when young people's vocabulary increases at the rate to which they are exposed to language through books and stories and they begin to read words that are familiar or are in the context of a story. At the end of the emergent literacy stage, young people are able to read and write in an independent and conventional manner (Clay, 1979; National Council of Teachers of English, 2006; Neuman, 2002).

At Risk for Reading Failure

This paper defines a student who is at risk for reading failure as in a situation that is a result of literacy instruction that does not meet her or his needs. At-risk status is not inherent in the student, but rather involves a mismatch between the student's characteristics and instructional needs and the instruction that is provided (Foorman & Torgeson, 2001; Howard, 2003; & Ruddell, 2002).

Statement of Purpose

This paper will examine research concerning strategies and approaches for emergent reading instruction taking both a general view of overall effective approaches,

and a tighter focus on specific approaches for students who are at risk for reading failure. Most of the studies examined focus on reading instruction in the early elementary school grades of kindergarten through fourth grade, with a large focus on the kindergarten and first grade years. My hope is that by critiquing these studies and searching for patterns of effective instructional approaches, a greater awareness of how teachers can better meet the literacy needs of all their students will emerge.

Limitations

Much educational research has been done on effective approaches to supporting reading development. The best approach to reading instruction has been disputed between those who believe that reading a developmental, whole-to-part process of making meaning and those who view reading as mechanistic, part-to-whole process of skill-building. This theoretical disagreement has been carried through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, leaving the available research and literature to also reflect this "Reading War" (Wren, 2001, p. 4-5). Because this paper defines emergent literacy as a developmental stage, the research will be critiqued with an eye for studies that acknowledged the developmental and meaning-making nature of the reading process for young students. As the critiques in chapter three will demonstrate, there is a large amount of existing research that accepts both the emergent and developmental view towards literacy for young people (Clay, 1979; National Council of Teachers of English, 2006; Neuman, 2002; Rankin-Erikson & Pressley, 2000; Wren, 2001).

This critical review of the literature is limited to only 27 studies and therefore only addresses a sample of the studies that exist on the topic. In addition, this review

does not provide an in-depth view into the research that exists for students who are at risk for reading failure as a result of neurologically based learning disorders. In an attempt to discover patterns in the research in such a small number of studies, this paper focuses more on the cultural and economic factors that lead to students being put at risk for reading failure in the public schools. This review addresses some of the studies that exist on bilingual and English as a second language programs, but again, the number of studies in this review are quite limited. Students who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities and students who do not speak English as their native language are as much at risk for reading failure in this country as any other group. There is an extensive body of research that explores the literacy needs of both groups and this research should be explored in order to gain a truly complete picture of the state of literacy development and achievement by the students in the public school system (Allington, 1998; Araujo, 2002; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).

Summary

This paper investigates the question: What are effective approaches to supporting emergent literacy in students who are at risk for reading failure? This question is important because so many young people are not learning to read in the United States and strong literacy skills are essential for the future academic success of students. In order to better understand the place that the United States is at currently in it's view of effective reading instruction for all students, the next chapter explores the evolution of reading instruction in the United States' public schools from the Colonial era to present day.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

Reading instruction is not a one-size-fits-all aspect of a child's education. As chapter one argued, teachers of reading must understand the backgrounds and contexts that students come from when they arrive at school in order to adequately meet each student's needs as they develop as an independent reader. Chapter one also mentioned that this inclusive and equitable approach to reading instruction has not been the dominant view in the history of the public schools in the United States.

In this chapter, two questions will be addressed: (a) What is the history of reading instruction in schools in the United States from Colonial times to the present day? And (b) what are the different labels, interventions and program implementations that have historically been used in schooling and reading instruction in attempt to end the achievement gap between students identified as at-risk for reading failure and those who have not?

A History of Reading Instruction in the United States

In 1642 Massachusetts passed the earliest law about reading. This law, stating that all parents and all masters of apprentices must have their children taught to read, was motivated by the colonists' belief that their salvation was based on the ability to read the Bible. Shortly after, in 1647, the first Massachusetts schooling law was passed. The law mandated that towns with 50 families or more must support a schoolmaster to teach reading and writing skills. At that time, the only method used to teach reading and writing was the alphabet method. This mechanistic method of reading instruction moved students from the small parts of letters towards whole words, sentences, paragraphs, and

finally whole books. Reading instruction was done orally at this time and writing instruction did not begin until students were seven years old (Monaghan, Hartman, & Monaghan, 2002).

In the early 19th century, some U.S. educators began to notice and replicate the work of European educational reformers. One of these famous reformers was the Swiss teacher, Johann Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi's theories were translated into English and began to influence some educators in the United States. He believed that rote learning and harsh discipline would not result in learning for students. Rather, he believed that learning began with a concrete experience, proceeded from whole to part, and emphasized children's capacity for understanding (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

The American Journal of Education, which still exists today, was the original carrier of Pestalozzi's voice in the United States and called for reform of reading and writing instruction. Reading and writing reformers attacked spelling books as inappropriate for the learning of young people due to their long lists of incomprehensible words and lengthy essays about adult themes. The reformers focused on reading for meaning. Samuel Worcester's *Primer of the English Language* was an example of Pestalozzian beliefs about reading instruction. This book had instructions for the teacher, pre-reading activities, and suggested that teachers use whole words before breaking them down into parts and analyzing them (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

At this time, a movement called The Common School Movement was growing quickly under the lead of Horace Mann. This movement, along with the growth of academies, lead to a growing demand for textbooks of all kinds, not just for reading instruction, and thus began the evolution of textbooks into graded, levelized series. The

most popular of these new textbooks were the *McGuffey Eclectic Readers*. McGuffey's readers included stories about children, had a moral and religious tone, and had large type and illustrations, all of which led to the change of the "reader" to be an elementary, not an advanced text. Publishers advertised McGuffey's readers as adaptable to use for either the old alphabetic approach or the new whole word approach to reading instruction (Monaghan, et al., 2002; Wren, 2001).

Although McGuffey's readers were the most popular literacy textbooks of this time, other authors were writing their own readers. Charles Barnes wrote and published the *New National First Reader,* which explicitly promoted the use of the whole word method as an introduction for reading instruction. Barnes' promotion of the whole word method as an introduction to more systematic use of alphabetics and phonics instruction was a common trend at the time. Almost no texts and teachers were using the whole word method exclusively. At this time, reading series were exclusively using systematic phonics in all of their readers and textbooks (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

Along with their exclusive use of phonics, readers were becoming more and more similar in other veins as well. Their moral themes became more covert, yet remained strong within the texts as "most series sought to build character through the American virtues of honesty, courage, hard work, self-reliance; patriotism and temperance" (Monaghan, et al., 2002, p. 226).

Near the end of the nineteenth century, women began to play an increasingly important role as teachers in the schools in the United States. Some publishers asked women educators to write readers. From 1890's to 1920's many women did. Jenny Stickney who was the principal of Boston Training School for Teachers wrote Stickney

Readers.   Other female textbook authors included, Mrs. Lewis Monroe, Ellen Cyr, Rebecca Pollard, Sarah Louise Arnold, Sarah Sprague, Emma Gordon, Frances Lillian Taylor, and Ella Flagg Young (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

Post Civil War years led to a renewed interest and increased use of the word method. The new popularity for the method was influenced by the Oswego State Normal and Training School, whose principal, Edward Austin Sheldon, initiated the new spread of this method. "Sheldon adapted Pestalozzian principles and advocated teaching reading by showing familiar objects that were then named and written as whole words" (Monaghan, et al., 2002, p. 227). Sheldon spread this method through *Lessons on Objects* manuals and reading series and the teachers he trained at his school. Sheldon's whole word approach fit well with the child-centered philosophy that was rising in the U.S. at this time and was guided by John Dewey. Dewey believed that schools should reflect greater society and proceed from the child's interests. Educators who shared Dewey's beliefs embraced the word method because it did not use the repetition and drill associated with phonics instruction (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

This renewal of the word method lead by Sheldon and Dewey was a radical change in U.S. reading instruction. Before this time, word approaches had only been used as introductions to discussions of letter-sound correspondence. Now, the word methods moved children directly from the word to meaning, then finally, if at all, discussions of letter-sound correspondence. Other factors that influenced the reading instruction reform that occurred at the turn of the century included the progressive Francis Wayland Parker's *Talks On Teaching,* which emphasized reading as thought-getting and, the theory of Stanley G. Hall, which said that the development of the child

recapitulates the development of race. He called for the inclusion in the readers of the stories, fables and traditions of cultures and groups of people who represented primitive people to the mainstream society (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

The counter movement to this progressive movement was that of the measurement movement led by Thorndike and Broadus and derived from behaviorist theories about learning. Although both the progressive reading reform movement and the measurement movement focused on the word method, there were large differences in their philosophies of how to use the method. Because the progressive movement did not support the use of textbooks, but rather the students own books, the textbooks being written and used at this time were dominated by the philosophies of the measurement movement. Through the textbooks, the measurement movement implemented instruction in word frequency, and measured by word counts, which became the basis of vocabulary instruction. Because they had control over the content of the textbooks, Thorndike and his colleagues had a strong influence on the language of reading instruction at this time (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

The first half of the twentieth century was a time of rapid change and development in both reading instruction and how the United States viewed the quality of reading instruction in the schools. Arthur Gates, a colleague of Thorndike, introduced the 'intrinsic' approach to phonics instruction, where phonic values were inferred from known sight words. The content of basal readers changed from fairy tales and imaginary animals to children and families in realistic settings. Also at this time, testing on World War I military recruits showed that many adults were illiterate and for the first time, the national spotlight was put on the prevalence of reading failure. This new focus on

reading failure lead to the identification of learning disabilities and the establishment of remedial reading programs in middle and secondary schools. New approaches towards diagnosing learning disabilities were quickly being introduced (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

The time that spanned from the 1930's to 1950's was the era of the word method in basal readers. This was widely accepted and used in nearly all basals. Children were expected to read for meaning from the word and rely heavily on context clues. Basals were filled with stories about white middle class suburban families, "mothers in aprons, foolish little sisters, and problem-solving older brothers" (Monaghan, et al, 2002, p.228). Rudolf Flesch attacked this word method in his, *Why Johnny Can't Read- and What You Can Do About it.* He claimed that the word method was inappropriate and a threat to democracy. He wrote that "the word method had reduced the learning of English to the equivalent of learning Chinese; that reading professionals were in cahoots with the publishing industry; and that professionals had ignored the results of their own research, which had shown that phonics was superior to the whole- word approach" (Monaghen et al, 2002, p.228). Parents responded to this book, it became a bestseller and the International Reading Association named its new objective as "isolating the sound of the letter" and to support only programs that did so (Monaghan, et al., 2002; Wren, 2001).

Basal readers began to follow suit and again were published with the use of systematic phonics. In 1965, President Johnson passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which gave billions of dollars to programs for schools taught by remedial-reading teachers. Schools were using the diagnosis and remediation approach to reading failure and were using this money to train large numbers of new teachers to be remedial reading teachers (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

In the 1970's Skinner's behaviorist theories were very influential on the field of reading instruction. Similarly, Benjamin Bloom's and Robert Mills Gagne's 'mastery learning' approach, which views reading as a cluster of hierarchical skills that must be mastered up to a set of criterion, was based on behaviorist theories about learning. Both of these approaches promoted programmed, skills-based, remedial-reading texts. In response to the behaviorist beliefs about reading instruction, Noam Chomsky offered up a new theory that lead to a radical change in reading instruction. He provided much evidence that language acquisition was innate and not learned through stimulus-response mechanisms. New insight into the reading process, which came to be called sociopsycholinguistics, was derived from this work. As constructivist, holistic, and progressive ways of thinking about literacy grew among educators, the whole-language movement emerged in the late 1980's (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

In November of 1989, The Elementary School journal devoted an entire issue to this whole-language movement. Dissimilar from prior movements and uses of the word method, the whole-language movement was based on a philosophy, not a method. It was based in the theory of language that said that reading acquisition occurred as naturally as language acquisition. In practice, the whole-language approach used authentic methods and materials, integrated language arts and other content curricula, and made the proficiencies and imaginations of the children the center of all activities. Many teachers adopted this approach because "they could control the texts of instruction instead of being controlled by textbooks" (Monaghan, et al., 2002, p. 230).

Because whole-language classrooms did not use textbooks, the textbook industries felt the consequences of this theoretical shift among many teachers. For as many

teachers who adopted whole-language the movement had as many critics. Many linguists claimed it was untrue that reading acquisition was comparable to language acquisition because so many cultures have language without systems of writing. Parents were also upset by the perceived "anti-phonics-ness" of the movement. The embedded nature of the phonics in the whole-language method was not found to be acceptable to everyone (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

Many of the parents who critiqued this method pointed to the reading scores of programs that used whole-language approaches that were low in the ranks. These groups were successful in getting legislation that over powered the use of the whole-language method and mandated 'systematic, explicit phonics' instruction passed in California, Alaska, and Ohio. Many conservative organizations supported this legislation, and many otherwise liberal parents did too. At that time, advocates of systematic phonics instruction provided research on reading acquisition and this research was summarized by Marilyn Adams in 1990. Her summary pointed to the critical role that phonological and phonemic awareness play in successful acquisition of the alphabetic writing system, to automaticity of word i.d. and the value of explicit instruction (Monaghan, et al., 2002).

The history of reading instruction in the United States, through the end of the twentieth century, carried the powerful theme of dispute over how young people should be taught to read and write. This dispute has come to be called both "the Great Debate" and "the Reading Wars" (Wren, 2001, p. 4-5). While one side of this debate has continually argued for the use of systematic, part-to-whole phonics instruction, in the 1970's and 80's there was a major shift that occurred on the opposing side from a whole word method to the philosophically based whole-language approach. This paradigm shift

added fuel to the reading wars and new waves of research that found evidence to support both the systematic teaching of phonics and the whole language approach emerged (Rankin-Erikson & Pressley, 2000; Wren, 2001).

Reports and national commissions on reading research are not a new phenomenon in the United States, however in recent time there have been two very influential national reports released: Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998) and The Report of The National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read (NICHD, 2000). The National Reading Panel's (NRP) report was intended to assess the status of research-based knowledge about effective reading instruction. The NRP report provided evidence and answers about the effectiveness of instructional approaches such as alphabetics and fluency. For the topics of comprehension, teacher education, and the use of technology the NRP repeatedly called for more research to be done in these areas and provided no useful information or answers for these topics (NICHD, 2000). Due to the void in the report, many critiques of the NRP's research methodologies have been published. The most common critique is that while very few purely experimental studies are available in educational research, the NRP systematically neglected any research that was not purely experimental. There is a large body of educational research that uses designs other than experimental and many of these studies speak to the areas ignored by the NRP: comprehension, teacher education, and technology (Garan, 2001). Many educational professionals strongly believe that the inclusion of qualitative research alongside quantitative research, if it included all areas of reading instruction research, would be more beneficial to the teachers who rely on the research, than a report that excluded a large portion of the existing research, due to it's

experimental design (Garan, 2001; Hiebert & Adler, 2002; NICHD, 2000; Snow et al, 1998; Wren, 2001).

In their report, Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, Snow, et al (1998) stated their mission was to provide research-based information on reading instruction without taking sides in the reading wars. As a result, many education professionals believe that their findings were vague and simplistic. An example of this is the conclusion that Snow et al arrived at when they called for an end to the reading wars through a balanced approach to reading instruction. Despite the critiques calling it too vague, balanced approach to literacy instruction has its bases in educational research and at this point in time, very few teachers subscribe completely to either systematic phonics or whole language instruction (Hiebert& Adler, 2002). Balanced literacy is often described as a combination of the best elements of the phonics and whole language philosophies and it typically involves a combination of instruction in literacy skills and strategies and immersion in literary experiences and authentic texts. At this time, the swinging pendulum of trends for effective reading instruction in the United States seems to be resting at a balanced approach to literacy instruction. This stopping point has already encountered as many critics and questions as any other points along the way (Wren, 2002). If balanced literacy is the combination of a sampling of the best practices from both philosophies, than it is not yet clear how a teacher decides which practices are best and how these practices should be put together to create a literacy curriculum. And, in spite of the numerous shifts from phonics to whole language and back again, an unacceptable number of young people are still at risk for reading failure. Perhaps, a

mixing of the two instructional philosophies is too simplistic to meet the needs of all of the students in the United States (Hiebert & Adler, 2002; Snow et al, 1998; Wren, 2001).

The History of Intervention Programs for At-Risk Students

"The term "at-risk" entered educational vernacular in the 1980's as a result of the widely-read and often quoted study, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* put out by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983 (Ruddell, 2002, p. 33). This study found that the current educational policies and practices, especially those that dealt with reading instruction, were causing a large number of U.S. children to be "at risk for failure in learning to read and, ultimately, for being successful in school" (Howard, 2003; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Ruddell, 2002, p. 33).

As mentioned in the previous section, the first time that the United States became focused on the widespread nature of reading failure was when testing on World War I military recruits showed that a large proportion of adults were illiterate. The new focus on reading failure lead to the first identifications of learning disabilities. At first, all difficulties with reading were attributed to low intelligence and nothing was offered to students as assistance or intervention. These young people were just believed to be slow learners, or inherently incapable of learning to a certain degree (Monaghan et al., 2002). It was not long before research showed that achievement on measures of intelligence and on measures of reading intelligence did not correlate and the terms dyslexia and hyperlexia were created to describe young people who read either above or below what was expected of them. Remedial reading programs were established in middle and

secondary schools to help the students who were identified as reading below their grade level (Allington, 1998; Monaghan, et al., 2002).

Evidence continued to appear that low intelligence did not necessarily cause low reading achievement and in the 1960's the possibility that disadvantages of both economic and educational could lead to reading difficulties emerged. Interventions were developed and implemented with the hopes to overcome poverty and therefore end the reading achievement gap for young people. President Kennedy launched a War on Poverty in 1963 and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed in 1965. Title I of the ESEA was intended to intervene on the low reading achievement of poor students by distributing funding to schools with a high percentage of students from low-income families. It was believed that the increased funding for schools would balance out the inequities that existed among students' families' socioeconomic statuses (Allington, 1998; Ruddell, 2002; Spring, 2005).

Many critics have argued that the government's efforts to provide money to schools and families as an approach to help struggling readers was not an effective solution at all. These programs did not enhance instruction and in many cases the funding went to remediation programs that still carried the teaching philosophy of 'slow it down and make it concrete' that was remnant from the times when reading difficulties were attributed to low intelligence (Allington, 1998). It was becoming clear too many educators at this time that economic disadvantage and subsequent school funding was not the sole cause and solution to preventing reading failure (Spring, 2005).

Another new trend arose at his time as well with some educational and medical professionals beginning to attribute reading difficulties with learning disabilities that

were based in neurological deficiencies. Similar to the theory that struggling readers were simply not as smart as other young people, a student diagnosed with a learning disability was viewed as unable to achieve the same level of reading achievement as their undiagnosed peers. Many educators have warned of the danger with this theory about struggling readers because although some young people do have neurologically based learning disabilities, students who were struggling with reading for other reasons were diagnosed and deemed to have a limited capacity for learning, therefore never receiving the help they needed (Allington, 1998).

Recently there has been a growing awareness among educators that reading acquisition does not occur in the same way for all young people. It is easy for some, difficult for some and exceedingly difficult for others. Research has shown a wide spectrum of reasons for this variability in reading acquisition. It is also widely recognized that due to an array of social, cultural and economic reasons, students arrive at school with a wide variety of experience with literacy and for this reason a standard and uniform literacy program often leads to large discrepancies in reading achievement (Allington, 1998). As a result of these new recognitions about reading acquisition and effective instruction, in the 1990's, Title I regulations changed and allowed more freedom for schools and districts to develop remedial reading programs. At this time, many educators questioned the usefulness of the pullout remediation programs that had been used for decades. These educators argued that the nature of pullout increased the chances for academic failure by interrupting the classroom and learning development of those students, further separating them from their peers. The new reformed Title I programs allowed for reading specialists to work with the classroom teachers to teach at-risk

students in their classroom alongside non-Title I students (Allington, 1998; Ruddell, 2002).

Currently, instruction for at-risk children remains under Title I and early intervention programs vary widely as they are implemented according to the beliefs and needs of each school and school district. The latest trend for the United States government and its attempts to address the large problem of reading failure in its schools has been setting high academic standards, assessing students through standardized high stakes tests, and holding students back until they pass the necessary tests. The school's responses to these new government implementations have been more intervention programs for students who re at-risk for reading failure (Ruddell, 2002). While there has yet to be any strong evidence that these high stakes intervention programs are useful, there also is little evidence from the decades since the release of The National Commission on Excellence in Education's report, Nation at Risk, to show that this country's efforts to promote reading achievement in students at risk for reading failure have had any positive effects. A large proportion of young people in the United States are not learning to read. Howard (2003) captured this lack of success by stating, "it is clear that school reform has not succeeded. As a nation we remain ineffectual in the face of a problem that will consign an important segment of the population to, at best, the sidelines of the twenty-first century" (p. 90).

Summary

The history of reading instruction in the United States is influenced by a debate over which approach to teaching reading is most effective: systematic phonics instruction or the whole language approach. It was not until well into the twentieth century that the

nation as a whole recognized that the high numbers of adults and young people who could not read was problematic. Similar to the history of reading instruction overall, intervention programs for young people who are at risk for reading failure have gone through many trends and paradigm shifts in the last fifty to sixty years. In chapter three, I will review the research with a focus on the effective approaches for supporting literacy in students who are at risk for reading failure.

CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

What are effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy in students who are at risk for reading failure? Chapters One and Two described both the historical and present context for reading instruction in this country's public schools, as well as the importance that the answer to this question holds for the future of young people. Historically, there has been a critical and unsettled debate over the most effective approaches for reading instruction that will meet the needs of all students. In this chapter, I summarized and critiqued 27 studies that examined overall characteristics and perceptions about effective reading instruction, the effectiveness of specific instructional approaches, and large school and district wide reading intervention programs. The studies are organized into two major sections, the first sections focused on overall effective approaches to supporting emergent literacy in the classroom and the second section looked at those approaches specifically focused on students who are at risk for reading failure.

Overall Effective Approaches for Supporting Emergent Literacy in the Classroom

All of the studies in this section examined approaches for supporting emergent literacy in the classroom for all students, not only those who have been identified by the researchers as at risk for reading failure. Although the intent of this paper is to gain a better understanding of the effective approaches for students who are at risk, this section provides information as to how the educational research community studies effective approaches to emergent literacy. Some of these studies (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993; Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Lynch, 2002; Wray,

Medwell, Fox and Poulson, 2002) examine overall characteristics and perceptions of effective literacy curriculums and instructional practices, while others (Block & Peskowitz, 1990; Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri, 2003; Juliebo, Malicky, & Norman, 1998; Rieben, Ntamakiliro, & Gonthier, 2005) examine various specific instructional approaches for their effectiveness in supporting emergent literacy.

Studies That Examined Characteristics and Perceptions of Effective Literacy Instruction Practices and Programs

Wray, Medwell, Fox and Poulson (2000) were interested in comparing the teaching practices of teachers who had been identified as effective teachers of literacy against the practices of teachers who had not been identified as such. They found that there were salient characteristics of the teaching practices of effective teachers and that many of those characteristics were not present in the instruction styles of literacy teachers in general. The authors found that teaching a range of literacy skills and knowledge at the word, sentence and text levels within the context of work on shared texts was one of the most salient of the practices of effective teachers. The authors supposed that the contextualization of the literacy instruction in shared texts made it possible for the students to draw connections between the word, sentence and text levels of knowledge. Wray, et al. also found that another feature of the instruction of effective teachers of literacy was what the authors called explicitness. It was found that the effective teachers in this study made the processes and purposes of the literacy tasks and activities known to their students through modeling and demonstration and through explicit explanations. (Wray, et al., 2000).

In this study, the authors (2000) collected data through classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews of both teachers identified to be effective teachers of literacy and a validation group of teachers not so identified. They then categorized their findings into two main groups; the range of literacy activities used, and task presentation and lesson structure. For the category of the range of literacy activities used, the authors found that teachers in both the main sample of effective teachers and the validation group primarily used the same types of reading activities although there were some differences, for example, effective teachers were more likely to use big books than the validation group of teachers. When the researchers compared the teachers' self-reports against their actual practice some deeper complex patterns emerged. Although teachers in both groups were roughly similar in their reporting of teaching letter sounds (92.1% of effective teachers and 100% of validation teachers), and the validation teachers had reports of higher use of flashcards and phonic exercises than the effective teacher sample, the researchers' observations revealed that the effective teachers were actually teaching letter sounds more (35 out of 52 observed lessons) than the validation group (11 out of 20 observed lessons). The approaches that teachers in each group used were very different. The effective teachers tended to spend more time looking at sounds within the context of a big book or a text written by the teacher (73.6%), while the validation group tended towards more paper-based exercises about sounds (77.4%) (Wray, et al., 2000).

In the second category, task presentation and lesson structure, the authors (2000) found that the teachers in the effective teachers of literacy group also taught in a way that refocused the students' attention towards literacy tasks regularly throughout a lesson. These teachers did so by making frequent checks student progress by asking children to

provide examples of writing in progress either for the teacher or other students to comment on. These types of teacher behaviors were observed in 46 of the 52 observed lessons for the effective teachers of literacy sample and in only 5 of the 20 observed lessons of the validation group (Wray, et al., 2000).

The openings and closings of literacy lessons and sessions of effective teachers shared some distinct characteristics. These teachers used clear and purposeful directions to focus their students to tasks and also used modeling extensively. One of the effective teachers said this about modeling in her interview, "Oh yes, whenever I am demonstrating, not just in writing. I am always talking about the conventions of writing and what I am doing and I feel they are learning an awful lot more if they realize that it is just part of writing and reading" (Wray, et al., 2000, p. 82).

Both effective teachers of literacy and teachers in the validation group used a wide range of questions. The questions used by effective teachers focused on asking students how they accomplished a literacy task, how they made literacy decisions, what reading cues they used, and to explain comprehension decisions. The researchers (2000) observed these question types in 48 out of 52 lessons. Unfortunately the researchers did not provide examples of the types of questions observed in the validation group classrooms for comparison against the effective teachers of literacy group (Wray, et al., 2000).

Wray, et al. (2000) provided many specific examples of what effective literacy practices look like in a classroom, and one of this study's strengths was the large number of participants and the wide range of sources that the researchers used to collect data about the instructional practices of both groups of teachers. Data was collected on 228

teachers through a preliminary questionnaire, two classroom observations and a follow up interview with each teacher to check and confirm what was observed. However, due to the fact that the researchers did not provide information about the gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or state or country of residence of any of the teachers or students who took part in this study, the findings are not generalizable to any classroom or school in the United States. Without this information, teachers cannot know the context that these teachers and students were working, learning and teaching within. The researchers also provide examples of what the effective teaching practices look like but fail to explain what complementary or opposing practices in the validation group classrooms look like. As a result of this lack of information it is impossible to make informed comparisons about the effectiveness of some of the strategies (Wray et al., 2000).

Wray et al (2000) found that common traits of effective literacy instruction can be distinguished from general instructional practices when a large group of teachers is looked at. Studies such as this one provide useful information towards answering questions about which approaches to literacy instruction are effective, and more research done with large groups of teachers in other regions and cultural contexts would lead to the discovery of more patterns and trends in instruction that teachers could use to inform their practice.

Similar to Wray et al (2000), Fisher and Hiebert (1990) were interested in examining the everyday instructional practices of elementary school literacy teachers to determine the efficacy of different approaches. Different from Wray et al, Fisher and Hiebert focused their study on looking at the different characteristics of literature-based versus skills-oriented approaches to literacy instruction. As discussed in the first chapter

of this paper, there is a sharp theoretical divide amongst educational professionals about the best approaches to literacy instruction. In this study, the researchers' primary goal is to examine the efficacy of both literature-based and skills-oriented approaches to literacy instruction by looking at classroom learning tasks that foster higher-order thinking in reading and writing. These researchers define the literature-based approach as an approach that "posits that acquisition of literacy occurs in the context of purposeful communication where meaning is socially constructed", while the skills-oriented approach "holds that proficient reading and writing result from the acquisition of a set of specific skills that are acquired in a hierarchically ordered sequence" (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990, p. 4). The researchers define a literacy task as a distinct unit of work relating to either reading or writing, and one task is distinguishable from another based upon the products, the methods or actions used to generate a product, and the resources available to students to use to generate a product. The teachers who made up the sample in this study, as in Wray et al's study, were predetermined to be highly effective teachers of literacy by school district staff (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990).

As their data collection methods, the researchers (1990) used informal observations, videotapes of classroom experiences, field notes, teacher interviews and samples of student work that covered five full days of instruction in eight different classrooms. The overarching finding from this study was that the opportunities for taking part in literacy tasks that are central to the development of higher-order thinking skills differed qualitatively and quantitatively between the literature-based and skills-oriented approaches. In this study, the cognitive complexity of literacy tasks were differentiated along a scale ranging from lower cognitive complexity tasks such as recognition of facts,

to highly cognitive complex tasks such as tasks that require the synthesis of information, or integration of ideas from numerous sources. Fisher and Hiebert (1990) found that overall the total time spent on literacy tasks varied over the groups with the literature-based groups tending to spend more time on literacy than the skills-oriented groups within a day. Literacy tasks averaged 60% of the school day for a literature- based second grade classroom, 52% for a literature-based sixth grade classroom, 47% for a skills-oriented second grade classroom, and 39% for skills-oriented sixth grade classroom. The results of this study also found that, based on the researchers rating of each task, more time was spent on tasks with higher cognitive complexity in the literature-based classrooms than the skills-oriented classrooms (Fisher and Hiebert, 1990).

The researchers' (1990) focus on higher-order thinking skills in literacy activities lead them to explore what they called student product specification within the classroom literacy tasks. Student product specification describes the amount of influence the student had in determining what, when, and how of the products of their classroom work. This was measured on a five-point scale that ranged from no student influence, to a great deal of student influence. A clear pattern emerged in this category showing that theses types of activities were done more in all literature-based classes with a mean score of 3.2 than skills-oriented classes with a mean score of 1.8, on the five point scale (Fisher and Hiebert, 1990).

Fisher and Hiebert's (1990) study used reliable observation and data collection methods such as triangulation of the observed classroom tasks and activities and a close look at inter-rater reliability. The researchers collected large amounts of data that proved

useful in drawing comparisons and contrast between classrooms that use literature-based and skills-oriented approaches to literacy instruction. This study cannot be widely generalized because the sample is a relatively small and homogenous group of only twelve classroom teachers who all work in the same school district. The results described here can only be applied to similar districts in suburban areas. Also, because the sample classrooms were predetermined by the district it is unknown if these eight teachers represent a broader community of elementary school teachers of literacy (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990).

Fisher and Hiebert (1990) found that literacy experiences differed in both kind and amount between the literature-based and skills-oriented approaches to literacy instruction and determined that the differences found were in areas that relate to the development of problem solving and higher-order thinking. The researcher also found that the tasks identified for each of the two groups aligned well with the educational philosophies of the literature-based and skill-oriented instruction. The literature-based approach comes from the perspective of meaning making and students in those classrooms played a role in determining how their tasks and products were designed and played out. These students shared their own interpretations of text and discussed their own writing with peers. In the skills-oriented classrooms, where reading and writing were viewed as hierarchically ordered skills that are transmitted from teacher to student, the students took on a more passive role. Tasks and activities were usually already specified when the students received them. In these classrooms students had many opportunities to practice and fewer opportunities to apply knowledge and skills (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990).

Fielding-Barnsley, R. & Purdie, N. (2005), examined the attitudes and knowledge that elementary school teachers hold about metalinguistics. In this study, the researchers define metalinguistics as "an acquired awareness of language structure and function that allows one to reflect on and consciously manipulate the language" (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005, p. 65). Metalinguistics includes phonemic awareness, an awareness of syllables, rhyme and morphology. Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie recognized that the role the teacher plays in a student's development of metalinguistics is crucial. The researchers cite evidence that suggests that many teachers are not prepared to teach young people to read because they themselves do not have enough explicit knowledge of metalinguistics to do so. Most teachers of literacy have an implicit awareness of metalinguistics that they apply to their own reading but implicit awareness will not transfer into effective instruction for their students (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

The data for this study was collected through the use of a survey. A total sample size of 340 teachers was divided into three groups, 93 pre-service primary teachers, 209 primary in-service teachers, and 38 special education teachers. The first section of the survey included 12 questions about the participants' attitudes towards early reading and spelling. These questions were framed around the two major theoretical orientations towards literacy, explicit code-based instruction (CB) and implicit meaning based instruction (MB). There were also four neutral questions included in this first section. The second section of the survey contained 10 multiple-choice questions about the participants' knowledge of metalinguistics. These questions were designed to question the teachers' knowledge about the structure of the English language at both the word and sound level. It was important to the researchers (2005) that the teachers answered based

on their current attitudes and knowledge level. The teachers were not to use books or other resources in order to answer the questions. In order to ensure this pre-service teachers took the survey during class time and the other teachers took the survey during a non-teaching time in the presence of a research assistant (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

The results of this study are organized by Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie's (2005) main research questions: The first question asked, what are primary school teachers' attitudes towards using explicit metalinguistic instruction in the teaching of reading, writing, and spelling?   The total MB and CB scores were computed and the mean score for MB was 3.83 (SD =1.04), and the mean score for CB was 4.92 (SD= .54). The teachers had positive attitudes towards both MB and CB literacy instruction, although the attitudes towards CB were significantly higher than those towards MB (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

The second question asked, how much knowledge do primary school teachers have about specific aspects of metalinguistics such as phonology, syllabic structure, rhyme, and morphology? A total knowledge score was calculated for each participating teacher by adding up the number of correct items, so the highest possible score was 10. The mean number correct was 6.12 (SD= 1.86). There was variation in the knowledge that the teachers had for different components of metalinguistics. The teachers' knowledge of short vowel sounds was 92% correct while their knowledge of the number of speech sounds in a given word was only 24.1% correct (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

The third question asked, what are the differences between experienced, inexperienced, and specialist teachers with respect to metalinguistic attitudes and knowledge? Results from an ANOVA of teachers' attitudes showed that pre-service, experienced and special education teachers did not differ significantly in the way they answered CB questions (p=. 11). There was, however, a significant difference between the answers provided by the three groups for MB questions (p=. 02). Results from an ANOVA for teachers' knowledge showed significant differences between the three groups (p=. 001). Post hoc Scheffe tests showed that special education teachers scored significantly higher on knowledge than both pre-service and in-service teachers, and in-service teachers scored significantly higher than pre-service teachers (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

A weakness in this study was the reliability coefficient for the survey questions. Of the 12 attitude questions focusing on both the CB and MB theoretical orientations, eight items representing two factors were retained. Two of those questions represented MB instruction and six questions represented CB instruction. The reliability coefficient for CB was low but deemed acceptable at (.63) and the reliability coefficient for MB was even lower at (.54). The researchers (2005) attribute these low numbers on the low total number of items. In order for the differentiation between CB and MB instruction to be represented, this instrument of data collection would need to be altered and adjusted. This study used a large sample size of 340 and all of the teachers worked in schools in the same state in Australia. The results of this study could be generalizable to teachers and classrooms in this state, although the study does not provide any information on the characteristics of the schools where these teachers work. Because the survey examines

teachers attitudes, more information is needed on the characteristics of the school where these teachers are working, as the context could play a large role in shaping teachers' attitudes towards metalinguistics, and CB or MB approaches to instruction (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

The overall findings in this study were that many of the teachers had positive attitudes to both code-based and meaning-based instructional approaches. The teachers' attitudes were slightly more positive about code-based instruction. In spite of these positive attitudes, the teachers' metalinguistic knowledge was not strong. It seemed that teachers acknowledged the importance of metalinguistics in the emergent literacy but did not necessarily have the knowledge necessary to effective teach such skills. This disconnect between the teachers' attitudes and current knowledge base reveals a gap in the teachers' abilities to be effective in emergent literacy instruction. The implication of this finding is that both pre-service, in-service and specialist instructors need to be educated in the knowledge of metalinguistics that is so crucial to the success of their students' own learning process (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

While Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005) studied the attitudes and knowledge that elementary school teachers hold about metalinguistics, Barksdale-Ladd &Thomas (1993) were interested in examining teachers' beliefs and perceptions of literacy instruction based on basal programs. The researchers acknowledged that the use of basal readers and basal programs in schools plays a critical role in the instructional decisions that teachers make concerning literacy. Because of this documented dependency of teachers on basal programs, the researchers wanted to examine teachers' beliefs and perceptions of reading instruction in order to better understand both the general attitude

and common usage of basal programs by literacy teachers. Some underlying questions to this examination are, is the use of basal readers an effective approach to literacy instruction, and if not, why are teachers so dependent upon basal programs for their classroom literacy instruction (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

This study seeks to answer two questions: 1. What are teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and feelings about reading instruction involving the role of basals, nonbasal instruction and administrators, parents and the community? 2. What are teachers' beliefs regarding needs fulfillment for students, themselves, parents, and school administrators through classroom basal instruction? Data was collected through open-ended interviews that were given to 8 teachers, by two researchers during last month of the school year and immediately following the end of the school year. These interviews were audio taped and later coded into categorical units for analysis (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

An analysis of the data related to the teachers' use of basal instruction showed that 92% of reading instruction done by the 8 teachers was based on basals. These teachers relied on basals for 70-100% of their instruction and all of the teachers used the assessments from the basal manuals. In the category of feelings and opinions, 88.7% of the statements were negative and 11.3% were positive. Teachers mentioned feeling that basal programs were too regimented and that they were in a rut. Several of the teachers also indicated that they felt concerned or lacked confidence about teaching without a basal. All eight teachers said that they felt pressured to teach with the basal program (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

An analysis of the data collected about non-basal instruction revealed that 97% of the ideas shared were positive feelings about non-basal instruction and 10.2% were

negative. Most of the negative feelings centered on a larger workload with non-basal instruction. Of the positive feelings and experiences shared about non-basal instruction, all were related to the students' positive responses to non-basal activities (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

An analysis of the results of the portions of the interviews that dealt with needs fulfillment showed that of 117 total idea units about the students' needs fulfillment, 94 were aligned with lower-level needs statements (skills instruction, relating ideas to students' interests, allowing expression of ideas, etc.) and 23 were aligned with higher-level needs fulfillment (providing choices, encouraging independence, encouraging creativity, etc.). Overall, teachers felt that their basal programs mostly met students' lower-level needs. Of the 153 idea units about the teachers' needs fulfillment, 149 aligned with lower-level needs and 4 aligned with higher-level needs. All statements about how basal programs met the needs of parents, administrators and other teachers were related to lower-level needs (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

This study had some limitations. The sample size was very small, only eight teachers, and although these teachers taught in a few different schools, they were all working within the same rural region. This study does not account for different cultural, economic or regional differences in teachers' attitudes and perceptions of literacy instruction and basal programs. And therefore can only be generalized to a very small population of educators. Basal reading programs mostly fulfilled lower-level needs for students, teachers, parents and administrators. A concern with this finding is that if the goal is lifelong literacy as a result of early instruction in reading and writing than teachers should be focusing on meeting and encouraging higher-level needs, such as appreciation

for learning and critical thinking. The researchers (1993) made it clear that effective approaches to teaching literacy should involve both lower-level and higher-level needs being met and in this study it was shown that basal programs were neglecting the higher-level needs of the students. This study also revealed a conflict amongst the teachers. The teachers reported mostly negative attitudes and feelings towards basal programs and equally strong feelings of reliance upon such programs in their classrooms. These teachers are instructing their students using methods that they do not believe in (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

This study answered many questions about teachers' beliefs and perceptions of basal programs and it also leaves a larger question to be explored. Why are teachers, similar to those that participated in this study, using basal programs that they do not believe in? More research needs to be done involving larger and more varied samples in order to begin to answer this question (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993).

Rather than looking into teachers' attitudes and perceptions about literacy instruction, Lynch (2002) investigated the relationships among parents' reading beliefs, children's reader self-perceptions, and reading achievement. In her study, Lynch stressed that it "has often been claimed that parents are the first teachers and the home is the first school" (2002, p. 54). When a child enters school, she brings with her beliefs and attitudes about school and literacy that have come from her home life. Research also shows that from very early on, young people learn from their parenting adults how competent they are in certain activities. Because literacy skills are the foundation of all schools' curriculums, it is very important that young people enter school with feelings of confidence and competence about themselves as readers and writers. This study is

relevant to teachers of young readers because they need to have an awareness of the spectrum of beliefs and perceptions about self-efficacy held by both students and their parents. With this awareness, teachers can make efforts to support and encourage young readers who do not approach literacy with a strong base of confidence and competence (Lynch, 2002).

Data for this study was collected in two ways. First, a survey of the parenting adults of 66 students (92 parents: 49 mothers and 43 fathers), aged 8 and 9, measured the parents' self-efficacy beliefs for their children's reading achievement. Second, the students were given a questionnaire called The Reader Self-perception Scale, and a reading test that measured different components of the children's reading abilities. Lynch (2002) found that relationships did exist among parents' reading beliefs, children's reader self-perceptions and their reading achievement. Mothers had stronger self-efficacy beliefs for their children's reading achievement than did fathers. Lynch (2002) could only speculate why the fathers held lower self-efficacy beliefs than the mothers, and the positive relationship between mothers' self-efficacy beliefs and children's self-concept was consistent with the previous literature and research. A parent's sense of self-efficacy for their children's academic development can enhance children's beliefs in their own academic self-efficacy (Lynch, 2002).

In this study, boys and girls differed in the internal feelings they held about reading. Girls had more positive feelings while reading and boys had more negative feelings. Significant differences also appeared between the boys' and the girls' scores on the reading tests. Girls scored higher on the measures of early reading achievement. While this study could not provide evidence for the reasons that these discrepancies

existed, the results of the study supported previous studies that also found that a significant relationship exists between children's self-perceptions of progress and their construction of meaning scores on a reading test (Lynch, 2002).

Lynch's (2002) study used a sample of students and parents who all lived in the same rural region in Canada. All participants spoke English as their first language and were from lower-to middle class background. This study focused on self-perceptions and beliefs and it must be noted that perceptions and beliefs will be different in other regions, communities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Lynch often referred the consistency of her results with the results of other studies. Due to the lack of information about who participated in those studies these results cannot be confidently applied to other communities and cultural contexts (Lynch, 2002).

The relationship between children's self-perceptions of progress and their ability to construct meaning while reading holds major implications for teachers of literacy. Lynch (2002) called for teachers to be aware of the importance of their students' perceptions of previous reading performance in relation to their current reading achievements and also the importance of the major role that parents play in determining the success of their child's literacy achievements. The ability to read is the key to all other academic successes for a student. An effective teacher of emergent literacy will acknowledge and support the self-perceptions and beliefs of both young people and their parenting adults as they relate to reading achievement and try to move them towards positive feelings of self-efficacy and competence (Lynch, 2002).

The five studies included in this section all examined characteristics and perceptions about effective literacy instruction practices and programs. Wray, et al.

(2002) and Fisher & Hiebert (1990) looked at the major characteristics of teachers' daily practices in order to determine which were most effective for literacy instruction. While Wray et al. focused on comparing teachers who had previously been identified as effective teachers of literacy, Fisher & Hiebert focused on comparing the teaching practices of skills-based versus literature-based literacy instruction. Both studies found that these comparisons were worth examining as Wray et al. found that there were salient characteristics of the teaching practices of effective teachers that were not present in the instruction styles of literacy teachers in general and Fisher & Hiebert found that literacy experiences differed in both kind and amount between the literature-based and skills-oriented approaches to literacy instruction and these differences were in areas that relate to the development of problem solving and higher-order thinking (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Wray et al., 2002).

Rather than looking at the characteristics of various teachers' literacy instruction, Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005) and Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (1993) examined teachers' perceptions about two specific aspects of their literacy programs: metalinguistics and basal readers. Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie found that although many of the teachers had positive attitudes about both code-based and meaning-based instructional approaches, the teachers' metalinguistic knowledge was not strong. Even though the teachers acknowledged the importance of metalinguistics in the emergent literacy they did not have the knowledge necessary to effective teach such skills. The study conducted by Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas answered many questions about teachers' beliefs and perceptions of basal programs yet it left a larger question to be explored: Why are teachers, similar to those that participated in this study, using basal

programs that they do not believe in? The researchers called for more research needs to be done in order to answer this important question (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993; Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005).

Different from a teachers' perceptions about her or his own practices, Lynch (2002) investigated the relationships among parents' reading beliefs, children's reader self-perceptions, and reading achievement and called for teachers to be aware of the importance of their students' perceptions of previous reading performance in relation to their current reading achievements. Lynch noted that an effective teacher of emergent literacy will acknowledge and support the self-perceptions and beliefs of both young people parents as they relate to reading achievement and try to move them towards positive feelings of self-efficacy and competence (Lynch, 2002).

Studies That Examined Various Specific Instructional Approaches For Their Effectiveness In Supporting Emergent Literacy

Block and Peskowitz (1990) were interested in the relationship between metacognition and spelling. Specifically, they studied how elementary- aged students used metacognition, which the researchers defined as the knowledge about what one does or does not know, to judge how difficult a word's spelling is, when approaching a spelling task. The researchers believed that metacognition would affect a student's judgments about how likely a given spelling is to be correct because spelling a particular word involves accessing stored knowledge about words. This stored knowledge is made up of phonological, semantic, and orthographic information about individual words and word families (Block & Peskowitz, 1990). Words that do not fit generalizations or are not consistent with phonics rules will most likely be more difficult to spell and spellers

will need to adopt strategies in order to produce correct spellings of such words. These strategies may incorporate different phases of the spelling process including, generating, inspecting, self-correcting, and confirming. The researchers in this study attempted to obtain predictions and confidence judgments at the generating and inspecting phases of spelling and assess their relation to the students' actual spelling performance. The researchers also studied whether the conditions under which the spelling is inspected, for example, with or without teacher pronunciation or stated out loud as opposed to being read silently, and whether or not the different conditions would affect the accuracy of the spellers confidence judgments (Block & Peskowitz, 1990).

The students in this study were placed into one of four treatment groups. Three of the groups took part in spelling tasks where the students rated their ability to accurately spell a word, wrote out the spelling on a card, then had an opportunity to see their spelling again later, inspect it, and again judge whether it was spelled accurately or not. The difference between these three groups was in the inspection task. Students listened to the experimenter's pronunciation of the word and silently read the spelling, read the word aloud, or read the word silently before judging it accuracy. The control group only listened to words and wrote our spellings, they did not have any opportunities to inspect the spelling a second time. The researchers (1990) found that the students' predictions of ability to spell a word and subsequent confirmations of that spelling were related to accuracy (Block & Peskowitz, 1990).

More often than not, when the students said they could spell a word correctly and later confirmed the spelling as correct it was an accurate spelling. The experiment also demonstrated metacognitive spelling knowledge. In the two treatment groups where

students subsequently visually inspected spellings and either listened to a pronunciation of the word or pronounced the word themselves, detection of incorrect spellings improved. Based on these findings the researchers concluded that a student's ability to determine if a spelling is correct or incorrect greatly improved when they had the opportunity to visually inspect the spelling as opposed to just hearing the word. When this visual inspection was coupled with auditory information, the ability to judge accuracy improved even more (Block & Peskowitz, 1990).

The researchers (1990) did not describe the region or cultural context of the school and students who were involved in this study therefore making it difficult to generalize their findings across any other elementary schools or populations. Similarly, it is difficult to generalize the results without more background knowledge of the students' abilities with spelling and the strategies they may have been using at the time of this study. No pretest was given when the students were placed in the four treatment groups, rather they were placed on the basis of a teacher's description of good and bad spellers which subjects the students to the biases and opinions of a particular teacher. The testing for both phases was done individually and in a small room. Although this setting may have aided in the students' focus and concentration at the spelling tasks, it is also a contrived environment that required the students to be out of their classroom and taking part in tasks at the direction of the researchers (1990). This may have lead to stress and pressure for the participants of the study (Block & Peskowitz, 1990).

Block and Peskowitz (1990) stated the main finding of their study to be that the students had developed metacognitive knowledge about the words they were asked to spell. Because this study found that the students in the treatment groups that were able to

visually inspect their spelling were better able to determine whether a word was spelled correctly or not, the main implication for teachers is that metacognitive knowledge could be acquired and better developed in elementary aged spellers through explicit instruction in metacognitive spelling strategies such as different forms of inspection, as opposed to simply generating a spelling and moving on (Block & Peskowitz, 1990).

Juliebo, M., Malicky, G.V., & Norman, C. (1998), similar to Block and Peskowitz (1990), were interested in the role that metacognition plays in young readers' approaches to literacy. Juliebo, et al, however, focused their research study on metacognition in first graders who are involved in an early intervention literacy program. The researchers in this study define metacognitive knowledge as "knowledge that involves knowledge about person, task and strategy factors which affect the progress and outcome of cognitive enterprises" (Juliebo, et al., 1998, p. 26). The students who participated in this study were enrolled in an early intervention program called Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993), which promoted the development and extension of metacognitive awareness, by prompting teachers to ask certain questions of the student. This study explores both the spontaneous and teacher prompted metacognition that young children used during their time in an early intervention program and attempts to answer three questions: To what extent do young children engage in metacognition during early intervention sessions; To what extent do young children display metacognition as they view videotapes of themselves taken during intervention sessions; and What is the nature of metacognition displayed in these two contexts? (Juliebo, et al, 1998).

The answers to these three questions have strong implications for the effective instruction of literacy to young students. It is important for teachers to know both the

extent and the nature of the metacognitive behaviors that their students engage in as they read. This awareness can guide teachers in both individualizing instruction to meet the needs of each student and in creating literacy activities that work to develop and enhance metacognitive behaviors (Juliebo, et al., 1998).

The participating students in this study were given a series of subtests from Clay's (1993) diagnostic tests that measured their knowledge in different reading and writing skills. The participants' metacognitive behaviors were examined through two videotaped sessions of an early intervention lesson and a retrospective session where the students watched themselves on videotape and answered questions. Research assistants coded the instances of metacognition as observed within the sessions and from watching the videotapes of each session. These assistants coded metacognitive behaviors into categories and subcategories. Some examples of these categories include, metacognitive knowledge/awareness, strategy/procedural, and self-management. The researchers (1998) found over twice as many instances of metacognition in the retrospective sessions than in the initial intervention lessons. The children involved in this study were better able to show metacognitive awareness when they were given the chance to view and talk about what they had done in the lesson than they had during the lesson itself. In the retrospective sessions, 88% of all metacognitive moments were coded into knowledge categories while only 29% of metacognitive moments were put in this category during the intervention lesson. The opposite occurred for the category of self-management where 71% of the moments were observed during the lesson and only 17% were observed during the retrospective session (Juliebo, et al., 1998).

There were many similarities amongst the five students and the nature of their metacognitive behaviors. For all of the children, the most commonly occurring category of metacognition for the intervention lessons was self-correction and for the stimulus response sessions was strategy/procedural knowledge. None of the students gave many responses in the conditional category, which may speak to the fact that although the students are aware of many strategies for reading they have limited awareness of how and when to use them. There were differences that appeared amongst the students, for example, the one female student showed less metacognitive behaviors in the stimulus response session than the intervention lesson and the four boys all showed the opposite. Juliebo, et al. (1998), stress that for this reason it is important to include more than one measure for all children when estimating the extent of their metacognitive awareness and control (Juliebo, et al., 1998).

From these findings, Juliebo et al. (1998) concluded that the young readers in the intervention program displayed a wide range of metacognitive behavior and in the retrospective sessions they observed metacognitive behaviors that were closely connected with behaviors cited in other studies similar to this one. This study provides much useful descriptive information about the metacognitive behavior in young readers and reliability of the findings is supported by the use of open coding and an inter-rater agreement of 94% for all categories of metacognitive behavior cited. While all of the students in this study displayed substantial metacognitive behaviors, further research would need to be done in order to link the metacognitive behaviors to reading progress.   This study employed a very small sample of only five first grade students who were already enrolled

in an early intervention program that stressed metacognitive behaviors and is therefore not fully generalizable to a larger community of young readers (Juliebo, et al., 1998).

Rieben, Ntamakiliro, and Gonthier (2005) compared different word spelling practices, such as invented spelling and copied spelling, in kindergarten and then assessed their affects on letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, reading and spelling. The researchers wanted to know the comparative effects of different early writing types on reading and writing. The researchers created three different treatment groups that would replicate different teaching practices. There was a group of children who practiced either invented spelling (IS), copied spelling (CS), or invented spelling with feedback (ISFB), and control group whom only made drawings (D). At the end of the study, which lasted six months, each participating student was tested individually on letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, word reading and word spelling (Rieben, et al., 2005).

For all comparisons made between the IS and D groups and CS and D groups there were no significant contrasts. Neither invented spelling or copied spelling alone significantly improved performance. The three contrasts of ISFB to D, ISFB to IS, and ISFB to CS were significant. The ISFB group scored significantly higher than the IS, CS or D groups on orthographically oriented tasks. ISFB scored higher than D for orthographic reading and word reading tasks and higher than IS and CS for orthographic spelling, orthographic reading and word reading. Because the results provided no feedback on grapheme or phoneme awareness or the alphabetic principle, the researchers (2005) conclude that invented spelling or copied spelling should not replace phonemic awareness instruction in the classroom (Rieben, et al., 2005).

This study was conducted in across five different schools in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. However, the researchers (2005) noted that many of the orthographic features of French are similar to English, such as words containing double letters, and the results of this study should be applicable to English language reading and writing as well. The researchers also note, however, that there is an overrepresentation of upper class students in this study and that the study excluded students with a low level of vocabulary knowledge. For this reason, the results cannot be generalized or applied to kindergarteners that come to school with low levels of vocabulary knowledge and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Rieben, et al., 2005).

The ISFB group, that benefited from both IS practice and feedback on the correct spelling scored higher than other three groups on most tests. This finding that the children who received a combined treatment had more success than those who received a single treatment shows that instruction that involves both invented spelling practice and feedback is the most effective. These findings showed the presence of orthographic knowledge at age five, and should encourage teachers of emergent literacy to develop an awareness of orthographic features from the very beginning of literacy instruction through practice with invented spelling and the provision of feedback (Rieben, et al., 2005).

Castiglioni-Spalten and Ehri (2003) conducted a study of kindergarten students from two urban elementary schools that were located in neighborhoods described to be of low socioeconomic status. This study examines a specific instructional method with the intent of aiding young readers in learning to read and spell. Castiglioni-Spalten and Ehri's intent with this study to answer the question: Do kindergartners, who are taught to

segment words into phonemes by monitoring articulatory gestures or by manipulating

blocks, benefit in their ability to read and spell? In order to answer this question, the

researchers worked with three groups of kindergartners from two schools that did not

teach reading at that grade level. A researcher instructed one group to segment words

into phonemes by studying several blocks with depictions of different mouth positions on

them. For example, one block had a drawing of a mouth with closed lips and the students

were taught that this represents the phonemes /p/, /b/, and /m/. When the student heard a

specific phoneme, she was instructed to look for the corresponding block. Another group

was taught to segment words into phonemes by listening for the number and type of

phoneme in each word. These students were instructed to tap on blocks. One tap on one

block represented one phoneme. If, for example, the researcher said /p/, /p/, the student

was taught to tap one block twice. If the researcher said, /p/, /t/, the student was taught to

tap two different blocks, one time each.   The third group was a control group. These

students stayed in their classroom and received their usual instruction. The researchers

ultimately found that both the articulatory and the ear methods taught phonemic

awareness more effectively as compared to a control group. The skills transferred to

writing for both treatment groups who were able to write phonemes in words more

accurately than the control group. Only articulatory training transferred to the reading

task (Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri, 2003).

Castiglioni-Spalten and Ehri's (2003) overall findings suggest that the

instructional methods used in the study are effective instructional approaches for teaching

young students to read and write. Some of this study's strengths include the random

assignment of students into the three groups and that the study's findings were replicated

across two different posttests administered by a researcher who did not know which treatment each student had received. This removes much of the possible experimenter bias that could have affected the posttest outcomes. A limitation to this study that must also be addressed is related to the research question. The researchers asked if kindergartners, who are taught to segment words into phonemes by monitoring articulatory gestures or by manipulating blocks, benefit in their ability to read and spell. Although the posttests revealed that the students were able to segment words into phonemes better than they were able to at the pretest, these findings do not provide evidence for how well the students will be able to read and write authentic texts. The students in this study were removed from their classroom for the pretests, instructional sessions and posttests that occurred across six 30-minute sessions. Due to the contrived nature of the environment, one must question how the skills taught to the students during this study will transfer into their regular classroom work. More research would need to be done to examine how such methods of word segmentation transfer to later reading and writing abilities (Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri,

2003).

The four studies in this section all examined various specific instructional approaches for their effectiveness in supporting emergent literacy. Block and Peskowitz (1990) and Juliebo et al. (1998) looked at the relationship between metacognition and literacy achievement in young students. These two studies approached their examination of the influence of metacognition on literacy development in different ways. Block and Peskowitz looked at its effects on spelling and found that the participating students had developed metacognitive knowledge about the words they were asked to spell and stated

that the main implication for teachers is that metacognitive knowledge could be acquired and better developed in elementary aged spellers through explicit instruction in metacognitive spelling strategies such as different forms of inspection. While Juliebo et al. concluded that the young readers in the intervention program displayed a wide range of metacognitive behavior and that these were closely connected with behaviors cited in other studies similar to this one, further research would need to be done in order to link the metacognitive behaviors to reading progress (Block & Peskowitz, 1990; Juliebo et al., 1998).

Rieben, Ntamakiliro, and Gonthier (2005) compared different word spelling practices, such as invented spelling and copied spelling, in kindergarten and then assessed their affects on letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, reading and spelling and found that the children who received invented spelling practice and feedback had more success than comparison groups. Castiglioni-Spalten and Ehri (2003) conducted a study of kindergarten students to determine whether kindergartners who are taught to segment words into phonemes by monitoring articulatory gestures and manipulating blocks, benefit in their ability to read and spell. Their overall findings suggested that the instructional methods used in the study were effective instructional approaches for teaching young students to read and write. However, a critique of the study showed that while the researchers asked if kindergartners, who are taught to segment words into phonemes by monitoring articulatory gestures or by manipulating blocks, benefit in their ability to read and spell, the posttests only revealed that the students were able to segment words into phonemes better than they were able to at the pretest. These findings did not

provide evidence for how well the students would be able to read and write authentic

texts (Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri, 2003; Rieben, et al., 2005).

Effective Approaches for Supporting Emergent Literacy in Students Who Are At Risk for

Reading Failure

All of the studies in this section examined approaches for supporting emergent

literacy in the classroom for students who are at risk for reading failure. As described in

chapter one, that is the intent of this paper and this section provides information from the

educational research that has been done on effective approaches to supporting emergent

literacy for this diverse group of young people. Included in this section are studies that

examine large intervention programs implemented in entire schools or districts that have

been identified as at-risk (Carlson & Francis, 2002; D'Angiulli, Siegel, & Hertzman,

2004a; Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass & Massengill, 2005; Lane & Menzies, 2002;

O'Connor, Fulmer, Harty, & Bell, 2005), studies that examine and observe the overall

instructional and support practices of various classrooms (Barone, 2002; Bursuck, Munk,

Nelson & Curran, 2002; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Speece & Ritchey, 2005),

studies that examine emergent literacy approaches for students who are English language

learners (Araujo, 2002; D'Angiulli, Siegel & Maggi, 2004b; Graves, Gersten & Haager,

2004; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004), and studies that examine the effectiveness of a variety

of specific instructional practices for supporting students who are at risk for reading

failure (Center, Freeman, Robertson & Outhred; 1999; Fang & Cox, 1999; Leal,

Johanson, Toth & Huang, 2004; Mathes, Torgeson, Clancy-Menchetti, Santi, Nicholas,

Robinson & Grek, 2003; Simmons, Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes & Hodge, 1995).

Studies That Examined Large Intervention Programs Implemented In Entire Schools or Districts That Have Been Identified As At-Risk

Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass, and Massengill (2005) described the implementation of a balanced literacy program in one urban school district in order to answer two main research questions: 1. Of the instructional time devoted to literacy, how much time was devoted to each of the different types of balanced literacy activities, read alouds, guided reading, independent writing and so on? 2. What does a balanced literacy classroom look like? Balanced literacy, in this study, is defined as, "a philosophical orientation that assumes reading and writing achievement are developed through instruction and support in multiple environments by using various approaches that differ by level of teacher support and child control" (2005, p. 273). The researchers cite a study done by The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement whose results showed that for students who are at-risk for reading failure as a result of high poverty, effective approaches to teaching literacy included good classroom management and scaffolded balanced literacy instruction that focused on explicit skills and authentic texts. To further the research in this area, Frey, et al. described the implementation of a similar program in an urban school district (Frey, et al., 2005).

The researchers (2005) used a triangulation strategy of classroom observations, a teacher self-report survey and student small group interviews. All three data sources showed that both teacher-directed and student-directed activities were taking place and that independent student work occurred with a higher frequency than teacher-directed activities. These findings concerned the researchers because past studies have shown that although independent work is necessary in classrooms with diverse groups of students

and students who enter school with limited literacy skills, teacher-directed instructional activities should be an essential part of the literacy instruction. The research assistants observed read alouds in the classrooms, however the teachers did not report that read alouds focused on phonological concepts, vocabulary building, or deriving meaning from texts. Shared reading and guided reading were observed occurring only occasionally. An effective balanced literacy program stresses all components because the variety of approaches supports different readers at different times (Frey, et al., 2005).

One of this study's strengths was the fairly large sample size. The participants of this study included the students from grades K-5 in 32 elementary schools across one school district. 67 teachers and their classrooms were involved in the study, and 23 small group interviews were administered with a total of 123 students from grades 2-6. The researchers also gathered data through a triangulation strategy and had consistent forms and checklists for all observers to base their observations off of (Frey, et al., 2005).

The results of this study show that the teachers involved in the district's new balanced literacy program were participating and implementing all of the components of that program. The results also showed that time given to teacher-directed instructional activities were much less than the time given to individual activities. The unequal distribution of the balanced literacy activities may have put students who have limited literacy skills at a disadvantage. The implication of these findings for districts, schools, or individual teachers planning to implement a balanced literacy program is that a balanced literacy program is most effective when all of the components are available to the students. If some components are missing or rarely present than the needs of all students will not be met (Frey, et al., 2005).

Carlson and Francis (2002) examined and evaluated an implementation of a program The Rodeo Institute for Teachers Excellence (RITE) carried out in an elementary school. The purpose of RITE is to address the emergent literacy needs of at-risk students because the effectiveness of the reading instruction that the students receive in the early grades is so important to their later development as readers and writers. The ITE program is a phonics-based program that was designed to provide students who are at risk for reading failure with explicit instruction in decoding and phonemic awareness. In this evaluation, the researchers included all of the students and teachers in grades K through 2 at 20 participating schools. Twenty comparison schools that did not take part in the RITE program were identified (Carlson & Francis, 2002).

Carlson and Francis (2002) collected data on the schools through a series of literacy-based standardized tests that were administered to all K-2 students in the fall and spring of the school year and through teacher observations. Teacher observations took place at two different times throughout the school year, and twice for each time and focused on two areas: teacher corrections and teacher responses to student responses. The teachers were each observed for a total of 80-100 minutes throughout the school year. Finally, the RITE trainer that worked at each school was asked to evaluate each teacher's instructional and classroom management practices (Carlson & Francis, 2002).

Carlson & Francis (2002) found that the RITE program was successful at improving the students' reading abilities, based on the assessments. The students involved in the RITE program outperformed the students in the comparison schools and this performance was found to be the strongest in the first to years of the program. The researchers also found that by second grade the rate of improvement on reading

assessments slowed down as if the RITE program was not fully supporting the improvements that it started in grades K and 1. The classroom observations and the results of the RITE trainer evaluations showed that teachers who implemented the RITE program to a higher degree had better performing students in their class (Carlson & Francis, 2002).

Carlson and Francis' (2002) study had a very large sample size of 277 teachers from across 20 schools. The study fails however the explain in detail what the RITE program looks like in detailed and specific terms. Without this necessary information, the findings cannot be applied to other elementary schools. The RITE program claims to be a phonics-based program that uses explicit approaches to teaching decoding and phonemic awareness and all of the assessment instruments used tested for phonics-based skills such as letter-sound identification, blending, and an awareness of onset and rime. The strong performance results for the students in the RITE program must be viewed in the context of the correlation between their instruction and assessment. Neither the RITE program, nor the evaluation by Carlson and Francis mentions any literacy work with comprehension, writing, or reading texts. The students were not assessed for any comprehension skills or strategies either. This important aspect of emergent literacy is not accounted for in this study (Carlson & Francis, 2002).

The researchers (2002) and their description of the RITE program both acknowledge the importance of providing effective literacy instruction to students when they are just beginning to read and write. However, if a program that is not full and balanced in supporting all of the research-based aspects of emergent literacy than it is possible that effective literacy instruction is not present. Carlson and Francis' findings

showed that the rate of high reading performance slowed as students moved through second grade. If this rate continues to slow than the program has not fully served these students' literacy needs. A more complete and longitudinal study would need to be done on the RITE program in order to determine its effectiveness in the long run (Carlson & Francis, 2002).

D'Angiulli, Siegel and Hertzman (2004a) evaluated the relationship between a school district's literacy program and the rate of children with reading difficulties who were classified as at-risk for reading failure. Prior research has shown that students of families with low socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to have reading difficulties and need intervention. Therefore, the researchers wanted to determine whether a school program with a rich literacy component could compensate for some of the socioeconomic factors that may play a role in a student's reading difficulties (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004a).

The results of this study were based upon the 30 participating schools. All of these schools offered a rich literacy program. Tests that evaluated basic cognitive skills that support literacy development (word reading, phonological processing, and word spelling) were administered to all students in the sample in the fall of kindergarten then in the spring of each consecutive year through grade three. Multiple correlations were run for each test year and outcome measure. The effect of SES on test scores was assessed separately. The SES variables were called, unemployment, mobility, single parent, and payment-income, and were entered as variables in the multiple correlation model (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004a).

Strong associations were found between SES and reading achievement in kindergarten, prior to beginning school in the fall and there was a reduction of

socioeconomic effects on test scores only six months later. A trend analysis was done

among related effect sizes. For every effect size expressed in terms of correlational

metric, trend analyses were conducted using orthogonal contrasts. These trend analyses

of effect sizes for each grade showed the association between SES and test scores

progressively dropped until reached minimal levels in grades two and three ($p < .05$).

Therefore, the risk of reading failure decreased as a function of grade ($p < .001$). From

the initial rate of .26 in kindergarten, the risk of reading failure was reduced to .04 in

grade three (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004a).

The basis for this study was the rich literacy program that is present in the sample

school district. The researchers (2004a) described the characteristics of the program that

made an effective program for teaching young people literacy. Some of the

characteristics include, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, a home

reading program, read alouds, explicit instruction in sound-symbol relationships, journal

writing using invented spelling, and small group and whole group instructional activities.

The study's findings are based upon these rich literacy activities yet no information is

provided as to the extent and consistency that these activities are used throughout the

district. A possible confounding variable to the results could be inconsistencies or

different implementations of the literacy program between classrooms, grades and

schools. One strength of this study is the longitudinal nature; students were followed and

tested across four grades and the large sample size. Test scores came from 1,221 students

(D'Angiulli, et al., 2004a).

This study's findings show that in schools with rich literacy programs, the

association between SES and performance in basic literacy skills was reduced as the

years of schooling increased. Because the effect of SES on literacy performance decreased with exposure to the literacy activities of reading, spelling and phonological processing, an awareness of teachers to the possible connection between SES and reading difficulties could lead to early intervention for students at-risk for reading failure (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004a).

O'Connor, Fulmer, Harty, and Bell (2005) conducted a four year-long study in two schools in order to understand what the effects of professional development in early literacy and direct literacy intervention are on literacy outcomes for students who are at risk for reading failure. At the beginning of this study, the researchers divided the sample into three groups. Layer 1 included classes of kindergarteners whose teachers received professional development in skills-oriented literacy instruction. Layer 2 included classes of kindergarteners whose teachers received the same professional development and the students in these classes who were identified as at-risk for reading failure, based on the pretests administered for this study, also received direct intervention. A control group included a class of kindergarteners from another school where the professional development and direct intervention were not offered. These classes of students were followed through grade three and each group's designated treatment continued. The professional development was taught by the researchers and included phonemic awareness, vocabulary and phonics for grades K and 1, the alphabetic principle, word study and fluency for grades 1 and 2, and multiple-syllabic word reading approaches and comprehension strategies such as developing the main idea, retelling, and summarizing for grade 3 (O'Connor, et al., 2005).

A student's high-risk profile was initially determined when the student was "lagging" behind their peers (O'Connor, et al., 2005, p. 442). The researchers noted that the reason a student is lagging behind can be attributed to inappropriate instruction, too few opportunities to engage in important reading tasks (perhaps as a result of too much whole-group instruction), or students may not have acquired concepts or understandings that their grade-level peers have already learned. If a student is identified to be lagging behind than a new approach to the instruction they receive is needed (O'Connor, et al., 2005).

The layered approach allowed the researchers (2005) to compare the control group with a cohort of students whose teachers had yearly professional development, and with a cohort of students whose teachers had professional development, and the students who needed it received intervention sessions. O'Connor, et al. found that early and continuous intervention for students with high-risk profiles in kindergarten through third grade improves their reading outcomes. The findings in this study showed that at the end of grade 2 and 3 the students' reading outcomes (Layer 1 versus Layer 2 versus Control) based on posttest scores for word identification, word attack, comprehension, and fluency were all significant. The findings for at-risk students were identified in all three treatment groups but only in Layer 2 did they receive any extra intervention, showed significant outcomes, similar to the larger sample. The professional development of layer 1 improved reading outcomes significantly over the control group in grades 2 and 3, and the addition of direct intervention in Layer 2 resulted in larger effect sizes over the control group and significant differences across all reading areas (O'Connor, et al., 2005).

This study was a longitudinal study that followed and assessed cohorts of students across four years of schooling. The researchers (2005) provided the demographic information about the students involved in the study. The students from School 1 were living in a primarily low SES industrial area of a city in the Northeast. Fewer than 10% of the students' parent reported any college education. The students in the study were 12% African American, 2% Hispanic, 3% Native American, and 83% European American. The students from School 2 were 15% African American, 57% European American, and 28% other. School 2 was located near a university and the parents of these students were primarily highly educated (O'Connor, et al., 2005).

A weakness of this study is the extent to which the researcher adapted the learning environments of the students. This study does not provide any information about the instructional practices that were taking place in these schools and classrooms before the different treatments began. The researchers (2005) provided a specific type of skills-oriented professional development and corresponding direct intervention to struggling readers. The students' were then tested on the same measures of reading. One could expect that with the implementation of skills-oriented professional development and direct intervention strategies the students would have more success on tests of these skills (O' Connor, et al., 2005).

Lane and Menzies (2002) were interested in students who are at-risk for reading failure as a result of a lack of academic readiness skills, such as basic concepts of print, and a lack of sociobehavioral skills such as the ability to follow directions, take turns and manage frustrations. Overall, teachers and other educational professionals tend to assume that students will begin school with both of these abilities. Students who do not

have these abilities for a wide variety of reasons become immediately at-risk for academic struggles and relationship struggles with peers and teachers. The researchers were interested in effective interventions that will help these students meet the expectations of the school culture (Lane & Menzies, 2002).

When published, this study was at the midpoint in its intervention plan and preliminary results showed that, if implemented correctly, a comprehensive, school-wide intervention plan could improve academic achievement for many students. Preliminary results were based on a set of tests that the participating students were given at the beginning of the school year and again 3 months later to assess student progress. These tests included a behavior assessment called the Student Risk Screening Scale, and reading comprehension tests that included Scholastic Comprehension tests, Harcourt Brace reading Comprehension tests, and grade-level reading comprehension passages from the Multiple Skills series. These preliminary tests showed that there were significant improvements in many students' reading comprehension throughout the school. Students' risk scores, based on the Student Risk Screening Scale, did not improve significantly over time. Eighty-six percent of the students had remained stable in their risk status and 6% of students made slight movement towards lower risk categories. An interesting preliminary result showed that the students in the higher risk categories were just as likely to have academic growth as those in the lower risk categories when the initial variable of reading performance was taken into account. This finding suggests that students in higher risk categories are not any more resistant to intervention than those in lower risk categories. The researchers (2002) supposed that the difference in results from the school-wide intervention program for literacy and at-risk status was attributed to the

stronger focus on the literacy interventions (90.31% fidelity) than the school-wide behavior plan (80.83% fidelity) (Lane & Menzies, 2002).

This study had a relatively large sample size of 298 general education students ranging from grades 1 through 6. All students attended the same elementary school located in southern California. The ethnic distribution of the school is 53% Hispanic, 33% White, 12% black, 1% Asian, and 1% other. 78% of the students received free or reduced priced lunches and 21% of the students were English language learners. The staff included 16 general education teachers. The implemented intervention plan included a literacy component with three categories of instruction: whole group, small group and individual instruction. The behavior components included in the intervention plan coincided with the Assertive Discipline model. The researchers (2002) used uniform checklists to assess the integrity with which the teachers and schools implemented each component of the overall plan. The literacy intervention plan also included research-based comprehension strategies, metacognitive procedures, and higher-order thinking skills and was implemented with the help of a literacy coach and the Assertive Discipline behavior plan involved setting up a classroom community, positive attention strategies and explicit instruction on behavioral expectations (Lane & Menzies, 2002).

Lane and Menzies (2002) stressed that students who are unable to meet the academic and social expectations of their teachers, for whatever reason, area at-risk for school failure. It is then the expectations of the teachers that must be examined. A lack of acceptable performance by a student is often due to a deficit on the teacher's part. If a teacher is not effectively meeting the needs of all of her students, than the student's stand

to lose. Intervention programs should also focus attention on teacher variables such as classroom management, planning and instructional approaches (Lane & Menzies, 2002).

The four studies in this section all examined large intervention programs implemented in entire schools or districts that have been identified as at-risk. Frey, et al. (2005), and Carlson and Francis (2002) examined district wide literacy curriculum interventions that were implemented in an attempt to boost reading achievement for the elementary aged students. Frey, et al. described the implementation of a balanced literacy program in one urban school district in order to determine how much time was devoted to each of the different types of balanced literacy and what a balanced literacy classroom looks like. The researchers found that although the teachers involved in the district's new balanced literacy program were participating and implementing all of the components of that program, the time given to teacher-directed whole class instructional activities was much less than the time given to individual activities. The unequal distribution of the balanced literacy activities may have put students who have limited literacy skills at a disadvantage and the implications of this finding for districts, schools, or individual teachers planning to implement a balanced literacy program is that a balanced literacy program is most effective when all of the components are available to the students. If some components are missing or rarely present than the needs of all students will not be met (Carlson & Francis, 2002; Frey, et al. 2005).

Carlson and Francis (2002) examined and evaluated the implementation of a program The Rodeo Institute for Teachers Excellence (RITE) carried out in an elementary school in order to address the emergent literacy needs of at-risk students. The researchers found that the RITE program was not full and balanced in supporting all of

the research-based aspects of emergent literacy. It appeared that effective literacy instruction was not fully present. Carlson and Francis' findings showed that the rate of high reading performance slowed as students moved through second grade. If this rate continues to slow than the program has not fully served these students' literacy needs. A more complete and longitudinal study would need to be done on the RITE program in order to determine its effectiveness in the long run (Carlson & Francis, 2002).

D'Angiulli, Siegel and Hertzman (2004a) conducted their research through a district wide literacy program that was already in place. They evaluated the relationship between the district's literacy program and the rate of children with reading difficulties who were classified as at-risk for reading failure. Their findings showed that in schools with rich literacy programs, such as the one studied, the association between SES and performance in basic literacy skills was reduced as the years of schooling increased. O'Connor, Fulmer, Harty, and Bell (2005) conducted a four year-long study in two schools in order to understand what the effects of professional development in early literacy and direct literacy intervention are on literacy outcomes for students who are at risk for reading failure. Similarly, Lane and Menzies (2002) were interested in students who are at-risk for reading failure as a result of a lack of academic readiness skills, such as basic concepts of print, and a lack of sociobehavioral skills such as the ability to follow directions, take turns and manage frustrations. As a result of their findings, the researchers stressed that students who are unable to meet the academic and social expectations of their teachers, for whatever reason, area at-risk for school failure and it is then the expectations of the teachers that must be examined. If teachers are not effectively meeting the needs of all of her students, than the students stand to lose.

Intervention programs should also focus attention on teacher variables such as classroom management, planning and instructional approaches (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004a; Lane & Menzies, 2002; O'Connor, et al., 2005).

Studies That Examined The Overall Instructional and Support Practices of Various Classrooms for Students Who Are At Risk for Reading Failure

Bursuck, Munk, Nelson and Curran (2002) examined teachers' attitudes and knowledge of emergent reading practices that can prevent reading problems for children who are at risk for reading failure and able to identify at risk students. Of the 549 kindergarten and first grade teachers who participated in this study by responding to a survey, the majority of the respondents favored explicit structured instructional practices over more implicit, whole-language based, instructional practices for students who are at risk for reading failure. This may suggest that when at risk readers are concerned, teachers are not providing as much balance in the literacy curriculum. The respondents also agreed that reading failure could be prevented with early intervention yet they also rated their ability to identify a student, who is at risk for reading failure lower than their knowledge of intervention strategies (Bursuck, et al., 2002).

One of the strengths of this survey study was the large number of participants who represented classrooms in urban, suburban and rural areas. No information was provided as to the socioeconomic status of the communities where these schools were located or to the percentages of students at-risk for reading failure in the schools. Without this information, it is difficult to generalize theses results to other school and classroom communities. This study has a number of limitations. The researchers (2002) stated that this survey had a strong focus on decoding skills and strategies. Although a factor

analysis was done on the attitude portions of the survey and found a reliability of .64 for implicit, whole-language and .67 for the explicit, phonemic awareness and phonics questions, the results of the surveys were analyzed through the lens of explicit phonics and phonemic awareness instructional strategies. The respondents' low ratings of knowledge about specific strategies for helping students at risk for reading failure may only appear low because more implicit, meaning based instructional strategies were not present on the knowledge sections of the survey (Bursuck, et al., 2002).

The results of these surveys provide no information about the teachers' actual teaching practices, as the survey questions focus on attitudes, perceptions and knowledge. Although there is an imbalance to this study, with a strong focus on decoding and other phonics-based instructional strategies, the results for the teachers perceptions of their ability to identify students who are at-risk for reading failure is relevant. Teachers may have knowledge of a set of strategies that are effective for supporting the emergent literacy of young people, but how can these strategies be truly effective if the teacher is not able to properly assess her or his students' needs? More research in this area would be helpful to teachers, administrators and other educational professionals. Perhaps more studies' findings would suggest that teachers need to be more aware of how to identify the needs of their students before focusing on how to meet those needs (Bursuck, et al., 2002).

Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) surveyed a nation-wide sample of special education teachers who had been identified as effective teachers for students with difficulties in reading in order to determine some of the effective approaches to literacy instruction for students with reading difficulties. Due to the large number of questions on

the survey, the researchers (2000) grouped the results into the categories: general philosophies and learning environments, general teaching processes, reading instruction, and writing instruction (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

The survey asked teachers whether they considered themselves to be teachers of whole-language instruction. A total of 23% responded yeas to this item, and of that percentage, 57% responded that they were to some extent, and 20% of the teachers responded no. A clearer picture of the emphases the teachers place on meaning-based versus decoding-based instructional strategies came with the results to the question about which proportion of instruction for students who are struggling with reading should be considered decoding text and which proportion should deal with gaining meaning from text. The mean percentage reported for gaining meaning was 62% (SD = 16.46) and for decoding was 38% (SD= 16.46). All teachers reported that they created a literate environment for their students. Teachers also reported: in-class libraries (90%), chart stories and poems (65%) and word lists (58%) (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

The teachers reported using ability-grouping for a little more than half of their literacy instruction time and one third of the teachers reported using reading groups that met daily. Only 21% of the teachers used cooperative learning groups more than 50% of the time. For students with reading problems, the teacher reported small group instruction 35 % of the time and for students with more severe reading problems individualized instruction was used 39% of the time. 79% of the teachers reported that they always teach attending behavior and 19% of the teachers sometimes teach attending behavior to their students. Listening skills were always taught by 81% of the teachers and were sometimes taught by 19% of the teachers (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

The percentages of different types of materials read by students are: materials written at a controlled reading level, 47%, outstanding children's literature, 42%, materials written for specific phonetic elements, 24%, and high interest, low vocabulary materials, 14%. For oral reading, the teachers reported different types of materials. Stories written by students and basal readers were used by 90% of the teachers; books with controlled vocabulary were used by 74% of the teachers and trade books by 68% of the teachers. Concepts about print were intentionally taught to students more than half of the time and were taught in context or as an isolated activity by 80% of the teachers (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

Ninety-seven percent of the teachers reported teaching letter-sound relationships to all of their students with no differences based on the degree of reading difficulty. Most teachers said they preferred teaching these concepts in context and they also taught them in isolation. The teachers were asked to rate, on a scale of 0 (never)-7 (several times a day) the frequency with which they taught decoding strategies to students with varying degrees of reading problems. For students with mild reading problems were rated as several times a week (M= 5.39, SD = .99), nearly daily for students with moderate reading problems (M = 5.66, SD = .89), and daily for students with severe reading problems (M= 6.00, SD = .80). For comprehension skills and strategies, the teachers rated on a scale of 0 (rare) to 7 (all stories) their frequency of asking comprehension questions for the majority of reading (M= 6.55, SD = 1.09). 66% of teachers reported that they used discussion of stories several times a week, daily or several times a day (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

Writing in various forms was reported as common practice in the majority of the teachers' classrooms and 90% of the teachers reported that their students write in a variety of forms several times a week, daily, or several times a day. Writing portfolios were used as tools by 73% of the teachers for evaluating students' writing. Two-thirds of the teachers reported that they use journal-writing several times a week, daily, or several times a day, and 94% of the teachers' allocated time for guided writing. Only 20% of the teachers reported that their students used the writer's workshop and process writing format for their writing instruction. Almost all of the teachers responded positively to their students' use of invented spellings (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

This study used a nation-wide sample of special education teachers in order to avoid regional biases. This sample size was relatively small, however, only 36 teachers. This study was also conducted using a survey and therefore no observation of what the instructional approaches of the teachers looked like, nor is there any information on the students' performance and achievements in literacy. It is difficult to apply the results of this survey to teaching practice because although the survey showed much agreement amongst effective teachers about instructional approaches, there was no qualitative information about how the approaches were implemented by each teacher (Rankin-Erickson &Pressley, 2000).

The instructional practices of these teachers show a balance of teaching philosophies and an overall commitment to creating supportive and motivating environments for their students to work in. When compared to past studies done on effective general education teachers, differences are noted in the degree more than the type of instruction that special education teachers use. Explicit teaching of letter-word

skills, small group work and individual instruction all occurred more frequently for the special education teaches in this study than the general education teachers of similar studies. Almost one-fourth of the participating teachers identified themselves as whole-language teachers and most of the practices reported in this study were aligned with that philosophy. As an entire group, the teachers had not totally embraced the whole-language methodology. The survey results describe an integrated approach to teaching literacy that uses many of the positive aspects of whole-language instruction as well as more explicit, structured strategies that have been found in the past to be effective for students with reading difficulties. As trends in schooling shift towards greater inclusion of students with difficulties in reading into general education classrooms, teachers need to be able to meet the literacy needs of all of their students. Instructional strategies such as basal readers and homogeneous groupings are not appropriate for meeting the needs of a diverse classroom of students and for students who have difficulties with reading. This study shows that effective teachers of students with reading difficulties use a wide variety of approaches that combine literature-based, authentic instruction with more explicit and structured instruction based upon the needs of their students (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

Barone (2002) was interested in how kindergarten students, who attend a school that is low performing in reading and therefore labeled at-risk, develop literacy. She was also interested in how their teachers support the students in acquiring this literacy knowledge. Barone collected her data by observing 16 focal students chosen by the researcher to represent the ethnic diversity of the school: eight boys, nine Hispanic students, two African American students, and four white students. Of these focal

students, ten spoke English as their second language and only four had any preschool experience. The sixteen students were in two different classrooms. Barone observed these students in their classroom three times a week across an entire school year without any student interaction. Each focal student was targeted once per visit and she focused her observations on research-based aspects of a kindergarten literacy program: instruction in letter knowledge, phonemic awareness and concepts of a book. The researcher also colleted data through teacher interviews and the collection of student work samples (Barone, 2002).

Overall, Barone (2002) found that the strategies most commonly used by the teachers were: reading stories to students, shared reading, independent reading, journaling, letter knowledge and sound-symbol instruction, and making take-home books. Over the course of the school year, the closer inspection into these practices revealed that simply listing these strategies did not fully describe the instruction. For example, the students were read to, but almost never were they included in a conversation about the text they heard. There were few overt opportunities for the students to develop an understanding of the stories they heard, and for the students had little English language skills, Barone felt that the stories had little meaning. All three teachers, in the two classrooms focused on direct instruction and coloring and worksheet activities were often used (Barone, 2002).

At the end of the year, Barone (2002) found that these students did become literacy learners, but only in part. The majority of the sixteen focal students had little knowledge about letter identification, phonemic awareness and letter/sound relationships. The students were not engaged in the meaning and purpose of their reading and writing

activities. Barone deemed the level of literacy knowledge that the focal students had at the end of the year to be worrisome. The students' lack of engagement in the purposes and meaning of their literacy development and activities may have been related to the type of instruction they received. Barone observed that a large proportion of the instruction focused on letter recognition and the sounds of the letters. This knowledge is important for emergent readers, however when the instruction is isolated from the meaningful connections to the text as was done in these classrooms, the students cannot fully engage in comprehending the texts. Barone also observed very few opportunities for the students to experiment with print in a meaningful way, by expanding their phonetic awareness through creating their own spellings. Mostly, these students copied spellings or were given the correct spellings by the teacher (Barone, 2002).

This study has many limitations. Barone (2002) conducted all of her research in two classrooms with only sixteen focal students therefore providing a very limited picture of instructional approaches for students who are at risk for reading failure. This study's findings can only be applied to the two teachers involved. The researcher conducted all observations and subsequent coding. There is no inter-rater agreement to reference as support for her data collected. Furthermore, all of the students' achievements, progress, strengths and weakness were assessed through the researcher's observations and the teacher interviews. There were no systematic pre- or posttest assessments of reading performance (Barone, 2002).

Barone (2002) observed a strong focus, overall, on phonemic skills in these two classrooms. This strong and tight focus for a literacy program can exclude students who are learning the English language because it excludes them from opportunities to develop

comprehension skills. On the surface, these teachers attempted to engage their students

in meaningful and effective reading and writing activities, such as shared reading,

journaling and read alouds, however they added these strategies on to the framework of

their established and structured curriculum and therefore did not engage the students in a

meaningful way. The implications for teachers of students who are at-risk for reading

failure is that the research-based effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy

for these students are important and the strategies cannot simply be added onto another

instructional program, or implemented in name only. These practices must be

implemented in a way that is meaningful and engaging for the students. Teachers must

find a way to hold themselves accountable for the instructional practices they use. If the

intent id meaningful engagement of all students, than it is important o use assessments in

such a way that this can be achieved (Barone, 2002).

Speece and Ritchey (2005) cited prior research that showed the connection

between reading fluency, the speed and accuracy with which text is read, and skilled

reading development and comprehension of text. They also cited studies that provide

evidence that a gap exists between students who are at risk for reading failure and

students with more traditional reading development in their reading fluency skills as early

as first grade. For these reasons, the researchers examined patterns of development for

oral reading fluency for students who are at risk for reading failure and for students who

are not. The researchers were also interested in what predictors of amount of growth in

oral reading fluency that exists for at-risk children (Speece & Ritchey, 2005).

Speece and Ritchey (2005) collected data for two cohorts of first grade students

across two successive academic school years. Two letter-sound fluency probes were

administered in the fall and the students who whose performance was in the bottom 25th percentile were identified as at risk (AR). A sample of not at risk (NAR) students was identified by determining two students in each class who scored at the 50th percentile, one student who scored at the 30th, one at the 70th, and one at the 90th. All students' fluency skills were assessed through tests of letter-sound fluency and oral reading fluency that occurred across twenty weeks from January to may for all of the students. The researchers also assessed the students' rapid automatized naming (RAN) skills by noting how many seconds it took a student to name a series of six objects. Phonological awareness, word reading efficiency, and the student's over all IQ were also assessed. Each classroom teacher completed a social skills rating scale for each AR student (Speece & Ritchey, 2005).

Speece and Ritchey (2005) found evidence that was similar to past studies showing oral reading fluency beginning early for young readers. In this study, the various assessment instruments showed the AR and NAR groups had differences in both the number of words they could read in 1 minute in May and their rate of growth (in words per minute). At the end of first grade, the AR students were reading less than half as many words per minute as the NAR group (22.5 versus 56.9). The AR group was also growing at half the rate as the NAR group (.78 versus 1.50 words per week). Speece and Ritchey found these to be alarming differences for students who are so early in their reading development. The researchers also suggest that fluency skills be integrated into reading instruction earlier (Speece & Ritchey, 2005).

It was also the intent of the researchers (2005) to examine the possible predictors of growth in the level of oral reading fluency. They predicted that letter-sound fluency

would be the major predictor and this prediction was confirmed. In January of first grade, letter-sound fluency skills predicted the May oral reading fluency levels. The students with better letter-sound fluency skills in January showed more growth in oral reading fluency in May. These students continued to have more oral reading fluency skills into second grade. The rapid automatized naming and the phonological awareness were not predictive of oral reading fluency in the same unique way that letter-sound fluency was (22.5 versus 56.9) (Speece & Ritchey, 2005)

In this study, Speece and Ritchey (2005) took the background variables of the students into account. All students were not equal if different contextual variables were affecting their performance on the assessments. Thus the researchers factored the extent of each student's mother's education, the child's chronological age and socioeconomic status. None of these background variables, including the students' IQ scores, proved to be significant in this sample. The teachers' ratings of academic competence taken from the completed social skills rating scales were unique correlates of first grade oral reading fluency and were marginally related to growth (p= .0518). With acknowledgement that it was only marginally related to growth, the teacher's opinion could provide a unique view to be factored into predictive models. The researchers only conducted predictive analysis on the AR group. Due to this possible restriction of range, the correlates that were not uniquely significant (RAN and phonological awareness) may have become so with the larger and more varied sample. In spite of the background variables that Speece and Ritchey took into consideration, this sample was limited in that all of the sample students and teachers belonged to the same school district. Because all of the students attended one of three schools, there is not much variation in region or instructional approach. The

type of literacy instruction that these students received may have factored in to the scores they received on the various assessments (Speece & Ritchey, 2005).

For most students, first grade is the time that they learn to read words by sight and through decoding strategies. Students must eventually be able to accurately and quickly identify words in order to read and make meaning of texts. Students must develop oral reading fluency. Speece and Ritchey (2005) approached reading fluency a part of the reading process that parallels the growth of word reading skills as opposed to product of reading development (Speece & Ritchey, 2005).

Two of these studies (Bursuck, et al., 2002; Rankin-Erickson& Pressley, 2000) used surveys to examine the instructional approaches of large groups of literacy teachers. Bursuck et al. examined teachers' attitudes and knowledge of both emergent reading practices that can prevent reading problems for children who are at risk for reading failure and ability to identify at risk students. Although the results of their surveys provided no concrete information about the teachers' actual teaching practices, as the survey questions focus on attitudes, perceptions and knowledge, the majority of the respondents favored explicit structured instructional practices over more implicit, whole-language based, instructional practices for students who are at risk for reading failure. Rankin-Erikson and Pressley surveyed a nation-wide sample of special education teachers who had been identified as effective teachers for students with difficulties in reading. The instructional practices of these teachers show a balance of teaching philosophies and an overall commitment to creating supportive and motivating environments for their students to work in. The survey results describe an integrated approach to teaching literacy that uses many of the positive aspects of whole-language

instruction as well as more explicit, structured strategies that have been found in the past to be effective for students with reading difficulties (Bursuck, et al., 2002; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

Barone (2002), was interested in how kindergarten students, who attend a school that is low performing in reading and therefore labeled at-risk, develop literacy and how their teachers support the students in acquiring this literacy knowledge. She observed a strong focus, overall, on phonemic skills in these two classrooms and concluded that such a strong focus for a literacy program can exclude students who are learning the English language because it excludes them from opportunities to develop comprehension skills. Speece and Ritchey (2005) examined patterns of development for oral reading fluency for students who are at risk for reading failure and for students who are not. The researchers were also interested in what predictors of amount of growth in oral reading fluency that exists for at-risk children. Their findings were similar to past studies showing oral reading fluency beginning early for young readers (Barone, 2002; Speece & Ritchey, 2005).

Studies That Examined Emergent Literacy Approaches for Students Who are English Language Learners

Araujo (2002) conducted a yearlong study of a kindergarten classroom located within a predominantly Portuguese immigrant community in the eastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which classroom literacy practice supports students' growth in oral language, reading and writing. Araujo was also concerned with what children's literacy behaviors and literacy development look like for that particular bilingual classroom. This study was conducted in an elementary school

where 40% of the student population spoke Portuguese, being of either Portuguese or Brazilian descent and the majority of the staff also spoke Portuguese. Araujo conducted her research within one contained bilingual classroom of twenty, full day kindergarteners, six of which were of Brazilian descent (Araujo, 2002).

In order to obtain a description of the classroom literacy practices and to view literacy in the classroom from a participant's point of view, Araujo (2002) dedicated the first month of her study, and also the first month of school, to familiarizing herself with the classroom and establishing her role as a participant observer. She then collected 65 classrooms observations throughout the remainder of the school year using field notes, audiotapes, collections of artifacts, photographs of wall charts and informal teacher interviews. Through the analysis of this data collected across the 65 observations in the classroom, Araujo identified three major literacy events and labeled them, "Circle/Reading", "Phonics/Handwriting", and "Journal Writing" (Araujo, 2002, p. 236).

Araujo (2002) found that children's literacy development was linked to the classroom literacy instruction. She also found that oral native language support and balanced approach to literacy instruction helped these students develop understandings about written language because this approach resembles more conventional forms in a similar way to how native English speakers acquire written language. Araujo cautioned that although this study indicated that ESL students can attain high levels of literacy development through a balanced approach to literacy, it does not address the possible negative affects such instruction may have on the student's development of their native language (Araujo, 2002).

One of the strengths of Araujo's (2002) study was that the three major literary events and the literacy practices and themes within them were identified through the process of open coding as they emerged out of her classroom observations. She checked these literacy events and practices against teacher interviews and classroom artifacts, however there was no mention of any other outside party checking her coding for validity. Araujo concluded her study with the suggestion that children's literacy development is connected to the type of literacy instruction they receive. She also concludes that oral native language support along with a balanced literacy approach helps students develop a complex knowledge of written language. Araujo's study provides much information that is useful to both ESL teachers and general education teachers who have students with native languages other than English. This study had a very small and specific sample size and therefore it would be difficult to generalize her findings to other classrooms (Araujo, 2002).

Similar to Araujo (2002), D'Angiulli, Siegel and Maggi (2004b) were interested in the reading achievement of students who are learning the English language. D'Angiulli, et al., however focused on students who were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) and were also from low socioeconomic status (SES) families and communities. The researchers noted that ELL students are typically at great risk for reading failure because they are also tend to belong to families who are at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. Because of this, the researchers were interested in the relationship between literacy instruction and the influence of SES on students who are learning the English language and students who speak English as their first language (L1). Specifically, this study investigated the effect of a district-wide school literacy-

intensive curriculum on word-reading achievement for ELL and L1 students as they progressed from kindergarten through fifth grade (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b).

The results of this study showed that as early as kindergarten word-reading achievement was related to SES. For the L1 students, the relationship was one that the researchers expected from the general population, that word-reading scores increased with SES. For the ELL students, the relationship was not as clear-cut because three gradients emerged for this group. One group of kindergarteners consistently had high word-reading scores in spite of their SES, another group showed the same relationship as the L1 students, and a third group showed strong relationships between SES and word-reading scores with large differences at the extreme ends of the SES spectrum. These gradients changed as the students progressed from kindergarten to fifth grade. As the students moved up in grade levels the relationships between SES and word-reading scores became more like that of the l1 students. By grade five, both the Ell and L1 students were obtaining high word-reading scores regardless of their SES (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b).

The literacy-intensive curriculum that was used in the participating school district included explicit instructional activities with an emphasis on sound-symbol relationships, cooperative story-writing, journal writing, the use of invented spelling, guided reading, shared reading, a home reading program, independent reading, and read alouds. The students' achievement was assessed through a test of word-reading skills. The SES of the students was determined through the most recent census data for the school district (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b).

This study had a large sample size of 1,108 students from 30 schools in one school district, however the study did not have a comparison group. All of the participants were involved in the literacy-intensive instruction. Also, because the instructional methods used in the classrooms involved in this study were mandated by the school district these results cannot necessarily be generalized to other elementary classrooms unless the specific literacy instructional practices and the student demographics were the same (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b).

The study's findings suggest that the students' word-reading scores have a distinct relationship to their SES in kindergarten, but by grade five the progress of L1 and ELL students become similar. The implication of this is based on the findings that show the similarities in the students' word-reading development were related to instruction, while the differences were related to SES. Therefore, it is an oversimplification to state, as prior research has, that the development of reading skills are similar in ELL and L1 students if SES is not accounted for. Learning to read English for young ELL students is a very demanding task and this task is most likely more challenging for students who live in low SES homes. Prior research finding have also shown that explicit and intensive literacy instruction are necessary to meet the needs of both L1 and ELL students who are at-risk for reading failure. This study adds that those practices are also effective in addressing the literacy inequalities that are associated with socioeconomic differences. Overall, this study showed that schooling and comprehensive literacy-intensive instructional programs started early in kindergarten and continued on through later grades may lessen the negative influence of SES on word-reading achievement (D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b).

Contrary to D'Angiulli et al.'s main findings, Lopez and Tashakkori (2004) cited research that showed the academic gap between limited English proficient (LEP) and native language speakers widening as they progressed through school. This widening gap reported in these studies may be a result of the type of instruction that the students are receiving and it may not have as intense of a focus as the curriculum program studied by D'Angiulli et al. Many literacy programs designed for bilingual and LEP students have vastly different goals and this lack of uniformity often adds to the students' risk for reading failure. With an interest in early intervention and a two-way bilingual program, Lopez and Tashakkori sought to find out if the potential risk for reading failure by the end of first grade could be minimized though a two-way bilingual program that began in kindergarten (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).

This study was conducted at one public elementary school in a predominantly Spanish-speaking school district. Large portions of the school's students come from immigrant families. The participating students were placed into two groups, the extended foreign language (EFL) group who received two hours of English language arts, thirty minutes of social studies in English, one hour of mathematics in English, one hour of Spanish language arts, and thirty minutes of science in Spanish each day, and the control group who received English-only instruction all day. Data was collected and analyzed using a two-group multiple pretest=posttest quasi-experimental design where students were pretested at the beginning of both kindergarten and first grade and post tested at the end of each year (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).

Despite their initial expected risk status, the students in the EFL group made adequate academic progress. At the end of first grade, there was no significant difference

between the EFL and the comparison group. These findings suggest that the early

implementation of the two-way bilingual program broke the pattern of academic failure

that is typical of Spanish-speaking students in this school district (Lopez & Tashakkori,

2004).

This study had a relatively large sample size of 87 students and because all of

these students attended the same school, the results cannot be applied to the students of

other elementary schools. This study also stopped assessing the students' reading

achievements after first grade. In order to truly show that a instructional method is

effective against the ever-widening achievement gap that occurs between LEP and native

English speaking students as they progress through school, the study would need to

follow the students into higher elementary school grades (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).

Many critics of bilingual education programs claim that any time devoted to the

students' native language is time taken away from learning to read and write the English

language. This study shows the benefits of a two-way bilingual program that allows for

instruction in the students' native language. The implications of these findings become

difficult for monolingual general education teachers who have LEP students in their

classroom. Not all public schools provide bilingual literacy programs, but that does not

invalidate this study's findings. All teachers of LEP students must make strides to learn

the language of their students and to incorporate literacy materials and opportunities for

the students to work in their native language in order to support their growth in reading

and writing in both English and their native language (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).

Graves, Gersten and Haager (2004) shared similar concerns for English learning

(EL) students as past researchers have in that many studies show second-language

learners can acquire the ability to read English at about the same rate as native speakers in the early elementary grades, but there is little information as to the specific instructional practices that either promote or inhibit this process. In order to add to this gap in the research, Graves, et al., investigated the literacy practices of multiple language first grade classrooms in order to examine the relationship between teaching practice and students' growth in reading. The researchers focused on how teachers could integrate research-based emergent literacy practices with English language development activities (Graves et al., 2004).

This study reported the data of two years of data collection in fourteen multiple language first grade classrooms in one school district. Year 1 focused on nine of the classrooms and year 2 focused on the other five. Across all of these classrooms, students spoke Cambodian, Cantonese, English, French, Hmong, Lao, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Data was collected in each classroom through five to seven observations per classroom during their 2.5-hour literacy sessions where observers completed a Likert scale form that rated the effectiveness of particular teaching practices and also included specific field notes. The students' reading abilities were assessed through pretests and posttests at the beginning and end of both years. The pretests and posttests were all the DIBELS oral reading fluency tests which tests the number of words a student can read per minute (Graves et al., 2004).

The oral reading fluency (ORF) pretest for all 14 classrooms, across the two years, was 16.45 words per minute (wpm) and benchmarks indicate that students who read below 40 wpm are at some risk for reading failure and students who read below 20 wpm are at great risk for reading failure. The ORF posttest classroom means ranged

from 19.32 to 81.92 wpm, with an average gain of 29.62 wpm. The correlation between the teachers' effectiveness ratings and the gain from pretest to posttest on ORF is moderately strong (r= 0.65). The researchers (2004) calculated the percentage of students who read below 40 wpm by the end of the year and found that these percentages were much higher in the classrooms where the teachers received low ratings on the effectiveness Likert scale. In year 1 the top-rated teachers had between 20-40 percent of their students below the 40 wpm benchmark and for the three teachers with he lowest ratings, nearly all of their class, 81-85 percent, were reading less than 40 wpm. Although the benchmark of 40 wpm is probably too high for EL students there is still are marked differences between the classrooms of high and low rated teachers (Graves et al., 2004).

The qualitative data collection from this study revealed some effective practices for teachers of EL students. These effective practices came from the classrooms where the teachers were rated high on an English Language Learners Classroom Observation Instrument (ELCOI) Likert scale and their students had higher scores on the oral reading fluency assessments. Some of the instructional practices that were identified as effective for teaching literacy to EL students were: high student engagement, many opportunities to use newly learned skills, much time spent in active reading, clear, explicit models of proficient performance and daily attention to struggling readers through specialized small group instruction and the use of mini-lessons. These practices are all supported in prior studies that focused on effective instruction for EL students (Graves et al., 2004).

This study based its assessments of teacher effectiveness on a Likert scale that was completed by classroom observers. The internal consistency reliability was high at .89 and the median inter-observer agreement on an item-by-item basis was 74 percent.

At the end of all of the observation sessions, the researchers (2004) interviewed each teacher in order to check the observer's field notes and observations. The only assessment piece used for the students was on ORF measure that assessed the number of words read per minute, therefore there was no way for the researchers to assess the level of comprehension and meaning-making that each student had as a result of the instruction they received (Graves et al., 2004).

This study was an attempt to begin to understand how teachers can effectively incorporate research-based instructional practices for emergent literacy and strategies that support language development for EL students. While this study's findings seemed to suggest that most of the strategies and approaches that research has labeled as effective for the support of emergent literacy for native speakers are also effective for EL students as well, more research needs to be done to understand the lasting effects of these practices on both the English language and native language development of EL students. Research is also needed to help explain how particular instructional approaches effect the development of comprehension and meaning-making, not just word-reading and oral reading fluency, for EL students (Graves et al., 2004).

All four of these studies examined emergent literacy approaches for students who are English language learners. Araujo (2002), conducted a yearlong study of a kindergarten classroom located within a predominantly Portuguese immigrant community in order to examine the ways in which classroom literacy practice supports students' growth in oral language, reading and writing and what children's literacy development looks like for a particular bilingual classroom. She found that children's literacy development was linked to the classroom literacy instruction and that oral native

language support and balanced approach to literacy instruction helped these students develop understandings about written language. Similar to Araujo, D'Angiulli, Siegel and Maggi (2004b) were interested in the reading achievement of students who are learning the English language and focused specifically on students who were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) and were also from low socioeconomic status (SES) families and communities. Their findings suggested that students' word-reading scores have a distinct relationship to their SES in kindergarten, but by grade five the progress of L1 and ELL students become similar (Araujo, 2002; D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b).

Lopez and Tashakkori (2004) cited research that was contradictory to D'Angiulli et al.'s (2004b) main findings by showing the academic gap between limited English proficient (LEP) and native language speakers widening as they progressed through school. Lopez and Tashakkori sought to find out if the potential risk for reading failure by the end of first grade could be minimized though a two-way bilingual program that began in kindergarten. This study showed the benefits of a two-way bilingual program that allows for instruction in the students' native language. Graves, et al. (2004) investigated the literacy practices of multiple language first grade classrooms in order to examine the relationship between teaching practice and students' growth in reading. The researchers found that most of the strategies and approaches that research has labeled as effective for the support of emergent literacy for native speakers are also effective for EL students, and they called for more research in this area in order to help explain how particular instructional approaches effect the development of comprehension and meaning-making, not just word-reading and oral reading fluency, for EL students (Graves et al., 2004; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).

Studies That Examined The Effectiveness of Specific Instructional Practices for

Supporting Students Who are At Risk For Reading Failure

Mathes, Torgeson, Clancy-Menchetti, Santi, Nicholas, Robinson and Grek (2003)

wanted to help teachers of emergent readers to provide the crucial content of emergent

literacy instruction using approaches that gives individual instruction to students and is

intense enough to meet the needs of struggling readers. In an attempt to do so, the

researchers examined two different learning arrangements that facilitated differentiated

instruction to students: teacher-directed small-group instruction and peer-assisted

instruction. Teacher-directed small-group instruction has been shown to be both effective

and problematic because while the teacher is able to provide focused instruction to some

students, the rest of the class must be involved in independent work. Under this model,

students are often working individually for up to two-thirds of their instructional time.

Peer-assisted instruction increases the academic engagement of students without adding

to the amount of time the teacher is working with each individual. This study involved a

form of peer-assisted instruction called first-grade Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies

(PALS) (Mathes, et al., 2003).

Mathes et al. (2003) studied twenty-two first grade teachers across six schools.

Within the classrooms of each teacher, only the students who were identified as at risk for

reading failure were studied. These students were identified through a screening of oral

reading fluency and a phoneme segmentation task. The students were ranked based on

their scores and the students who had the five lowest scores per class were included in the

study. Seven of the teachers used first-grade PALS in three- 35 minute sessions per week

for sixteen weeks, seven used teacher-directed small-group work on sounds and words

three times a week for 30 minutes for sixteen weeks, and eight teachers were the comparison group who continued to use traditional instruction. The comparison teachers were chosen from demographically similar schools to the sample teachers and because they reported using similar curriculum materials as the other fourteen teachers. The PALS and small-group work conditions used the exact same content. The only difference was the model through which instruction was approached for each student. Pre- and posttests were administered to measure reading achievement through tests of word reading efficiency and phonological processes. The researchers also monitored the continued progress of the students by assessing for oral reading fluency and phoneme segmenting fluency every other week (Mathes, et al., 2003).

The findings of this study showed that both first-grade PALS and the teacher-directed small group instruction (TDI) improved reading performance beyond that of the comparison group for struggling readers in terms of statistical significance and educational relevance. Results also showed that receiving instruction from a teacher was more powerful than similar instruction from a peer as statistical differences were found and effect sizes were larger between the TDI and contrast groups then between the PALS and contrast groups, where both the PALS and contrast groups involved a form of teacher instruction (Mathes, et al., 2003).

Mathes et al. (2003) considered their sample of twenty-two teachers to be quite small. These teachers all worked in the same school district and there was a range of low, middle and high socioeconomic status schools represented in the study. The researchers conducted formal observations of all teachers to confirm their reports of curriculum used, instructional approach, and allocation of instruction across a week. A

Chi-square analysis showed no reliable differences between the groups on self-reported reading approach (p= .57). A significant difference was found between the number of teachers in both the experimental conditions and the comparison group who reported using systematic phonics instruction (p= .00). All seven teachers in both experimental groups reported using phonics instruction while only three teachers in the comparison group reported the use of systematic phonics. Because the assessment measures were primarily phonics-based (word reading efficiency, phonological processing, word attack, fluency segmentation and rapid automatized naming) with only one measure of reading comprehension, the systematic phonics instruction that was already in place in all of the treatment classrooms may have affected the higher scores on these assessments (Mathes, et al., 2003).

From the results of this study it would appear that teachers present lessons in a manner that promotes reading growth better than peers do for low-performing readers. In spite of this, no statistical differences were found between the two conditions in this study (TDI and PALS) suggesting that further research is needed in order to make any claims about TDI versus the PALS approach. The students made academic progress by working with one another and teachers could benefit from incorporating more peer-related instructional activities into their literacy programs. This study does not recommend that PALS or other forms of peer-assisted instruction replace any teacher-directed instruction, however it does suggest that a form of PALS could supplement the teacher-led instruction in the classroom, especially when the teacher is involved in a small group lesson (Mathes, et al., 2003).

Fang and Cox (1999) studied whether the development of register-switching expertise was a part of literacy development. The researchers wondered if students simultaneously develop skills in adapting language for different contexts as they grow into independent readers and writers. Register is defined in this study as "a necessary mediating concept that establishes the continuity between a text and its context. It refers to the variety of language that is appropriate for a particular situation type or context" (Fang & Cox, 1999, p. 144). The researchers use the terms "written language" and "written register" interchangeably in reference to the language that is commonly used in writing that meant for others to read. Written language therefore does not mean oral language written down. Oral language is often based in a specific time and place and the responsibility for understanding is placed on both the speaker and the listener. Because written and oral language, or registers are different, writers must register-switch in order successfully move from speaking conversations to creating comprehendible pieces of writing (Fang & Cox, 1999).

The participants were 17 first grade students who were identified as at risk for reading failure and admitted to the Reading Recovery literacy intervention program. In order to collect the data necessary for this study, a familiar adult visited each student during their intervention sessions. The adult engaged the student in a conversation to get a sample of oral monologue text based on the student's experiences. The adult then asked the student to dictate that same monologue as a story "written for other children to read" (Fang & Cox, 1999, p. 147). This request changed the context of the story from interactive listener to absent reader audience and from oral to written. Fang & Cox were interested in whether the students would recognize these shifts in context and account for

them with a register shift. The adult only assisted by acting as a scribe. All sessions were audiotaped (Fang & Cox, 1999).

This generation of oral and written texts was done at the beginning and at the end of Reading Recovery. Two trained scorers independently analyzed the texts using cohesion analysis. All discrepancies were resolved to 100% agreement through discussions of related research studies and systemic functional linguistics. A cohesive harmony index (CHI) and a non-cohesive harmony index (NCHI) were found for each text. Fang & Cox found that at the beginning of Reading Recovery the mean CHI for the students' oral register texts (M = .79, SD = .10) was significantly higher than that for the written register texts (M= .65, SD= .12), p= .001, and the mean NCHI in the oral register texts (M = .10, SD = .09) was significantly lower than for the written register texts (m=. 20, SD = .09), p= .001. The students did not successfully adapt their use of register from oral to written. There was a lower degree of cohesion in the written texts than the oral texts. At the end of Reading Recovery, however, the students were able to create cohesive written texts. There were no longer significant differences in the mean CHI between the oral register (M= .78, SD = .13) and the written register texts (M= .80, SD = .08), NS. By the time the students successfully completed Reading Recovery, they were able to properly switch from the oral to written register (Fang & Cox, 1999).

This study had a very small sample size of only seventeen students and all of the involved students had been previously identified as struggling readers. These first grade students were all involved in a very specific intervention program and because of this; this study's findings cannot necessarily be generalized to other groups of first grade students. This study also dealt with register switching from the oral to the written and it

cannot be assumed that such registers exist or have the same relationship globally as they do for the English language (Fang & Cox, 1999).

The familiarity that one has with a particular register affects their ability to use it properly. When students enter school they typically have much more experience with the oral register than the written register. Because of this, it is expected that young readers' use of oral registers would be more cohesive than their use of written registers. All of the students in this study appeared to be gaining their experience with the written register through their Reading Recovery sessions (Fang & Cox, 1999).

Center, Freeman, Robertson and Outhred (1999) were interested in visual imagery training which has been shown in prior studies to improve young readers comprehension of text. Past research suggests that teaching young readers to create mental images as they read enhances their ability to make inferences and predictions and remember what they read. It is believed that visual imagery provides young readers an alternate to comprehension that is non-phonological. In this study, the researchers aimed to examine the visual imagery component of a school wide reading comprehension program (Center, et al., 1999).

Center et al. (1999) created a sample and comparison group by pre-assessing a group of second grade students through a listening comprehension skills test. All of the students who scored in the bottom third of their school group were included in the study. These students were then randomly assigned to either a treatment or comparison group. Both groups received twelve listening comprehension lesson, three times a week, for four weeks. The experimental group was the only one to receive visual imagery lessons in

these sessions, along with the other listening comprehension lessons (Center, et al., 1999).

Visual imagery lessons involved the presentation of various objects and pictures of scenes. After viewing the objects and pictures students were told to close their eyes and visualize, or "paint a picture in their minds" of the object or picture they just saw (Center, et al., 1999, p. 248). The students were told that painting pictures in their mind would help them to remember what the object or picture looked like. The students were asked to describe what they had visualized. The instructor then modeled a think-aloud practice by drawing pictures of a sentence that she had previously read aloud. Each comprehension lesson for the experimental group began with visualization training and the students were encouraged to use these strategies during the remainder of the listening comprehension lessons. The comparison group completed the same lessons without the visualization training beforehand. All students were pre-and post-tested on two measures of listening and reading comprehension and reading accuracy (Center, et al., 1999).

Center, et al. (1999) found that adding a visual imagery-training component to a listening comprehension program does improve listening and reading comprehension for a group with low comprehension. In relation to the comparison group, the experimental group, significantly outperformed on the tests of listening and reading comprehension. Visual imagery did not have an impact on reading accuracy however, as the experimental group had significantly higher scores on the reading accuracy test than the comparison group. Because the students were in second grade, these finding suggest that visual imagery training will help the listening and reading comprehension of young readers and

the instruction of such strategies should not be postponed until later grades (Center, et al., 1999).

This study was conducted through a four-week program where students received specific instruction outside of their classroom. A longer study would need to be conducted in order to know if the students in the experimental group continued to have the same success with listening and reading comprehension as they did immediately after their instructional sessions. The long-term impact of such training is unknown. The researchers also noted that they were not able to know whether the skills taught in these trainings were needed for the development of strong comprehension skills or whether the strategies taught allowed the students with low comprehension to overcome other cognitive processing deficits that were causing the listening comprehension difficulties. More research would need to be done in this area in order to better understand this aspect of the study (Center, et al., 1999).

Center et al. (1999) recognized the importance of providing effective instructional approaches for young readers, from kindergarten on, that focus on both decoding and comprehension. For students who are a t risk for reading failure, it is important that interventions do not only address literacy at the word level but also at the level of comprehension. This study's findings showed the benefits that visual imagery training provided for a group of students who struggled at the comprehension level and suggest that the incorporation of visual imagery instruction in literacy classrooms would benefit students who need an alternative to phonological practices (Center, et al., 1999).

Simmons, Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes and Hodge's (1995) study had two purposes, the first was to learn more about explicit reading instruction to learning- disabled (LD) and

low-performing (LP) students in general education classrooms, and the second was to examine the effects of peer tutoring on LD and LP students. The researchers define explicit instruction as a method of instruction that involves "the direct, systematic presentation of critical information by the teacher to students" with the major components being, teaching in small steps, guiding students during initial practice, and providing students with high levels of successful practice (Simmons, et al., 1995, p. 388). Simmons, et al. also referenced a large body of prior studies that all show that students learn more when teachers use explicit instruction (Simmons, et al., 1995).

In peer tutoring, students instruct other students and this has been shown to be an effective way to address the needs of LD and LP students when teachers are not able to provide enough individualized instruction due to time and classroom management constraints. Studies have shown that the mount of active reading instruction given to LD and LP students is not enough to meet their instructional needs. Because of this, the researchers (1995) supposed that peer tutoring would increase the time that LD and LP students spent in relevant literacy activities (Simmons, et al., 1995).

This study was conducted by creating two treatment groups, explicit teaching (ET), explicit teaching plus peer tutoring (ET + PT) and a control group (C). Both the ET and ET + PT teachers received training in explicit teaching strategies and how to incorporate explicit teaching with their school-mandated literacy curriculum. These trainings took place over the course of 16 weeks. After the training, both treatment groups implemented ET with their students and eight weeks later, the ET+ PT teachers began the PT component without interrupting the ET instruction. The control teachers continued their traditional instructional methods. Four observers collected data on each

of the treatment classrooms, and student achievement was assessed at three different times, immediate pre-intervention, immediate post intervention and delayed post intervention. The students' achievement was assessed through a standardized test of reading comprehension. This assessment tested for words read correctly, questions answered correctly, total words written in recall summaries, matched words written in recall summaries. This test used 400-word traditional folktales as the reading pieces in the test (Simmons, et al., 1995).

The findings of this study showed that explicit teaching plus peer tutoring was a significantly more effective teaching model than explicit teaching alone. The LD and LP students in the ET + PT treatment read more fluently, answered more questions correctly, and selected a greater number of correct responses than the students in the ET and C groups. The consistency and magnitude of these effects stress the significance of the differences between the ET and ET + PT treatment groups. The majority of the effect sizes for the combined treatment group compared to the control group were educationally important (> .33) with many (> .50). Also, exit interviews revealed that both teachers and students found PT both effective and fun. Because this study did not study PT alone, no claims can be made about the effectiveness of PT alone on reading growth, and in this study, ET alone did not meet the needs of LD and LP students (Simmons, et al., 1995).

The sample size for this study was relatively large for a field-based study, including 24 regular classroom teachers from grades 2-5, from five schools. These schools were located in a southeastern suburban area that represented both low and middle socioeconomic levels. All of the students who were identified as LD participated in the study and the LP students were identified by their teachers as students who were

not eligible for special education, and scored lower than the 25th percentile on a standardized reading test or was the lowest functioning reader in the class. Although this study involved the implementation of both ET and PT methods, the students were able to stay in their classrooms and receive the new instruction from their teachers. This study did not involve any pullout activities or any major shifts in the student's instructional time. A possible weakness to the assessment instrument was that the test used familiar fairytales as the reading passages. Although these are common and traditional stories, it cannot be assumed that all students are exposed to such stories. The students who were familiar with the fairytales would find the reading comprehension test more accessible than those who did not (Simmons, et al., 1995).

The implications of this study's finding for general education teachers of LD and LP students are that peer tutoring, coupled with explicit instruction, can meet the needs of LD and LP students by increasing the amount of time these students spend on relevant and active reading activities. This method provides greater opportunities for structured and supervised reading practice for these students. Because no significant results were found for the explicit teaching groups as compared to the control groups, the researchers (1995) could not speak to the effectiveness of explicit teaching methods for LD and LP students. Many educators agree that students have the right to an education in a regular classroom and in order to provide for the instructional and academic needs of these students, general education teachers need to find effective ways to teach all students. Simmons, et al., found that peer tutoring, coupled with explicit instruction is one way to achieve this goal (Simmons, et al., 1995).

Leal, Johanson, Toth, and Huang (2004), acknowledged the increasing need for effective literacy tutors for elementary students who are struggling with reading and writing. They also stated that prior research has shown that there are common components to all successful tutoring programs: many opportunities to read authentic materials, many applications of reading integrated with authentic writing experiences, and highly motivated reading and writing activities related to students' interests and abilities by tutors who care. All three of these components were present in the tutoring program that is described in this study and therefore allowed the researchers to better understand whether there is a significant change in the reading skills of elementary students who are at-risk for reading failure as a result of an effective tutoring program (Leal, et al., 2004).

This study described four months of a six-year long tutoring program that involved pre-service teachers and elementary students who are at-risk for reading failure. The tutoring program involved pre-service teachers who had gone through tutor training courses working one-on-one with the students in two weekly sessions. The tutoring sessions spanned two quarters and students were assessed before tutoring began, at the end of the first quarter, and again at the end of the second quarter. The assessments included an informal reading inventory that tested oral reading comprehension, word recognition, and listening comprehension to assess the students' strengths and weakness, which was administered before tutoring began. Other assessments that were used later in the tutoring programs tested for phonics, sight words, context, vocabulary, text structure and comprehension monitoring strategies (Leal, et al., 2004).

As mentioned, this tutoring program provided opportunities for the students to read authentic materials, integrate reading with authentic writing experiences, take part in reading and writing activities that related to their interests and abilities, and work with caring tutors. The researchers collected data from these tutoring sessions from the tutor's daily lesson plans and on-line journals as well as through the students' assessment scores in three areas: reading comprehension, word recognition, and listening comprehension. The mean gain in scores for the students averaged 13.14 points for oral reading comprehension, 11.43 points for word recognition, and 19.15 points for listening comprehension across the four months of tutoring (Leal, et al., 2004).

A limitation to this study was that while all of the students were pre-assessed with the same assessment, the follow-up assessments were not necessarily the same. The initial assessment informed the tutors on the strengths and weakness that each student had for reading writing and tutoring sessions were planned accordingly. After the pre-assessment, all other assessments were individualized to each student's needs. There is no triangulation of data with which to confirm the findings. The participating pre-service teachers all came from the same university teaching program. Although particular components of the tutoring program were singled out, these results cannot be generalized to other tutoring programs (Leal, et al., 2004).

Leal, et al. (2004) concluded that helping students who are at risk for reading failure to improve their reading scores is a realistic goal. The findings from this particular study showed that for a tutoring program, success for these students, in terms of reading scores, is enhanced when a tutoring program provides strategies for reading for meaning and remediation for word identification skills, writing and reading a self-

authored book and motivating relationships between the tutor and student (Leal, et al., 2004).

All of the studies in this section examined the effectiveness of various instructional practices for supporting students who are at risk for reading failure. Mathes et al. (2003) examined two different learning arrangements that facilitated differentiated instruction to students: teacher-directed small-group instruction and peer-assisted instruction. The findings of their study showed that while both peer-assisted instruction and teacher-directed small group instruction improved reading performance beyond that of the comparison group for struggling readers, receiving instruction from a teacher was more powerful than similar instruction from a peer. Fang and Cox (1999) studied whether the development of register-switching expertise was a part of literacy development. The researchers wondered if students simultaneously develop skills in adapting language for different contexts as they grow into independent readers and writers and found that activities that promote an awareness of the organization of the written language, its rhythms and its structures as well as how to make meaning of texts promote students' abilities to gain cohesion in the written register (Fang & Cox, 1999; Mathes, et al., 2003).

Center et al. (1999) were interested in examining the effectiveness of visual imagery training because it has been shown in prior studies to improve young readers comprehension of text. They found that the addition of such a training component to a listening comprehension program does improve listening and reading comprehension for a group of students with low comprehension. Simmons et al. (1995) conducted a study to learn more about explicit reading instruction for learning- disabled and low-performing

students in general education classrooms and found that explicit teaching plus peer tutoring was a significantly effective teaching model. Finally, Leal et al. (2004) examined whether there is a significant change in the reading skills of elementary students who are at-risk for reading failure as a result of an effective tutoring program. The findings from this particular study showed that for a tutoring program, success for these students, in terms of reading scores, is enhanced when a tutoring program provides strategies for reading for meaning and remediation for word identification skills, writing and reading a self-authored book and motivating relationships between the tutor and student (Center et al., 1999; Leal, et al., 2004; Simmons et al., 1995).

Summary

        The studies in this chapter reveal that there are many ways to examine effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy in students who are at risk for reading failure. Many of the studies affirm that students who are put at risk for reading failure are not a homogenous group of young people. These studies also reveal that there cannot be one single prescribed approach to meeting the literacy needs of all students. From large, district-wide intervention programs, to the way that spelling instruction is approached, the researchers cited in this chapter have all chosen a particular lens through which to examine effective approaches to supporting emergent literacy for students who at risk for reading failure. All of these studies provide useful information and implications for teachers of literacy. In an attempt to find patterns and draw conclusions from this research, Chapter Four will restate the focus of this project, summarize the findings of the reviewed literature and discuss classroom implications.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This paper addresses the question: What are effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure? Chapter one provided the rational for this paper by explaining the present context of reading instruction in this country's public schools. It also described and provided evidence for the large numbers of students who are put at risk for reading failure and therefore the importance that the answer to this paper's question holds for the future of young people. Chapter two described the history of reading instruction and with that the on-going critical and unsettled debate over the most effective approaches for reading instruction that will meet the needs of all students.

Chapter three reviewed and critiqued twenty seven articles that examined overall characteristics and perceptions about effective reading instruction, the effectiveness of specific instructional approaches for different types of students and classrooms, and large school and district wide reading intervention programs. The studies were organized into two major sections, the first section focused on overall effective approaches to supporting emergent literacy in the classroom and the second section looked at those approaches specifically focused on students who are at risk for reading failure. This chapter will summarize the findings of the reviewed literature.

Summary of Findings

Four major themes that relate to effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure emerged from the findings of the twenty-seven research studies reviewed in this paper. These themes include: instructional

strategies that focus on meaning making and comprehension-based approaches to teaching emergent literacy, instructional approaches that are explicit in nature, professional development and interventions focused on both the knowledge and practices of literacy teachers, and specific instructional practices that will serve and support young students who are learning the English language.

For the purposes of this paper, emergent literacy was defined in chapter one as the stages in a young person's development as a reader where she or he moves from basic concepts about print towards independent reading and writing skills. This is also the time when young people gain awareness of the alphabetic principle, which is the understanding of the relationship between sounds and symbols, and which is mainly supported through experiences with practical uses of print. At this time, young people's vocabulary increases at the rate to which they are exposed to language through books and stories and they begin to read words that are familiar or are in the context of a story (Clay, 1979; National Council of Teachers of English, 2006; Neuman, 2002). Because this paper defines emergent literacy as a developmental stage, the research was critiqued with an eye for studies that acknowledged the developmental and meaning-making nature of the reading process for young students. As the critiques in chapter three demonstrate, there is a large amount of existing research that accepts the emergent and developmental view towards literacy for young people.

The first major finding that was supported by many of the studies critiqued in this paper is that literacy instruction approaches that include comprehension and meaning-making strategies, from the beginning, are more effective in supporting students who are at risk for reading failure through the emergent literacy stage, than those approaches that

favor skills-based and phonological strategies (Center et al., 1999; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Leal et al., 2004). Fisher and Hiebert (1990) found that comparisons of teachers who use a skills-based versus literacy-based approach to reading instruction were worth examining. The researchers found that the most prominent differences between the two approaches to teaching literacy were in areas that relate to the development of problem solving and higher-order thinking, with the literacy-based approaches to teaching supporting problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills more than the skills-based approach to literacy instruction (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990). Center et al. (1999) were also interested in comprehension and meaning-making strategies as a way to support emergent literacy for young readers. They examined the effectiveness of visual imagery training because it has been shown in prior studies to improve young readers comprehension of text and found that the addition of such a training component to a listening comprehension program does improve listening and reading comprehension for a group of students with low comprehension (Center, et al, 1999). Finally, Leal et al. (2004) examined the reading skills of elementary students who are at-risk for reading failure and are also involved in an effective tutoring program. The researchers found that the success for these particular students was enhanced because the tutoring program provided solid strategies for meaning-making and comprehension, along with remediation for word identification skills, writing and reading a self-authored book and motivating relationships between the tutor and student (Center et al., 1999; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Leal et al., 2004).

The second major finding that was evidenced by numerous studies included in this paper is that emergent literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure is

effectively supported by instructional practices that are explicit and structured in nature

(Block & Peskowitz, 1990; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Rieben et al., 2005;

Simmons et al., 1995). Block and Peskowitz (1990) looked at the relationship between

metacognition and spelling in young students and found that students do develop

metacognitive knowledge about the words they spell. As a result of these findings, the

researchers concluded that the main implication for teachers is that metacognitive

knowledge could be acquired and better developed through explicit instruction in

metacognitive spelling strategies (Block & Peskowitz, 1990; Rankin-Erickson &

Pressley, 2000; Rieben et al., 2005; Simmons et al., 1995).

Rieben, Ntamakiliro, and Gonthier (2005) compared different word spelling

practices, such as invented spelling and copied spelling, and assessed their affects on

letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, reading and spelling and found that students who

received specific practice and feedback from the teacher in invented spelling had more

success than comparison groups (Rieben et al., 2005). Rankin-Erickson& Pressley

(2000) used surveys to examine the instructional approaches of large groups of literacy

teachers who had been identified as effective teachers for students with difficulties in

reading. The results of these surveys showed an integrated approach to teaching literacy

that used many of the positive aspects of whole-language instruction as well as more

explicit, structured strategies to be effective for students with reading difficulties

(Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000). Finally, Simmons et al. (1995) conducted a study

to learn more about explicit reading instruction for learning- disabled and low-performing

students in general education classrooms and found that explicit teaching plus peer

tutoring was a significantly effective teaching model (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Rieben et al., 2005; Simmons et al., 1995).

The third major finding that was confirmed by studies included in this paper is that the emergent stage of literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure is supported by professional development and interventions focused on both the knowledge and practices of literacy teachers (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005; Lane & Menzies, 2002; Lynch, 2002). Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005) examined teachers' perceptions about metalinguistics and found that although many of the teachers had positive attitudes about emergent literacy instruction, the teachers' metalinguistic knowledge was not strong. Because the teachers acknowledged the importance of metalinguistics in the emergent literacy but did not have the knowledge necessary to effective teach such skills, Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie concluded that emergent literacy can only truly be supported for young people if teachers have the necessary knowledge of emergent literacy themselves (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005; Lane & Menzies, 2002; Lynch, 2002).

Lynch (2002) investigated the relationships among parents' reading beliefs, children's reading self-perceptions, and reading achievement and called for teachers to be aware of the importance of their students' perceptions of previous reading performance in relation to their current reading achievements. Lynch also noted that an effective teacher of emergent literacy must have the requisite knowledge of both the field of literacy instruction and of their students' families in order to effectively acknowledge and support the self-perceptions and beliefs of both young people and parents as they relate to reading achievement and try to move them towards positive feelings of self-efficacy and

competence (Lynch, 2002). Lane and Menzies (2002) were interested in students who are at-risk for reading failure as a result of a lack of academic readiness skills, such as basic concepts of print, and a lack of sociobehavioral skills such as the ability to follow directions, take turns and manage frustrations and found that students who are unable to meet the academic and social expectations of their teachers are strongly at-risk for school failure. The researchers also concluded that in such situations, more so than the performance of the students, the expectations of the teachers that must be examined and intervention programs focused on teacher variables such as classroom management, planning and instructional approaches should be recommended for teachers of emergent literacy (Lane & Menzies, 2002; Lynch, 2002).

The fourth major finding that was upheld by the research studies critiqued in this paper is that students who are at risk for reading failure because they are still learning English while attending elementary school will need specific instructional approaches and interventions that will serve and support them through the emergent stage of literacy by respecting and acknowledging their native languages (Araujo, 2002; Barone, 2002; Graves, 2004). Graves, et al. (2004) investigated the literacy practices of multiple language first grade classrooms in order to examine the relationship between teaching practice and students' growth in reading. The researchers found that most of the strategies and approaches that research has labeled as effective for the support of emergent literacy for native speakers are also effective for EL students (Araujo, 2002; Barone, 2002; Graves, 2004).

Barone (2002), was interested in how kindergarten students, who attend a school that is low performing in reading and therefore labeled at-risk, develop literacy and how

their teachers support the students in acquiring this literacy knowledge. Barone observed a strong focus on phonemic skills and concluded that such a strong, skills-based focus for an emergent literacy program excludes students who are learning the English language because it excludes them from opportunities to develop comprehension skills (Barone, 2002). Similarly, Araujo (2002), conducted a yearlong study of a classroom located in a predominantly Portuguese immigrant community in order to examine the ways in which classroom literacy practice supports students' growth in oral language, reading and writing and what children's literacy development looks like for a particular bilingual classroom. She found that children's literacy development was linked to the classroom literacy instruction and that oral native language support and balanced approach to literacy instruction helped these students develop understandings about written language (Araujo, 2002).

Two of the studies reviewed in this paper had conflicting findings that are worth noting. Similar to Araujo (2002), D'Angiulli, Siegel and Maggi (2004b) studied the reading achievement of students who are learning the English language and focused specifically on students who were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) and were also from low socioeconomic status (SES) families and communities. Their findings suggested that students' word-reading scores have a distinct and direct relationship to their SES in kindergarten (lower SES relates to lower word-reading scores), but by grade five the word-reading progress of students who speak English as their first language and ELL students become similar (Araujo, 2002; D'Angiulli, et al., 2004b). In contradiction to these findings, Lopez and Tashakkori (2004), who sought to find out if the potential risk for reading failure by the end of first grade could be

minimized though a two-way bilingual program that began in kindergarten, found that the academic gap between limited English proficient (LEP) and native language speakers widening as they progressed through school. Due to the contradiction that these two studies' findings present, more research is needed in the area of tracking the reading progress and performance of ELL and low SES students against that of students who speak English as their first language (Araujo, 2002; D'Anguilli, et al., 2004b; Lopez & Tashakkori 2004).

Nearly all of the studies in this paper that examined actual instructional approaches found that the teacher was a critical variable in the study. This can be seen in the nature of the four major findings that relate to effective approaches for supporting emergent literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure and the studies that supported these findings. The four major findings that support emergent literacy were: instructional strategies that focus on meaning making and comprehension-based approaches to teaching emergent literacy, instructional approaches that are explicit in nature, professional development and interventions focused on both the knowledge and practices of literacy teachers, and specific instructional practices that will serve and support young students who are learning the English language. The value of any of these research-supported effective instructional approaches is dependent upon the style, intensity and fidelity with which the particular teacher or teachers implements it. As this summary of findings has shown, whether it is the belief about what emergent literacy is, the explicitness of the teacher's instructional style, the amount of relevant knowledge the teacher possesses, or the teacher's ability and willingness to include students' native

languages into the classroom, the level of support that young people who are at-risk for reading failure receive is highly dependent on the choices the teacher makes.

Classroom Implications

The reviewed literature revealed that the teacher was a critical variable in the effectiveness of any instructional approach's ability to support emergent literacy for students who are at-risk for reading failure. Since the effectiveness of any particular approach was dependent upon the manner, intensity and reliability with which the particular teacher or teachers implemented it, the major findings from this review of the literature hold major implications for teachers of literacy. The research findings suggest that it is not enough to know what the effective approaches to supporting emergent literacy are, but rather one must know how to implement the instructional approach in such a way that the students' needs are truly being met.

Numerous studies included in this paper addressed the classroom implications of a mismatch between the characteristics and instructional needs of particular students and the instruction those students were receiving. Many of these studies also made suggestions for teachers as to how to remedy the mismatch and move towards more effective emergent literacy instruction (Araujo, 2002; Barone, 2002; Block & Peskowitz, 1990; Center et al., 1999; Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Graves, 2004; Lane & Menzies, 2002; Leal et al., 2004; Lynch, 2002; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Rieben et al., 2005; Simmons et al., 1995).

Fisher and Hiebert (1990), recommended a strong focus on a literature and comprehension-based approach to emergent literacy instruction as a result of their

findings that such approaches better support higher-order thinking skills than skills-based approaches. Block and Peskowitz (1990) called for teachers to develop ways to incorporate explicit instruction in metacognitive spelling strategies in order to promote more effective and diverse spelling strategies for their students. Rieben, et al., (2005) suggested that teachers of emergent literacy both allow for and encourage invented spelling for their students while also providing specific feedback on students' spelling. Rankin-Erickson and Pressley's (2000) nation-wide survey of effective special education teachers found that these teachers overwhelming use a balance of whole-language instruction alongside more structured and explicit strategies for supporting emergent literacy. Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005) found that participating teachers had low levels of knowledge of metalinguistics, a key aspect of literacy instruction. As a result, the researchers recommended intervention programs and professional development programs that would work to boost teacher's knowledge of metalinguistics. Lynch's (2002) findings also lead to a recommendation for additional professional development for teachers of emergent literacy. Lynch's recommendation were based on the findings that because students' and parents' self-perceptions about reading achievement strongly relate to actual performance levels, teachers need strong levels of knowledge about the lives and families of their students in order to effectively support their instructional needs as developing readers. Finally, Araujo (2002) and Barone (2002) found that effective teachers of emergent literacy must meet the instructional needs of their ELL students by incorporating the students' native oral languages into English-language instruction (Araujo, 2002; Barone, 2002; Block & Peskowitz, 1990; Center et al., 1999; Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Graves, 2004; Lane & Menzies, 2002;

Leal et al., 2004; Lynch, 2002; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Rieben et al., 2005; Simmons et al., 1995).

Summary

The main purpose of this review of the current literature has been to determine effective approaches that are specifically focused on students who are at risk for reading failure. The conclusions drawn from these studies are synthesized four major findings. Emergent literacy for students who are at risk for reading failure is most effectively supported by, instructional strategies that focus on meaning making and comprehension-based approaches to teaching emergent literacy, instructional approaches that are explicit in nature, professional development and interventions focused on both the knowledge and practices of literacy teachers, and specific instructional practices that will serve and support young students who are learning the English language. The common thread that all four major findings share is that the degree to which the teacher demonstrates knowledge and capability in implementing an instructional approach is also the degree to which the approach will prove effective for supporting emergent literacy.

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