The Use of ELL Specific Assessment Accommodations: A Comparative Case Study of Classroom Practices

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To Mom, Lubov Ivanovna Yeremina

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ABSTRACT

Access and equity of instructional and assessment practices used with English Language Learners (ELLs) have been in the forefront of educational research. In recent years, the developments in computerized assessment design and the prevalence of Universal Design for Learning have complicated the already complex terrain of literacy and language instruction and assessment of ELLs. Within this context, the present study focuses on the daily experiences of two third-grade ELLs in a small city school system in the southeast United States. Through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and administrators, and document analysis, this comparative ethnographic case study aims to explore systematic patterns in relation to accommodation use, teacher and student characteristics, classroom activities and content. Guided by the bioecological model of human development, a sociocultural perspective on teaching, and a sociolinguistic view of language learning, I use content analysis to investigate how accommodations are enacted and accounted for across participating classrooms. The findings indicate the complexity of sanctioned and unsanctioned accommodation use during classroom literacy and language assessment and instruction. In addition, the findings suggest the following implications for educators and test developers concerned with educational equity and access for ELLs: teachers' beliefs about students' literacy and language development influence accommodation use; monolingual practices imposed by the English-only laws are barriers to equitable educational access by ELLs; language and literacy interventions for ELLs lack consistency across settings; and classroom observations provide insight into the usefulness of high-stakes testing accommodations for diverse students.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"You know the classroom teachers do not accommodate" was a frequent reaction to my dissertation topic when I shared it with English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher-friends. The consensus within the community of ESL educators was that I would find nothing. Yet, with the belief that negative findings are still findings, I continued on. Little did I know that I would find a lot more than "nothing."

Changing Demographics

In a recent report, the Center for Immigration Studies reported that, in 2014, 63.2 million U.S. residents (native-born, legal immigrants, and illegal immigrants) spoke a language other than English at home. That number increased 16.2 million since 2000, 3.6 million since 2010, and 1.4 million since 2013 (Camarota & Zeigler, 2015). States with the largest percentage increase in foreign language speakers from 1980 to 2014 were: Nevada (up 1,001 percent), Georgia (up 875 percent), North Carolina (up 702 percent), Virginia (up 446 percent), Tennessee (up 416 percent), Arkansas (up 380 percent), Washington state (up 367 percent), Oregon (up 340 percent), South Carolina (up 338 percent), Florida (up 337 percent), Utah (up 316 percent), and Maryland (up 300 percent). Despite a common belief, many of those who speak a foreign language at home are not immigrants. Of the more than 63 million foreign language speakers, 44 percent (27.7 million) were actually born in the United States (Camarota & Zeigler, 2015).

The Pew Research Center (2015) projected that by 2065 the composition of the nation's immigrant population will change. In 2015, 47% of immigrants residing in the U.S. were Hispanic, but as immigration from Latin America, especially Mexico has slowed in recent years (Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012), the share of the foreign born who are Hispanic is

expected to fall to 31% by 2065. Meanwhile, Asian immigrants are projected to make up a larger share of all immigrants, becoming the largest immigrant group by 2055 and making up 38% of the foreign-born population by 2065. Hispanics will remain a larger share of the nation's overall population. U.S. population projections published by Pew Research Center indicate that from 2015 to 2065, immigrants and their descendants "are projected to account for 88% of the U.S. population increase, or 103 million people, as the nation grows to 441 million."

In 2015, there were roughly 18.1 million Hispanic children in the United States, representing 1 in 4 children in the country. Of those, approximately 9.2 million, were boys (Cabrera et al., 2016). My home state of Tennessee experienced a 134% increase in the Hispanic population between 2000 and 2010, making it the 3rd fastest increasing immigrant population in the nation (Nagle, Gustafson, & Burd, 2012).

In 2013-14 school year, 9.3 percent of public school students in the US, or an estimated 4.5 million students, were identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Education Programs (2007) projected that 25% of students enrolled in American schools would be ELLs by 2025.

Most immigrants settle in urban areas with the "gateway cities," such as Los Angeles, Miami, and New York City, being the home of more than half of foreign-born population (Logan, 2003). A quick look at the US Census reveals that in Los Angeles County, California, for instance, Latinos outnumbered White/Non-Hispanic residents in 2015. However, Lichter and Johnson (2006) found evidence that immigrants who have been in the US for five years or less bypassed the gateway cities and settled in more "geographically dispersed locations" (p. 118).

Today, rural communities and smaller cities and towns are no longer insulated from the immigrants who choose to reside there. As a result, these areas witness an influx of linguistically and culturally diverse students who qualify for ESL services.

Because most of the educational research with ELLs has been in urban centers that enjoy a large number of ELLs, there is a lacuna of studies looking closely at the educational contexts and pedagogical practices in rural and small town contexts where there is no critical mass of ELLs. Thus, the selection of the school district for this study was both fortuitous and purposeful in that it aimed to fill in the gap of research with a small city school district located in the state of Tennessee. I present the demographics of the state of Tennessee, retrieved from the Tennessee report card webpage on February 17, 2017, to allow readers a glimpse into broader setting of the study (see Table 1).

Table 1. Tennessee School Demographics

Demographic Category	Total Number or Percentage
Schools	1,833
Teachers	64,939
Students	997,893
English Language Learners	5.0%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	35.1%
Students with Disability	14.0%
White	64.2%
Black or African American	24.1%
Hispanic or Latino	9.0%
Asian	2.2%
Native American/Alaskan	0.3%

While researchers and educators argue for the societal and educational benefits associated with diversity, the increasing number of culturally and linguistically diverse students presents a challenge for schools that have no previous experience with supporting them. This is often complicated by the prevailing trend to maximize ELLs' time in the mainstream classroom, as there are simply not enough English as a second language or bilingual teachers to support the growing number of ELLs. Because ELLs are spending most of their in-school time in mainstream classrooms, more and more responsibility is placed on classroom teachers who are expected to know how to instruct all students across content areas and provide necessary, and often mandated, accommodations and supports.

Furthermore, the policy landscape and its *in situ* interpretation are impacted by language policies enacted in each state. In Tennessee, an English-only state, the assessments and instruction are to be delivered in English. Therefore, although ELLs can be allowed a bilingual dictionary as an accommodation, the assessment or instruction cannot be administered in any other language than English (Tennessee ESL Program Guide, August 2016). In spite of the research findings that indicate positive links between bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness; positive relations with symbolic representation, attention control, and problem solving (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010), as well as improved literacy skills (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013, Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006; Slavin & Cheung, 2005), increased economic competitiveness and enhanced interethnic communication (Graddol, 2006; Spolsky, 2004), assimilationist-oriented argument for English-only persists.

While keeping this larger language policy context as a backdrop, the present qualitative study aims to explore the complex and continuously evolving landscape of ELL learning and

teaching through up-close and personal examination of how teachers interpret and enact a variety of ELL accommodations in their daily literacy and language instruction and assessment. I map the findings onto the state-mandated accommodation guidelines developed to account for the linguistic diversity of ELLs.

Rationale for Study and Statement of the Problem

The rationale for examining experiences of ELLs and their teachers is not solely grounded in increasing linguistic and cultural diversity, but also in a large pervasive achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs that persists in spite of efforts to close it. To appreciate the disparity of non-ELL and ELL achievement, many researchers turn to math and reading scores on the NAEP, The National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is considered the nation's report card and allows educators to track progress of subgroups across time.

The average scores for ELLs on the 2015 reading NAEP assessment in grades 4, 8, and 12 were significantly lower than the average scores for non-ELLs. By fourth grade, roughly 1 in 5 Hispanic male students (19 percent) are proficient in reading, a rate half that of white male students (43 percent). Historical overview indicates that at fourth grade, the White-Hispanic gap narrowed from 26 points in 1992 to 21 points in 2015 (NAEP, 2015). The non-ELL/ELL achievement gaps were 37 points at the 4th-grade level and 45 points at the 8th-grade level. These gaps appear pervasive over time as they have not changed significantly since 1998, the year when ELLs were first included in the NAEP assessment.

In addition, according to the 2015 NAEP scores, 34% of Tennessee 4th graders scored Below Basic, 32% - Basic, 26% - Proficient, and 8% - Advanced. Hispanic students had an average score that was 12 points lower than that for White students. Students who were eligible

for free/reduced priced lunch had an average score that was 28 points lower than that for students who were not eligible (NAEP, 2015).

Some researchers argue that the performance gap between ELLs and non-ELLs endures partially due to the revolving door phenomenon: "ELL subgroup membership is systematically skewed toward lower-performing students" (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015, p. 115) by the definition of Limited English Proficiency (LEP). To clarify, because the ELL status is meant to be temporary, students continuously enter and exit the subgroup. Once students reach a certain level of English proficiency, as measured by an English Language Proficiency (ELP) test, they are exited from the program and two years after the exit date their scores are no longer counted towards the ELL subgroup performance.

Other scholars believe that the unnecessary linguistic complexity of the tests (Solano-Flores, 2008) disallows ELLs access to the construct the test is measuring. Thus, measurement of content becomes measurement of English language proficiency. In order to alleviate such construct-irrelevant barriers (Lane & Leventhal, 2015) associated with the assessment of ELLs, states frequently mandate the use of testing accommodations. Defined as changes to the test materials or the testing environment that facilitate access to test content, accommodations ideally address individual unique characteristics that interfere with students' ability to fully demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities directly related the measured construct (Tindal & Fuchs, 1999). In theory, assessment accommodations allow ELLs access to a leveled playing field where they can show their "true" academic achievement. Ensuring that the test scores are valid, reliable, and fair has become a national and state priority, as a great deal of critical decisions are based on the achievement scores obtained through high-stakes assessments.

In addition to providing accommodations during the high-stakes assessments, states frequently prescribe that standardized testing accommodations be used during daily classroom instruction and assessment (Schissel, 2014). For instance, TnReady Ensuring Access for All: Guidelines for Allowable Test Administration Conditions, Accessibility Features, and Accommodations, published by the Tennessee Department of Education (2015-2016), advises that there should be a "critical connection between accessibility and accommodations in instruction and accessibility and accommodations during assessment" (p. 3) and that "[s]elected accommodations should be provided routinely for classroom instruction and classroom assessment during the school year in order to be used for standardized assessments." (p. 9) The guidelines also emphasize that "[a]ccommodations should not be used to compensate for a student's lack of knowledge and/or skills, or because of a lack of appropriate instruction" (p. 13).

In the past, ELLs in Tennessee were offered a linguistically simplified version of the state assessment, extra time, and bilingual dictionaries during all of the subtests, i.e., reading and language arts, math, science, and social studies, and read aloud of math, science, and social studies subtests. Read aloud was offered during all subtests, but reading and language arts. However, with the adoption of new Tennessee standards, as well as the new high-stakes assessments, the accommodations available to ELLs changed. Following the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (Hehir, 2009; Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014; Rose & Meyer, 2002), testing supports are now tiered in that there are a number of supports available to all students with additional accommodations specifically designed for ELLs. Preferred seating, small group, and familiar classroom atmosphere are recommended for all students. Teachers now are not required to cover their classroom walls during the assessment time. Built-in features

available to all students also include highlighter, answer eliminator, pop-up glossary, line reader, flag questions, note space, visual zoom, and audio amplification. The Tennessee Department of Education outlines the following accommodations as allowable to ELLs: frequent breaks, scribe, extended time, and paper-based test, but the website also states that ELLs can receive additional accommodations that would allow for meaningful and appropriate participation in the assessment. Table 2 and Table 3 demonstrate how Reading/Language Arts standardized tests, as well as accommodations, changed over time in the state of Tennessee.

While these accommodation guidelines and definitions provide a roadmap for assigning accessibility features and accommodations during assessments and instruction, teachers are positioned as responsible for selecting appropriate supports for ELLs while ensuring all students' familiarity with the testing accommodations available to them during high-stakes testing time. To wit, here is an excerpt from the 2014 Tennessee Procedures for Participation of Students in the Tennessee's Assessment System manual:

> When possible, educators should choose supports that are consistent with the student's current needs, based on the experience of educators who currently work with the student, and consistent with those already used for routine instruction and local assessments. In any case, it is critical that students have the opportunity to become familiar with the accessibility feature or accommodation, and practice using it prior to the administration of the TNReady assessment. For this reason, it is necessary to decide on supports well in advance of the assessment. (Procedures for Participation of Students in the Tennessee's Assessment System, 2014, p. 13)

Table 2. Overview of the State Accommodations (2012-2017)

Reading/Language Arts for ELLs	
Test	**Accommodations and Accessibility Features**
TCAP/ELSA (Paper and pencil - Measurement Inc.) 2012-2015	Accessibility features: Timing/scheduling (time of the day, breaks, multiple test sessions) Setting (one-on-one, special lighting, adaptive or special furniture, location with minimal distractions, hospital/homebound) Presentation (visual aids, amplification equipment, large print, reread/sign oral instructions verbatim) Response (student answers in test booklet, on separate sheet of paper, scribe) Accommodations: English Linguistically Simplified Assessment (ELSA); EL excluded; extended time; read aloud in English of test instructions
TnReady (Online or paper and pencil - Measurement, Inc.) 2015-2016	Testing conditions (if needed): flexible setting/small group; students reads aloud to self; noise buffer/FM system Accessibility Features: read aloud/human signer for test instructions; line reader for text; highlighter Accessibility Features Identified in Advance: magnification/color overlays/masking Accommodations: extended time; rest/breaks/multiple same day sessions; word-to-word bilingual dictionary
TCAP (Paper and pencil - Questar) 2016-2017	Accessibility features: highlighter; straight edge line reader/mask tool; auditory aids; color overlay; place marker; scratch paper; removable markers to eliminate answer choices; directions read aloud and clarification/repetition as needed; magnification/enlargement device; redirect student to the test; glossary in footnotes; external spell check device; student can read the assessment aloud to him/herself. Accommodations: extended time; word-to-word bilingual dictionary; rest/breaks; EL excluded

Table 3. 2016-2017 Accommodations Descriptions

Accommodation	Description
Extended Time	Not to exceed double time.
Word-to-Word Dictionary	The student may use an approved bilingual, word-to-word dictionary. Dictionaries that include definitions, phrases, sentences, or pictures are not allowed. The student should be familiar with the dictionary they will use during testing. Students should be given ample time to complete the test using the accommodation. If no hard copy word-to-word dictionary can be found for a specific language, contact the Tennessee Department of Assessment for additional guidance.
Rest/Breaks	This allows for the student to take additional rest/breaks based on a need as outlined in a behavior plan, IEP, EL or medical plan at any time during the subpart. Each subpart must be completed within one test day. Required testing times may not be exceeded.
EL Excluded	EL (English Learner) students who are in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school may be excluded from participation in the ELA and Social Studies/U.S. History assessments. First-year EL students are still required to participate in math and science assessments, however their math scores may be excluded from accountability.
Human Reader/Human Signer for Science	Any student identified as EL, Transition Year 1 or Transition Year 2 may have the Science content assessment read aloud per recommendations by the ESL team.

As such, classroom teachers of ELLs become not just the deliverers of the state accommodation policy, but instead active decision-makers who exercise a certain degree of discretion and autonomy. This connects to what Lipsky (2010) describes as "the correct balance between compassion and flexibility on the one hand, and impartiality and rigid rule-application on the other" (p. 16). Although the policy, as written, highlights and enforces the importance of introducing accommodations to students well before the high-stakes annual testing, it also acknowledges the fact that teachers exercise a great degree of autonomy. Because dealing with children calls for sensitive observation and judgment in moment-by-moment interactions, it cannot be reduced to pre-programmed formats. It stands to reason that looking closely at how teachers enact accommodation policy in the classroom would be an active area of education research. However, this is not the case. In fact, there is an overwhelming gap in research examining classroom teacher use and evaluation of testing accommodations *in situ*. Given the scant research attention to within-classroom testing accommodations with only a handful of relevant studies to date (Clark-Gareca, 2013; Schissel, 2012), it is not at all clear how teachers working with ELLs interpret and enact accommodation guidelines proposed by their states and districts. Such lack of insight seriously impedes the conceptualization of appropriate ELL national and state assessment policy.

Finally, as the educational landscape is currently in flux due to the new more rigorous college and career readiness standards (such as Common Core State Standards), and the assessments and instruction increasingly involve computer-assisted technologies, a closer look at the ELL accommodation interpretation and use is warranted. Thus, this study explores the ELL accommodation policy, as written and as enacted, with its multitude of dimensions and

influences. I seek to provide a deeper theoretical understanding of within-classroom accommodations, a reconceptualization of appropriate ELL assessment policies, and a development of practical implications for teachers of ELLs.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Guided by the notion that policy is a complex multifaceted phenomenon (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996) with "inter-related levels influencing each other in often unanticipated ways" (Villegas & Lucas, 2011, p. 35), this study investigates how guidelines regarding ELL testing accommodations are being interpreted by teachers and administrators, what classroom accommodations are used during language and literacy instruction and assessment, and what the rationale for using such accommodations is. Such investigation of within-classroom accommodation practices can not only shed light onto how policy influences classroom practice, but also "can expand test accommodations into a new territory where teaching is used to influence testing" (Schissel, 2014, p. 294) and to diversify the currently available repertoire of ELL test accommodations.

Thus, through the theoretical lens of sociocultural framework, bioecological model of human development and sociolinguistic view of language teaching and learning, I intend to answer the following research questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions of accommodation use with ELLs during language and literacy instruction and assessment?
2. How are ELL accommodations enacted in mainstream and ESL classrooms during language and literacy instruction and assessment?

3. What are systematic patterns across participating classrooms in relation to accommodation use, teacher and student characteristics, classroom activities and content?

In the remainder of this chapter I will define pertinent relevant terms, describe the context for this study, and provide an overview of how the rest of the sections are organized. I summarize what each chapter addresses and how it contributes to answering the research questions.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions serve as explanations of terms I utilize throughout this study. These definitions also serve to offer a brief prelude to the present study.

Accommodations – The term "accommodation" is often narrowly used in testing literature to describe "changes to testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation in order to allow students' meaningful participation in the assessment" by addressing "the unique linguistic and sociocultural needs of the student without altering the test construct." (Willner, Rivera, & Acosta, 2008, p.vii). In this study, I take up a broader definition of accommodations to also include the changes to instructional procedures, instructional materials, and instructional situations that allow students meaningful participation in the instruction.

Allowable accommodations – accommodations allowed during high-stakes assessment and perceived to ensure a valid and reliable score on these assessments, not to provide an unfair advantage to those students who receive accommodations.

Bilingual dictionaries - By allowing students to look up unfamiliar English vocabulary, bilingual dictionaries and glossaries are meant to provide ELLs with access to the language of the test instructions and items. Unlike glossaries that provide descriptions and explanations of words specific to various contexts, bilingual dictionaries allowed on high-stakes testing offer direct translations of each word.

ELL – English Language Learner; The U.S. Department of Education defines ELLs as national-origin-minority students who are limited-English-proficient (LEP) and emphasizes the preferred use of the term *ELL* versus *LEP* as the former highlights students' accomplishments versus deficits. In Tennessee, children enrolled in a K-12 school setting whose enrollment datasheet indicates that he or she (a) spoke a language other than English as a baby; (b) currently speaks a language other than English at home; or (c) has family members who speak a language other than English, are tested with a placement English language screener. The results determine whether the student is designated as LEP and his or her consequent placement in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. ELLs are subsequently assessed yearly to gage their language proficiency. Once language proficiency, as determined by the English language proficiency assessment, is achieved, students are transitioned out of the ESL program, reclassified, and are no longer included in the LEP sub-group.

ELP assessments – English Language Proficiency assessments administered with ELLs yearly to measure their English language acquisition. ELP assessments are administered in addition to the yearly high-stakes achievement tests and typically include sections of four modalities of language, i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Emergent bilingual – Recent research distances itself from the term 'ELL,' as an operational label to describe students learning English as an additional language in schools. Instead, the term 'emergent bilingual' is used to signify that while acquiring English, the students become bilingual and are able to communicate in both their home language and English (Garcia, Kleifgen, Falchi, 2008). While the term emergent bilingual acknowledges and celebrates the dynamic nature of languaging (doing language in daily interactions to get things done), it is somewhat disingenuous to claim that in English-only states, such as Tennessee, children are encouraged to develop their multilingual toolkits to become truly emergent bilinguals. Thus, I continue to use the term 'ELL' in this study to reflect the infrequency of home language use in the classrooms.

English proficiency level – Similar to the reading level, English proficiency level is not a fixed entity. It varies greatly depending on the context, content domain, and language learner characteristics. WIDA (definition is provided further in this section), for instance, has six levels of English language proficiency that differ across such content areas, as language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies.

ESL – English as a Second Language program designed to accelerate ELLs' English language acquisition in order to allow them to fully participate in the mainstream classroom, in which the medium of instruction is English.

Linguistic simplification – Linguistic simplification is the process of changing the language of test instructions and internal items in order to minimize syntactic and semantic complexity while preserving the same meaning pertinent to the content area being assessed. Word frequency, word length, morphological complexity, sentence lengths, as

well as the density and cohesiveness of ideas, contribute to linguistic complexity of a text. Such linguistic complexity not related to the construct being measured can reduce reliability and validity of the assessment administered with ELLs.

Reading level - "Reading level is not a static entity like height. Interest, prior knowledge, type and amount of instruction, type of support and rereading all matter to what children can successfully read." (Cunningham & Allington, 2003, p. 141)

Scaffolding – I subscribe to the following definition of scaffolding offered by Margaret Heritage and colleagues:

Drawing on Vygotsky's notion of activity in the "zone of proximal development," Wood, Bruner, and Ross have suggested scaffolding as a metaphor for "just-right" kind of support that teachers provide to move students beyond their current state of development. Consistent with the aims of college and career ready standards and deeper learning, the goal of this kind of support is to make students' knowledge generative, or transferable, so that they can use it in the future to support new learning on their own […] The scaffolding is proleptic, or forward looking. (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015, p. 46)

WIDA – Formerly World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, WIDA does no longer use its acronym definition. WIDA Consortium is a non-profit cooperative group whose purpose is to develop standards and assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students. "Through standards, assessments, research, and professional development, WIDA provides meaningful tools and information to educators working with ELLs that are anchored in research-based practices for serving these diverse learners." (https://www.wida.us/membership/benefits.aspx) The state of Tennessee adopted the

WIDA standards and accompanying ELP assessments provided by the consortium. WIDA identifies six levels of English language proficiency (entering, beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, reaching) across the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. At each level, WIDA identifies what kinds of language students can process and produce, e.g., at level one (entering) writing, students can draw and label their objects, pictures, and diagrams, while at level five (bridging) students can author multiple forms of writing and react to multiple genres and discourses.

Significance and Relevance of Study

Although state-mandated policies and guidelines in regards to ELLs claim to promote academic achievement and equality for these students, studies systematically investigating the influence of "street level bureaucrats", that is, teachers and principals, on how these policies and guidelines actually get interpreted and enacted in the classrooms are scarce. As one tool to reduce construct-irrelevant variance in measurement of ELLs' achievement, Pennock-Roman and Rivera (2011) emphasize the importance of continuing "to improve accommodations and to investigate how best to match them to particular student needs." (p. 20) Stressing the importance of accommodation research, Cizek (2007) argued:

> The state of research on what constitutes an appropriate accommodation for a given pupil on a large scale assessment is still in its comparative infancy – which would mean by extension that the state of affairs in classroom assessment accommodations is essentially embryonic. (p. 112)

Extending Cizek's argument, I believe that assessment accommodation guidelines affect more than just assessments in the classroom. The daily instruction and interactions that ELLs

experience can potentially reflect the enactment of the accommodation policies. Interestingly, Wright and Choi's (2006) survey of teachers in 40 elementary schools in Arizona revealed that fewer than half of these schools provided ELLs with the mandated state test accommodations. This insight highlights the need for examining the complex systematic relationships of ELLs, classroom teachers, administrators, policy-makers, and accommodation policies.

Many unanswered questions in regards to accommodations remain and are worth exploring. If teachers provide ELLs with sanctioned accommodations, how and why do they accomplish that? If teachers do not provide ELLs with accommodations recommended by the state, what do teachers do to support ELLs during literacy and language instruction? As such, the significance of this proposed study is its orientation towards exploring accommodation uptake and enactment in the classroom through the lens of a bioecological model of human development, sociocultural perspectives on learning and teaching, and a sociolinguistic view of second language learning.

Overview of Research

To address the issues discussed in the previous section, I employed comparative ethnographic case study design to explore how accommodation guidelines get translated into daily situations of literacy and language instruction and assessment of two focal ELLs. Both students were male, in the third grade at the time of the study, and were receiving ESL services, as well as reading interventions in accordance to the Response-to-Intervention system set up in their respective schools. Through qualitative classroom observations, document analysis, and formal and informal interviews with teachers, school, district, and state administrators, as well as informal discussions with children themselves, I aimed to paint a picture of how state-mandates

assessment accommodations were enacted in both instructional and assessment situations. I also tried to understand how teachers accounted for such accommodation use and how children's literacy and language development was influenced as a result.

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the aims of the study and its research questions, and the chapters that follow provide detail into the study. I begin with the review of literature related to the assessment accommodations and their usefulness for ELLs (Chapter 2). I then discuss the theoretical underpinnings (Chapter 3) and methodological choices made for this study (Chapter 4). Chapters 5 and 6 are dedicated to the findings of this study, while Chapter 7 attempts to integrate the findings in order to highlight the implications for research and practice.

CHAPTER 2: ACCOMMODATION USE WITH ELLS

As described in the introduction, my experience with teaching and learning languages, as well as my initial literature review of research on the use of accommodations with ELLs led me to the following research questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions of accommodation use with ELLs during language and literacy instruction and assessment?
2. How are ELL accommodations enacted in mainstream and ESL classrooms during language and literacy instruction and assessment?
3. What are systematic patterns across participating classrooms in relation to accommodation use, teacher and student characteristics, classroom activities and content?

In this chapter, I discuss relevant literature on accommodations used for high-stakes assessments and their effectiveness, as well as research on classroom accommodations use. While a number of exemplary studies related to accommodation use exist, the overwhelming majority of them are quantitative in nature and none of them take up the issue of accommodation through the combination of the bioecological model of human development, sociocultural theory, and a sociolinguistic view of second language teaching and learning.

What Are Testing Accommodations?

Accommodations are changes to the testing procedures or materials "intended to minimize the cognitive resources ELLs need to process the language of the test and maximize the cognitive resources available for accessing the content of the test" (Rivera & Collum, 2004, p. 3) The often

cited purpose of accommodations is to remove the construct-irrelevant variance, such as lack of the English language proficiency, in order to successfully measure ELLs' content-specific knowledge. Rivera and Collum (2004) pointed out that "the challenge of accommodating ELLs is to ensure that accommodations ameliorate linguistic and cultural barriers associated with learning a new language without altering essential features or destroying test validity and other technical qualities of the test." (p. 4)

Accommodations must be effective, valid and feasible (Kieffer et al., 2012). Effective in that they lead to improved scores, valid in that they do not modify the content that is being measured, and feasible in that they do not impose costly or overly complicated implementation. Rivera and Stansfeild (2000) organized accommodations into four broad categories of *presentation, response, time-scheduling,* and *setting*. Rivera et al. (2006) and Shafer Willner et al. (2008) devised an alternative taxonomy of ELL accommodation with two categories of *direct and indirect linguistic support*.

Hofstetter (2003) reported that the most frequently offered high-stakes accommodations were provision of extended time, small group or one-on-one administration, breaks, reading aloud of questions in English, and allowing the use of bilingual word lists or dictionaries. Upon reviewing state policy documents from the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Rivera and Collum (2004) concluded that there were as many as 75 different accommodations in use at the time and those accommodations varied across states and districts. Generally, the majority of states outline ELL accommodations in tandem with accommodations available for students with disabilities. Rivera and Collum (2004) noted that 31 of 75 accommodations listed among states' policies only applied to students with disabilities, whereas about 44 apply to ELLs. Specifically,

the researchers identified 27 direct linguistic support and 17 indirect linguistic support accommodations that vary in their degree of applicability and overall usefulness. Providing ELLs with direct linguistic support accommodations, such as oral translation, linguistically simplified materials, bilingual glossaries/dictionaries, or translated versions of tests, has been long seen as a means to removing some of the linguistic burden from the assessments so that ELLs' skills and content knowledge could be measured more accurately (Abedi, et al., 2000; Abedi & Lord, 2001; Albus, Thurlow, Liu, & Bielinski, 2005; Butler & Stevens, 1997; Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kopriva, 2000; Rivera, et al., 2000; Stansfield & Rivera, 2001). However, some states simply apply the accommodations used for students with disabilities to ELLs (Rivera, Collum, Shafer, & Sia, 2006). Below I include the ten most common ELL test accommodations recommended by state policies in 2008 (Shafer Willner, Rivera, & Acosta, 2008):

- Use of dual language dictionaries
- Reading items aloud
- Translating directions orally into native language
- Clarifying/explaining directions in English
- Repeating directions
- Reading directions aloud
- Clarifying/explaining directions in the native language
- Simplifying directions
- Allowing student to respond orally in English and describing responses
- Extended time

History of Testing Accommodations on High-Stakes Tests

Historically, ELLs were excluded from participation in state assessments, "because limited English proficiency was thought to prevent students from understanding questions and/or result in invalid test results under standard test administration procedures" (Rivera, Collum, & Shafer Willner (2006) as cited in Kieffer, Lesaux, Rivera, & Francis, 2009, p. 1169). Prior to 1995, the NAEP policy also allowed for exclusion of ELLs as they were deemed unable to demonstrate content knowledge due to their limited English proficiency. However, with the introduction of The Improving America's School Act (IASA) of 1994 and later NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act of 2002, states were held increasingly more accountable for *all* students' achievement, including that of ELLs and students with disabilities.

Under IASA and NCLB, not only were the states required to administer assessments and disaggregate the results by gender, racial and ethnic groups, and English proficiency status, but they were also challenged to utilize assessments *accessible* to all students. The 1994 law specifically indicated that assessments were to be made available with "reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with diverse learning needs." Students with diverse learning needs included students with disabilities and ELLs. Wright and Choi (2006) argued that the meaning of *reasonable* and *accommodations* was and still is fairly ambiguous, as states develop their own definitions and decide which accommodations suit their needs most. No monitoring exists to ensure that effective accommodations are provided and that students are in fact using them, but the law is pretty clear on the mandatory nature of assessment and accommodation use with ELLs:

The 2002 law (NCLB) extends the assessment requirements of the 1994 law and expands

accountability requirements for all students. Under NCLB, states are required to include "limited English proficient students, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided accommodations . . . including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what students know and can do in academic content areas. (U.S. Congress, 2002, Section 1111[b][3][C][ix][III] as sited in Rivera & Collum, 2004, p. 3)

More recently, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a reauthorization of NCLB, also included that ELLs participate in the achievement assessments and are "assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided appropriate accommodations […] including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency" (US Department of Education, 2015, p. 25). I next describe what accommodations are afforded to ELLs on such large-scale assessments as NAEP and the new generation of assessments, such Smarter-Balanced and PARCC.

Accommodations on NAEP

NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, is the largest nationally representative longitudinal assessment of American students in various subject areas. While initially excluding ELLs from participation, NAEP introduced accommodations for students with special needs, which included students with disabilities and ELLs in the 1990s. What started with 6 accommodations in 1996, now allows for 21 accommodations. Specifically, for the reading portion of the test, ELLs are mostly allowed indirect linguistic support accommodations, i.e., extended time, small group or one-on-one test administration, and breaks. Additionally,

directions can be read aloud in English and Spanish, if appropriate. The complete list of accommodations is available on the NAEP website (https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/accom_table.aspx).

In press, as well as research, NAEP accommodations are often situated as a means to access, as they allow ELLs to take the test that was designed for English speaking children. However, there are certain accommodations that NAEP does not allow, such as read aloud of the reading subtest and conducting the assessment over several days. It also seems that neither allowing accommodations nor the inclusion of targets set to ensure that students with special needs and ELLs are participating in the assessment influence states' decision to continuously exclude large number of ELLs from participating in NAEP, e.g., Kentucky.

Accommodations on PARCC and SBAC

Because the newer generations of achievement testing has been shifting to an online computer-based administration, the nature of accommodations afforded to ELLs was bound to change (National Center on Educational Outcomes, 2011; Thurlow, Lazarus, Albus, & Hodgson, 2010). Most recently, the concepts of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) underpin new summative assessments being implemented across the United States. The term 'universal design' of assessment is often defined as a way to develop assessments to include the widest range of students while preserving the validity of the assessment results (CAST, 2012; Thurlow, Lazarus, Albus, & Hodgson, 2010). For example, both testing consortia, PARCC (Partnership for Readiness for Colleges and Careers) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), continue to utilize accommodations as a way to include ELLs, but also incorporate extensive universal tools and accessibility features available to all students. Russell, Hoffmann, and

Higgins (2009) describe the computerized assessment based on the principles of the Universal Design as follows:

> In a universally designed test-delivery system, all students across a testing program use the same standard interface and have access to high-quality tools and accommodations delivered in a controlled, standardized, and equitable manner. (p. 3)

On their website, SBAC promises to "provide accurate measures of achievement and growth for students with disabilities and English language learners" (http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/support-for-under-represented-students/). They intend to do so through universal accessibility tools (e.g., a digital notepad and scratch paper, English glossary), designated supports (e.g., a translated pop-up glossary, stacked translations, text-to-speech) identified by school personal as necessary for individual students, and accommodations (e.g., Braille, closed captioning) available to students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan. Table 4 provides a sample of Smarter Balanced embedded and non-embedded Universal Tools, designated supports, and accommodations (adapted from A Summary of Smarter Balanced Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations).

Likewise, PARCC is "using universal design principles to make the new tests as accessible as possible to all students, including English learners and students with disabilities." (http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/accessibility) The accessibility features available to all students include answer masking, audio amplification, bookmark, color contrast, blank scratch paper, highlighting tool, pop-up glossary, spell check, and so on.

Table 4. Smarter Balanced Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

	Embedded	Non-embedded
Universal Tools	Breaks Digital Notepad English Glossary Highlighter Spell Check Zoom	Breaks Scratch Paper
Designated Supports	Color Contrast Masking Turn off Any Universal Tool	Color Contrast Color Overlay Noise Buffers Separate Setting Translated Test Directions
Accommodations	Braille Streamline	Abacus Print on Demand Scribe Speech-to-Text

PARCC also provides a list of the accommodations available to ELL and cross-references each accommodation with the recommendations regarding the effectiveness of that accommodation based on the English Language Proficiency (ELP) level of the student (see Table 5), citing Abedi and Ewers (2013) as a foundational piece of research for PARCC policy decisions on accessibility features.

Effectiveness of Specific Testing Accommodations

A plethora of research studies and reports examining the effects of a particular accommodation or a combination of various accommodations on test performance has been conducted and published over the last twenty years. In their review of research on the effects of accommodations on ELLs' test performance, Sireci, Li, and Scarpati (2003) found that the most commonly studied accommodations were "linguistic modification, provision of a dictionary or bilingual dictionary, provision of dual-language booklets, extended time, and oral administration" (p. 89). I will begin this section with a discussion of narrative reviews that examined the effectiveness of specific testing accommodations. I then describe related meta-analyses and a few individual studies published since the latest meta-analysis.

Narrative Reviews

In their extensive 100-page literature review, Sireci, Li, and Scarpati (2003) examined studies addressing the use of accommodations with students with disabilities and ELLs. The authors located and reviewed 12 studies examining the following ELL accommodations: linguistic simplification, bilingual dictionaries, customized dictionaries, test translation, extra time, and read-aloud. Only 4 studies showed that accommodations led to improved test results for ELLs. The authors concluded that the results across all studies were unclear, but some

Table 5. Selected PARCC Accommodations

	Most likely to benefit English learners at this ELP level		
Accommodations	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Extended Time	HR	HR	HR
Word-to-Word Dictionary (English/Native Language)	NA	HR	HR
General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated in Student's Native Language (by test administrator)	HR	R	NA
General Administration Directions Clarified as Needed in Student's Native Language (by test administrator)	HR	R	NA

Key: highly recommended (HR); recommended (R); may not be appropriate (NA)

accommodations, such as the provision of linguistic simplification or a dictionary/glossary, showed promise.

Rivera and Collum (2004) reviewed 15 research studies published between 1990 and 2003 that examined the effect of such accommodations as linguistic simplification, customized English dictionaries and glossaries, use of native language, read aloud of test instructions and internal items, and extra time. They concluded that only two accommodations appear promising-native language versions of assessments and linguistic simplification of English versions. They argue that because ELLs have to navigate through layers of linguistic structures, lexical items and sociocultural practices embedded in the test, such modifications as simplification, repetition, and clarification can compensate for ELLs' lack of English language proficiency:

> Compared to peers who have automatized processing the language of the test, ELLs who have not automatized language processing are at a distinct disadvantage… Accommodations can mitigate these disadvantages by helping ELLs access the content of the assessment. This support can be provided directly, through the (1) simplification, (2) repetition, or (3) clarification of the test items or directions, or indirectly, by modifying the conditions under which a test is taken. (p. 14)

Meta-analyses

In 2006, David Francis and colleagues issued The Center on Instruction's report, a meta-analysis of 11 studies, on test accommodations for ELLs. Later published in Review of Educational Research (Kieffer, Lesaux, Rivera, & Francis, 2009), the report concluded that accommodations are "generally ineffective" in improving ELLs' performance on large-scale assessments. Furthermore, Kieffer et al. (2009) argued that bilingual dictionaries or glossaries

did not have a positive effect on ELLs' outcomes. In comparison, English language dictionaries and glossaries had an overall positive (although small) effect with an expected modest improvement in the range of 10% to 25% reduction in the achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers. Additionally, simplified English was not found to have a statistically significant effect on performance on math and science tests:

> In contrast to the conclusions of the narrative reviews (i.e., Abedi et al., 2004; Sireci et al., 2003), our meta-analysis findings suggest there is little reason to be optimistic about the potential effectiveness of simplified English as a test accommodation. (p. 1187)

In their response to Kieffer et al. (2009), Pennock-Roman and Rivera (2011) reached the opposite conclusion. Specifically, they found that when coupled with extra time, most accommodations did improve ELLs' test performance. The most effective accommodations were the provision of dual language, the bilingual glossary, and the English glossary. The researchers also noted:

> Although there is little experimental research to support the use of read aloud for ELLs, it is the most commonly provided English language accommodation—currently used in 40 states (Shafer Willner et al., 2008; Acosta et al., 2008). Conversely, English dictionary/glossary accommodations have effect sizes above 0.2 in pop-up format or in paper and pencil format with generous time, but they are provided in only 11 states (Shafer Willner et al., 2008; Acosta et al., 2008). (p. 20)

Two more meta-analyses published in 2012 added to the growing body of research on ELL testing accommodation use. Using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), H. Li and Suen (2012) looked at 19 studies to test (a) whether accommodations were effective and (b) what

variables mediated the effects of the accommodations offered to ELLs. Overall, only a small, positive effect size was associated with accommodation use. The most influential factor accounting for significant variation was English language proficiency with ELLs with lower English proficiency benefiting from accommodations more than their more proficient ELL peers. The researchers also found that there were "no significant differences between math/science and non-math/science subjects in terms of the accommodation effects" (p. 341) and "no statistically significant differences among the effects of various accommodation strategies" (p. 342).

Kieffer, Rivera, and Francis (2012) issued an update to their 2006 report and this time concluded that simplified English, providing English dictionaries or glossaries, and providing extra time "had statistically significant, small average effects on ELLs' test performance" (p. 14). The researchers reiterated their earlier point that to eliminate ELL and non-ELL achievement gap, all students must receive high-quality content instruction in the language of the test they will be given. The updated report also included the following recommendations for test developers: (a) use simplified English in test design, eliminating irrelevant language demands for all students; (b) provide English dictionaries/glossaries to ELLs; (c) match the language of test to the language of instruction; (d) provide extended time or unlimited tests to all students.

Finally, most reviewed meta-analyses were either in math and science domains and utilized NAEP or TIMSS test items. However, several studies looked at accommodation use specifically within reading and language arts context. For instance, Anderson, Liu, Swierzbin, Thurlow, and Bielinski (2000) focused their experimental study on looking closely at the effects of using dual language questions and read aloud in Spanish on the performance of Spanish-speaking 8th graders on the Minnesota Basic Standards Test. The reading passages were in

English, but all other test information was presented in two languages side-by-side. The researchers found no statistically significant differences for ELLs under standard and accommodated conditions.

Albus, Thurlow, Liu, Bielinski (2005) examined the effect of a simplified English dictionary on the reading test performance of Hmong ELLs. The students were asked to interpret two reading passages with and without an English dictionary. The authors did not find any significant difference in comprehension scores. However, not all students used the accommodation when it was provided. When looking at the students who reported using the accommodation, ELLs with self-reported intermediate English reading proficiency had a statistically significant higher test score with the use of accommodation. Students with self-reported poor English reading proficiency did not benefit from the English dictionary even when they reported using it. The researchers further hypothesized that, although inconsistent across levels of English reading proficiency, the use of English dictionary was more appropriate for their sampled population than a bilingual dictionary given the lack of literacy in their first language.

Based on the studies reviewed, it is difficult to determine what accommodations are most effective. Assigning appropriate testing accommodations appears to be more complex than simply providing test administrators and teachers with a standard laundry list of accommodations to be used on high-stakes and classroom assessments. Because ELLs are a diverse group of students with varied levels of literacy and language development, accommodations provided ought to reflect such diversity. In the next section, I will discuss the work of several researchers who explore systematic ways of personalizing accommodation assignment for culturally and

linguistically diverse learners.

Assigning Appropriate Accommodations

Abedi and Ewers (2013) suggest the following critical considerations for selecting accommodations for ELLs and students with disabilities (for a more detailed discussion see Abedi, 2012):

(1) Effectiveness: an accommodation must be effective in making an assessment more accessible to the recipients.

(2) Validity: an accommodation should not alter the focal construct, i.e., the outcomes of accommodated and non-accommodated assessments should be comparable.

(3) Differential Impact: an accommodation should be sensitive to student's background characteristics, and their academic standing, i.e., one size may not fit all.

(4) Relevance: an accommodation should be appropriate for the recipients.

(5) Feasibility: an accommodation must be logistically feasible to implement in the assessment setting. (p. 4)

Kopriva, Emick, and Hipolito-Delgado (2007) posited that assigning inappropriate accommodations to ELLs is as effective as giving them no accommodations at all. Furthermore, providing inappropriate accommodations can impede students' performance. For instance, although Duran, Brown, and McCall (2002) reported that providing side-by-side versions of the tests in English and ELLs' first language proved successful for math bilingual assessments in Oregon was beneficial, it may not be appropriate to an ELL who is not literate or has never received academic math instruction in his first language. Some ELLs might be well versed in certain topics or concepts in one language and others in the other (Garcia & Pearson, 1994).

Comprehensive policy and accommodations analysis, followed by an expert panel discussion, conducted by Acosta, Rivera, and Shafer Willner (2008) yielded an important framework for selecting accommodations for ELLs. Based on the Conceptual Framework for Mapping Accommodations to ELP Levels, the panel members vetted a list of appropriate accommodations in both English and students' native language and mapped them to English language proficiency (ELP) levels and to selected student background variables.

Furthermore, citing Kopriva et al. (2007), Kieffer (2009) posited that ELLs who received individualized accommodations as recommended by the computerized taxonomy for ELL accommodations (STELLA) based on English language proficiency, English reading proficiency, and native language reading proficiency had significantly higher scores than ELLs who received non-recommended accommodations or no accommodations at all. The data for the algorithm is collected through a number of sources, including "a student's school file (which contains the student's English and non-English native language proficiency scores, as well as other information regarding the student's experience in the U.S. schooling system), a parent/guardian form (which summarizes information obtained through an interview with the student's parent or guardian on the student's home language proficiency and prior schooling experiences), and a teacher form (which is based on a teacher's observations of the student's language abilities and classroom- related experiences and preferences)" (Myers & Kopriva, 2015, p. 2). The chart illustrating the components on the STELLA decision-making system is presented in Figure 1 (Myers & Kopriva, 2015, p. 3).

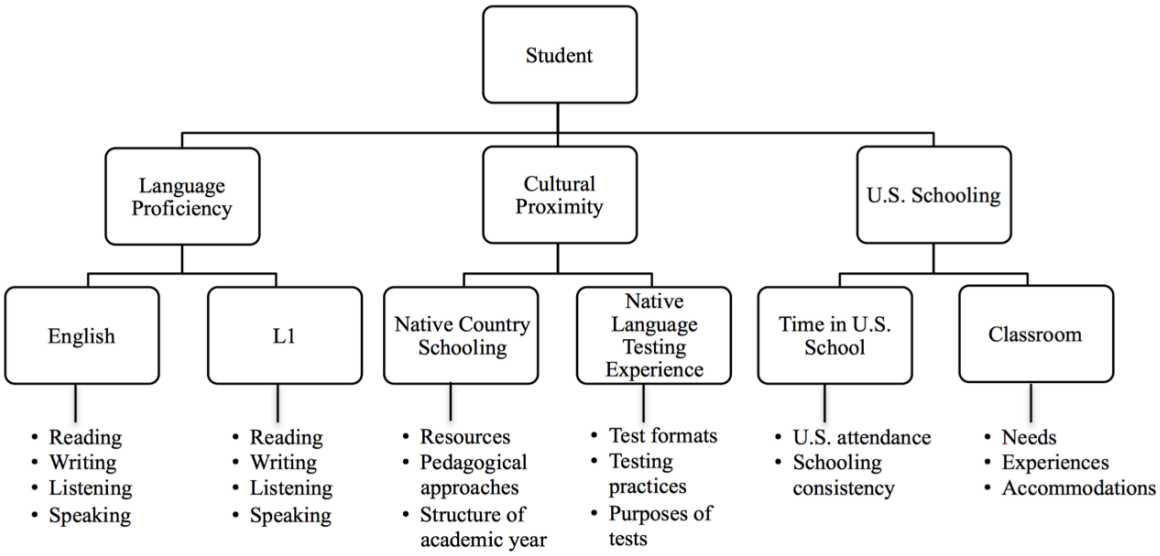


Figure 1. STELLA Decision-making System

A "nuanced profile of students" that goes "beyond overly gross indicators such as EL status or not, level of English language proficiency, or time in the United States" warrants and embraces "this more fine-grained approach to identifying needs of ELs in testing" (Thurlow & Kopriva, 2015, p. 347). Such approaches, as STELLA, allow to identify key factors in choosing appropriate accommodations for ELLs. However, understanding the research on how to successfully assign accommodations to ELLs is critical for examining not only the high-stakes assessments, but the daily classroom decision-making. The diversity of ELL population and the complexity of classroom instructional and assessment practices warrant a closer look at how accommodations are devised and assigned in the classroom.

Within-Classroom Accommodation Use and Effectiveness

Although state-mandated policies and guidelines in regards to ELLs aim to promote academic achievement and access to instruction and assessment, studies systematically

investigating teachers' interpretation and enactment of specific accommodations are scarce. Few relevant studies looked at the enactment of accommodations during instructional tasks (Cho & Reich, 2008; Harklau, 1994; Reeves, 2004) and even fewer studies focused on the accommodation use during classroom assessments (Clark-Gareca, 2013; Schissel, 2012).

In her 2013 dissertation, Clark-Gareca surveyed over 200 teachers and, then, observed and interviewed 10 focal classroom teachers to identify what accommodation practices took place during math and science assessments. Her findings suggest that none of the observed teachers used linguistic simplification as an accommodation during class assessments. Instead, teachers used read aloud which they felt "helped ELLs to better understand test content and more easily provide correct answers" (p. 111). Teachers also utilized paraphrase (spontaneous rewarding of test items), test in lock step (all test-takers are taking the test at the same pace, item-by-item, the students are not allowed to proceed until everyone indicated that they are ready to move on), modified test (pre-prepared test with modified language or modified tasks that were for ELLs and/or special education students; eliminating of one or two answer choices), and word banks (especially, used with fill-in-the-blank tests). According to the survey results, teachers infrequently allowed bilingual dictionaries as an accommodation in the classroom. During the interviews, teachers reported the belief that 4th grade students were too young to use bilingual word-to-word dictionaries. Such dictionaries were not considered helpful for understanding content or were simply unavailable for students- two teachers had bilingual dictionaries in the classroom solely for their own use. Interestingly, another dissertation study conducted by Gribble (2014), revealed that ESL teachers "with more years of ESL teaching experience used bilingual dictionaries as an ELL accommodation on regular classroom assessments more frequently than

teachers with fewer years of ESL teaching experience." (p. 65)

More specifically, Gribble (2014) explored English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' perceptions of "standardized testing accommodations and regular classroom assessments for ELLs in Tennessee public schools." (p. 4) Recruited through a university-affiliated ESL listserv, 85 ESL teachers (out of 400 potential respondents) participated in a brief survey developed by the researchers. The findings suggest that ESL teachers had an overall positive view of such classroom testing accommodations, as extended time, read-aloud, and word-to-word bilingual dictionary. Teachers reported extended time being used the most often, with read-aloud being second most frequent, and bilingual dictionaries being used seldom or never. Finally, similar to Clark-Gareca's (2013) finding, ESL teachers in Gribble' s study expressed a belief that additional accommodations would benefit ELLs on standardized tests.

To gain first-hand experience with within-classroom accommodation use, Schissel (2012) examined data from administrators, classroom teachers, and students in two urban schools in Pennsylvania. Based on the field notes, semi-structured and informal interviews with the participants, classroom artifacts, and publically available documents, and data on the schools policies and test performances, the researcher concluded that teachers and administrators perceived accommodations as effective, equitable, and beneficial to ELLs. Classroom observations revealed that, to make the tests accessible to their students, teachers utilized a broader range of pedagogical practices than that prescribed by the state. Similar to Clark-Gareca's (2013) study, the teacher "rephrased and simplified the prompt" and "referenced a previous conversation in class" (p. 289). Schissel (2012) posited that "teachers and administrators' expanded use of test accommodations beyond state mandates may also contribute

to their positive view of test accommodations." (p. 291) At the same time, she argues that the conceptualization of accommodations for ELLs ought to shift away from "accommodation as a tool that levels the playing field through assimilation to monolingual norms to one that introduces multilingual scaffolds to support and promote the multilingual competencies of all students" (p. viii).

Conclusion

The research presented in this section offered an overview of the complex terrain of the ELL accommodation assignment and effectiveness. In the next chapter, I discuss theoretical underpinnings of the present study, which focuses on our understanding of how classroom teachers accommodate ELLs during daily literacy assessment and instruction.

CHAPTER 3: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

A number of researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) have argued that one's theory, methods, and analytic strategy should be made transparent and that connection among the three should be established to provide a comprehensible framework through which the phenomenon in question is examined. Therefore, in this section I discuss the theoretical frameworks underpinning the present study. Because teachers and their ELLs live and enact policy across multiple environments, my research is guided by the intersection of the bioecological model of human development, the sociocultural perspective on learning and teaching, and a sociolinguistic view of second language learning. While the key ideas of the theoretical perspectives are presented in Table 6, I also offer a detailed account of each theory and how they interrelate to help answer the research questions of this study.

Table 6. Summary of Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretical Perspectives		
Bioecological model of human development	Sociocultural perspective on learning and teaching	Sociolinguistic view of second language learning
Proximal processes, person, context (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem), time	Joint activity, Zone of Proximal Development, more knowledgeable other, interaction, guided participation, apprenticeship	Variability, language in use, community of practice, repertoires of negotiable resources, situated second language learning Translanguaging

Bioecological Model of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development underwent substantial changes over time and, in fact, was still being developed until his death in 2005. In his earlier work, following the theory of psychological fields (Lewin, 1935), Brofenbrenner postulated that the system, to which he further refers as ecological environment, can be imagined as a set of "nested structures" that fit inside the other like Russian nested dolls. Such system is comprised of five socially organized subsystems, each of which differs in the levels of proximity to the developing person in terms of space and time. While Bronfenbrenner's theory was always ecological in that it stressed the interrelatedness of person and context (Bronfenbrenner, 1988), it wasn't until the 1990s that he began identifying *Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT)* model and, specifically, proximal processes as the essence of the theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

In their 2006 chapter that is key to understanding the bioecological model of human development, Bronfenbrenner and Morris define development "as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings, both as individuals and as groups" (p. 793) and outline two propositions key to understanding of their theory.

Proposition I:

> Especially in its early phases, but also throughout the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment. To be effective, the interactions must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. (p. 797)

Proposition II:

> The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person, the environment – both immediate and more remote – in which the processes are taking place, the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration, and the social continuities and changes occurring over time through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived. (p. 798)

Let us unpack these two "theoretically interdependent" (p. 798) propositions and operational research design model – *Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model* - that allows their investigation. *Processes* encompass a variety of interactions between the developing person and his or her environment over time (proximal processes) and are the main mechanisms of producing human development. When children regularly engage in reading and writing in their first or second language either with parents, teachers, or peers, these proximal processes shape development in a particular way. Through these activities children come to make sense of their linguistic and physical world and identify their place in it. However, the power of such proximal processes to influence the development varies greatly depending on the characteristics of the developing *Person*, of the immediate and remote *Contexts*, and the *Time* during which the processes occur. The direction and the power of proximal processes depend in part on critical characteristics of a developing *Person*. The newer iterations of the bioecological theory are further complicated by the fact that personal characteristics of each participant, not just the developing person, but also his parents, teachers, peers, etc. with whom he or she interacts, must be accounted for.

Bronfenbrenner conceptualized the context, or environment, in terms of nested systems that range from microsystem to macrosystem. *Microsystems* represent patterns of "activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment." (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39) Such immediate environments include family, classroom, and peer group settings. *Mesosytems* represent relationships and link between two or more microsystems containing "the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). The relationships between home and school are examples of mesosytems at work. In literacy studies, the work of Heath (1983) and Purcell-Gates (1995) highlighted the complexity of such relationships. Although studies have shown the dissonance between school and out-of-school systems, this study explores the systems impacting a developing person and their relations within one school (see Figure 2).

Exosystems are "the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40) The relationship between the classroom practices and the decisions made about the child's educational career in an IEP meeting in which the child did not participate would provide an example of such linkages. Further, influences of family social networks on the child's development, as described in Lareau's (2000) work, have important

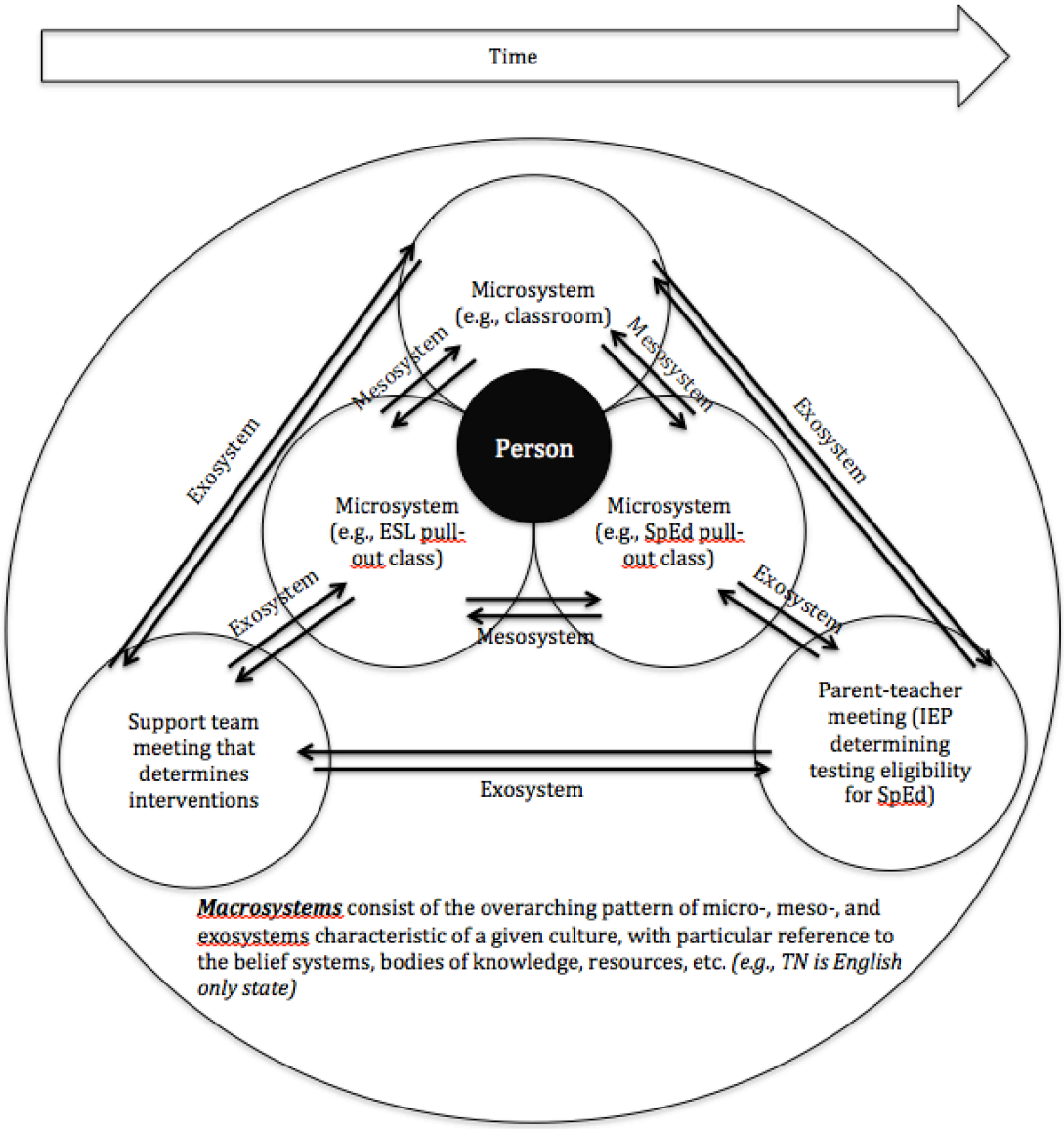


Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner's PPCT Model (as applied to educational context of ELLs)

implications for educators.

Macrosystems consist of the:

> overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material, resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40)

The final concept of the PPCT, *Time*, has a prominent place at a micro-, meso-, and macro- dimensions.

> *Microtime* refers to continuity versus discontinuity in ongoing episodes of proximal process. *Mesotime* is the periodicity of theses episodes across broader time intervals, such as days and weeks. Finally, *Macrotime* focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society, both within and across generations, as they affect and are affected by, processes and outcomes of human development over the life course. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2005, p. 796, emphasis in the original)

To summarize, bio-ecological theory focuses on answering the following questions regarding the proximal processes, which are at the heart of the theory: What are proximal processes? How are proximal processes influenced by the individuals, the contexts in which they occur, and the time? How do proximal processes influence the developmental outcomes of participating individuals?

Sociocultural Perspective on Learning and Teaching

The sociocultural framework is based on the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and his colleagues and students. Ideas central to the sociocultural framework are social and semiotic mediation, learning and development, and zone of proximal development. Specifically, the sociocultural framework acts from the premise that language learning occurs in a social context within interactions with others (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Perez, 2004; Reyes & Azuara, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). In this process of development, language is built on background knowledge children already have and is constructed through dialogue and interaction within the environment (Reyes & Azuara, 2008; Rogoff, 1990; Tolchinsky, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978).

Unlike Piaget's theory, Vygotsky placed critical emphasis on social mediation and the importance of learning that is assumed to pull children's development along (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 192). Vygotsky postulated that the learning and development occur on two mutually constitutive levels, social and psychological. First, learning of culturally-embedded ways of thinking is mediated in an interpsychological space, between the learner and the object, as well as the more knowledgeable others. Then, through internalization, learning moves into the intrapsychological space. However, it is not a simple transmission from the more knowledgeable others to the learner, but instead "an appropriation in which information is taken in to use and manage the new skills in different ways for later application" (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 193). Because learning is socially and culturally mediated, it varies across social and cultural contexts.

Sociocultural perspective is relevant to language and literacy instruction and assessment of ELLs in that it highlights "the learning of an additional language as a process that involves gradually appropriating" a second language "to make it into our own tool for self-regulation and thinking, just as we learned to do the same with our L1 as children" (Ortega, 2013, p. 220). Sociocultural perspective conceptualizes discursive events between teachers and ELLs or ELLs and their peers as the captured instances of joint social activity, or the process of "the collective acquisition of the second language" (Donato, 1994, p. 53), that is characterized by "the construction of co-knowledge" (p. 39). Furthermore, the joint social activity must be studied in real time in situ. Ortega (2013) describes this Vygotskian *microgenetic method* as "the study of situated change in real time" (p. 224) that highlights a prospective account of development. In other words, sociocultural perspective does not ask what the child has achieved, but instead seeks to answer what he or she can achieve in the near future.

To summarize, the sociocultural perspective on learning and teaching is grounded in the following tenets: (a) development follows learning; (b) participation in activity is central in the development of knowledge; (c) participation in activity progresses from apprenticeship to appropriation, from the social to individual plane; and (d) learning can be observed as changes in participation over time (Walqui, 2011, p. 162-163).

Sociolinguistic View of Second Language Learning

Sociocultural knowledge acquisition discussed in the previous section is intimately connected to linguistic knowledge acquisition. Thus, I use the key ideas of sociolinguistics, or the study of language in use, to underpin my exploration and analyses of how social factors, both in and out of the classroom, influence ELLs' English language acquisition and production.

Many social and contextual variables, such as teachers' race and ethnic background, students' first language proficiency, or the nature of a given task, influence ELLs' linguistic output. Thus, sociolinguists highlight language as "a semiotic tool that humans use to communicate with others purposefully and appropriately within specific contexts." (Walqui, 2011, p. 164). As such, the successful communication does not necessitate perfectly grammatically correct speech, but instead requires that interlocutors are able to express their ideas and intentions and to respond to each other appropriately to build on and extend the dialogue to achieve specific communicate goals. In second language teaching, as well as in literacy instruction for ELLs, the insidious assumption that correctness is key contradicts the tenets of the sociolinguistics. Moreover, it poses a huge detriment to ELLs' language and literacy development, which become stifled by the constant emphasis on "correct" grammar, "correct" pronunciation, and "correct" vocabulary. Instead, the sociolinguistic perspective embraces the socially patterned variation in language use and attempts to explain why we speak differently in different contexts (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013).

Most recently, the concept of translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014) came to the forefront of sociolinguistic studies. Translanguaging stems in part from the research of Williams (1994) and Baker (2011) who worked with speakers of English and Welsh. The practice of receiving information in one language and giving information in another – first termed translinguifying – was argued to maximize learners' bilingual ability in learning. Becker (1995) argued that there is no such thing as language, as a finite structure with clear boundaries. Instead there is continual languaging, an activity of human beings in the world, always in the process of being constructed. Becker (1995) further explains, "All languaging is what in Java is called jarwa

dhosok, taking old language (jarwa) and pushing (dhosok) it into new contexts"(p. 185). Pennycook (2010) conceptualizes language as practice and describes it as follows:

> To look at language as a practice is to view language as an activity rather than a structure, as something we do rather than a system we draw on, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity. (p. 2)

Thus, English language learners (emergent bilinguals) do not simply acquire a second language, but rather they "adapt their bodies and brains to the language activity that surrounds them" and "participate in cultural worlds and learn that they can get things done with others in accordance with the culturally promoted norms and values" (Thibault, 2017, p. 76). Juffermans (2011) describes this human turn in sociolinguistics as a shift "towards language (in singular or as a verb) as a sociolinguistic system that is constructed and inhabited by people" (p. 165). As such, all learners, as well as their teachers, can be considered language learners within a complex dynamic system of language socialization (Duranti, Ochs, and Schieffelin, 2011; The Five Graces Group, 2009). The notion of translanguaging then draws on one's linguistic repertoire without regard for socially and politically identified language names and labels. García (2009) explicated translanguaging to mean discursive practices of bilinguals who continuously attempt to make sense of their worlds. In the words of García and Wei (2014), "all languaging is knowing and doing, and all knowing and doing is languaging" (p. 11).

Such reconceptualization of what we understand as a language, language proficiency, and language knowledge allows us to question the clear boundaries of accommodations as conceptualized for ELLs and seek assessment and instructional flexibility in daily interactions

between teachers and their students.

Summary of Theoretical Frameworks

The aim of this study is to examine the complex uptake and enactment of within-classroom ELL accommodations designed to support two focal students in two elementary schools. As such, Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model offers an interactive view of child development in that it emphasizes the importance of social policies, programs, and daily experiences afforded to children across contexts and time. Similar to sociocultural theory, which conceptualizes learning as "stretching across social and material environments" (Roth & Lee, 2007, p. 189), bio-ecological framework systematically considers individual characteristics of the developing person, contexts (e.g., classrooms, homes, communities, and societies) and their relationships in providing resources for child development. PPCT model also augments sociocultural theory in that it illustrates how child development takes place through "processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between the person and its environment (p. 38)." Sociolinguistics, in turn, offers an even narrower lens to examine the proximal processes from the translanguaging perspective. Considering teachers' interpretation and enactment of within-classroom ELL accommodations through the bio-ecological, as well as sociocultural and sociolinguistic, perspectives might offer deeper insight into potentially long-lasting effects these enactments have on children's literacy and language development.

Finally, in agreement with Fettes' (1999) argument that all research is necessarily critical, the theoretical framework presented here implies a critical interrogation of language and literacy teaching and learning. Because there is no escaping the significant issue of value in any study

related to policy, taking a critical stance examining the assumptions and outcomes is inescapable. My understanding of critique and a critical stance echoes the following Foucauldian notion:

> Critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, [on] what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered models of thought the practices we accept rest. (Foucault, 1988, p. 154)

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this chapter, I discuss the research design, methodology, and data collection and analytical strategies I used in order to answer the questions outlined in Chapter 1 and expanded upon in Chapter 2. The purpose of this study is to closely examine and compare two upper-elementary classrooms for patterns in how classroom and ESL teachers interpret, take up, and enact ELL accommodations. Specifically, I aim to answer the following research questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions of accommodation use with ELLs during language and literacy instruction and assessment?
2. How are ELL accommodations enacted in mainstream and ESL classrooms during language and literacy instruction and assessment?
3. What are systematic patterns across participating classrooms in relation to accommodation use, teacher and student characteristics, classroom activities and content?

The rest of chapter describes how I intend to answer these questions.

Methodological Approach: Comparative Ethnographic Case Study

"Those who want to use qualitative methods because they seem easier than statistics are in for a rude awakening." (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 53)

In Chapter 3, I outlined the theoretical underpinnings of the proposed research as the intersection of Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development, sociocultural perspective on learning and teaching, and a sociolinguistic view of second language learning. Citing Kurt Lewin, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) argued that "there is nothing so practical

as a good theory" (p. 796) and that "a good theory is one that can be translated into corresponding research designs that match the defining properties of the theory" (p. 796). Given the research questions guiding this study and theories used as a lens for answering them, I identified a comparative ethnographic case study design as a fitting methodological approach.

While qualitative research broadly aims to describe human behavior in context and to answer "questions that ask why, how, what is happening, and what does it look like" (Purcell-Gates, 2011, p. 136), case study, specifically, is a scrupulous examination of a case. Such examination involves "in-depth and often longitudinal examination with data gathering through participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and document collection and analysis" (Glesne, 2011, p. 22). Focusing on the uniqueness and complexity of one case allows for a comprehensive examination of dynamics of the phenomenon under investigation. Given the complexity of the interpretation and enactment of within-classroom ELL accommodations, case study allowed me to preserve such complexity in the analysis while also limiting the scope of my study in a meaningful way.

As such, a central characteristic of a case study is its boundedness that determines what is included in or excluded from the study (Barone, 2011). The bounded system can be a phenomenon, a teacher, a classroom, or a state, for example (Stake, 2000; Yin, 1994). To bound my case study, I focused on two focal ELLs- both 3rd grade boys, both identified as needing intervention in reading- and their homeroom, ESL, and Special Education classrooms. While I attempted to focus on two units of language and literacy instruction in each classroom, this became complicated by the interruptions imposed by district testing, school closures due to snow, holidays, and the fact that teaching in units was not as clearly defined as I expected. As

Mr. Williams (all names of participants are pseudonyms), one of the teachers in the study, explained when I asked about observing during a unit of study: "As far as having continuous units of anything […], it is not going to happen. It is like you have three days, take a break, and test. Four days, take a break, and test. Two days, take a break, and test." (Mr. Williams interview, 01/11/16) Additionally, the case was restricted by the length of the study (6 months) - November 2015 through April 2016.

The majority of research on accommodations has been done with elementary school students, particularly at 4th grade level, and some middle school students. Although the accommodations tend to be the same across grade levels, their implications might prove different. Therefore, by focusing on upper-elementary grades, I hope to tease out some of the particulars associated with these grades and build on previous research. Third grade classrooms are of particular interest, because the third grade achievement has been traditionally viewed as predictive of students' future academic success (Pearson & Duke, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

I augment individual case studies of each classroom with a comparative review of both. That allows for generation of typologies of different systems within and across settings. As such, I consider this case study to be instrumental (Stake, 2000), because my hope, as a pragmatist, is that it would inform theory and improve the overall quality of literacy and language instruction and assessment offered to ELLs.

Consistent with Yin's (1994) suggestion for ensuring the high quality of case studies, I explore multiple sources of evidence, which I discuss in the next section. I argue that the in-depth pre- and post- observation interviews, extensive classroom observations, document and

artifact analysis join into "a converging line of inquiry" (p. 92) that complements existing quantitative studies on accommodation use and effectiveness for ELLs.

Data Sources

The data gathering techniques used for this study were flexible, continuous, and responsive to the context to allow for exploring the systems and relationships associated with enactment of ELL accommodations in classrooms. I relied on classroom, school and state document analysis, classroom observations and audio-recordings of literacy and language instruction and assessment times, and teacher interviews as the major sources of data. Teacher interviews, classroom document analysis (that include student work and texts used for literacy and language instruction and assessment) and observations provided insight into the relationships within immediate microsystems and processes that allowed or disallowed students' language and literacy development. While principal interviews offered an insight into the meso- and exo-systems, state-level document analysis and interviews of the state ESL liaison and assessment supervisor provided a context for the two cases, as well as the much needed look at the broader macro-systems related to the accommodation use in the classroom. Table 7 summarizes the data sources for this study.

Interviews

Interviews are used when "respondents may not answer difficult or sensitive questions unless an interviewer is at hand to encourage them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, as cited in Posavac, 2011, p. 84) or when the interviewer is not quite certain what is most important to the respondents when it comes to the topic of study. Glesne (2011) offers a useful metaphor of

Table 7. Data Sources

Field Notes (Observations) 11/12/15-04/11/16		
	Days of observation	Minutes of transcribed audio-recordings
Focal Student 1 (Daniel)	15 days	2,370 minutes
Focal Student 2 (Fabricio)	16 days	2,010 minutes
Student Work (594 images)		
Writing samples, text titles, plan book pages of lessons, unit plans, classroom testing accommodation schedules, weekly tests, worksheets		
Interviews (14 interviews; 384 min)		Additional Data
Teacher 1 (Mr. Williams) Teacher 2 (Mrs. Sullivan) ESL (Yoo Mee) teacher Special Education teacher Principal 1 and Principal 2 District ESL supervisor State ESL liaison State testing coordinator Teaching assistant 1 and 2		State, district, school accommodation (and other relevant) documents Analytical research memos Student information: WIDA scores, reading levels, grades, demographic information

baseball in relation to interviews, where the researcher wants his or her questions to hit "a swatted homerun of words" (p. 102) by the participants.

For interviews with participating teachers, teaching assistants, principals, and district administrators, I used a protocol adapted from Schissel's (2012) dissertation examining the pedagogical practice of test accommodations with emergent bilinguals in two urban schools in Pennsylvania. The questions and prompts outlined in the interview protocol broadly indicate the areas I aimed to discuss with my participants, but they were not necessarily posed in the pre-set order. In a word, although the protocols for the interviews were developed in advance, the interviews sometimes took a different shape depending on participants' responses and

willingness to share.

Before, during, and after each observation session, informal interviews with participants were frequently conducted. Those followed an ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979) approach in which the interview flows as a conversation rather than a structured interaction. Conceptualized as speech acts (Austin, 1962), ethnographic interviews are flexible enough to allow for the discussion of different issues and items related to the topic. The challenge to the interviewer is to master the technique of offering explicit purpose for the interview, maintaining honest rapport with the participants, and posing ethnographic questions that contribute to the discovery of participants' knowledge. Spradley (1979) suggests the following ethnographic questions worth asking: descriptive questions (e.g., Could you describe how literacy instruction went today?); structural questions (e.g., What are accommodations that are provided to students who are dually identified as ELLs and students with special needs?); and contrast questions (these questions allow the researcher to uncover the dimensions of meaning participants employ to distinguish objects and events in their world).

Classroom Observations

Research shows that rather than teacher characteristics and beliefs, it is what teachers actually do in the classroom that makes the most difference for students (Brophy & Good, 1986; Charalambous, Komitis, Papacharalambous, & Stefanou, 2014; Kyriakides & Creemers, 2008; Hanushek, 1986; Palardy & Rumberger, 2008). Thus, in order to examine teachers' enactment of the ESL accommodation guidelines in their natural ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), I conducted in situ observations during language and literacy instruction and assessment. Guided by the belief that observations must be comprehensive and systematic (Pellegrini, 2013), I

observed each classroom for 15 and 16 school days respectively. My intent was to observe two full units of study, which turned out to be less straightforward than I expected due to the definition of what a unit of study is, as well as multiple interruptions and testing. Prior to beginning formal observations and audio-recording, I spent several days volunteering in the classrooms, informally observing, and talking to the children and a variety of adults in the building. This phase allowed the participating children and adults to habituate to my presence and helped me to identify the observation times and contexts that were most relevant to the research questions at hand.

I kept descriptive field notes (Bernard, 2006) of both group and dyadic interactions between teachers, ELLs, and their peers throughout my observation time (see Observation Tool Template in Appendices). I believe that an advantage of such an emic qualitative approach to observation is its openness to discovery. It allowed for enough flexibility to record every single detail of the language and literacy events without being restricted by pre-designed observation checklists or a set of behaviors to look for. Such openness permitted the research questions and the methods utilized to answer them to be fairly dynamic. On the other hand, a clear disadvantage to such an open approach was the researcher's bias that potentially limited what was perceived as important and worth recording.

In order to address or, at the minimum, to acknowledge my personal biases and to supplement my field notes proper, I kept field reflection notes, "an outlet for writing things that you don't want to become part of a public record" (Bernard, 2006, p. 392). These reflection notes contained my ponderings about the following questions proposed by the Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2002) (as cited by Glesne, 2011, p. 77):

1. What surprised you? (helps to track assumptions)
2. What intrigues you? (helps track personal interests and positions)
3. What disturbs you? (helps track tensions and possibly stereotypes and prejudices)

Audio-recording and Transcription

All formal interviews and as many of the informal interviews as possible were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. Audio-recordings ensured that the details of the conversations were preserved verbatim and were not simply reconstructed from the researcher's memory.

Classroom literacy and language instruction and assessment times were also recorded and added to the dataset to complement the observational data. Again, because it is impossible to capture the entire ecology of the classroom by taking field notes, audio-recordings allowed for the reconstruction of some of the critical interactions. The recordings were not used for an in-depth discourse analysis per se, but instead were utilized to pull verbatim examples illustrative of the themes and patterns identified through analysis of classroom observations and interviews.

Documents and Artifacts

Collection of documents and artifacts pertinent to the phenomenon under investigation helped to construct a macro contextual picture of the ESL accommodation guidelines in the state of Tennessee, as well as to gain an understanding of how the participating school district, school, and classrooms took up such guidelines. I concur with Glesne (2011) who wrote:

> Visual data, documents, artifacts, and other unobtrusive measures provide both historical and contextual dimensions to your observations and interviews. They enrich what you see and hear by supporting, expanding, and challenging your portrayals and perceptions. (p. 89)

State, district, and school documents

Many types of written documents exist in the world of policy and education. Such documents, as policy briefs, state ELL accommodation guidelines, instructions for test administration, school flyers, agendas, and memos on within-classroom ELL accommodation use, became artifacts suitable for analysis. In fact, these documents allowed me to paint a fuller picture of ELL within-classroom accommodation ecology and its multi-dimensional relationship with the current education policies.

Classroom documents and photos

As part of my observation protocol, I collected documents, e.g., copies or photos of texts read and produced by ELLs, and took photos that documented various aspects of classroom life related to the ELL accommodation enactment during literacy and language instruction and assessment. Collier and Collier (1986) describe photography as another way of observation that, unlike field notes, obtains data "with qualifying and contextual relationships that are usually missing from codified written notes" (p. 10). After all, a picture is worth a thousand words! For the convenience sake, I utilized my iPhone to take photos and to scan texts as appropriate. These visual artifacts were categorized and integrated within the observation notes to allow for more holistic analysis of proximal processes within various systems that influenced ELLs' experiences with literacy and language learning.

Data Collection Protocol

All of the interviews were audio-recorded via a digital recorder. MP3 files were downloaded on a password-protected laptop and transcribed. While conducting interviews, I often jotted down verbatim phrases or words that stood out to me; I utilized those jottings as a

starting point when I began to transcribe and code the interview transcripts. The field notes were taken by hand while in the classrooms. I tried to sit in the corner to be as discrete as possible. As I interviewed the participants and took field notes, I jotted down my initial reactions to what I was witnessing. Field notes had a separate column for my initial reactions and reflections, which served as a place for my jottings and also as a reminder to reflect right away on what I saw in the classroom. Thus, the data analysis for this study began as the data were collected, although "[t]he seduction of participation sometimes overshadowed the goal of participation" (Lareau, 1989, p. 217) and simply being in the classroom interacting with children appealed more than taking copious notes, which reminded me (and children) that I was a stranger allowed in their world. Reflecting on the days of fieldwork was eased by the drive back to the university, during which I dictated my thoughts on the day's work into my iPhone. Those recordings subsequently assisted me in reconstructing some of my emergent ideas, thoughts, and reservations about the events I witnessed in the schools. To transform the handwritten field notes into a digital form, I typed them into a word document, archived by the date of observation. Photographs of classroom artifacts were inserted into the appropriate places in the typed field notes.

The coding of field notes began when they were in a hand-written form through the process of "pre-coding" (Layder, 1998). Specifically, I highlighted all the episodes related to teacher accommodations either during assessment or instruction, circled and underlined significant codable moments worthy of further analysis. As I typed the field notes, I transferred my initial pre-coding to the word document, while simultaneously checking for any overlooked parts of the data relevant to the research questions of the study. Further, if I found the audio

recording of specific episodes particularly pertinent to my analysis, I transcribed them verbatim. That portion of the audio recording was then inserted into the typed field notes.

Data Management

To keep track of data sources collected, I first catalogued each observation, interview, and document in an Excel workbook, which allowed at a glance view of all of the data sources and for the comprehensive running list of all of the materials gathered for analysis. Next, I compiled the interview transcripts, observation field notes, relevant documents, memos, and scans of student work in an NVivo file. NVivo 11.3, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), served as an important scaffold for the data analysis for this study.

Data Analysis Protocol

To avoid "anecdotalism" (Bryman, 1988) where idiosyncratic instances of a phenomenon are presented as a theme, an inductive (bottom up) approach (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) to data analysis was utilized with six stages guiding the process: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes from codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As the first level of analysis, I read and reread the transcripts and observation field notes to familiarize myself with the data. I also created analytical memos or "analytical notes" (Bernard, 2006, p. 398) regarding the content of the interviews, observation field notes, and documents and artifacts; these analytical notes were created in order to make sense of the data and to begin identifying important topics and patterns.

During the initial code generation, I utilized attribute coding and in-vivo coding

techniques to begin focusing the analysis. In order to make sense of observational data, I started with provisional coding and then employed value coding to focus the analysis on participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs. Value coding was instrumental in highlighting the interplay between what participating adults described as their beliefs, values, and attitudes and their observed actions and interactions with children. At this stage I also began pattern coding to identify potential patterns in the dataset.

Through ongoing visual code mapping and landscaping, the final overarching themes and patterns were teased out from the codes, checked, and rechecked to ensure that they worked in relation to the coded extracts. Eventually, the thematic map, or "the overall conceptualization of the data patterns, and relationships between them" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89) was produced that served as the initial roadmap for the final report on the findings. In addition to the description of themes, the final report includes verbatim vignettes and illustrations that allow for a more dynamic description of how accommodation enactments played out in each classroom and connected to the larger policy context. Table 8 summarizes and provides descriptions of the coding techniques utilized in generating the findings for this study.

As I engaged with the data collected for this study, it was critical to remember that the analytic claims must be grounded in, but also to go beyond, the collected data to produce "convincing interpretations" (Reinking, 2010). Braun and Clarke (2006) offer to consider the following questions towards the final stages of the analysis: 'What does this theme mean?' 'What are the assumptions underpinning it?' 'What are the implications of this theme?' 'What conditions are likely to have given rise to it?' 'Why do people talk about this thing in this particular way (as opposed to other ways)?' (p. 94).

Table 8. Coding Techniques

Technique	Definition
First Cycle of Analysis	
Analytical Memos	Memos are sites of deep reflection about our data. They can include reflections on code choices, participants' routines, emergent patterns and categories, future directions of the study, and so on (Saldaña, 2016)
Attribute Coding	Notation of the basic descriptive information such as: the fieldwork setting, participant demographics and characteristics, data format, and other variables of interest. "Attribute Coding is intended as a *coding grammar*, a way of documenting descriptive "cover" information about participants, the site, and other related components of the study. " (Saldaña, 2016, p. 85, emphasis in the original)
In-Vivo Coding	"The root meaning of in vivo is "in that which is alive," and as a code refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 105). E.g., "fuzzy on accommodations"
Provisional Coding	Based on the literature review of possible accommodations, I developed a list of anticipated categories of action and participant responses, such as "READALOUD," "EXTRA TIME," "PROMPTING," "SMALL GROUP." These provisional, temporary, codes were modified, revised, deleted, and expanded, and stacked once the data analysis was underway.
Second Cycle of Analysis	
Value Coding	Value coding teases out participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs. Value is the importance we attribute to something. An attitude is the way we think and feel about something. A belief is a broader category that includes our values and attitudes together with personal knowledge, prejudices, and perceptions of the world. "Value Coding is value-laden." (Saldaña, 2016, p. 135) especially since I bring my own beliefs and values to the analysis. Careful consideration was given to assigning appropriate codes.
Third Cycle of Analysis	
Pattern Coding	"Pattern Codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. They pull together a lot of material from first cycle coding into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis. They are sort of meta code." (Saldaña, 2016, p. 236)

As such, a thorough thematic analysis must be consistent with the research questions and the theoretical stance taken up by the researcher who continuously attempts to address the 'So what?' question while dealing with mountainous qualitative data. Finally, as I realized the urgency of exploring my own "subjectivities" (Hatch, 2002) and biases, I had to explore my own beliefs and attitudes towards language and literacy teaching and learning.

Reflexivity Statement

"The landscape looks different depending on the particular hill you happen to choose to stand on." (Ball, 1985, p. 164)

Researcher's reflexivity, "the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways that reveal deep connections between the writer and his or her subject" (Goodall, 2000, p. 137, as cited in Hatch, 2002, p. 11), is critical for ensuring the integrity of qualitative research. Couched within the assumption that the researcher is a part of the world she studies, I tried to look deeply at my own experiences with and beliefs about languaging and literacies (intentionally plural), learning and teaching, as well as policy. I also acknowledge that my notion of self as dynamic, it has changed over the years and it continued to change even as I collected and analyzed the data for this study. My current broader ontological and epistemological assumptions are critical to discuss, as they influence the lens through which I examine the world around me.

My native/first language is Russian. I was born in Russia and lived there until 2004, when I immigrated to the United States. My first encounter with second, or foreign, language learning began in the grade school when English and, subsequently, French were introduced into

our curriculum as mandatory foreign language courses. I don't remember learning very much English from those lessons, aside from several formulaic expressions, idioms, and names of English sightseeing locations. It is when I began my studies as an English as a foreign language major at the pedagogical university, my learning of English and French began to take shape. Two primary methods used at the time were grammar-translation and audio-lingual. Both were utilized during my studies. My fellow students and I spent countless hours reading and translating works of literature from English into Russian, practicing our grammar rules by conjugating of verbs, and repeating same sounds or groups of sounds over and over in front of the mirror to get sounding native-like. It is hard to tell which part of our comprehensive English language training worked best or whether one single part could be identified in the first place, but as I reflect on the process of my own acquisition of English, I attribute my language learning progress to wide reading and writing in the target language (for me, it was English), to the study of patterns in structure of words, sentences, and texts, and to the authentic language practice that became available to me when I traveled and, subsequently, moved to the United States.

Today, after studying English as a Second Language education in an American university and working as an ESL teacher in two elementary schools, my understanding of language learning and teaching is very different from that I held after graduating with my undergraduate degree. In agreement with the pedagogical shifts supporting "ambitious learning for ELLs" discussed by Heritage, Walqui, and Linquanti (2015), I see language as purposeful, patterned, and complex. In order to gain linguistic insight, students have to be engaged in conceptualizing language as action that gets things done.

As such, I believe that language is best acquired or learned by being a part of the social process of apprenticeship within meaningful authentic activities that serve to scaffold language development and content knowledge learning which are intimately interconnected. Heritage, Walqui, and Linquanti (2015) write:

> "Consistent with sociocultural theory, students' second-language learning is best fostered by participation in carefully structured interactions that provide them with the opportunity over time to develop conceptual understanding, analytical practices, and dynamic language use in a domain." (p. 30)

I agree with the authors in that (a) language and content are inseparable, (b) teachers must possess linguistic competence to educate diverse students, and (c) ELLs must apprentice into the disciplinary discourses to be able to reach the rigorous college and career readiness standards.

Finally, as a constructivist, I seek to describe various interpretations or constructions of reality, as it is impossible to know the absolute reality or truth. The knower and the known are inseparable (Hatch, 2002) in their co-construction of reality that is under investigation.

My thinking and my personal beliefs about the nature of successful language and literacy instruction for ELLs, about what constitutes equitable educational environment, and about policy certainly influenced what I noticed during classroom observations, what I heard during interviews and how I made sense of all of the collected data. Yet, by taking up qualitative methods of research in this study, I intended not to discover the truth that might have been out there, but instead to seek an understanding of various interpretations of ELL accommodation policies and their enactment in the classroom. While I can never check my lived experiences and

beliefs at the door, I acknowledge and surface them here in order to continuously question my choices in regards to study design and my interpretations of the data.

Trustworthiness

To insure the trustworthiness of my analytical considerations, I follow Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) advice to continuously examine what is being noticed and why, how can it be interpreted, and how we can know it is the right interpretation. Keeping up with the field notes and other data sources, writing notes in which my assumptions and biases are brought to bear, and seeking "audit" of my work from my colleagues were several strategies I utilized to increase the trustworthiness of the study. Furthermore, member checking by participants, e.g., teachers, state and district personnel, provided invaluable insight into the "truthfulness of the inference one makes about meaning" (Pellegrini, 2013, p. 67).

Creswell's (2014) guidance is appropriate and critical to researchers, both experienced and novice:

> Researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust with them; promote the integrity of research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions; and cope with new, challenging problems (Israel & Hay, 2006). (p. 92)

Thus, conducting research is a highly ethics- and value-laden endeavor that requires a lot of consideration and judgment from the researchers' standpoint. I was also reminded by Bateson's (1984) discussion of anthropological work that while researchers sometimes try to "draw a frame around an event" to "briefly separate it from context" and make it an object of study, those working in the field cannot do that, as the questions we ask shape the answers we

receive. She writes,

> Even as you observe, you also participate. The context of any question, the entire conjunction of interviewer and information, sets a metamessage for the communication. Trying to be objective, you may think you are separating off an experience by setting it in a frame, but actually the frame changes the meaning of what is within it. (p. 224)

A major concern of qualitative research then is to recognize limitations and delimitations of one's study. The next section discusses these in detail.

Limitations

Like any research design, case studies have a number of limitations that have to be acknowledged. Because a case study is an inevitably context-laden inductive approach in which separating the phenomenon under investigation from its context is rather challenging, the richness of classroom environment and the amount of observational data might prove overwhelming. In fact, without an observation guide and a constant reminder of what the research questions are, it seems easy to be collecting information without a particular purpose, just for the sake of collecting. Thus, it is essential to focus the observations and interviews, so that the data are meaningful and relevant to the research questions posed. Furthermore, because a case study is specific to a particular context, arguing generalization becomes challenging, if not impossible. Finally, as with most qualitative research, I became a part of the study, both during the data collection stage and the analysis. Thus, my biases and views on teaching and learning influenced the study results.

Delimitations

I intentionally limit this study to two focal children and their teachers to explore the enactment of ELL accommodations during connected instruction and assessment. I chose to focus on two male ELLs in two upper-elementary classrooms because I consider this time in children's academic career to be critical for language and literacy development and because upper-elementary school level aligns with my previous teaching experiences and current research interest. Because both focal students are speakers of Spanish as their first language, it allowed me to categorize their experiences and see patterns of pedagogical practice that specifically address the needs of that particular group of students. Research has shown that due to a variety of cultural, as well as environmental factors, many Latino males are not attaining academic proficiency, not graduating from high school, and not going to college (Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2013; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). Exploration of how ELL accommodation enactment affects Hispanic boys at the elementary-school level and affects the trajectory of their schooling was not the purpose of this study per se, but the focus of two Spanish-speaking boys indirectly contributed to my understanding of systematic patterns that create these students' school realities.

Localizing the Inquiry: Research Sites

"You just can't dig your head in the sand and forget about it. They are here and it is only going to grow." (District ESL Supervisor interview, 11/19/15)

This section localizes the inquiry with information about research sites and contexts provided. I begin with the explanation of why that particular site was chosen, followed by the

district and school achievement and demographic data. I also begin to describe the study participants to set the stage for the findings chapters.

District

Kayford is a city with the population of about 50,000 set in the Southeastern United States. As many parts of the Southeast, Kayford is located near several national and state parks, lakes, and natural preserves. With miles of trails preserved for hiking and biking and beautiful vistas of rolling hills, the city is also home to a large chemical factory, which although brings jobs and higher wage bracket citizens to the areas, bestows a pungent odor to certain parts of town. Additionally, a university campus is located several minutes away from both schools, in which the research took place.

With the total enrollment of over 7,000 students, Kayford City Schools district has thirteen schools: eight elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, one early learning center (preschool), and a non-traditional school. Most students in the district are white, with 10.8% African American, and only 4% Hispanic and 2% Asian students (see Table 9). These demographics were somewhat reflected in the teachers and staff, who were predominantly white English-only speakers. Unlike teachers who teach them, a high number of students in Kayford live below poverty line. In 2013-2014 school year, over half of KCS student population qualified for free and reduced lunch. In August of 2016, five elementary and one middle school implemented a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)- a program that allowed high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students. Both of the schools in which I conducted observations were CEP schools.

Despite the disadvantages students and their families might have experienced, KCS district is high achieving, beating state average outcomes in terms of reading proficiency. The 2015-2016 Strategic Plan clearly states the district's commitment to providing "a student-focused and world-class educational experience for each of its students." Kayford has been named one of the top school districts in the state and has received a number of awards and nominations. Table 10 summarizes the Reading/Language Arts test results the district achieved and compares them to the state of Tennessee in 2014-2015 school year.

The district emphasizes shared leadership (Boundless, 2015), a style in which responsibilities are distributed within the schools with teachers and administrators leading each other. The district supervisor shared that the principals in charge of each school, as well as the teachers, are highly-qualified for their jobs.

Table 9. Kayford City Schools Demographics 2015-2016

Demographics	Percentage
White	82.4%
Black or African American	10.8%
Hispanic or Latino	4.0%
Asian	2.3%
Native American/Alaskan	0.4%

Table 10. Reading/Language Arts Report Card

	2014-2015 3-8 Reading/Language Arts Report Card	
Proficiency	**Kayford**	**Tennessee**
Below Basic	9.6%	12.8%
Basic	31.9%	38.8%
Proficient	42.2%	37.4%
Advanced	16.3%	11%

> Principals are great! We probably have the best group of principals that I have ever seen in the district. They are really hard working, conscientious. They are very good and solid with their pedagogy and that carries down. Teachers here are as dedicated as I have ever seen to go the extra mile […] It goes back to having good solid classroom teachers. (District ESL supervisor interview, 11/19/15)

Although the district follows the standards and curriculum outlined by the state's Department of Education, curriculum maps and pacing guides developed by educators in the district are used in all subjects and outline the essential content for the entire year. All of these are housed on a server accessible to all of the district employees, which is updated every year. All elementary schools initiated a Free Little Library by the end of the 2014-15 school year, and it is not uncommon to see those right at the school entrance, where both parents and children can look through the available books.

The district used Response to Intervention (RTI) in the 2014-2015 school year at the elementary schools and the following year in middle schools. Common assessments, such as Easy CBM and Developmental Reading Assessment, are utilized to help educators to identify students who need additional supports, intervention, remediation, and extensions. The district uses a system-wide process for interpreting assessment results, which includes analyzing and reviewing the data at data conferences where strengths and areas for improvement are identified and the next steps and intervention strategies are planned and, subsequently, implemented. The district website outlines what it is that schools do to support all students as follows:

> Plan, teach, assess, and evaluate to inform instructional practices […] Incorporate problem-solving and innovation in teaching and learning. Guide teaching and learning

using internationally benchmarked standards. Seek to understand and engage our families and community. Recruit, retain, and develop highly competent educators. Build leadership capacity within our educational community.

English Language Learner (ELL) Department

About 1% of Kayford students are English Language Learners (ELLs). One of the district supervisors shared,

> As far as most of the systems, I think we do have a small percentage of ELLs […] small but not insignificant because of all the federal reporting that we still have to do, so I don't want to put them on the backburner. (District supervisor interview, 11/19/15)

ELLs in the district are a diverse group of students who are either foreign born or US-born. The process of ELL identification is clearly outlined by the state department of education. Children enrolled in a K-12 school setting whose enrollment datasheet indicates that (a) he/she spoke a language other than English as a baby, (b) he/she currently speaks a language other than English at home or (c) he/she has family members who speak a language other than English, are tested with a placement test, W-APT Screener. The score the student receives on the screener determines ESL program qualification and placement. Each ELL is required to receive at least one hour of language instruction by a certified ESL teacher daily.

The ESL department consists of the supervisor, administrative assistant and three ESL teachers. The supervisor and the administrative assistant also work with two other federal grants in the district: Title I (programs that aim to improve academic achievement of disadvantaged students) and Title II (programs that prepare, train and recruit high quality teachers and principals). The three ESL teachers are itinerant and travel to several schools every day of the

week to provide ESL instruction to ELLs in the district. The ultimate goal of the ESL program stated on the district website is the improved English language proficiency of ELLs as measured by the state language proficiency test, WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment). Additionally, ELLs are required to participate in state and district assessments, such as state standardized summative assessment for English language arts and math in grades 3-11. The district website describes the ESL program in the following way (retrieved on May 5, 2015):

> Kayford City Schools receives funding under the NCLB Title III grant. These funds are used to support the English Language Learners (ELLs) in Kayford. Students classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) are placed in the age-appropriate grade in the inclusion program and provided ELL services. The district has a procedure that ensures age appropriate placement and prohibits retention based solely on lack of English language skills. Services provided include: pull-out individual or small group tutoring by an ELL teacher; peer tutoring; modification of regular classroom assignments and tests; after-school and summer programs; and appropriate technology or other instructional activities.

My initial involvement with KCS began in 2014 when I assisted with the district literacy program evaluation. As part of the evaluation, I observed one ESL classroom teacher and met with the ESL supervisor to discuss the ESL program and its points of contact with the literacy program. Later that school year, I conducted a need assessment of the ESL program, a qualitative investigation of perceived needs of ESL and classroom teachers. As I became familiar with the school district, several striking characteristics surfaced. First, all students in the district were held

to high standards. Second, the school district as a whole had a number of effective programs and processes in place to support literacy development of all children, e.g., a strong reading and writing programs, a wide reading component (all classrooms had plenty of books for children to read), a recently introduced word study component, and ongoing progress monitoring. These characteristics of excellence prompted the selection of this district as the site for this study. I now turn to the description of each school and individual participants.

Cumberland Elementary School

The mission of the Cumberland Elementary School is to empower students from diverse backgrounds to achieve their full potential and to demonstrate responsible citizenship. The school is a Title 1 school with over 65% free and reduced-priced lunch students, which "would rival some urban schools" (District ESL supervisor interview, 11/19/15). School demographics are presented in Table 11.

Mr. Williams, a third grade teacher described the recent shifts in demographics of the schools:

> The folks who grew up here, raised their families have passed on, which is leaving it to become rental properties and that leads to high transition rate, a lot of the poverty, a lot has become section eight government housing […] and we have seen with that a lot

Table 11. Cumberland Elementary School Demographics 2015-2016

Demographics	**Percentage**
White	86.2%
Black or African American	8.9%
Hispanic or Latino	4.6%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	65.4%
Students with Disabilities	25.2%

more diversity, a lot more African American students, a lot more Hispanic students and […] seems that within the last three years the pace has quickened, as far as the change in demographics. (Mr. Williams interview, 02/24/16)

There were three ELLs total in the school who qualified for ESL services. The principal shared:

We are a predominantly white population. We are starting to have more Hispanic, African American […] We have no Asian. But we have seen an increase in those subgroups of students. And I know it might not sound like it, because here we are talking about 3 ESL students in the entire school, but we have other students who come from Hispanic homes that may not qualify for ESL services […] I would imagine our population would keep growing […] we have some Hispanic stores popping up in our area, so it wouldn't surprise me if we had more students coming. And rent is cheap if you are moving to the area, so it is going to start increasing. (Cumberland principal interview, 12/20/15)

Cumberland was designated by the state education agency as a focus school in 2012-13 and 2014-15 school years (Table 12 outlines the Reading/Language Arts test scores in the 2014-2015 school year). This designation meant that Cumberland was among the 10% of schools with the highest achievement gaps between groups of students, such as racial and ethnic groups, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities and English-language learners. Such designation required a provision of school-wide supports to close achievement gaps between student subgroups.

Table 12. Cumberland Elementary School 3-8 Report Card 2014-2015

3-8 Reading/Language Arts Proficiency	Percentage
Below Basic	15.7%
Basic	46.6%
Proficient	28.1%
Advanced	9.6%

The principal attributed some of the difficulties the school experienced with achievement scores to a high mobility rate of families in the area. She shared,

> We have a high mobility rate, so we may have a kid and they leave in 3 weeks, or we may get a kid in and they stay with it. You never know what you are going to get, when you are going to get it, and how long they actually going to be here. So, looking at that, we always have to focus on the child and what the child needs, so I don't think things are going to shift a whole lot in being able to give the child what they need, as long as we have the appropriate resources. So, as long as we have the resources from the district to meet the needs of ESL students, I feel confident that the teachers would be able to work with the resources, whether it is an individual or a program, whatever it might be to be able to provide them with what they need. The resources part is very important. (Cumberland principal interview, 12/20/15)

Mr. Williams echoed the sentiment of focusing on the child to support his or her individual growth:

> We have students who would be at other schools in the district or another district around us who are very unsuccessful and they come here and they'll experience success because we are focused on every individual student. And that is just a huge piece that is not in every school, but it needs to be […] our kids in this community need experiences,

because they don't get them. So, we have to provide them with those experiences […] That is the focus of the school- focus on the student and supporting the student and supporting the family […] we are one big family that is focused on our 300 and odd kids. (Mr. Williams interview, 12/24/16)

Making families feel safe and welcome is one the top priorities of the school. The family liaison, provided to each Title I school, specifically works with families to address their needs and make them feel welcome. According to the school staff, the family liaison is always going to homes, contacting parents, meetings with them wherever is most convenient for the parents (e.g., at a McDonalds down the street from the school). In addition, the school has parent walk-throughs on the regular basis. All parents are invited to come by and walk through the classrooms to see what the children are doing. I experienced such a walk-through first hand on one day of my observations. Many parents, including the mother of Daniel- one of the focal students- came to visit children and their teachers.

Finally, school boasts one hundred percent of their teacher and paraprofessionals meeting state licensing criteria in subjects and grades taught, with all of the teachers meeting the highly qualified standards for the subject and grade level they teach. All teachers and administrators at Cumberland appeared completely dedicated to the success of their students.

Jonesboro Elementary School

Principal's message on the school's website reads:

Jonesboro Elementary is focused on providing a personalized learning environment for each student. Through the integration of a variety of technology resources, students are able to differentiate their learning to access information and demonstrate their knowledge

in a multitude of ways. The use of technology enhances learning through increased engagement, problem solving, critical thinking and innovation.

The goal of the school, according to its officials is to prepare students for the 21st Century. One wall of the school boasts the quote from Anita R. Sneed, "Your circumstance is not your outcome." Students at the Jonesboro Elementary School are overwhelmingly white and economically disadvantaged (the detailed demographic information is presented in the table 14). Yet, in spite of the high levels of poverty and the school's Title 1 designation, it prides itself on high standards for all children and an environment that focuses on each learner. Jonesboro demographics and Reading/Language Arts results are presented in Table 13 and Table 14.

Table 13. Jonesboro Elementary School Demographics 2015-2016

Demographics	Percentage
White	73.8%
Black or African American	16.2%
Hispanic or Latino	8.7%
English Learner Students	3.1%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	72.4%
Students with Disabilities	15.7%

Table 14. Jonesboro Elementary School 3-8 Report Cart 2014-2015

3-8 Reading/Language Arts Proficiency	Percentage
Below Basic	16.1%
Basic	44.5%
Proficient	31.6%
Advanced	7.8%

The ESL district supervisor shared,

> I take vendors around all the time and they are always shocked when we go into the schools and I tell them it is a Title I school. Then I tell them the percentage of free and reduced and they are always amazed. That's a good feeling; I don't know what we do to achieve that. I think it is the teachers, it is the community, it is just a variety of factors. (District supervisor interview, 11/19/15)

The principal focused on the individualized approach to teaching and learning, focusing on each child's needs while getting closer to proficiency expected by the state. She shared,

> While we have proficiency expectations for grade level standards, what does it look like then for each individual child so they can continue move towards, and beyond? So a lot of our work is really structured around what we know about students, what we know about proficiency, and how do we continue to guide each learner. (Jonesboro principal interview, 12/10/15)

At 3-5 grade levels, the instruction is departmentalized, meaning that one teacher teaches math, another – reading, and still another science and social studies to all of the students in that grade level. This allows for each teacher to be an expert of his or her content area, which is taught to all students in a particular grade. The school prides itself on providing opportunity for students to learn about the world around them. One day, while at Jonesboro for observations (02/23/16), I saw the student-created posters of various countries around the world (see Figure 3). The posters were displayed in the hallway and stood out to me as a beacon of diversity and welcoming nature of the school and its teachers.

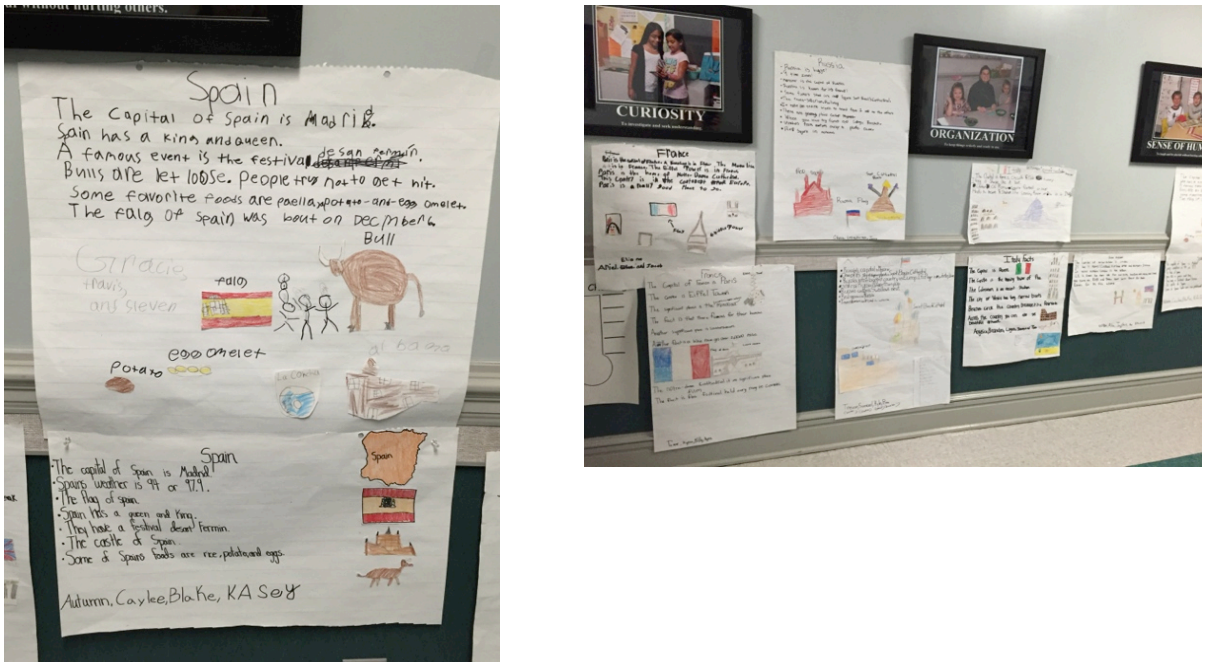


Figure 3. Jonesboro Posters

Participants and Their Spaces of Learning

Focal Students' Profiles

Both focal students were in 3rd grade, 9 years old, at the time of this research. They were both born in the United States to the immigrant parents who spoke Spanish at home. Their similarity ended there, with differences in personalities and literacy and language development overwhelmingly setting the boys and their school experiences apart.

Daniel

Daniel is a 3rd grade boy whose mother is a first generation immigrant from Cuba and father is a first generation immigrant from Mexico. Daniel lives with his mother, father, and a little sister, all of whom speak both Spanish and English at home. Daniel was born in the United States and has attended the same school (Cumberland Elementary) since kindergarten. He has

worked with the same ESL teacher since kindergarten. She described him as someone who has "a mind of his own" and who "doesn't pull any punches," as he "tells you exactly what he thinks about something." She shared a story about Daniel skipping school one day, which exemplifies his clever, yet at times defiant, nature:

> One time he had her [his mother] convinced that we were not having school […] and we were having school. So, they called her to find out where the children were and she about had a stroke. She came up and brought her kids. And I looked at Daniel and he was just smiling. But I know that he said, "Well, if mom is thinking that we are not having school, I am not trying to remind her." That is Daniel- he is a mess. (Ms. Yoo Mee interview, 02/05/16)

Daniel's teacher described Daniel as "capable" but "unmotivated" partly because his parents do not "hold him to a very high standard." Although the teacher reported that Daniel was "doing better [after] Christmas as far as the attitude," he still was trying to "figure out what can motivate" Daniel to try harder in class and to finally get closer to grade level proficiency in reading.

In terms of his literacy and language development, Daniel started at the DRA level 18 in November of 2015 and got to DRA level 28 by May 2016. Daniel entered third grade at DRA level 16. Because the expectation for the district was that children entering third grade should be at the DRA level 28, Daniel was selected to receive Tier 2 interventions, which were provided by his ESL teacher. DRA 18 equates to Guided Reading Level J, Lexile 300-600. DRA 28 equates roughly to Guided Reading Level M, Lexile 300-600. Later in the year, Daniel was designated as

needed Tier 3 interventions to boost his growth in literacy skills. Daniel's teacher described him in the following way,

> Daniel qualified for Tier 2 RTI intervention based on his reading level. We use the DRA reading assessment. He entered 3rd grade at the 16 and the benchmark for entering 3rd grade is a 28. So, he was a little more than a year below grade level on his DRA. He is making progress on his DRA, he has moved from 16 to 18 at our last assessment, but the level also jumped to a 30, so it's a moving target. So, that is why we identified him as Tier 2 and are implementing the intervention there. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

On his language proficiency assessments, WIDA, Daniel has made substantial gains over the 2015-2016 school year (see Table 15). As seen from his scores, on a 6-point scale determined by the language proficiency levels defined by WIDA, he went from 3.1 to 5.3 in literacy, and from 2.4 to 4.6 in writing. Based on these improvements, his ELL status was changed to 'Transition Year 1' in 2016-2017 school year. The transition status indicated that Daniel stopped receiving daily one-hour ESL services, with the ESL teacher checking in with the classroom teacher regularly to make sure that he is keeping up with classroom work. Transition students can be brought back into the active ESL status if necessary.

In terms of his home language proficiency, both Mr. Williams and Ms. Yoo Mee were unsure. Mr. Williams thought that the family spoke Spanish at home, but because he has not met

Table 15. Daniel's WIDA Scores

WIDA Year	Listening	Speaking	Literacy	Writing
Spring 2015	5.0	6.0	3.1	2.4
Spring 2016	5.6	5.3	5.3	4.6

the father, he could not be quite sure. The mother spoke very fluent English and had no trouble communicating with the school or the teachers. When I wondered one day how well versed in Spanish literacy and language Daniel was, Ms. Yoo Mee exclaimed, "That would be good to know!"

Daniel's typical literacy block started first thing in the morning in his classroom. The students were invited to either read at their desks or any other comfortable place in the classroom. Reading on the computer was also allowed and Daniel sometimes was on the website, called ReadTheory, reading online. Below I provide an example of what activities Daniel engaged in during his literacy block. I include such information, as location and type of activity in order to begin to paint a picture of Daniel's typical day and the typical experiences within literacy and language instruction and assessment. Table 16 describes Daniel's daily schedule.

All of Daniel's literacy block work took place in his classroom, including his ESL/RTI class provided by the ESL teacher. I provide an example of First Do, Then Do that the teacher displayed on a digital screen on the classroom wall. The components of First Do, Then Do were always fairly consistent (see Figure 4). As students engaged in these activities either independently or with a partner (as in the case of fluency practice which required one student reading and the other timing), the teacher pulled small guided reading groups to the kidney-shaped table at the back of the class.

Table 16. Daniel's Daily Schedule

Time	Type of Activity	Typical Content	Location	Supervising Adult
8:20-8:30	Whole group	Morning meeting (announcements, pledges, morning greeting)	Classroom	Classroom Teacher and Teaching Assistant
8:30-8:40	Whole group	Life skills; read-aloud; discussion		
8:40-9:00	Whole group	Literacy unit work-reading of texts or writing. POWTIDE, POWTREE, lots of teacher modeling, discussion		
9:00-9:53	Independent; partner work; small group	"Do First. Then Do" – writer's workshop, word work, daily language practice, fluency practice, Read Theory; guided reading groups		
10:50-11:20	One-on-one	ESL/RTI time (Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy)		ESL Teacher

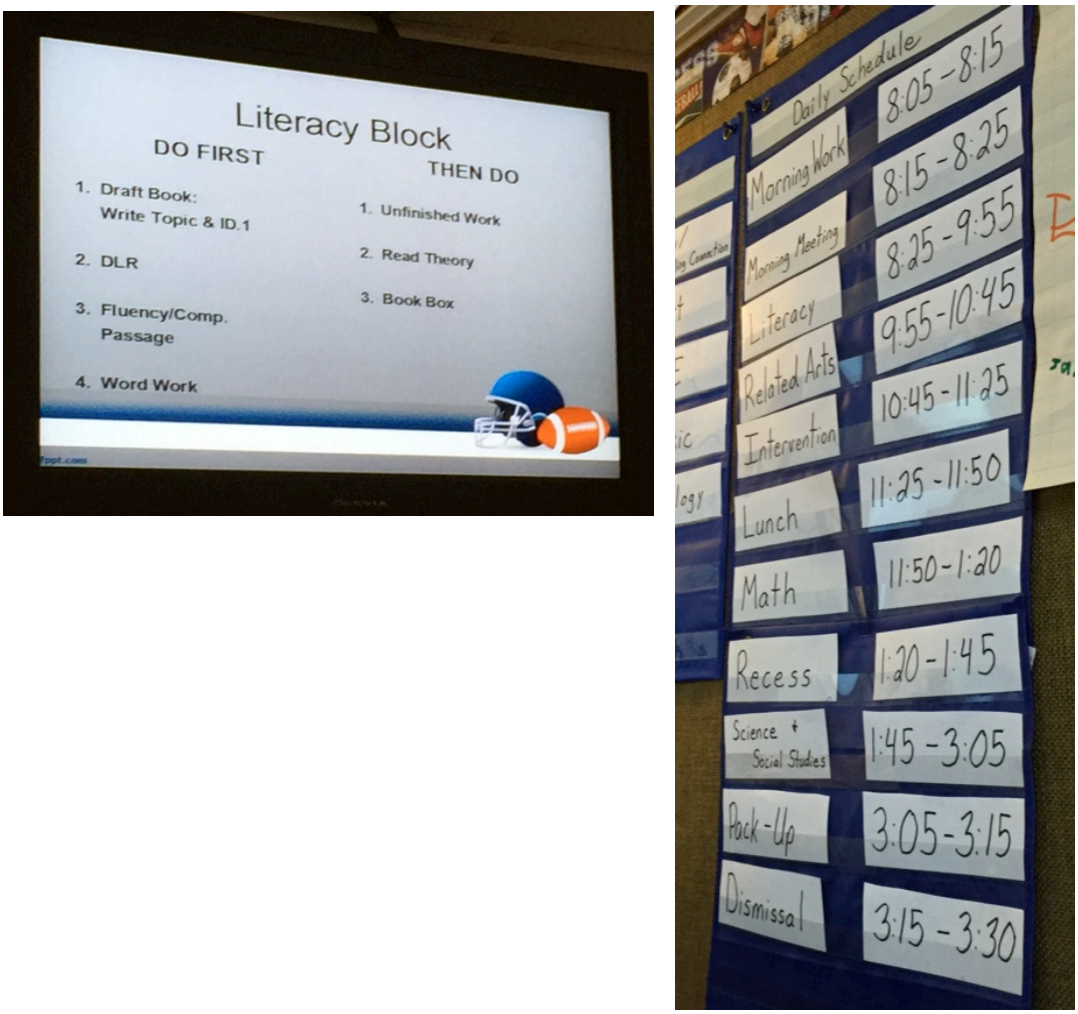


Figure 4. Daniel's Literacy Block Components and Daily Schedule

The teaching assistant worked closely with a handful of Special Education students, but was also available to the rest of the students if necessary. Often while the teacher taught a small group of students, other students were instructed to ask the teaching assistant for help if necessary and not interrupt the small guided reading group work. Students had separate notebooks for writing and word work, a personal folder for their Daily Language Review (grammar exercises for the week) and Fluency/Comprehension passage, and a personal Book Box that contained their free choice books. Daniels book box contained such popular titles as Mike Lupica's *Comeback Kids, Hiro's Quest: Enemy Rising by Tracey West*, and Tom Angleberger's *Origami Yoda* books.

ESL/RTI class took place during intervention and enrichment time, during which every student in third grade received designated types of supports or opportunities to develop particular skills. The principal described the school's approach to RTI and why the ESL teacher was designated as the most qualified person to deliver interventions in the following terms:

> For RTI here, everyone is in some type of intervention or enrichment. So, if they are below grade level, even if we don't think they are a concern for a possible SpEd [Special Education] referral, we still will provide them with an intervention based on the skill deficit, even if it is not severe […] Or on or above grade level and performing in that way in the classroom at the time, they will be in an enrichment type of thing. For ESL students, most of their interventions are provided to them by their ESL teacher. And we do that because it allows her to work on their skill deficit, but also knowing that […] I mean she is going to know […] with RTI you want it to be the most qualified person delivering the intervention, and in their case with her background as an ESL teacher, she

is going to be the most qualified working with them to make gains. (Cumberland principal interview, 12/20/15)

Fabricio

Fabricio is a 3rd grade boy whose mother is a second-generation immigrant from Mexico. He lives with his mother, aunt, cousin, and grandmother, who was the first generation immigrant from Mexico. At home, the family speaks both Spanish and English, but grandma – the primary caregiver – speaks only Spanish. After meeting the mother at an IEP meeting, which was called to obtain her signature to allow testing for special education services referral, the ESL teacher reflected that the mother appeared to be a "very young" and "focused on herself," which made it difficult for her to take care of Fabricio. Although Fabricio's father did not live with the family, he was actively present in the boy's life. Fabricio often talked about his father and their time together. Together they visited Mexico for winter break in December of 2015. Fabricio was born in the United States and has attended an American school since kindergarten. He started kindergarten at a different school and moved to Jonesboro at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.

Below I present a brief description of his academic achievement within the time of the observations. Fabricio started as a DRA level 4 in November 2015. He remained at the same level at the end of the school year. DRA level 4 presupposes that the reader is able to read short phrases and to retell important events of a story, to self-correct miscues during reading and confirm unknown words by using beginning sounds, picture clues, and language structures. DRA 4 is roughly aligned with Guided Reading Level D, Lexile 200-400.

Due to the lack of progress, Fabricio was placed into Tier 3, and subsequently was tested and identified for Special Education services for both reading and mathematics. Fabricio started the 2016-2017 school year receiving a number of special education services in reading and math.

On his language proficiency assessments, WIDA, Fabricio's speaking and listening skills have improved, while his literacy and writing remained relatively unchanged. As seen from his scores in Table 17, he went from 2.2 to 2 in literacy, and from 2.2 to 2.3 in writing. He continued to receive ESL services in the 2016-2017 school year, in addition to his special education services.

Jonesboro's principal described Fabricio as "an amazing kid" with whom "you just fall in love." Yet, his achievement has "frustrated" her very "much." The ESL teacher, who taught Fabricio's aunt and collaborated closely with his previous ESL teacher, described Fabricio's situation in the following terms,

> I have only worked with him this year and I had heard about him even before I started working with him, because a different ESL teacher had him last year. She would say, "Fabricio just struggles." Teachers were trying to get him the help that they felt like he needed. There just never seems to be an answer for that child, which is kind of sad. And even so, people still struggle with him, because he has so many needs and he is so low. It is just surprising to me- I just wish it hadn't taken this long because they have been saying that he needed more help since he was in kindergarten." (Ms. Yoo Mee interview, 02/05/16)

Table 17. Fabricio's WIDA Scores

WIDA Year	Listening	Speaking	Literacy	Writing
Spring 2015	3.5	1.9	2.2	2.2
Spring 2016	4.2	3.9	2	2.3

One of the teaching assistants, who worked with Fabricio every morning on learning letter names and sounds and using them in writing as a means to becoming literate, emphasized his need for intensive remediation:

> Mentally, emotionally, psychologically for him, the instructional level of the 3rd classroom is so far above his ability level, it is really hard for him not to say, "I can't do this stuff." He needs more time than he is getting right now (for remediation). He goes back into the group upstairs (classroom), they start the whole group instruction, and he is back out in the left field again. It is nothing that he is able to do. He needs an intensive remedial program to help him to make gains as quickly as possible (Teaching assistant interview, 02/25/16)

Fabricio's literacy teacher, Ms. Sullivan, was also very concerned about his academic success. She shared that if she were in his shoes, she "would feel like a failure." In fact, she felt like she failed in terms of supporting him and helping him succeed and progress academically. In order to address the needs of Fabricio, the school support team, which included the classroom teacher and the principal, pulled together as many resources and people as they could to support Fabricio throughout his literacy block. The schedule below represents Fabricio's typical day.

As witnessed from the schedule in Table 18, Fabricio's literacy and language block time was usually very busy. He led me around the school as he made his way to different locations to work with different adults. Usually, as I arrived I would find him in the hallway with a Teaching

Assistant, who has been a teacher for many years before retiring and volunteering in Jonesboro. Fabricio and another boy, Evan, who was receiving special education services spent lots of time together as they went through their day. After their work with the first Teaching Assistant, the boys went back to their homeroom. After a brief time in the homeroom, the class would line up and go upstairs to their literacy classroom.

Table 18. Fabricio's Daily Schedule

Time	Type of Activity	Typical Content	Location	Supervising Adult
8:00-8:30	Small group (N=2)	Writing and word work (letter/sounds, sight words, blends)	Hallway or conference room	Teaching Assistant 1
8:30-8:37	Independent work	Free reading, movie, cursive writing practice, etc.	Homeroom	Classroom Teacher
8:47-9:06	Whole group or small group (N=4)	Read-aloud, teacher modeling of POWTIDE or POWTREE, guided reading groups	Literacy Classroom	Literacy Teacher
9:07-9:19	Small group (N=2)	Shared reading or word work (Words Their Way)	Literacy Classroom or Hallway	Teaching Assistant 2
9:19-9:21	Whole group	Read-aloud, teacher modeling of POWTIDE or POWTREE	Literacy Classroom	Literacy Teacher
9:23-10:05	Small group (N=6)	Reading and writing	ESL Class (teacher's workroom)	ESL Teacher
10:16-10:41	Small group (N=4)	SPIRE	SpEd Classroom	SpEd Teacher

During literacy time, Fabricio spent little time engaged in whole group activities. Instead he was pulled out into a small group with a second Teaching Assistant, who worked with him and Evan on a variety of tasks provided by the literacy teacher. Once the literacy teacher started pulling small guided reading groups, she invited Fabricio and Evan to join her and two other students.

After the small group time, Fabricio was usually picked up by his ESL teacher. The ESL pull-out class had six students from first and second grade. Fabricio was the only third grader in the group. After the ESL class, Fabricio would make his way to the Special Education classroom, where together with Evan and two other students, he would work on SPIRE intervention program with the Special Education teacher. Because of frequent meetings, his special education class did not always meet. In that case, Fabricio and Evan went to their math class (which they were typically missing while in the Special Education class).

Teachers and Their Classrooms

As seen from their daily literacy block schedule, each focal student interacted with a number of teachers across multiple settings. Below I present a summary table (see Table 19) that outlines each teacher's areas of certification, education attainment, and years of teaching experience. Then I briefly describe each participating teacher and their working space to further set the stage for the analysis in the following chapters.

Mr. Williams

Mr. Williams is a highly energetic teacher, totally committed to his students' success. He frequently collaborated with the other third grade teacher and they often spent their planning time together brainstorming what they were going to teach and how, deconstructing state

Table 19. Participating Teachers

Teacher	Certification Areas	Highest Education Degree	Total Years of Experience in Educational Sector
Mr. Williams	Elementary (K-6)	MS	7 years
Ms. Sullivan	Early Childhood (PreK-3)	MS	4 years
Ms. Brown	Elementary (K-8) SpEd (PreK-12) PreK-4	MS	12 years
Ms. Yoo Mee	SpEd (K-12) ESL (PreK-12) Elementary (K-6)	MS	27 years

assessment requirements and rubrics, and discussing district initiatives with the administrators. Mr. Williams described instructing ELLs as an area in which he did not have "enough professional development" but also as working with colleagues to be able to meet ELLs "where they are" and support them.

Mr. William's classroom was set up with desks and chairs clustered in three groups, which were put together mostly according to the student needs. The cluster of tables where Daniel sat was designated to the special education students and the teaching assistant who provided direct assistance to the children in this group. The expectations and goals were posted for students to see (see Figure 5). The room had a great number of trade books organized by levels on the shelves (see Figure 6).

Ms. Sullivan

With an undergraduate degree in early childhood education and a masters in reading education that focused on whole language, Ms. Sullivan was a literacy teacher for all of the third grade students in Jonesboro. While she also provided a homeroom for one of the classes, she saw

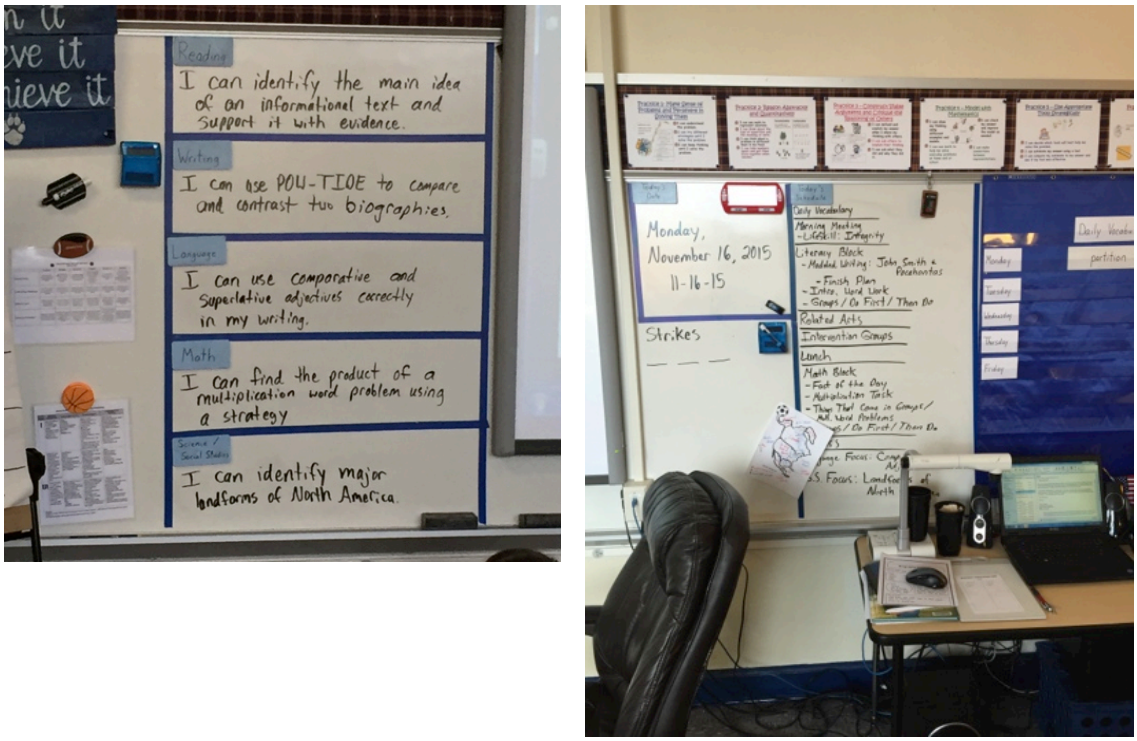


Figure 5. Goals and Expectations (Mr. William's Classroom, 11/13/2016)



Figure 6. Bookshelves (Mr. Williams's Classroom, 11/13/2015)

three classes (about 60 children) for their 90-minute literacy block every day. Although she described having a self-contained class as "trying" and "a lot to manage" in terms of different content areas, she also expressed concerns about working with three classes every day:

> I really enjoy having two classes, 40 some kids […] that was manageable and it was great. I was strictly literacy and I loved it […] three classes is too much. There are too many kids, too many individual needs to get to know and to meet and limited time. If we were here 12 hours a day, I could be successful. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

In terms of having ELLs in her class, she shared that in Jonesboro there always was a class where most ELLs would be placed and hers had always been that class. However, most ELLs in her classes were in transition status, meaning they were not receiving active ESL services, as they acquired enough literacy and language to successfully function in the classroom. Except for one student and Fabricio, Ms. Sullivan had "not had much experience with kids that have great needs that are much different from other students in class." She described her first experience with a newcomer ELL who arrived in her class in her first year of teaching,

> […] he showed up the first day, could not speak, could not tell me his name, so he was still learning to speak […] and that was very challenging, because I don't speak Spanish, I mean I took 2 years of Spanish in high school but didn't really retain much other than basic phrases, so that was very challenging. It was just like he had to be taught this is an "a," before we could even go any further. That was very challenging. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

Ms. Sullivan's classroom was set up with desks and chairs clustered in three groups, which were put together mostly according to the student needs. The cluster of tables where

Fabricio sat also included a special education student, Evan, with whom Fabricio often worked. Figure 7 includes photos of book selves and instructional materials displayed in the room.

Ms. Yoo Mee and ESL Spaces in Both Schools

One ESL teacher served both of the observed schools. She began her teaching career being a first grade teacher for three years. Then she traveled to Korea where she taught ESL at a refugee school. She got interested in pursing an ESL and Special Education certification upon her return to the United States, while at the same time continuing teaching at the elementary school level. She was also trained in Reading Recovery and previously served as a literacy specialist.



Figure 7. Ms. Sullivan's Classroom (03/03/2016)

As an ESL teacher at Kayford, Ms. Yoo Mee traveled to several schools to provide instruction to ELLs. The district supervisor described her and her colleagues in the following way:

> I think that the ESL teachers understand the challenges and they know what we have to do to move these students forward. That group is so caring working with those students, they are so culturally sensitive […] it is just dawning because we have those students for such a short time during the day and trying to get in all of the domains and make sure we are doing all we need to do I feel for our teachers, especially because they are traveling around. (District supervisor interview, 11/19/15)

With 16 active ELLs and 25 total students, Ms. Yoo Mee described her situation as following:

> This year the load has not been as bad as last year and I don't have that many schools […] My schedule is not as crazy as it was crazy last year, but I tried to work on it this week trying to get some kinks out of it, because I lost some students this year. I have 16 active ones and 25 all together. It is doable with the travel. (Ms. Yoo Mee interview, 02/05/16)

At Cumberland, Ms. Yoo Mee met Daniel in his regular classroom during intervention and enrichment time. At that time, every third grade student participated in some sort of one-on-one or small group activity based on their needs. At Ms. Yoo Mee worked with Daniel, the classroom teacher held small intervention group with three students and the teaching assistant worked with another student one-on-one.

At Jonesboro, Ms. Yoo Mee worked with a group of first, second, and third grade students (total of 5 students) in a small workroom that only had two tables, a handful of chairs, and no whiteboard. Because the workroom was adjacent to the clinic, the ESL classes were sometimes interrupted by students who came to see the school nurse. Additionally, the workroom had an adult bathroom, which was frequently visited by teachers and other adults in the building. When this space was occupied by a traveling clinic or something else, the ESL class took place in the cafeteria.

Ms. Brown and the Special Education Classroom

With a caseload of 23 students, the special education teacher was constantly putting out fires and trying to manage students who were coming and going into her small room. The room included a teacher's desk and a small round table with a few chairs where she taught her small groups of students. Fabricio's group consisted of four students- two third graders and two fourth grades. The tall shelves in the room were mainly empty and contained no trade books. A few stacks of workbooks and supplies were scattered across the shelves.

Additional Interview Participants

To couch the findings of this study within a larger context of accommodation policy, I interviewed district, state, and school administrators about the use of high-stakes testing accommodations. A brief outline of the participants' position titles, previously held positions, highest educational attainment, and approximated total years of experience are listed in Table 20.

Finally, teacher assistants who worked closely with teachers in this study cordially agreed to be interviewed as well. Although most of our discussions were on the run, they offered insight into the experiences of support staff, such as teaching assistants, who often worked with ELLs.

Table 20. Other Interview Participants

Position Title	Previously Held Positions	Highest Education Degree	Total Years of Experience in Educational Sector
Director of Assessment Design for Special Populations	Special Education Teacher; Special Education Supervisor	PhD Candidate	Over 20 years
Director of English Learner and Immigrant Programs	Teacher	MA in Psychology	Over 30 years
Supervisor of Federal Programs	Teacher, Consultant	PhD in K-12 Administration	Over 20 years
Principal (Cumberland)	Teacher, Associate principal	EdS in Administration	Over 10 years
Principal (Jonesboro)	Teacher, Literacy coach, Associate principal	EdD in Leadership and Policy Analysis	Over 15 years

According to Cumberland Elementary website, each paraprofessional in Title I schools in the district met the following requirement:

> The Every Student Succeeds Act (formerly No Child Left Behind) requires that all paraprofessionals in Title I schools who provide direct instructional assistance to students must meet specific highly qualified guidelines. Each assistant must have either two years of college and an associate's degree, or pass a content specific examination in reading, math, and writing.

All three paraprofessional working with the focal students met this requirement. Mr. William's TA started volunteering in the school cafeteria when her own children were school-aged. When the teaching assistant position came open, she applied and worked in that capacity for two years. Ms. Sullivan's first TA was a retired teacher of 18 years who volunteered in

several classrooms in the mornings. Her second TA was the youngest and the most inexperienced with no teaching experience and only minimal college preparation.

Chapter Summary

The descriptions I provided so far of local places, spaces, and individuals involved in the study, although general in nature, provide a backdrop against which the findings I describe in the next chapters unfold. While the standardized test scores presented in this section reflect a reductionist view of what counts and knowledge and the subgroup classifications provide a simplistic view of students, teachers, and their relationships within school systems, these data are useful for setting the stage and providing general background to the study.

CHAPTER 5: ACCOMMODATIONS DURING CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS

Chapter Overview

This chapter is the first of two that examine the enactment of accommodations during classroom instruction and assessment. Chapter 5 focuses on the accommodation use during assessments and Chapter 6 focuses on accommodations and assessment influencing daily instruction the focal students experienced. Because classroom assessment practice incorporates a number of activities that range from informal observations by the teacher to high-stakes testing practice, I focus on the more formal assessments administered in the classrooms. These formal assessments include practice-standardized testing situations, end of the unit quizzes and writing assignments, and diagnostic reading assessments. Drawing on the work of Schissel (2012), I define practice-standardized testing situations "as situations when a teacher gives an assessment to a whole or small group and incorporates some elements of test administration that are mandated during the administration of standardized tests" (p. 185). Because these assessments were administered in a whole group, small group, as well as one-on-one setting, across a number of settings and with different adults, I highlight how each assessment practice was treated within the systems in which the focal students found themselves. Practice-standardized testing situations resembled the high-stakes assessment practice, in which students sat with laptops at their desks, logged into the online platform, and completed the assessment while being supervised by the teachers and teaching assistants. Students who required extra time were later escorted to a different location to finish the test. Those locations varied from a special education classroom to a teacher workroom. End of the unit quizzes were usually administered in a whole group or a small group and diagnostic assessments were usually administered in a one-on-one setting.

While looking closely at how teachers and teaching assistants negotiated assessment practices with the focal students, I also embed the interview findings that presented underlying beliefs and assumptions held by participants. As Bronfenbrenner (1995) noted "the inclusion of both beliefs and corresponding behaviors" can enhance "the explanatory power" of the study (p. 631). I begin with the vignettes that included Daniel taking the Language Arts and Social Studies high-stakes assessment practice (an example of the practice-standardized testing), followed by the classroom assessment administered by the teacher, and finally zooming in on how a running record administration required extensive negotiation of meaning on the part of the student and the teacher in a one-on-one setting.

Practice-Standardized Testing Situations

At both schools, a number of practice-standardized testing situations took place in anticipation of the actual high-stakes assessment (TnReady), which was scheduled to occur on district-selected dates within state-determined window. For Language Arts Part I, which replaced Tennessee's writing assessment, the window was February 8 through March 4; Language Arts Part II was to be administered between April 18 and May 13. Part I required open-ended written responses in response to a set of passages. For instance, if the passages described how beavers and moles build their homes, the prompt might look as follows:

> *Write an essay that compares and contrasts the homes of beavers and moles. Be sure to use facts and details from both texts to support your essay. Follow the conventions of standard written English. Manage your time carefully so that you can plan your essay and write your essay. Type your answer in the space provided.* (McQueen, Commissioner of Education, presentation at the Tennessee School Board Association Annual

Conference, 11/15/15, slide 44)

Language Arts Part II aimed to seek students' answers to a variety of questions ranging from multiple choice comprehension questions to questions that required highlighting selected textual evidence in the text. Performance on both parts of LA Assessment was to be combined into a single composite score for each student. All students in grades 3 through 8 were required to take the tests. The same year, the students also took the social studies assessment, which utilized an online platform identical to the one used for Language Arts and Mathematics. Schools received access to two TnReady practice tools- sample test items were available in MICA (Measurement Incorporated Classroom Assessment) and practice tests could be accessed by the districts in MIST (Measurement Incorporated Secure Testing). Kayford district and school leadership distributed MICA sample items to schools to be used during instruction. For instance, classroom teachers in both schools used the example described above (compare and contrast the homes of beavers and moles) during their literacy block. MIST practice tests were scheduled throughout spring semester in both schools. Before diving into the specific practice-standardized testing situations, in which focal students and their teachers enacted the assessment and accommodation policies, it is critical to mention that TnReady high-stakes assessment of 2015-2016 school year was ultimately canceled for grades 3 through 8 due to the online system crashing on the first day of test administration. Kayford schools chose not to administer the test on the first day, but instead to begin the day after. After the system crashed, the state attempted to have the testing company provide paper-and-pencil versions of the test. On February 10, 2016, the commissioner of education wrote in a letter to parents and families of Tennessee students:

I am disappointed we are unable to provide your student with an online version of

TNReady this year, especially after a year of planning and hard work. […] in order to protect our students' instructional time and better ensure they have a positive test experience, **we decided to move all students to a paper-and-pencil version of TNReady for the rest of this school year**. This change applies to both Part I and Part II of TNReady, as well as social studies. […] **The questions your student practiced on a computer are the same types of questions they will see on the paper version of TNReady**, and those questions will ask your child to use critical thinking and problem solving abilities. (emphasis in the original)

Mr. Williams was disturbed by the news:

[…] my wife and I were at home, the phone rang and it showed the central office […] they said that due to the testing not going well, they decided to scrap it and move to paper testing. We were starting the test on Tuesday and wisely so. So, we have not started yet. So, that was one thing they did that was good, but we were in shock. I called the Assistant Principal and told her I have to hear it from someone other than a recording. Is this true? And she said yes. And she was shocked. We were all totally […] defeated. Everybody felt very defeated. Luckily, we did get a snow day in-between. I was not prepared to come in and tell the students. That was my biggest issue- how am I going to tell these kids that this is totally changed? The reactions have been interesting- some of them have actually said they are happy. (Mr. Williams interview, 02/24/16)

On April 27, 2016, educators across Tennessee received the message from the commissioner announcing the cancelation of high-stakes testing for the year:

As a result of repeated failures from this vendor, we are suspending Part

> II of TNReady for grades 3-8 this year. […] We know the transition to TNReady has presented unexpected challenges for educators, schools, and districts, and we will not ask you to further disrupt your end of year schedule […] We will provide as much information to schools and students as possible related to results from Part I testing for grades 3-8. This will be used for informational purposes only, and no score will be associated with Part I for grades 3-8.

In spite of test cancelation, teachers and children spent hours of instructional time on practice tests, which were designed to prepare students for the state testing. The accommodations that went along with these practice tests were to reflect those assigned to students for the high-stakes testing. As the ESL Coordinator explained:

> The worst thing you can do is give a child an accommodation when they are trying to take a test that they have never seen before—they have never seen the test, they have never seen the accommodation, so you have double confusion. Ideally, if it is not an accommodation they need for their work, then they shouldn't need it for their test. And that is why we really focused in Tennessee on looking at those accommodations on a case-by-case basis. And that has been a real difficulty for some of our teachers because they want a chart that says they are this – they get that, they are this – they get that. But that is not the best way to do it. We need to really differentiate for the students. (ESL Coordinator interview, 12/14/15)

In the following section I attempt to capture the assessment accommodation influence on participating teachers' assessment administration. I describe relevant practice-standardized testing situations, which emerged situationally in both schools, followed by the description of

other classroom assessment situations and accommodations that were injected into them.

Daniel: Social Studies and Language Arts MIST

To prepare students for the actual high-stakes assessment, practice tests were scheduled throughout the spring semester. Because the practice tests were to mimic the actual high-stakes tests, I was not permitted to either audiotape the interactions during the practice test or take photos of the MIST platform. I was able, however, to secure a convenient place near Daniel where I could mostly see what he was doing. Mr. Williams did not cover the walls for the practice tests, as the state for the first time in many years permitted teachers to leave up the materials that they have used with their students throughout the year. In Daniel's classroom, this provision also translated into two additional posters placed over the board. The posters presented the argumentative and opinion writing graphic organizers, which were used in the literacy block as a preparatory stage before writing a draft.

According to the accommodation guidelines, Daniel was to receive extra time (up to double time, which for Social Studies assessment would be 45 minutes x 2 = 90 minutes) and a bilingual dictionary. All of the other accessibility features he received were similar to the rest of the students in the class. For example, he could use a highlighter, a spell check, and a note-taking tool features that were embedded within the MIST computer platform. I chose to include the two episodes of practice-standardized testing situation, in which Daniel participated. The first is the Social Studies practice test and the second Language Arts Part II. I highlight the Social Studies practice tests, because it represented well the structure of not only the social studies assessment, but also Language Arts Part I assessment. One of the reflections I wrote on the day of that

practice test reflected the nature of the social studies test and the overall feeling of the classroom environment,

> This social studies test looks like a test of reading and writing. It consists of a long passage, which students must respond to in writing. […] The text is pretty long- several paragraphs on the history of food in America. I wonder what the complexity of that text is. Question 1 asks: *Using evidence from the passage and the timeline to support your response, explain how historical events have affected what people eat in the United States.* Daniel receives no read-aloud, no bilingual dictionary. Two students get read-aloud (have headphones on). The class is very quiet with occasional keyboard clicks and typing. Students occasionally look around. (field notes, 01/14/16)

Although I was not permitted to take photos of the assessment, the quick Internet search brought up examples of what the writing tasks students had to do looked like (see Figure 8).

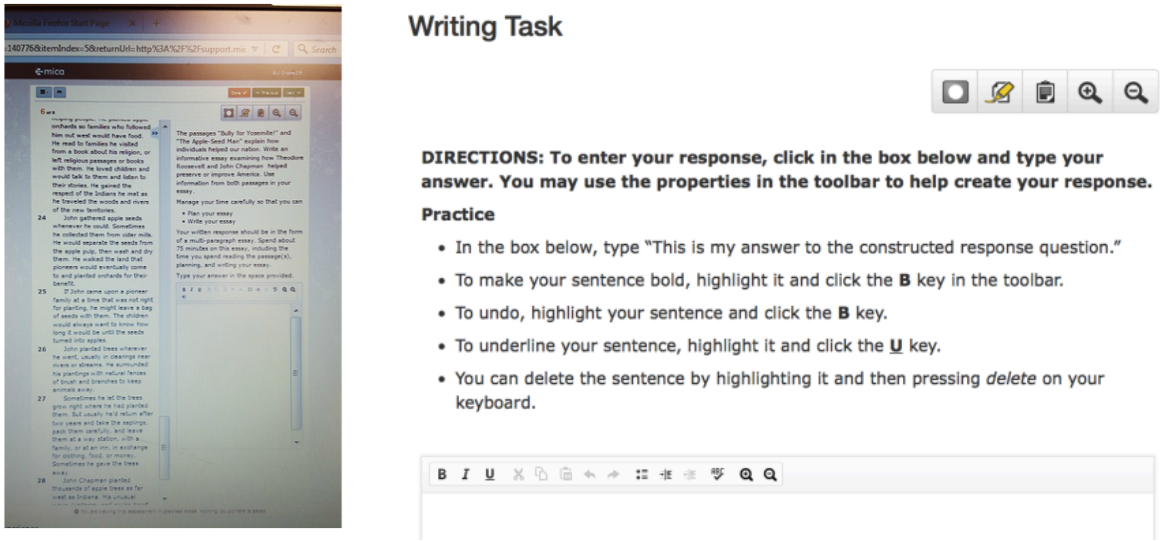


Figure 8. Standardized Online Assessment Writing Task Sample

Here I provide an outline, drawn from the field notes, that details how test administration was conducted. The test begins in the classroom with students sitting at their desks.

Classroom, whole group, students are at their desks.

(1) 8:30-8:47 Mr. Williams distributes Chrome Books, lined paper, and dividers. Then he gives each student a small piece of paper with log in information and provides directions. He says, "Click on "students" and don't do anything else. We will come by and collect your tickets." Classroom phone rings. Mr. Williams: "We will have to unplug it." A student begins asking questions. Mr. Williams: "No, sir. You talk out; it has to be reported to the state. I will be there in a minute." Mr. Williams continues to distribute login cards and then instructs students to type in their log in and password. Mr. Williams: "Type it exactly how it is." Once students are done, Mr. Williams and his Teaching Assistant, who is also in the room, begin to collect the tickets. TA talks to a student whose headphones are not working. TA leaves to get new headphones.

Mr. Williams is visibly stressed. He is sitting in the swivel chair by the active board while students are logging in and waiting for the TA to return. Mr. Williams then goes to unplug the phone. TA returns with a different set of headphones. Once the headphones work (8:43), Mr. Williams directs children to "re-familiarize themselves with the program." A student is experiencing a problem with logging in, Mr. Williams mutters, "Oh great!" and calls someone on the walkie-talkie for help. All students are quiet at their desks waiting for the issue to be resolved. Students cannot begin the test until everyone is ready to start.

Daniel entertains himself by clicking on different screens, looking at various accessibility features; then puts his head down. Daniel then clicks on the note-taking tool, types in it for a while waiting. Mr. Williams: "Click next, please." Daniel clicks 'Next.' A lengthy text and question one are displayed.

(2) 8:48-9:10 Daniel begins the test. Puts his head down, looks at the screen, looks around, raises his hand. Mr. Williams comes up and Daniel tells him he can't do the test, because his stomach is hurting. Mr. Williams encourages Daniel to do "his best." Daniel stares at the screen disgruntled. Daniel's screen goes darker, he moves the mouse and the screen lights up again. Daniel scrolls down.

TA looks at me, motions to the special education student sitting next to her, then back at me. She shakes her head and her eyes glisten with

tears, her hands clasped under her chin. The class is quiet with occasional clicks of keyboard.

Daniel gets to the timeline, which is a part of the text. He doesn't scroll to the right to see the whole timeline; instead, he starts typing his answer. He uses spellcheck feature to correct his misspellings, which are underlined with a squiggle line. Daniel erases, types again, then switches to writing on paper. After writing on the paper for a bit, Daniel starts typing again. Goes back and forth between writing on paper and typing.

(3) 9:10-9:16 Daniel continues to type. His first paragraph consists of one sentence. Starts a new paragraph. He types slowly using one finger while supporting his head with the other hand.

(4) 9:16-9:28 Daniel switches to the third paragraph. All his paragraphs have a space between them and only contain one sentence each. Daniel begins playing with his login card, which he did not return to Mr. Williams. He then scrolls down the text and writes more on the paper. Again plays with his login card, looks around, chewing on the hood of his sweatshirt. TA comes by, pats him on the back, and encourages him "to keep writing". Daniel stares at the screen, continues to play with his login card. Daniel stretches, placing hands in his hood, stretches again, starts playing with his pencil. Then he pushes the button for the line-by-line tool- it highlights each line by itself while covering the rest of the text. After tinkering with that, Daniel turns on the note-taking window. Closes it, goes back to the line-by-line tool, scrolling all the way to the top, maximizes the text window to the whole screen. Turns off the line-by-line tool and starts writing in the note-taking tool.

(5) 9:28-9:34 Daniel continues typing in the note-taking tool. Mr. Williams says, "You have 5 minutes left." Some students sigh and drop their heads back as if to say, "Oh, no." Daniel continues to type in the note-taking window. Once done, he erases everything. Then he proceeds to play with the strings on his sweatshirt and stare at the screen.

(6) 9:34-9:38 Mr. Williams: "Listen carefully to directions." Teacher names several students who are not to push finish and Daniel is one of them. Unfortunately, by then Daniel already pushed something that closed his test. So, he raises his hand. Mr. Williams explains to the TA what to do: "Take students to the bathroom, if necessary, and take them to a special education room downstairs to finish the extra time allotted to them." Daniel and four other students leave the room. I follow them.

SpEd Room, small group (N=5)

(7) 9:43-9:48 Five students are sitting at a circular table with their folder-dividers and Chrome books. Daniel: "Mrs. H, I am done." TA instructs him to go over his test once more to check and edit it. Students wait for their tests to be un-paused. TA and a SpEd teacher un-pause students' tests. TA: "You are up!"

(8) 9:48-9:54 Daniel: "Do you want me to read it?" TA: "Do whatever you need to do and let me know when you are done."

Daniel looks at his test, especially the note-taking tool he used earlier. It has writing in it, even though Daniel deleted it before leaving the classroom. The screen is split again with half of the screen with the text and another with the writing space.

At 9:50, Daniel says, "I am done." TA whispers something in his ear. Daniel goes back to looking at his screen and adds a bit to his writing. I glance over to his note-taking tool (notepad). It says:

"batman is robin is night way is green erroy is red erroy is flash is kid flash is young flash is otmet flash is zoom is quick silver"

At 9:53, Daniel calls the TA over and says, "I am done." She guides him through the process of exiting the test. He closes his Chrome Book, turns in his scrap paper, and leaves. (field notes, 01/14/16)

The second day I highlight below helps us further understand how practice-standardized testing situation played out for Daniel and what accessibility features and accommodations were made available to him, as well as what he himself chose to utilize on the assessment. Instead of presenting the description of the whole practice-standardized testing situation, I highlight several portions of it, which are relevant to the analysis, which follows the excerpt.

Daniel was absent when the Language Arts Part II test was given to the rest of the class, so this is a "make-up test" for him. Teacher instructed the TA to take him and another boy who also was absent on the actual day of the practice test to the book room. Figure 9 depicts the

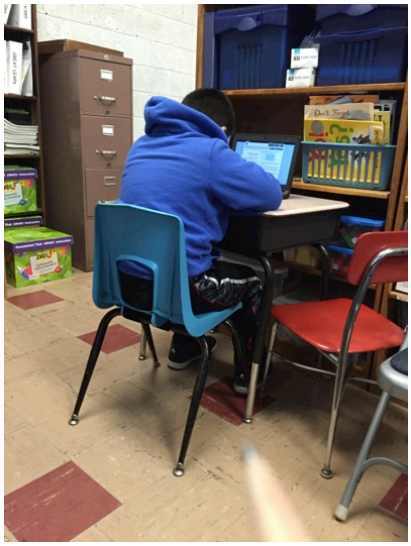


Figure 9. Daniel's Testing Setting (Book Room)

testing environment. TA instructed the boys to login and read the instructional page, which preceded the actual test. The test itself consisted of a number of questions that ranged from multiple-choice to drag-and-drop to highlight-in-the-text. Daniel began the test at 8:58 am and finished it at 9:41 am (43 minutes total).

Book Room, small group (N=2)

(9) 9:12-9:15 Question 4 contains two parts. Part A has multiple-choice answers. Part B call for highlighting within the text itself in response to the question. Daniel scrolls down the text and chooses the answer for Part A. About to press Next, but sees Part B. Highlights one word, then another. An error message pops up on the screen. Daniel presses X to close the message. Leaves just one word highlighted, still the test doesn't accept that answer. An error message is displayed. Daniel then highlights a few more words in yellow. Pushes Next. This time the answer is accepted.

(10) 9:19-9:21 Question 7 is a multiple-choice question. Daniel stretches, looks at the text, and plays with his sweatshirt sleeves by putting his hands all the way in, foot shaking. Daniel then chooses an answer, hesitates, then presses Next. A message is displayed on the screen prompting Daniel to go back and check the answers. TA: "Do you want to do that?" Daniel: "No." Clicks Next.

(11) 9:28-9:34 Question 11 Part A is a multiple-choice and Part B is a question,

where you have to select an answer within the text itself. Daniel chooses the answer for Part A and scrolls down to Part B. Clicks Highlighter Tool, highlights a part of a paragraph in yellow, then red, click Next. An error message is displayed.
TA comes closer. Daniel is trying his best to highlight. TA whispers, "Scroll down over here." Daniel looks at the text. All of it this time whereas before he only looked at the half. He didn't actually scroll through the whole text until the TA prompted him. Chooses the answer. Clicks Next. An error message is displayed. TA: "Let's see." Daniel highlights again, click Next, and an error message is displayed yet again. Daniel un-highlights, scrolls down, clicks Next, and the error message appears again. Daniel closes the error message, highlights more text, un-highlights it, and says to the TA: "Is that what I am supposed to do?" TA: "Let's see" She tries to help him in vain. He then clicks around until it works and he is able to move on to the next page of the test.

(12) 9:35-9:36 Question 13 Part A has multiple-choice answers and Part B involves highlighting within the text. Daniel chooses a multiple-choice answer and clicks Next.
TA: "Did you answer Part B?" Daniel goes back. TA is sitting behind him monitoring what he is doing. Daniel looks at Part B question, highlights, and clicks Next.

(13) 9:40-9:41 Final menu that has checks next to all questions. TA: "Wait a second." Looks at something on the computer and say, "Do you want to check your answers? You still have 20 more minutes." Daniel says, "No" and clicks finish.

(14) 9:41-9:45 Daniel does the after-assessment survey, and then clicks on the green button, which says 'Return to the Test'. Daniel returns to the test. TA: "You missed it." Daniel didn't really read what the buttons said and clicked green assuming it would let him finish the test. Instead, it took him back to the test itself. Daniel goes back and clicks the red button to finish the test. Clicks 'Finish'. Then pushes Previous button, which takes him back to the survey. Clicks 'Finish' again, then green 'Submit' and green 'Log out'.

(15) 9:45-10:02 Although Daniel is finished, TA instructs him to wait, since the second student is not done yet. Daniel puts his head down. (field notes, 2/3/16)

Accommodation Use During Practice-Standardized Testing Situations

Accessibility Features

As part of the universal design for learning, accessibility features Daniel received were available to all students. Out of all of the tools, he used spellchecker (paragraph 2), note-taking tool (paragraph 4, 5, 8), and line-by-line tool (paragraph 4). Daniel used the full-screen feature of the assessment, but it seemed purely accidental (paragraph 4).

> Daniel plays with many tools offered by the computer program. Yet, none of them seem to help him write an answer to the question beyond a couple of sentences. It is not at all clear if he even comprehended the text. It looks like accessibility features might be a distraction or a convenient time-waster for students who cannot access the assessment. (field notes, 01/14/16)

Daniel utilized the highlighting tool only when it was explicitly called for by the test (paragraph 9, 11, 12). That counters what Mr. Williams saw as one tool children used the most:

> We emphasized highlighting in texts and underlining, picking out and we have done this for several years since we started text-based writing heavily […] they do use that and they manipulate it well. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/15/15).

Both Mr. Williams and his TA encouraged Daniel to do his best, keep writing (paragraph 2, 4), referred to the time left for the assessment accommodation (paragraph 5, 13), reminded him to go over the test again, check, and edit his answers (paragraph 7, 8, 10, 13), as well as to make sure to answer all of the questions (paragraph 12). TA also actively attempted to help Daniel when he was experiencing difficulty with the online platform and received an error message several times in a row (paragraph 11). Small group setting, utilized to provide extra

time or to allow for test make-up, was also instrumental to Daniel's assessment context. It is during the small group time that Daniel and the TA interacted around the test the most. I describe how teachers accounted for state-sanctioned accommodations Daniel received.

Accounting for Sanctioned Accommodations

According to Daniel's teacher, Daniel had the possibility of three accommodations: extended time, rest breaks, and a bilingual dictionary. However, Daniel's ESL teacher, Ms. Yoo Mee, assigned extended time as the only accommodation for him to receive. She explained that providing him with a one-to-one bilingual dictionary would not be helpful, because Daniel "will not have enough literacy skills to do it." She elaborated on all of the possible accommodations available to ELLs,

> This year they have extended time. They can get rest breaks, but I didn't allow for that unless they actually needed that. You can do a word-to-word dictionary but I don't normally let them do that because sometimes they don't have the dictionary skills they need and they will spend all the time playing with the dictionary. (Ms. Yoo Mee interview, 02/05/16)

"Even if he struggles, he will rush through it": Use of Extended Time

The ESL teacher predicted that even if Daniel struggles with the test, he would try to finish it as quickly as possible. Indeed, Daniel did not take advantage of the extra time allotted for his test completion, even though his teacher and the teaching assistant made sure that he was given a chance to use his double time. My field notes for both of the above episodes describe a similar pattern,

> Daniel only took 11 minutes from his extra 45 minutes. I am not sure how helpful this time or a small group setting was to him. As evidenced from his notepad writing, he wasn't thinking deeply about the test. Instead, he was thinking about superheroes he knew. (field notes, 01/14/16)
>
> Daniel definitely does not utilize his double-time; instead, he finished the test very quickly. (field notes, 02/03/16)

Students tend to finish the tasks they do not enjoy or in which they feel unsuccessful quickly, perhaps that is why many ELLs do not take advantage of the extra time provided to them by state assessments. This echoes what the district supervisor shared about "testing of stamina with the long passages" on the state assessment. He elaborated,

> [The third grade passages] are very long and hard and to get to extrapolate that material, it is not that different concepts it is just having to go in there and extrapolate it a different way […] When I have been in a training reading third, fourth grade social studies passages, I get bored with it after a while. I am probably a little more motivated than they are […], so I really worry about what they can get and how focused they can stay throughout that time. (District supervisor interview, 11/19/15)

Ms. Sullivan connected to larger implications for teachers when she explained:

> It is scary that your job depends on this test. It's about 30% for Part 1 and 60 something for multiple choice, Part 2. A good number of the kids are just copying the text. It's disappointing because it would take me a good 40 minutes to do this and some of them are already done. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/01/16)

Furthermore, the fact that any student has to wait for their test-taking time to expire before logging off or leaving the testing area seems unwarranted at best and wasteful at worst, because it wastes precious instructional time and opportunities for the participating student. Daniel waited for 17 minutes before he was allowed to leave the test-taking area (paragraph 15). During that time, he did not engage in any instructional or useful activity, e.g., reading. Instead, he simply waited. It would be too simplistic to place the blame for such a misappropriation of instructional time on the teacher and the teaching assistant, because they themselves are influenced by the systems they cannot control. Mr. Williams discussed the very issue of allowing students to finish the test before their allotted time expired in one of our interviews:

> [Students] have to be given the entire time before their test closes out in MIST. One thing they found in the high school- say you have a 60-minute test, the kid is finished in 40 minutes, closed their laptop. There is the same ticket to login for Part I and Part II, so where that device went to sleep, when the kid went to take Part II, they still have to wait 20 minutes to complete the time for Part I before the computer would let them start Part II. (Mr. Williams interview, 01/11/16)

The same underlying concept of lock-step process, in which all students complete the assessment at the assigned pace, is also evidenced in the fact that that during the whole group administration students must wait for any problem to be resolved. Thus, everyone waits for new headphones for a special education student or for resolving logging in issues for a student who is denied access to her account (paragraph 1). It took 17 minutes for the social studies assessment to begin, because of the technology issues a couple of students experienced.

The Use of Unsanctioned Accommodations

The use of computer-based assessment often is promoted as objective and something that does not involve a prejudiced test-administrator who can fail to execute the protocol with precision and fidelity. The teacher and the teaching assistant did not prompt or assist children during the whole group administration time. In fact, Mr. Williams emphasized the fact that all communications are to be limited and monitored when one of the students began asking a question aloud without raising his hand. The teacher emphasized the importance of this test-security procedure by saying, "No, sir. You talk out; it has to be reported to the state. I will be there in a minute" (paragraph 1). The only thing teacher was allowed to say was "Do your best," which he did when Daniel said that he was unable to complete his test because of the stomach ache (paragraph 2), and how much time was left until the end of the assessment (paragraph 5). The TA simply encouraged Daniel to keep working by saying, "keep writing" (paragraph 4).

However, when Daniel was either finishing or completing his testing in a small group setting (alternate setting than the classroom), more interaction with the supervising adult took place. During the social studies assessment, TA asked Daniel to go over his test one more time to check it (paragraph 7) and to add to his writing (paragraph 8). During the language arts assessment, she interacts with Daniel to double-check if he wanted to check his answers (paragraph 10, 13), to provide guidance and assistance with test items (paragraph 11), to remind him to complete all of the test items (paragraph 12), and to inform him of the time he still had left (paragraph 13). While these interactions did not offer any direct linguistic support to Daniel, they did create spaces for more flexible approach to the assessment, in which children and adults could not help but to language around the task at hand. In the next section, I describe how this

was taken a step further during Fabricio's assessment, during which Ms. Sullivan offered a read-aloud as a linguistic scaffold aimed at making the test more accessible.

Fabricio: Writing Assessment

Although the summative assessment was scheduled to be online, and often the practice tests were set up to mimic the high-stakes assessment itself, in this particular case the assessment was done on paper. While the commissioner of education shared with the school board association members that 99% of districts were ready with the network access and 90% of districts were ready with the device access, individual schools did not always have the capacity required by the full online implementation. For example, at Cumberland Elementary, teachers and students conducted a walk-a-thon to raise money for Chrome Books. At Jonesboro Elementary, due to the limited number of devices, several practice tests were conducted with a pen-and-pencil even though the principal shared during her interview: "There are some paper assessments. But we are trying to minimize the shock factor for students, so we know if they are going to be assessed online and try to build informative assessments that match the way it looks. We try to gain exposure and experience with how it functions for us." (Cumberland principal interview, 12/10/15)

The quarterly writing assessment administered in both classrooms served as a benchmark assessment and was scored by the classroom teachers. Its administration was to mimic the state testing administration in the set up and administration. Ms. Sullivan shared, "Typically we try to make sure that state and district assessment align because we do not want to give accommodations that they are not going to get, but you also do not want someone feeling unsuccessful." (Ms. Sullivan interview, 12/15/15) I highlight this particular example of practice-

standardized testing situation, because she provided a read-aloud as an accommodation afforded to Fabricio, which was not typical of other instances of practice-standardized testing situations in either focal students' classrooms. However, at the promise of Fabricio being referred to Special Education services by the time of the actual high-stakes testing, Ms. Sullivan reasoned, "I try to make sure that he is used to being tested with a read-aloud and just be very encouraging because his spirit is not broken." (Ms. Williams interview, 02/05/16) This echoed what the ESL teacher shared, "I think the read-aloud would help him. Well, you know they have read-aloud, extended time, separate environment, all that would help him." (Ms. Yoo Mee interview, 02/05/16)

During this particular episode, Fabricio was pulled out to a small kidney-shaped table with two other students who received a read-aloud. I provide the extract in full, followed by the analysis of what sanctioned and additional accommodations were afforded to Fabricio.

Classroom, whole group, students at their desks, Fabricio is at the kidney table with two other students.

(16) 8:36-8:43 Test set-up. Ms. Sullivan: "What it is talking about in your reading is really interesting. However, you are going to have to persevere through it in order to show me what you can and cannot do. It's not going to be easy. If I said, "Oh, it's so easy" I will be telling you a big old fib. It's not going to be easy, but I just want you to do your best, persevere, from the time we are going to start you are going to have 75 minutes. Ok? You are going to do your best and you are going to persevere and you are going to spend your time giving me all that you got. Do you think I will be happy if you finish early? No. Like I said, I know it is really difficult. I didn't make this test. Just do your best. Show me what you remember. Ok? Jack is going to come around and give everyone one of these (points to handouts). Here you will find your directions, so you obviously need to read this first. Don't begin yet. Peter is going to come around and give everyone your packet, your reading information or your articles. And Susan is going to come around and give everybody two sheets of paper. When she gives you these two sheets of single notebook paper, I want you to put your name of the front of each piece of paper. Because a lot of time we write so much we use multiple sheets of paper and don't put our name on them and I am stuck figuring out

what is what. So, give everybody two sheets of paper. […] So you are going to have three things- you are going to have your directions, you are going to have the articles that you are supposed to read, and then you are going to have your notebook paper that you are going to do your writing assessment on. Don't write anything on this sheet (points to the directions sheet), don't put anything on it."

Classroom, small group (N=3) at the kidney-shaped table

(17) 8:43-8:59 Ms. Sullivan is now sitting at the kidney-shaped table. Ms. Sullivan to class: "So, let's begin. Make sure you have notebook paper, you know where to get more, make sure you have your articles, and directions to read, they are mucho important. Is anybody missing any of those things?" Student: "I do not have paper." Ms. Sullivan: "Ok (gives paper to the student). You may go ahead and begin. You will have 75 minutes. Bear with me Fabricio, I will be there in just a minute."

(18) Ms. Sullivan: "I am going to read the directions to you all and then I am going to read the article and it is very important that you listen to what I am reading. If you need to make notes or underline while I read, you definitely can and then I will leave you to work on your own. So, I am going to start with this page right here (points to the page), follow along." Ms. Sullivan reads the directions. Stops and says, "Does anyone need me to reread this? Any part of this need to be reread? If later it does, you have to let me know."

(19) Ms. Sullivan: "Let's move on over to this part here. I will give you a few second to look. This is the red lionfish and the nutria. I will read those captions for you. Turn the page. Then we have a cane toad and Asian carp and an emerald ash borer." Ms. Sullivan then reads the texts to the small group of students. "Let's start with line one."

Fabricio is looking at the text, pretending to follow along. His pencil is moving, but across the wrong lines of text. Ms. Sullivan: "Down here (points to the lines she reads). …We are at line 20, line 20. If you ever need me to stop and reread something, you need to tell me that, ok?" Ms. Sullivan continues reading. Ms. Sullivan: "Let's flip the page." Ms. Sullivan continues reading. Students yawn. Ms. Sullivan finishes text 1. Ms. Sullivan: "All right, we have one more to read." Ms. Sullivan begins reading text 2. Fabricio is following along, but soon gets lost and just looks at the page. Ms. Sullivan points to the place where she is reading, "All right, we are at line four" (points to line four for Fabricio). Ms. Sullivan continues reading. Fabricio starts following again. When a page is turned,

Fabricio turns to the wrong page, but after looking at the teacher's page, realizes that he has the wrong page open, looks for the right page and turns to it. Occasionally, Ms. Sullivan points to the line she is reading to help Fabricio to keep track without interrupting her reading. Ms. Sullivan: "Alright, down here friend." Ms. Sullivan points and continues reading. "Almost done."

(20) After reading text 2, Ms. Sullivan says: "Alright, let's go back over here. So we read about invasive species. Let's go back over to this. I am going to reread your prompt for you, ok? This is what we should do, we should read our prompt first, then we should read, and then we can go back and reread our prompt. Species means types of animal, we are here at the bottom (points to where she is reading), invasive species are types of animals that move to new places they have never lived in before. Invasive species are also known as alien species or invaders. United States has many invasive species that arrived from other countries. These species can be a danger to the environment, other animals, and even people. The photos of some invasive species would be shown on the next pages. You are about to read two articles about invasive species. And that is what we have done. It says the first describes many different invasive species from around the world and the second looks at the type of fish that threatens the great lakes. As you read, think about how species becomes invasive, why species can be a problem, and how scientists and people like you can stop them. All right, now let's go over here (directs students to turn to the prompt and reads it to them). You have read two texts about the threat of invasive species. Write an article for your local newspaper stating your opinion about why it is important to stop invasive species from spreading in the United States. Be sure to describe the effect invasive species have on the environment and other animals. Support your opinion with reasons and key details from both texts. Remember to follow the conventions of standard written English. You may use the space below for pre-writing and have given you paper for that part, ok? You can use my notebook paper. Extra pages for pre-writing are also available. However, only the lines pages will be scores, so only what you write, your pre-writing will not be graded, ok? Do you want me to reread that again? No? Ok. So, go ahead and take your paper and you may begin."

(21) Ms. Sullivan addresses the whole class, "I made this mistake just now, this is not going to tell you what to do (points to the directions page). Your prompt is on the very back page. I don't know why they did that. That makes no sense. Ok?"

(22) 8:59-9:14 Students begin to write. Fabricio begins to write. Ms. Sullivan: "Think about what we do in class." Fabricio writes, erases, and writes again.

(23) Ms. Sullivan (to class): "I see some friends just sitting and chilling. You don't get to fourth grade by chilling. Showing me what you can do might get you there, but not sitting here doing nothing. The very least you can do is try. Look at your prompt. Think about we just did transportation change, what did we do in class? What do you do in class when you write? Read the prompt and start writing about what it wants you to write about. This is a test, I know it is hard. Just do the best you can. Andrew, eyeballs on your own paper please. You still have about 50 minutes, so you are doing good, as long as you are trying."

(24) Ms. Sullivan arranges papers on her desk and watches students work. Ms. Sullivan to small group: "Ok, guys, if you need me, you have to ask, ok?" Ms. Sullivan to me: "That's another thing, you have to make sure they know to ask. I cannot see them struggling and speak up and reread. They have to ask."

(25) When Fabricio is finished, he says: "Teacher."
Ms. Sullivan: "Are you finished? Ok, can you read it to me?"
Fabricio: "We listened to the teacher. We don't talk. We don't talk. We look at the teacher. The teacher is talking."
Ms. Sullivan: "Alright. Are you sure you are finished?"
Fabricio: "Yes."

Ms. Sullivan asks me to take Fabricio to the hallway and read with him, so I do. (field notes, 12/15/15)

Accommodation Use During Read-Aloud

Ms. Sullivan begins with the set-up to the assessment, while addressing the whole class. She emphasized that assessment passages are interesting, while also highlighting that they are complex (paragraph 16). Because the texts are hard, she repeatedly called for students to do their best, "persevere," and "spend [their] time giving [her] all that [they] got" (paragraph 16). She later reminds the students who appeared not very engaged with the texts that they "don't get to

fourth grade by chilling" (paragraph 23). She further urges students, "Showing me what you can do might get you there, but not sitting here doing nothing. The very least you can do is try." (paragraph 23). The teacher emphasizes students taking their time (75 minutes), not rushing through the test, and trying their hardest for her.

Small Group Test Administration

Turning her attention to the small read-aloud group, Ms. Sullivan stresses that the children listen to her very carefully, underline whatever they need to in the text, and follow along (paragraph 18). She additionally points to the page from which she reads. She does that several times throughout the read-aloud by pointing to the line from which she is reading, as Fabricio has a hard time tracking the print she is reading. Ms. Sullivan prompts him by saying, "Down here (points to the lines she reads). …We are at line 20, line 20." "All right, we are at line four (point to line four for Fabricio)." "All right, down here friend" (paragraph 18, 19, 20).

Ms. Sullivan also prompts the children to ask for assistance by reminding them to do so (paragraph 18, 20, 24). Ms. Sullivan does this several times throughout the testing time: "Does anyone need me to reread this? Any part of this need to be reread? If later it does, you have to let me know." "If you ever need me to stop and reread something, you need to tell me that, ok?" (paragraph 19) "Ok, guys, if you need me, you have to ask, ok?" (paragraph 24). She explained to me that she could not assist the students during the assessment with rereading unless the students asked. So, she used this testing scenario to make sure they knew to ask. Nobody in the small group read-aloud group ever took her up on the offer to reread any portion of the test.

Fabricio begins to write his response (paragraph 22), while the teacher tells the class that she is not pleased with some students "just sitting and chilling." She reminds students of the

previous classroom writing assignment they completed, “Think about we just did transportation change, what did we do in class? What do you do in class when you write? Read the prompt and start writing about what it wants you to write about.” She reiterates that the test is hard, but as long as students are trying their best, they are “doing good.” She reminds them that they still have 50 minutes left (paragraph 23). Throughout this testing practice, Ms. Sullivan refers to a number of test-taking strategies. In the small group, she explains to children that they should read the prompt, then read the texts, and then they can go back and reread the prompt (paragraph 20); she encourages students to take notes or underline while she reads (paragraph 18). Ms. Sullivan highlights the importance of locating the prompt (paragraph 21) and making sure the students looked at it before writing the response (paragraph 23). She also directly refers to the previously taught lesson on transportation changes to connect what students did during the instruction to this assessment situation.

When Fabricio is finished, the teacher does not simply collect his paper, but instead has him read what he has written. His writing response relates more to what was happening in the small group rather than the prompt itself. Fabricio wrote (see Figure 10), “We listened to the teacher. We don’t talk. We don’t talk. We look at the teacher. The teacher is talking.” (paragraph 24) Teacher asks him if he is sure he is finished in an attempt to prompt him to write

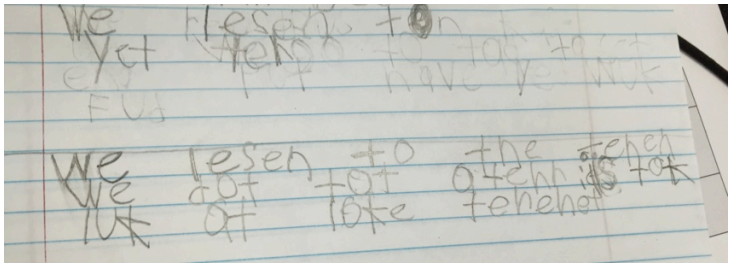


Figure 10. Fabricio’s Response to a Standardized Writing Prompt

more, but he seems content with his work and ready to be done. If we consider the beginning of the read-aloud by the teacher as the beginning of Fabricio's testing time (8:43), he finished the test (9:14) in 31 minutes. That is less than half the time allowed for this test.

Text Complexity of the Assessment Materials

The practice-standardized testing situations described above present a fairly typical scenario of what grade-level high-stakes language arts assessments looked like in the district. The test frequently included more than one text that students were supposed to read in order to answer a prompt. The most frequent practice prompts for the third grade assessment included comparing and contrasting, e.g., compare/contrast homes built by beavers and moles, and opinion writing, e.g., write an opinion article for a newspaper about why it is important to stop invasive species. Turning to the texts used for the practice-standardized testing situations, it is critical to examine the complexity and the types of texts students were asked to read. Unlike in the previous years, ELLs did not receive a linguistically simplified assessment, but instead were given the same test as the rest of the students. Mr. Williams described this shift as following:

> There was a modified assessment under the old TCAP that ELL students could be given instead. That's is gone away. No more simplified assessment. I never saw one, so not sure myself, but I know that is no longer an option for those students. It is the same test for everyone and it is the grade level text. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

Below is the first paragraph of the text called The Invaders by Lana Constantini. The text comes from the National Geographic Explorer, April 2009 issue. It is a non-fiction text that describes several invasive species and what scientists do to stop them.

Armies of creatures are on the move. They kill the animals and plants that get in their way. Is there any way to stop them?

A crocodile and a huge cane toad come face-to-face. The croc eats the toad. Soon, the croc is dead, too. Why? It ate a deadly invader.

Cane toads cause trouble in Australia. People brought them there to eat beetles. Instead, the toads ate everything.

As the croc found out, cane toads are poisonous. They have few predators. Now, cane toads are all over northeast Australia. They gobble up insects, frogs, and even birds' eggs. Native animals may have nothing left to eat.

To help students imagine the invasive species described in the text, their pictures, including that of a cane toad, are provided on a separate page. The definition of the word 'predators' is provided at the bottom of the page, it is defined as 'predators: hunters.' A quantitative analysis of this passage reveals that the Flesch-Kincaid grade level is 3.1 and Lexile level is 470L. The qualitative look at the text and this paragraph, however, brings to bear all of the academic content knowledge, vocabulary, and ways of examining text students must possess in order to comprehend the text and extract information from it to use it as evidence in their writing. Terms like 'creatures,' 'invader,' 'cause,' 'poisonous,' 'gobble', and 'insects' contribute to text comprehension and are not defined or explained by the test creators. Students must also possess knowledge of geography and understanding of the difference between so called 'native animals' and 'armies' of 'deadly invaders.' ELLs' understanding can be further impeded by the use of idiomatic phrases, such as 'on the move,' 'get in their way,' 'are all over,' and 'may have nothing left.' In addition, the text is composed of short sentences that are not explicitly

connected to each other by connectives that could aid in comprehension. The usage of 'impoverished texts' aids in lowering the quantitative complexity of the text, which is calculated in part based on the sentence length. However, it also may confuse the reader to whom the relations between ideas may appear ambiguous (Davison & Kantor, 1982; Goodman & Freeman, 1993) and have to be inferred.

Furthermore, locating these texts within the continuum of literacy and language development of the focal students, as well as the typical texts read by the students at their independent and instructional levels, the disconnect is clear (see Figure 11). In particular, for Fabricio, whose reading level was at DRA 3, the complexity of the texts used for the assessment practice was beyond the frustration level. This understanding did not escape the teachers, who attempted to reconcile such a large gap between Fabricio's instructional reading level and the test complexity through the use of accommodations, specifically the read-aloud and prompting.

Unsanctioned Accommodations: Accounting for Read-aloud and Prompting

During the follow-up interviews, participating educators discussed the impact of read-aloud and prompting as potential accommodations for ELLs. Participants took various perspectives on how useful read-aloud can be for Fabricio. The Jonesboro principal and the ESL teacher highlighted the fact that any possible accommodation would benefit Fabricio in his test-taking success. Excited about the possibility of special education accommodations after Fabricio's referral to special education services, the ESL teacher shared,

> I think the read-aloud would help him. Well, you know they have read-aloud, extended time, separate environment, all that would help him and keep him distracted, so any of those would help him. (Ms. Yoo Mee interview, 02/05/16)

Test Text (3rd grade level)

Aliens Among Us

Alien species are taking over. These aliens are from Earth! Yet they are moving into places they don't belong.

In their own homes, the animals fit in. There is the right balance between predators and prey.[2] But when a new species moves in, it can ruin the balance.

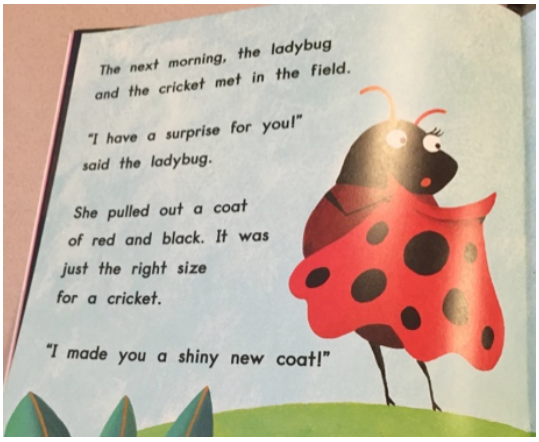
How do invaders reach their new homes? People sometimes move plants and animals on purpose. Some invaders hitch a ride on ships and planes. When pets get too big or too dangerous, people set them free.

Many invaders thrive in their new homes. They may have few or no predators. Their numbers grow quickly. They eat up food the other animals need.

Rodents on the Run

Nutria are rodents the size of a small dog. In the 1930s, people brought them to the U.S. from South America. People wanted to raise nutria for fur. But some escaped.

Daniel's Instructional Text (Level J)



Fabricio's Instructional Text (DRA 3)

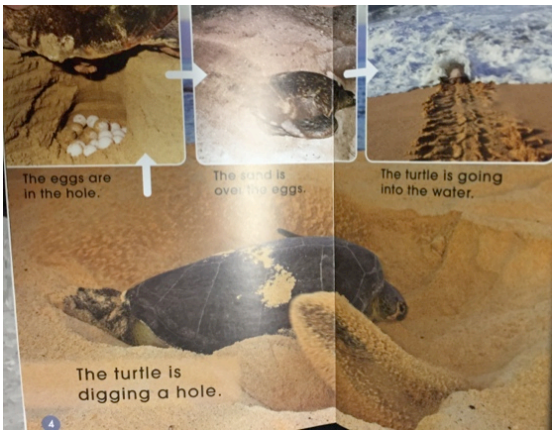


Figure 11. Instructional and Test Text Complexity

The principal concurred and extended the positive view of read-aloud to highlight that without it, Fabricio would be disadvantaged, because "the idea of him going into this assessment without the accommodations in place was just a disgrace, not us serving him to our fullest ability." (Jonesboro principal interview, 12/10/15)

However, the Special Education teacher and the classroom teacher did not agree with this assumption. Both of them expressed concerns about Fabricio taking the test successfully, regardless of the possibility of a read-aloud. The Special Education teacher shared about Fabricio and other students who were on the similar reading level,

> There are some students who get that read-aloud, your DRA 3 and 4, they really don't know what is going on. If you are a DRA 3, you are low. I mean you are. Is that really going to help? (Ms. Brown interview, 02/04/16)

She further elaborated that a child must be identified as 'a non-reader' to receive the read-aloud accommodation, even with the special education designation. What criteria are used to define a non-reader appeared to be in flux and depended on the teacher and the context:

> What is a non-reader mean? A non-reader to me would be a DRA 3 or 4, because they can't read. Now some people say a DRA 20 is a non-reader, because if they are in 5th grade and they are a DRA 20, but I argue that DRA 20 is not a non-reader. A DRA 20, they can read, so that is a very sticky subject and I do wish for everybody's sake that there was a tool that we could use to help us with that. (Ms. Brown interview, 02/04/16)

In spite of her use of both read-aloud and prompting within this particular testing situation, Ms. Sullivan shared during her interview that read-aloud might not be that beneficial to Fabricio because he is unable to refer back to the text or to remember it well enough to answer

the questions associated with it. Perhaps, this response stemmed from her experience within the testing situations similar to the one described above, in which Fabricio did not address the prompt but instead wrote a personal reflection on what just transpired. She shared:

> Read-aloud- he has to remember it. Every time I have given a student a read-aloud, how are they going to remember? They have to be able to go back into the text. He can't do that. Read-aloud, I don't think it would be beneficial to him. Maybe prompting, but that would be something you would have to have in place and know and consistently use. But he hasn't been getting any of it this year. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

When I asked to define prompting, she clarified,

> […] if they have a question or need something, they can have it clarify it or give a bit more information. But it has to be something they ask, prompting upon request. That might help. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

The intricacies of the read-aloud accommodation, although not sanctioned for Fabricio at the time of observations, yet still performed in the practice-standardized testing situations are of interest, because they contribute to the conceptualization of read-aloud and prompting as potentially useful or harmful accommodations for ELLs. It is not at all clear whether providing ELLs with the read-aloud alleviates the construct-irrelevant barriers to accessing the test. Prompting, which aims at clarifying terms and meanings, might be helpful in bringing ELLs closer to gaining linguistic access to assessment, although it is not sanctioned on any of the tests for ELLs.

As seen through the examples of the practice-standardized situations observed in both classrooms, there was a high degree of variability in terms of assessment set-up and

administration on the part of teachers, as students and contexts were taken into consideration. Students in turn interacted with the assessment and the adults administering it. As Ms. Yoo Mee predicted, Daniel "rushed through it" and Fabricio "tried his best." I next turn to classroom language arts and literacy assessments administered in both classrooms to explore what accommodations, if any, were employed by the teachers to make assessments meaningful to the focal students.

Classroom Language Arts and Literacy Assessments

In addition to the practice-standardized testing situations observed in the classrooms, teacher conducted regular weekly or bi-weekly quizzes and assessments. Aimed at checking students' mastery of particular spelling words or grammar and comprehension skills, these assessments were usually administered on Fridays during regular literacy time. Furthermore, students regularly took formative diagnostic reading assessments, such as running records and DRA. Below I provide vignettes of these assessments that exemplify their set-up and administration. I end this section with the discussion of how accommodations used on classroom language arts and literacy assessments interacted with the state-sanctioned accommodations and those used for practice-standardized testing situations.

Spelling and Language Assessments

I begin with a spelling, comprehension, and grammar test Daniel took in his classroom. Mr. Williams described these assessments as "traditional" for the literacy and language arts block. Mr. Williams' students are divided into three groups for the spelling test. Based on a word study assessment, each group is working on a different set of spelling words, based loosely on

students' stages of word knowledge development. The weekly spelling test reflects this differentiation. Mr. Williams explained:

> I call out five words for each group on Fridays as part of our language assessment. I will say red group these are your words, then I will call out yellow, and then green. And while the other groups are getting their words call out, there are other pieces of the quiz that they can be working on, so they are not just sitting there. We found a lot of success with it this year. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/18/15)

Daniel's Weekly Classroom Assessment

Classroom, whole group, students are at their desks, Daniel is at his seat with his testing folder that is used to prevent students from looking at each other's tests.

(26) 9:09-9:16 Mr. Williams: "Ok, everyone ready? Let's begin." (Mr. Williams stands in the middle of the classroom with all three spelling lists in his hand. He starts calling out the group name and their spelling words. E.g., red group- crab; yellow group-globe; green group-super and so on until all the words were called for every group. Mr. Williams annunciates every word carefully and repeats them all twice. Mr. Williams advises the red group that he will read the rest of the test to them once the spelling test is over. While Daniel is waiting, he looks around the class.)

Mr. Williams: "Red group, ready? Everybody else you could be working, taking your time on the other part of this quiz until your group is called, so be listening. Alright, red group, number one – crab, crab. (pause) number two" (A student indicates that he is not ready.)
Mr. Williams: "Alright." (pause)
Student: Ready
Mr. Williams: "Number two, red group – cloud, cloud. (pause) Number three – frog, frog. (pause) Number four- flag, flag (pause) Number five – float, float (pause) Alright, yellow group, be ready." (Teacher then continues to dictate words to yellow and then green group. Other students work on the rest of their assessment.)

(27) 9:16-9:19 Mr. Williams: "Alright, my testing group, come back. Everybody else, here is your comprehension quiz. (Teacher passes out the comprehension quiz). Get ready to be busy. No wasting time."

Daniel goes to the kidney table with the rest of the read-aloud group.

Classroom, small group (N=6) at the kidney-shaped table

(28) 9:19-9:29 Mr. Williams: "Don't get ahead of me. Ok, number 6. Everybody, read along, as I am reading to you. Ginny said, "I think the Cinderella is beautifuller than Sleeping beauty." How should the underlined word be written. A. beautifulest. B. more beautiful. C. most beautiful. D. Correct as is. (Mr. Williams pauses for students to answers, then reads the sentence once more). Kilauea is the most hot volcano on Earth. How should the underlined words be written? A. more hot. B. most hottest. C. hottest. D. correct as is. (Mr. Williams pauses for students to select an answer). Number eight- Tokyo, Japan is one of the noisiest cities in the world. How should the underlined word be written? A. Noisiest. Look at the spelling there. B. Most noisy. C. Noisier. D. Correct as is. (Mr. Williams provides time for students to answer) Ready? Take a look at the chart right here. Your task is to fill in the correct word under each column. For number nine, you have old, then the blank, and then the oldest. You are filling in the comparative form. For number ten, you have good, better, and the number ten is the blank. So you need to fill in the superlative form. And then for number eleven you have blank adjective, the comparative is dirtier, and the superlative is dirtiest. So go ahead and fill in this chart. If you have questions, ask me."
Mr. Williams provides time for students to complete this part of the test. A student asks him to reread number ten and Mr. Williams rereads the words in number 10. Daniel is looking intensely at items 9, 10, 11 without answering them.

Mr. Williams: "When you are ready, flip it over. (A student asks to reread number 11. Teacher rereads the words in number eleven. Mr. Williams notices that D is struggling). Let's think about the chart we did the there day. The adjective here (points to the first column) and the comparative compares to things, so it is a blank…so you will say, "This car is blank than this car." Old, blank, oldest. Ok. Think about that." Mr. Williams gives students time to complete the chart. D is still struggling to complete it.

Mr. Williams: "Daniel, let's flip this over to the back and let's come back to it, ok? Number 12, we are going to do our vocabulary words. What is the definition of colony? (reads answer choices as written and gives students time to select an answer) Number 13, What is the definition of adaptation? (reads answer choices as written and gives student time to select an answer.) Number 14, What is the definition of organism?" Mr. Williams reads answer choices as written and

gives student time to select an answer. A student asks Mr. Williams to read the question and answer choices again, so he does that. Mr. Williams looks at everyone's papers to make sure the answers were filled in before moving on. "Ready for fifteen? Alright. Tom is reading a book that is telling him facts about Abraham Lincoln. What type of writing is Tom reading? (Mr. Williams reads answer choices to the students and provides students time to select an answer.) Daniel, let me work with you on this after the informational text." The group moves on to the information text part of the test.

(29) 9:29-9:42 Mr. Williams: "We will work on this and see if we can get it all done. We might have to finish it later. My goal is to dig deeply into the text. Alright, name and date. We are going to read through this passage. I am going to be reading it to you. Your job is to follow along reading the words."

Mr. Williams begins reading the text starting with the title, 'Anton van Leeuwenhoek, Not the Father of the Microscope. Daniel is looking at his pencil. 3 out of 6 students are looking at their text while other look elsewhere. Daniel begins to suck on his shirt at the end of the sleeve in the wrist area in the middle of the sleeve.

Mr. Williams: "Ok, flip over (at the end of the page). Ok, paragraph four. Paragraph four. (Mr. Williams continues reading the text until the end of text). If you need me to go back and read any part to you, let me know. And we will go back and read parts as well. Ready? (Mr. Williams reads question 1). Tell me what we need to do?" Students: "Go back and read paragraph 2."

Mr. Williams: "Go back and read paragraph 2. Let's go back and this passage is very friendly because it numbers the paragraphs. I like that. Eyes on paragraph number two. We are going to read it. (Mr. Williams reads paragraph 2 and then answer choices). Ready? How can you tell that this is a biography?"

Mr. Williams reads the answer choices and allows students time to answer. The rest of the class is becoming increasing loud as students are finishing their assessments and begin doing other instructional activities outlined by the teacher earlier.

Mr. Williams: "How can you tell that this is a biography? (He reads answer choices again). Ready for three? What is the meaning of the word magnified in paragraph four? We will go back to paragraph four and go back through it. I want you to circle it as I read it, ok?

Follow along with me. (Mr. Williams reads paragraph four again. Daniel yawns.) Look at that sentence. These lenses magnified tiny things 200 times their real size. Ok? Number three. What is the meaning of the word magnified in paragraph four? (Mr. Williams then reads the answer choices for question three.) Number four. Are you ready? This question has two parts. Number four. This question has two parts. Answer part A first and then answer part B. Part A. What is this whole passage mostly about? This is how you are going to see the main idea question on the state assessment. It is asking you what is the main idea of the whole passage. Ok? (Mr. Williams reads the answer choices as written. Daniel quickly marks his answer and waits for his teacher.) Part B. Which sentences from the passage support the answer to part A? Ok? So, which of those support your answer to Part A. This is your evidence that support the main idea. Alright? (Mr. Williams reads the answer choices as written and allows students time to answer.) Ready? Number five. What sentence from the passage shows that Van Leeuwenhoek did not care what others thought of his work? (Mr. Williams reads answer choices as written and allows students time to select an answer). Which one of those tells you that he did not care what other thought about his work? Number six. Ready? Which sentence from the passage best explains the meaning of title? So, we have to stop. Let's go back and look at our title. The title was Anton van Leeuwenhoek, Not the Father of the Microscope. So, which of these tells you about that? (Mr. Williams reads answer choices as written and allows students time to select an answer.) Number seven. Which sentence from the passage best supports the idea that finding bacteria was van Leeuwenhoek's most important work?"

Mr. Williams reads answer choices as written and allows students time to select an answer. Students then turn in their tests to the teacher and go back to their seats.

(30) 9:42-9:45 Mr. Williams: "Daniel, I want you come here for a second. I want to see if I can refresh your memory." Mr. Williams and Daniel go to the chart. Mr. Williams finds the chart with adjectives. "Remember we did this the other day. Here is the adjective, superlative, we have to change the word and have to add to the word where we have to add -er or -est. Remember how we did that?"
Daniel: "Yeah."
Mr. Williams: "So, that is what we are doing with this chart. Alright. Does that help you?"
Daniel: "Yes."
Mr. Williams: "Alright."

> Daniel goes to finish his test and then turns it in. (field notes, 11/20/15)

Accounting for Accessibility Features and Accommodation Use during Classroom Language Arts and Literacy Assessments

As evidenced from the example above, Mr. Williams provided a number of accommodations to Daniel, which included small group setting, read-aloud, explanation of terms (paragraph 29), test-taking strategy instruction (paragraph 29), lock-in-step procedures (paragraph 26 and 28), and reference to the previously taught material (paragraph 30). In contrast to the supports Mr. Williams provided this small group of students, he described his classroom assessments, as well as the decision-making around accommodations, as bound and fully reliant on what is allowed by the TnReady assessment:

> With ELLs, […] like students who receive special education services, they have to be identified and given the ok to use the accommodations with testing. We tried to make our in-class assessments have the same accommodations and modifications that they will see on the real TnReady test. So, when I give an assessment, it is typically after a week of instruction, so we usually assess on Fridays. I preview the assessment for all students, I will put it up on the document camera. We go through it together for all students. Then I will call back my support group, as long as their accommodations match, just as it would be on the real test. We can't replicate it exactly, but I will pull them back and employ typically read-aloud with my group. My instructional assistant will also pull a group if different accommodations need to be put in place. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

Mr. Williams did not explicitly provide answers to Daniel when he noticed that Daniel was unsure about the grammar testing item. However, he connected that test item to the chart

that the class developed earlier in the week. With the help of the chart and this explicitly articulated connection of assessment to instruction, Daniel was able to provide correct answers to this part of the test. Figure 12 includes the test items referenced here.

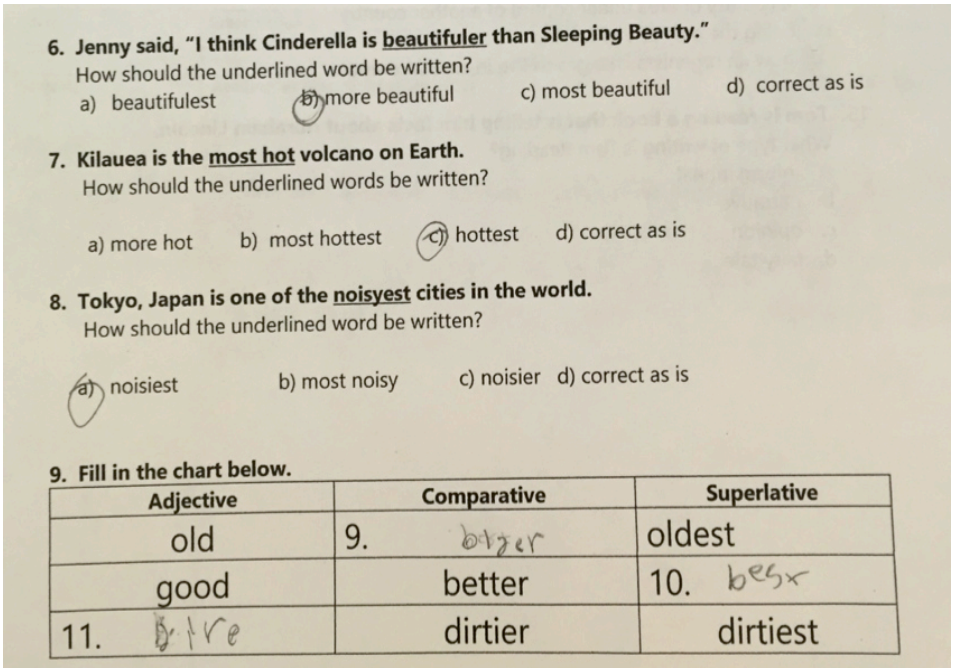
In addition, Mr. Williams used this assessment as an opportunity to model test-taking strategies. He demonstrates the use of look-backs in the text (referencing the text) for items that required rereading and providing textual evidence. For example, to answer the question about the main idea of a paragraph, the teacher goes back to that paragraph to reread it. In my field notes reflecting on what I began to notice, I wrote:

> It appears that in a small read-aloud group, the teachers are able to be more sensitive and responsive to children's negotiations of the test. If ELLs need more time, it is provided. If ELLs seems to struggle, teachers evaluate the possibility of a correct answer. If such a possibility exists, teachers provide a variety of linguistic scaffolds to help students to arrive at an answer. However, if tasks or assessment items are at frustration level for ELLs, teachers generally drop them. (field notes, 11/20/15)

Accounting for Read-aloud

While Daniel did not receive read-aloud on practice-standardized tests, Mr. Williams chose to employ a read-aloud on many other classroom assessments. The excerpt above exemplifies how while taking the test together with a group of Special Education students, Daniel receives read-aloud of both the test directions, test items, and the texts that accompany the test. The teacher accounted for such practice in the following way:

> The read aloud piece, especially for a student like Daniel, who is receiving ELL services and also is about a year below grade-level, I have found it to be very effective. […] I do



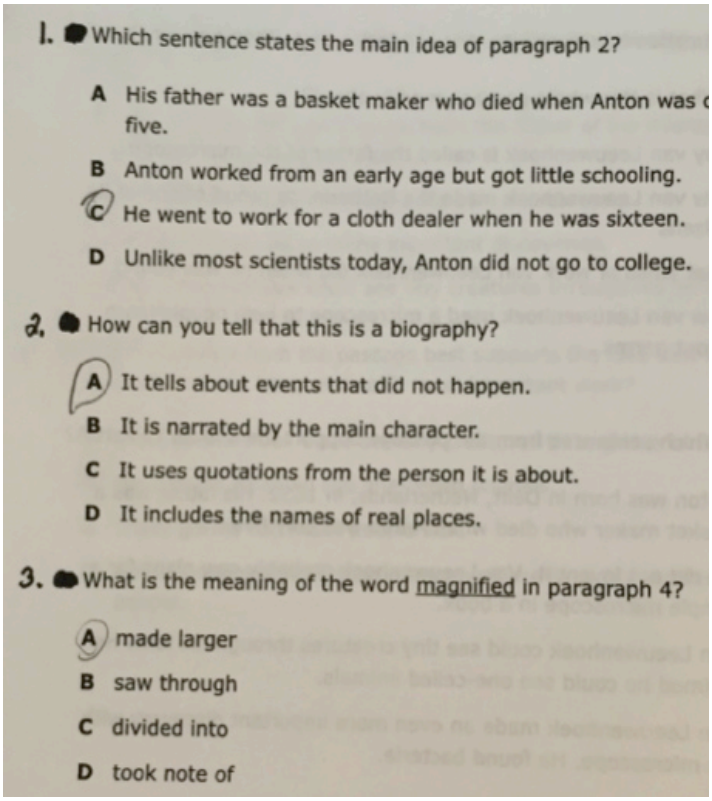
6. **Jenny said, "I think Cinderella is <u>beautifuler</u> than Sleeping Beauty."**
How should the underlined word be written?
a) beautifulest b) more beautiful c) most beautiful d) correct as is

7. **Kilauea is the <u>most hot</u> volcano on Earth.**
How should the underlined words be written?
a) more hot b) most hottest c) hottest d) correct as is

8. **Tokyo, Japan is one of the <u>noisyest</u> cities in the world.**
How should the underlined word be written?
a) noisiest b) most noisy c) noisier d) correct as is

9. **Fill in the chart below.**

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
old	9. older	oldest
good	better	10. bess
11. bire	dirtier	dirtiest



1. Which sentence states the main idea of paragraph 2?
A His father was a basket maker who died when Anton was five.
B Anton worked from an early age but got little schooling.
C He went to work for a cloth dealer when he was sixteen.
D Unlike most scientists today, Anton did not go to college.

2. How can you tell that this is a biography?
A It tells about events that did not happen.
B It is narrated by the main character.
C It uses quotations from the person it is about.
D It includes the names of real places.

3. What is the meaning of the word magnified in paragraph 4?
A made larger
B saw through
C divided into
D took note of

Figure 12. Daniel's Classroom Assessment Sample

not want the fluency or the readability piece to get in the way of assessing the comprehension skill. Or if I am assessing a language skill or a math skill or social studies skill, I don't want the readability to get in the way of the standard that I am attempting to assess. But if it is a reading assessment and it is something that I am looking to see that they are expected to read and typically those are running records, those type things, those type of assessments, we would not do a read-aloud on that. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

Fabricio's Literacy and Language Arts Assessments

Unlike Mr. Williams, Ms. Sullivan at first reported giving Fabricio spelling and other language arts assessments without differentiating the tests themselves.

I go ahead and give him the grade-level assessments just for my own records. I don't count those against him. But he is sitting here, he is getting the instruction, so I want to see how he fares on it. So, like the language assessments and things that I give on Fridays. I normally do them every couple of weeks, he takes them. Sometimes I even give him the grade level spelling test just to see. […] I go ahead and give him those because I know that he is going to take the standardized test. There is not going to be a special compare and contrast test for Fabricio. I don't know if it is necessarily right, what do you do? I modify his grades, his workload, and the way that I teach them, but when it comes down to the big assessments, we can't modify those. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

However, throughout the observation time, this has changed. She began giving Fabricio spelling tests that were closer aligned with his literacy needs. For example, his list was

differentiated from other students and she administered it in a one-on-one setting. However, because a teaching assistant was charged with conducting word study with Fabricio and Evan, the classroom teacher did not always know exactly what spelling patterns Fabricio practiced during the week. For instance, I made a note of that on a day when Ms. Sullivan administered a spelling test focusing on a short i words, e.g., stick, pick, click.

> There was no short i instruction this week at all. Ms. Sullivan gave Fabricio worksheets with that pattern to take home, but I don't think it is fair to expect him to learn it on his own. (field notes, 02/26/16)

Diagnostic Reading Assessments

According to classroom teachers, the most informative assessments they utilize in the classroom are the diagnostic reading assessments, such as DRA and Running Record. Ms. Sullivan elaborated on why DRA is most useful for her,

> There is literal comprehension, there is retelling, there is interpretation. There are all these different components that a good reader should be able to do. That is the most beneficial to me and I use it the most. If I ever feel like I have a question about a kid, I will just pull one out. To me, it tells me more than […] MIST results […]. On Part II, Fabricio's score was worse the second time around significantly than the first time. So, it tells me that it is a guessing game. That is not going to tell me what he can do. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

While these assessments only include small group or one-on-one administration as sanctioned accommodations or modifications for ELLs, they presented intriguing spaces of meaning making and negotiation of competencies. I present two excerpts, one from each focal

student, to illustrate the typical assessments students participated in and how they unfolded. Unlike standardized assessments that do not necessarily bring to bear students' linguistic and literacy repertoires at work, the vignettes of diagnostic assessments afford deeper insight into the students' language and literacy development. I begin with an account of Fabricio taking a DRA assessment.

Ms. Sullivan and Fabricio are at the teacher's desk (the assessment is administered in a one-on-one setting). The rest of the class is working on their literacy activities assigned by the teacher.

(31) 10:53-11:02 Ms. Sullivan: "It's that time again. Alright. You have not read this one, have you? (Ms. Sullivan shows Fabricio the text. He shakes his head.). Ok. Let me ask you first who reads with you at home?"
Fabricio: "My mom and my dad"
Ms. Sullivan: "Your mom and your dad? Ok. Would you rather listen to a story or would you rather read to someone?"
Fabricio: "Listen to it."
Ms. Sullivan: "You would rather listen to a story? And why is that?"
Fabricio: "Because my mom is trying to teach me how to read."
Ms. Sullivan: "Because your mom is trying to teach you how to read? What kinds of things does she do when she is trying to teach you how to read and she is reading to you?"
Fabricio: "Sometimes she gets the book, like this one, Captain America, some books from Wal-Mart."
Ms. Sullivan: "Ok. Why does she read the books she reads?"
Fabricio: "Because she likes the books."
Ms. Sullivan: "Because she likes the books. Do you like the books? Do they keep you interested?"
Fabricio: "Yes."
Ms. Sullivan: "Ok. Well, tell me about one of your favorite books."
Fabricio: "Monster trucks"
Ms. Sullivan: "Oh, you like to read about monster trucks?"
Fabricio: "Yes. Goosebumps."
Ms. Sullivan: "What do you like about Goosebumps books?"
Fabricio: "Slappy burns books"
Ms. Sullivan: "He burns the books?"

(32) Ms. Sullivan: "Alright (pause) well, in this story, it is called "Time to Play," Lee and Pam like to play after school, but they often have

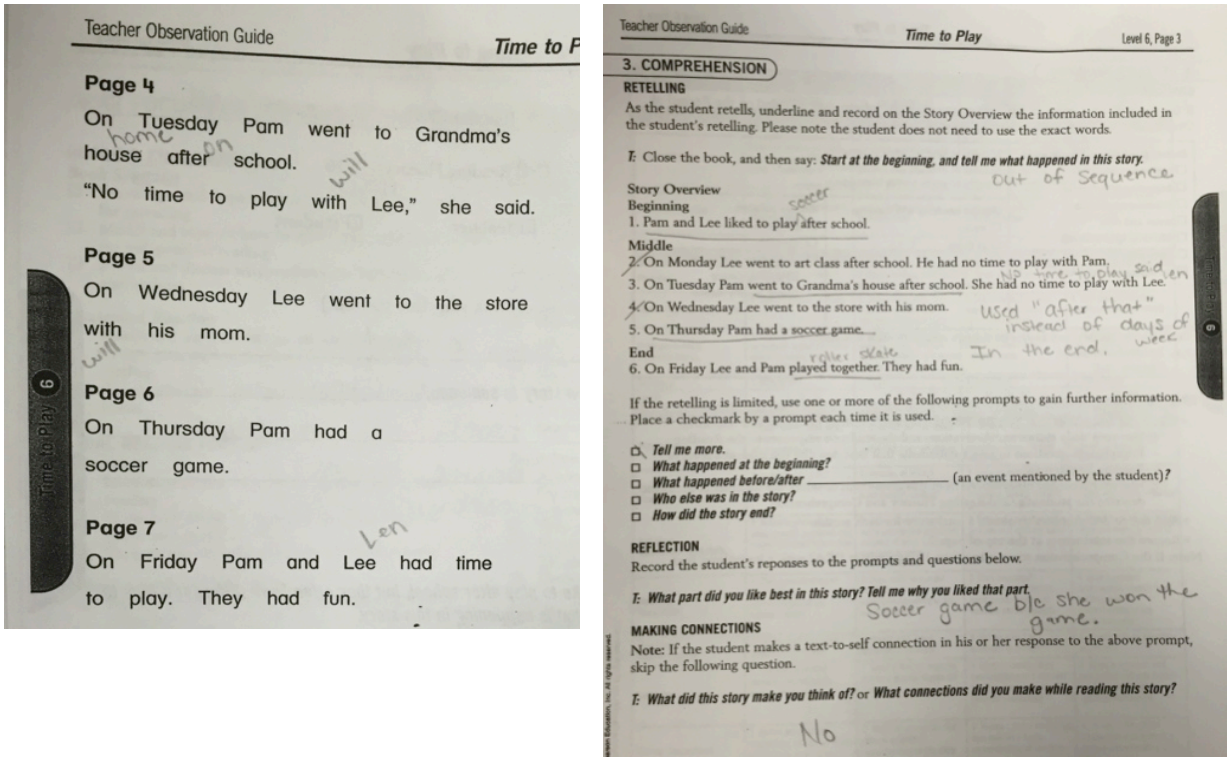
different things to do. I want you to flip through and look at the pictures and tell me what is happening in the story."
Fabricio (flipping through pages): "They are playing outside. Playing soccer."
Ms. Sullivan: "Ok"
Fabricio: "She is going to do something. Pam went to the house to her grandma and she went to the store with his mom to buy groceries and Pam plays soccer at the soccer team and and Pam Pam goes to roller skate together with and they plan skating."
Ms. Sullivan: "Alright. Very good. Now it is going to be your turn to read and find out what Lee and Pam did after school on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Ok? So, you can start there on page 2."
Fabricio reads the text (see teacher's miscue notes below). Ms. Sullivan provides one prompt ("remember his name is Lee") and provides one word ("art").
Ms. Sullivan: "Look at you! You went up a whole level. Give your brain a big old kiss. You did very well with that. You are almost up a whole level. That is a huge improvement. Makes me so happy. Just climbing on the roof and scream at the top of my lungs. I want you start at the beginning and tell me what happened in this story. Can you do it from memory? Do you remember? Can you do that? Go ahead."
Fabricio: "They went to school and play soccer and after that, then went home and Pam went to grandma's house and after that Len said not time to play. And she went to the house to see grandma and after that she had soccer game and after that they played games and in the end they roller-skate together."
Ms. Sullivan: "Can you tell me more about what they did earlier in the week? Like before they went to grandma's house?"
Fabricio: "They, Len went to her house and she went to grandma's house. And Len tried to do want to do art and she said, "You want to play?" and Len said, "No, not time to play.""
Ms. Sullivan: "So, they went to art class and grandma's house and soccer game. Did they go anywhere else?"
Fabricio: "They went roller-skate."
Ms. Sullivan: "Ok. What part did you like best in the story?"
Fabricio: "I liked the part of the game…the soccer game."
Ms. Sullivan: "The soccer game? Tell me why you liked that part."
Fabricio: "Because she won the game."
Ms. Sullivan: "What did this story make you think of? Did you make any connections to the story as you read?"
Fabricio: "Umm, it means she won the game and then Len wanted

> to do art and in the end they roller-skate."
> Ms. Sullivan: "Ok, but did it make you think of anything or help you make connections?"
> Fabricio: "No"
> Ms. Sullivan: "Ok. Alright. Well, I have to say I am very pleased with your progress. You have been working very hard. Perfect. Go tell Evan I'll get him next." (filed notes, 01/06/16)

Ms. Sullivan's prompts come directly from the assessment guide (paragraph 32). Unlike any other assessments administered in the classroom, DRA offers a number of prompts teachers can use to elicit fuller answers (see Figure 13). Example include *Tell me more, What happened in the beginning? Who else was in the story? How did the story end?* Although the story itself is not complex enough to facilitate an extensive discussion, these prompts were fairly successful in getting Fabricio to add more to his answers. Unlike any other assessment taken by Fabricio, the diagnostic reading assessments administered by the classroom teacher seemed to expose Fabricio's languaging as he attempted to make sense of the story and to answer teachers' questions.

Daniel's diagnostic assessment was administered by his ESL teacher as part of the literacy intervention (Tier 2). Specifically, the ESL teacher administered running records that were a part of the scripted program she used (The Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention). Below, I present an excerpt describing the part of the assessment that took place after Daniel read the text Jack and The Bean Stock (Level L). Attending to one miscue Daniel made, the teacher then moves on to comprehension questions.

RTI/ESL Time: Daniel and his ESL teacher are sitting opposite each other in the middle of the classroom. Classroom teacher has a small group. TA is working with a student. ESL teacher uses The Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention manual to guide her lessons with Daniel. She follows the manual closely, but deviates if necessary.



Teacher Observation Guide — Time to P

Page 4

On Tuesday Pam went to Grandma's house after school.

"No time to play with Lee," she said.

Page 5

On Wednesday Lee went to the store with his mom.

Page 6

On Thursday Pam had a soccer game.

Page 7

On Friday Pam and Lee had time to play. They had fun.

Time to Play 6

Teacher Observation Guide — Time to Play — Level 6, Page 3

3. COMPREHENSION

RETELLING

As the student retells, underline and record on the Story Overview the information included in the student's retelling. Please note the student does not need to use the exact words.

T: Close the book, and then say: ***Start at the beginning, and tell me what happened in this story.***

Story Overview

Beginning

1. Pam and Lee liked to play after school.

Middle

2. On Monday Lee went to art class after school. He had no time to play with Pam.
3. On Tuesday Pam went to Grandma's house after school. She had no time to play with Lee.
4. On Wednesday Lee went to the store with his mom.
5. On Thursday Pam had a soccer game.

End

6. On Friday Lee and Pam played together. They had fun.

If the retelling is limited, use one or more of the following prompts to gain further information. Place a checkmark by a prompt each time it is used.

- ☑ *Tell me more.*
- ☐ *What happened at the beginning?*
- ☐ *What happened before/after* _____ (an event mentioned by the student)*?*
- ☐ *Who else was in the story?*
- ☐ *How did the story end?*

REFLECTION

Record the student's reponses to the prompts and questions below.

T: What part did you like best in this story? Tell me why you liked that part.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Note: If the student makes a text-to-self connection in his or her response to the above prompt, skip the following question.

T: What did this story make you think of? or *What connections did you make while reading this story?*

Figure 13. Fabricio's DRA Assessment

(33) 11:13-11:16 Ms. Yoo Mee: "For the running record you didn't have any errors. You just had one and you made a correction there, so it is really basically two at the most there. There was something later on that you had some issues with, but I want you to look at that word, look at page 2, there was one word that you kind of stumbled over and we are going to work it out. Look at this sentence right here where it says "He lived" read that sentence for me again."
Daniel reads: "He lived with his mother in a small cott..couttage"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Cover up the first part, cover up, when you got two consonants right there, let's just get your finger and cover up part of that, so that you can do the first part, that is going to be the first part of your word right there. So I want you to take your finger and cover up t-a-g-e. (Daniel is not doing anything). With your finger"
Daniel: "Oh yeah"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "and cover it and what is that first part?"
Daniel: "Cot, k-"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "I am not hearing every single sound. There is a "t" there."
Daniel: "cot"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "What is the next part? Move your finger. What

makes sense there that he would live in? Small, it's like a small house or small?"
Daniel: "I don't know that word"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "I am doing to go ahead and tell you. It is cottage. We don't say cattAge (emphasizes A), we say cottage. Cottage is a small house."
Daniel: "I don't know what that means."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Ok, read this sentence."
Daniel reads: "He lived with his mother in a small cottage far out in the country."

(34) 11:19-11:21 Ms. Yoo Mee: "Ok, I am going to ask you some questions. (The rest of the class starts coming back in). Surely not (Ms. Yoo Mee is visibly frustrated, as she is not done with her lesson. Starts reading the comprehension question out of the manual as written, but then rephrases it). Talk about the problem with the money."
Daniel: "They were poor and they didn't have any money."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Ok, and because they don't have any money, they have…"
Daniel: "to sell their cow"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Ok, what happens after they sell the cow?"
Daniel: "They get some magical beans."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "And what happens with that?"
Daniel: "It grows."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Because?"
Daniel: "Because they are magic. They threw them outside."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Mom threw them outside. How does Jack solve the problem at the end?"
Daniel: "He goes he goes he climbs it, there is a giant…he is asleep, he gets the money."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "He gets the coins. Good. Why do you think Jack's mom calls him a fool when he comes back with the beans?"
Daniel: "Because mom thought it was just a lie, so only beans, so they lost the cow."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Right. How do you think Jack's mother felt when she saw the giant bean stock?"
Daniel: "Surprised."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Very! Talk about what you think Jack is like."
Daniel is silent.
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Do you think he is stupid?"
Daniel: "No."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Why do you think that?"
Daniel: "Because he is smart."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Where does it show you in the book that he is

smart? Look in the book." (Daniel starts looking in the book.)
Daniel: "Because he got up the bean stock?"
Ms. Yoo Mee: "Because he figured out how to use the bean stock to get money. Right? The story says that the giant was never heard from again. What do you think happened to the giant?"
Daniel: "He died."
Ms. Yoo Mee: "He could have. He just died because he was so sad he lost all of his money." (field notes, 1/14/16)

Accessibility Features and Accommodation Use During Diagnostic Assessment

In the examples provided of classroom assessment practices, the students were allowed small group or one-on-one testing administration. Although linguistic scaffolding is not sanctioned accommodation for state standardized literacy assessment for ELLs, teachers used their discretion and often the knowledge of students to make the test items accessible to them through questioning and prompting (paragraph 32 and 34). *Tell me more, Did you make any connections?, Because?, What happened with that?, Why do you think so?* – these prompts aimed at eliciting fuller responses from students. Teachers also repeated student answers and extended them (paragraph 32 and 34). Such strategy can be very useful for ELLs who are still acquiring a fuller linguistic toolbox of repertoires for successful expression in English.

Discussion

The number of linguistic scaffolds increased and the number of state-sanctioned accommodations decreased as the teachers and students moved towards more dynamic or diagnostic assessment. Even though DRA and Running Record administration followed a scripted format, the set-up of the assessments and the flexibility offered within each of them allowed teachers to exercise professional judgment when it came to accommodations and scaffolds. The nature and the aim of the test also seemed to play an important role in how

teachers selected and accounted for the use of specific accommodations for ELLs. Practice-standardized testing situations often tied to accountability for both students and teachers were often marked by the reduction in interaction between teaches and students, while diagnostic reading assessments fostered interactions for the sake of identifying students' strengths and needs.

It is possible that small group or one-on-one assessment administration opens up spaces for teachers and students to negotiate around the assessment and possible answers, while whole group administration closes the possibility of teacher-student communication. Computerized assessment administration, in particular, might cut off the possibility of linguistic scaffolds or accommodations aside from those embedded within the online platform itself, such as glossary for pre-selected terms. Although it seems that the more structured assessments, such as practice-standardized testing situations and whole group administration, offer few opportunities for accommodation use in comparison to small group administration and less rigid assessment practices, one should be cautious while drawing casual relationships within these contexts. Further investigations are necessary to establish the nature of relationships between the type of classroom assessment and the accommodations, to which they lend themselves.

Finally, not once during the observations of classroom assessments across schools and classrooms were students' multilingual competencies mentioned. Teachers instead repeatedly conflated ELLs' accommodation needs with those of Special Education students. Both Daniel and Fabricio were frequently tested with special education students in their classrooms. Mr. Williams, for example, talked about meeting every student where they are in spite of their labels, as long as support systems were put together within the school and the classroom.

> I had to really think about how I am going to meet the needs, because instructing ELLs is an area that I always felt like I have not had enough professional development. When I was in college, it wasn't really an area that was heavily emphasized. And I see now a little bit of justification there, because when I started looking into the accommodations and the best practices to meet their needs, it really is aligned to what I do for all of my students, in terms of using assessment data to meet them where they are. And then implementing best practices or accommodations and working with…if I have a student who receives special education services working with those staff to ensure that their needs are being met […] with ELLs, we have our coordinators and our support and I think I work with them really in a similar fashion. Just to make sure the best practices and all the accommodations are being met and that we are meeting them where they are. And it's the same I do with all of my students whether they are identified as receiving Special Education services, ELL services. If the student walks in my door and they are below grade level, whether they have a label or not, I am going to meet them where they are. (Mr. Williams interview, 02/05/16)

In the next section, I untangle what "meeting students where they are" looked like during classroom instruction for both Daniel and Fabricio. I also describe how assessment practices and accommodations were intertwined within daily instruction students received.

CHAPTER 6: ASSESSMENT INFLUENCING INSTRUCTION

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I describe how the assessment and accommodation practices were reflected within the daily instructional settings and interactions between teachers and students. Typically, the assessments surfaced within instructional practices in three distinct ways. First, teachers dedicated instructional time to model test-taking strategies while preparing for the state assessment. At the same time, the literacy instruction itself was designed to mimic the high-stakes assessment, particularly emphasizing the text-based writing, which is the essence of the Language Arts Part I and Social Studies Assessment discussed in Chapter 5. Finally, teachers often referred to assessments as an authoritative voice in the classroom, making the high-stakes test an invisible, but always present actor and decision-maker in the classroom. I provide representative examples of all three of those practices followed by the examination how teachers accommodated the focal students within those spaces. I begin this section, however, with a discussion of kinds of texts the focal students experienced throughout their literacy and language instructional settings.

Text Selection for Instruction

As the texts used for assessment represented a grade level text, teachers utilized grade level or above texts during whole group, and frequently small group, instruction. Mr. Williams explained that the use of grade level text is intentional, because this is the type of text ELLs will see on the state test:

> And of course the biggest push is the assessment, because that is what they are going to see on the assessment. We can't have them reading easier texts and then have them go and get overwhelmed on the assessment. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/18/15)

As such, Daniel was exposed to grade level text throughout his literacy block, with Mr. Williams providing additional explanation, read-aloud, or re-teaching to make that grade-level text accessible to all students. The instructional and independent level texts were consistently used by Daniel's ESL teacher during the intervention/ESL time. Ms. Yoo Mee was able to work with Daniel in a one-on-one setting to build his independence as a reader through the use of instructional level texts. One day Daniel told her that someone at a store complemented his reading (Daniel read instructions for a phone his mother was buying) and he said that Ms. Yoo Mee taught him how to read well.

Fabricio worked with instructional level texts when pulled out for morning intervention with one of his teaching assistants. She expressed her frustration with the use of grade-level text with ELLs who might not be ready for it frequently.

> Reading level just keeps going up and up. Well, you are supposed to be on level 12 at the end of the year, so I know you all are still only on a 3, but I am going to give you this 6 and 8, because I want you to move up. You will have to figure out how to read this book. When you do that to them, when you give them something too hard to do, you are saying, "I think you are so stupid that you can't do this. So, here. Just do it." You are telling them they can't succeed. (Jonesboro TA interview, 02/25/16)

At the same time, Ms. Sullivan described her approach to teaching and choosing text as more flexible than what the teaching assistant perceived. The observations in her classroom

demonstrated that she tried to do as much as she could for Fabricio in order to expose him to a variety of text difficulty. She explained her approach during the formal interview.

> I take in their reading group, I mean, even that is so varied, because you have a 3, you have 4, and then the other two students are significantly higher. So, I try to pull something that is a little bit more manageable for Fabricio and Evan, but also teach the grade-level standards. […] For instance, … we did the living in space piece that was a little bit too easy for the other two kids, but was a little bit more manageable for Fabricio and Evan […] If we are going to read something, I really try to pair with writing. I try to write about the text. I really enjoy that too. The writing is my favorite. It's probably the most challenging I think to do with these kids, but it is my favorite. Now as far as Fabricio, I also try to pull, in addition to grade level work, instructional level. Initially, I was pulling instruction level text for them to read with an assistant and to still maybe touch on some of those grade-level skills but also decoding and things like that as well. (Ms. Sullivan interview, 02/05/16)

Because Fabricio worked with so many adults during his language and literacy block, Ms. Sullivan's plan for supporting him evolved to ensure that every teacher or teaching assistant accomplished something different with Fabricio. The morning TA worked on reading at instructional level. Ms. Sullivan herself exposed Fabricio to grade-level texts and tasks, as well as lower level readers (that were still at frustration for Fabricio) to elicit a writing response. The second TA worked on word study using *Words Their Way* (Invernizzi, Johnston, Bear, & Templeton, 2017) materials. The ESL teacher used content-based ESL approaches to build Fabricio's academic language. And the Special Education teacher utilized SPIRE, a phonics-

based intervention program that included hardly any reading materials and directly contradicted the information Fabricio was learning from word study lessons he received earlier in the day. While such set-up exposed Fabricio to reading, writing, and word study throughout the day, there was little meaningful overlap between these settings and his presence in the literacy classroom was somewhat fragmented. Such inconsistency and lack of focus perhaps contributed to the lack of improvement he showed on his assessments in both literacy and language.

Literacy Instruction: "It all comes down to assessment in determining what I am going to be teaching"

At Kayford schools, the literacy instruction was centered around the motto of "Learn it as a reader; use it as a writer." Often the units of study were centered around two or more texts on a particular topic, which students examined as a whole group with teacher's guidance, as well as independently, in order to write a response to a prompt related to these texts. The prompts, texts, and the instructional opportunities they provided were heavily influenced by the standardized tests. Mr. Williams explained:

> It all comes down to assessment in determining what I am going to be teaching […] we have liberty to plan with our resources and implement instruction, but as far as deciding what to use for different groups and things that we need to review or discuss, it all comes down to many different assessments, such as their DRA and benchmark assessments we take each 9 weeks as far as their readiness for the curriculum in each nine weeks and also the classroom assessments we take weekly […] for example, last week we discovered that the majority of our students were having difficulty identifying nouns, verbs, and adjectives and differentiating, so we […] went back and for a week just reviewed those

skills. A lot of it is also assessment driven, as far as what our students need individually and whole group […] we are very data-driven. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

Stemming from assessment-driven instruction planning, described by Mr. Williams, it is not surprising that both his and Ms. Sullivan's classrooms structured their literacy block to align with the standardized assessment practices. Whole group instruction, in particular, mirrored the assessment for both Social Studies and Language Arts Part I practice-standardized assessment, where the students had to compare and contrast two texts. The excerpt below summarizes the instructional sequences of the whole group lesson taught by Mr. Williams, followed by the small group work focusing on the same topic. This part is also bookended by Daniel's final written product, both in the form of his POWTIDE (plan, organize, write: topic, important details, ending) graphic organizer and the written essay comparing Pocahontas and John Smith. Mr. Williams described this unit as the following:

> We read the previous week and now we are transitioning to using those pieces for a writing prompt and using those texts for writing. Then we will pick up another reading piece, which will subsequently become what we use for writing. […] These nine weeks we are focusing primarily on informational. In the third nine weeks really preparing for that writing assessment, we'll be hitting opinion very hard to get ready for the TN Ready Assessment in February. But […] we have to keep what we are reading and what we are writing in alignment. […] But within those units we try to pull out our language standards through the reading and writing as well. […] Just getting all those pieces of literacy instruction into what we are doing on the day-to-day basis- it's overwhelming but we try

to make sure we get it all in and it's integrated. And, of course, preparing them for that assessment. It is the big piece. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

Whole group instruction. Students are sitting on the floor in front of the active board. Daniel is sitting at the very back. Mr. Williams is projecting the materials he is discussing on the active board using the document camera (e.g., prompt, texts). There is large chart paper on the easel to the left of the board.

(35) 8:39-8:41 Mr. Williams: "Moving straight into writing prompt we are starting today. Today, we will be comparing and contrasting biographies. Let's say our learning target altogether, all eyes on the board please."
Class: "I can use POWTIDE to compare and contrast two biographies."
Mr. Williams: "Very good. Let's take a look at our prompt. You have read two biographies. What type of writing is a biography? Daniel, what do you think?"
Daniel: "Tells us what they did."
Mr. Williams: "Tells us what they did, which is what?"
Emily: "Facts"
Mr. Williams: "Information or facts. So, we are going to be comparing two informational texts about two important people in American history. John Smith and Pocahontas. We have read about them and are soon going to be reading about them, but we are going to go ahead and get started with this writing task today. Your task is to write an essay that compares and contrasts the lives of these two individuals. Be sure to tell similarities and differences. Use evidence from both texts. And remember to use the conventions of standard English while writing your essay. We are going to talk a whole lot more about those conventions next week based on the meeting that I had. So we are going to go ahead and start our POWTIDE. While I am creating it up here, what I want you do is have some private think time right now, ok? Private think time. Think about things, facts that you learned about John Smith and about facts you learned about Pocahontas through the readings we have done. What are some things that are the same and what are the things that different? Private think time."

(36) 8:41-8:44 Mr. Williams: "Turn and talk to the partner. (Students discuss similarities and differences of John Smith and Pocahontas with each other. Teacher circulates at the front of the rug and poses follow up questions or guides students to share their idea with someone else.) Alright, guys. Let's come back together, please in 5, 4, finishing up the conversation, 3, 2, 1. I am going to rely on you

guys to help me generate these. But first let's take a look at our POWTIDE."

(37) 8:44-8:55 Mr. Williams: "Remember our topic is where we have to introduce what we are writing about, okay? So, we are writing about John Smith and Pocahontas. We are going to write that under topic. Give me thumbs up if you are ready. I need you ready and focused. So, we are writing about John Smith and Pocahontas. (Mr. Williams writes on the chart paper by the board- see Figure 14) Let's get a little bit more specific and pull apart this prompt. What is this prompt asking us to do?
Class: "Write an essay"
Mr. Williams: "Write an essay that does what?"
Nancy: "Compare and contrast"
Mr. Williams: "So, if we are comparing and contrasting what are we going to tell about them."
Leland: "Information"
Mr. Williams: "Information about how they were what?"
Payton: "Same or different"
Mr. Williams: "Same and different, so we are going to be telling similarities and where are we getting our similarities and differences?"
Class: "From the text"
Mr. Williams: "From the passages and those passages were..."
Class: "Informational"
Mr. Williams: "Informational text that were what type of informational text?"
Ann: "Biographies"
Mr. Williams: "Biographies! So, we need to mention that, where we are getting our information in our topic. And we will show you that when we get into writing. Ok, let's move in and I want to see if you remember. We are doing comparing and contrasting in POWTIDE. Important detail one, what do we do here? Raising hands. Pressley."
Pressley: "We tell facts"
Mr. Williams: "We tell facts that are…"
Class: "Same"
Mr. Williams: "Same. Important detail two? Braden."
Braden: "Different"
Mr. Williams: "Different. Ok. Important detail three. Bailey, what do we do?"
Bailey: "Different"
Mr. Williams: "Different. Very good. Ok."

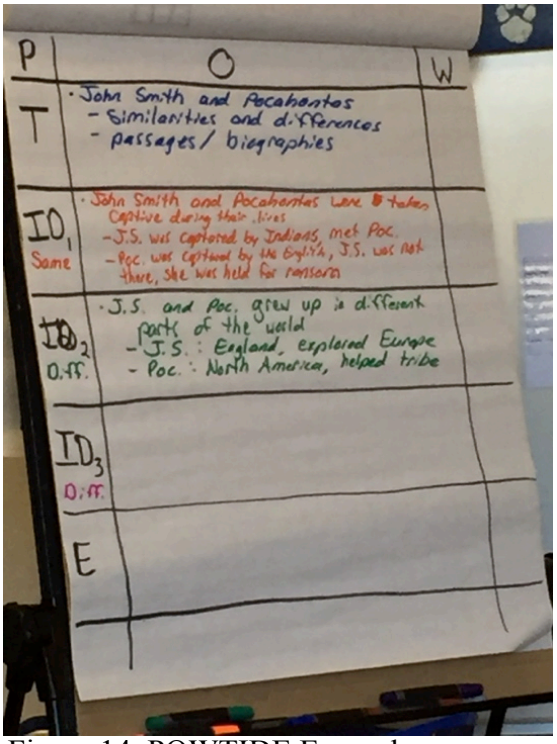


Figure 14. POWTIDE Example

(38) 8:56-8:59 Mr. Williams: "I had an interesting conversation over here about John Smith and Pocahontas and similarities. And I am going to use that, so I am going to ask people who were conversing to help with it. You guys need to watch him. Jackson, what was the similarity that you and Jayden and I talked about?"
Jackson: "We talked about how John Smith and Pocahontas both got captured."
Mr. Williams: "So, this is going to be my Important Detail 1. My similarity. (Mr. Williams writes and talks at the same time.) John Smith and Pocahontas, they were both taken captive during their lives. So, now I have my main idea. Let's connect it back to our writing. Remember we need the main idea and supporting details, using evidence from the text. All of our details have to support that and tell us more about the main idea. So, Jackson, what happened when John Smith was captured?"
Jackson: "The Indians captured him"
Mr. Williams: "I am going to abbreviate (writes) "JS, for John Smith, was captured by Indians" and what happened when he was captured by the Indians?"
John: "He almost died."
Bella: "He got to slavery."
Mr. Williams: "No, that was earlier in life. Who did he meet?"
Class: "Pocahontas."

Mr. Williams: “He met Pocahontas. I am going to abbreviate Pocahontas with just Poc, because this is a plan. Remember, guys, in your plan you just are making notes, but you don’t have to do complete sentences. Alright, if you are writing, I am going to go ahead and tell you this because it is something I observed yesterday. If you are writing your story in your plan, you are not going to have time to write your story in MIST or MICA or whatever we are using. Alright? What happened, and this is going deep into the text, I am very impressed that you remember this, what happened when Pocahontas was captured? Who was she captured by?”
John: “The English”
Mr. Williams: “Very good (writes and says) “Pocahontas was captured by the English.” Who was not there to protect her?”
Class: “John Smith”
Mr. Williams: “because he left, why?”
Ann: “Because of the gun powder explosion”
Mr. Williams: “Because of the gunpowder explosion that injured his leg. Ok? So, (writes and says) “John Smith was not there to..”
Jackson: “Mr. Williams, I just thought of something I can put for differences.”
Mr. Williams: “What?”
Jackson: “John Smith was captured by the Indians and Pocahontas by the English.” (Mr. Williams nods in approval)
Mr. Williams: “That’s right! Good. So, (continues to write and say) “she was held for ransom”
John: “What?”
Mr. Williams: “That’s a good vocabulary word. Let’s talk about that. Does anyone know? Does anyone have any prior knowledge of what that word means? No? Ransom means Pocahontas was taken prisoner and they sent a note her father and said, “If you want her back, you are going to have to give us food and things that we need.” Ok? So, that is what happened there. They were both taken captive or captured at different points in their life. That is an excellent similarity. Now, let’s think about differences. What would a difference?”
Bella: “One was a boy and one was a boy”
Mr. Williams: “What did I say yesterday about that similarity and difference? (class giggles) Is that mentioned in the text, first of all?”
Class: “No!”
Mr. Williams: “No, we have to go a little bit deeper.”
John: “She was an Indian and he was English.”
Mr. Williams: “Ok. I like it, but let’s go a little bit deeper, ok? How

about this? I am going to take what you said and I am going to add to it."
Jackson: "I got one."
Mr. Williams: "I will come to you. We still have another difference to do. I want you to see how I do this. Chelsea mentioned that John Smith was an Englishman and Pocahontas was an…"
Class: "Indian"
Mr. Williams: "I want you to think though what the main idea of our paragraph to be and that can be a strong detail. I would say (writes and says) "John Smith and Pocahontas" for lack of a better word "grew up in different parts of the world" Ok? Now, let's think about it. Where did John Smith grow up? Where was he from?"
Class: "England"
Mr. Williams: "He was from England. What did he do growing up? Do you remember? What were some details there?" (Students raise hands, teacher calls on them one at a time.)
Ann: "He explored"
Mr. Williams: "He explored. What continent was he growing up on? Who knows?"
Students: "North America. South America. England."
Mr. Williams: "What continent is England on?"
Alex: "Asia"
Mr. Williams: "I am going to have to talk to 2nd grade teachers! Europe! So, he grew up in England, he explored Europe. What about? And you can add more to this. There is a lot more you can add, but you have to bring it out of the text, ok? Alright. What about Pocahontas? What would be some details how she grew up?"
Peter: "She grew up in India"
Mr. Williams: "No, she didn't grow up in India. We need to talk about that. We always have fall break on Columbus Day and I never get to do my Columbus Day stuff. That's too sad. So, she grew up on what continent? We are living on it right now."
Class: "North America"
Mr. Williams: "What did she do when she was growing up? Give us a good detail from the text."
John: "She helped women."
Mr. Williams: "Yes. I am just going to put helped her tribe. We don't have to put everything in our plan, guys. Ok? We can keep going back to the text and finding even more details and evidence. I am thinking that in terms of time and in terms of what I want to get done today, I am going to stop here. My expectation for you today during writing workshop is that you create your POWTIDE plan in your draft book. Now, eyes right here, listen very carefully, if you have not finished your biography, than you need to skip a couple of

pages, so that you have room to finish it before you start this. So, let me show you how I want you to set up your POWTIDE more specifically in your draft book. (Mr. Williams switches to the notebook projected on the board.) So, this is how the POWTIDE should look in your draft book. Remember you always put the date, today is 11/13/15, and what would be a good title for this writing project?"
Class: "John Smith and Pocahontas"
Mr. Williams: "Alright, simple, I like it. Anyone has anything different?"
Ann: "Compare and contrast John Smith and Pocahontas"
Mr. Williams: "That really gives us a clue as to what we are doing, but we will probably find that out. I think I will just go with the simple title (writes) "John Smith and Pocahontas" Ok? So, remember to set up with your title and then you will set up your POWTIDE just like I did there. But I do want to show you what it should look like in your draft book as well. Remember the expectation is that you will be creating these to plan when we have our writing assessments and ultimately when we have TnReady." (Mr. Williams draws the skeleton of the POWTIDE on his draft book. Kids are watching what he is doing on the document camera on the board.)
John: "Do we have to do all of this today?"
Mr. Williams: "Just as much as I did. So, I planned my topic, ID1, and ID2. So, one similarity and one difference. That is the expectation for writing workshop today. I am not going to do it on the Smart Board today because I want to be able to freeze this and leave it up, so that you will have to look at this as well. After you get that accomplished, you may work on your Do First-Then Dos. Your Do-First says to complete the plan, but remember you only have to complete through the important detail number 2. Then you need to complete your DLR and make sure that gets turned in. Complete your fluency comprehension and get that turned in. Complete your word work and get that turned in. Ok? Please raise your hand if you have questions."
Ann: "Will it be a better title to say "Two short stories about Pocahontas and John Smith""
Mr. Williams: "Are they stories?"
Ann: "I mean biographies"
Mr. Williams: "You gotta watch that, guys."
Jackson: "Can we copy yours?"
Mr. Williams: "I would rather you not, but if you need to take ideas from my plan, the plan that we worked on together, since we did develop it together, I am ok with that for this draft. I would like for

it to be your ideas, but since we did develop it together, you may use these ideas, ok?" (field notes, 11/13/15)

Transitioning into a small group work, Mr. Williams called Daniel's group (the "lowest") to the kidney-shaped table with their draft books, in which they plan and write their pieces. Considering the small group time to be the time "to really drill in and to really target," Mr. Williams explained how the focus of small groups depended on the students and the instructional focus.

> With my higher groups I can push and make them a little more independent. With the students who are just on grade level and they need to be pushed to keep making this progress, we can really focus in on the grade level text. The other groups in the literacy block, they may receive an on grade level text, because they need to be instructed on their grade level in the 90 minute literacy block, but we also will occasionally pull in texts that are on their level that they can access more easily to achieve the learning target […] I try to do more writing workshop, as I start pulling small groups and then also pulling writing support groups, so that's been a change for me this year […] But the small group instruction I feel is critical to being able to meet the needs of the individual students. (Mr. Williams interview, 11/17/15)

The next excerpt presents the writing support group lesson, which included Daniel and served as a continuation and the extension of the whole group lesson presented above.

Small group instruction (N=6). All special education students and Daniel. Students are at the kidney table at the back of the room.

(39) 9:03-9:21 Mr. Williams looks through draft books for each child and makes sure that they are on track and left a few pages to complete their previous writing if needed.

Mr. Williams: "Are you ready? Do this with me. What do we need

to put as the heading at the top of our page?"
Students: "Date"
Mr. Williams: "The date, today is 11/13/15. So, we are going to put John Smith and Pocahontas."
Students: "Can we look there?" (Pointing to the board)
Mr. Williams: "You can or you can look here" (Pointing to a small board he is using for writing in small group)
Student: "How do you spell John Smith?" (Mr. Williams spells it for him. Then spells Pocahontas. Students write the heading of their draft book.)
Mr. Williams: "Go ahead and get our POWTIDE. (Mr. Williams demonstrates how to set up the POWTIDE organizer.) So, I want you to set this up, nice and neat, doing your personal best."
Students set up draft books. While students work on the POWTIDE set up, Mr. Williams goes to check on the rest of the class and asks certain students to do their personal best. Mr. Williams then comes back.
Mr. Williams: "We are going to do our plan together, like we did before, but we are going to take it down just a little bit. In our topic, we need to put down who we are writing about. Who are we writing about?"
Students: "John Smith and Pocahontas"
Mr. Williams: "Ok, so we definitely need to put that in our topic. So John Smith and Pocahontas. What are we telling about John Smith and Pocahontas? Daniel, are you with me?"
Daniel: "Yeah"
Mr. Williams: "What are we writing about John Smith and Pocahontas?"
Students: "Biography"
Mr. Williams: "No, we are using biographies to write."
Student: "Same and different between them"
Student: "Similarities and differences"
Mr. Williams: "That can be your choice whether you write same and different or similarities and differences. So, Daniel, what do you want to put?"
Daniel: "Similarities and differences"
Mr. Williams: "Ok, you can get that off of my chart there. Ok?"
Daniel goes to copy off of the board. Daniel goes back to the chart the whole class developed earlier and copies down some information while lying on the floor (9:16-9:18). Daniel comes back.
Mr. Williams: "Daniel, what we are doing is talking about the important detail number 1?"
Daniel: "Pocahontas and John Smith were both captured."

Mr. Williams: "Now, what did we say about how they were captured?"
Student: "John Smith was captured by the Indians and Pocahontas was captured by the English."
Mr. Williams writes "Pocahontas was captured by the English and John Smith was captured by the Indians." Does anyone remember what tribe of Indians? (Daniel is looking at the wall. He looks bored.) Go back in the text and find that. That might be a good detail for our writing."
Student: "Can you give me some hints?"
Mr. Williams: "We can do it together, ok?" (Students are copying what the teacher wrote, while Mr. Williams spells words for them. Daniel is done copying, looks around.)

(40) 9:25-9:34 Mr. Williams: "Guys, my plan was for the TA to support you with this and pull a different passage. But since it is just us today, we will look at the passage on Monday. So, I am going to give you this. You are good to go. You can take this and finish this. I am going to start pulling some reading groups. You guys know what you are supposed to do. Do your personal best. You are good to go. We will work on it more on Monday." (Daniel goes to add to his POWTIDE with a friend by the board.) (field notes, 11/13/15)

By discussing the same text and task in both whole group and small group setting (Figure 15 and Figure 16), Mr. Williams aimed to provide students with a point of access to the grade level text (paragraph 38 and 39) with the end-goal -- success on the end-of-the-year standardized assessment -- in mind (paragraph 38). Grounded in the principles of universal design for learning, such conceptualization of differentiation was central to both focal literacy classrooms where to differentiate within the literacy block meant to figure out a way to help children understand the grade-level texts. To help students access frustration level text, teachers are instructed to use close reading parsing out information needed to understand the text. As the excerpts above vividly demonstrate such accommodation involved lots of repetition, copying, and provision of word spelling. While students were definitely exposed to grade level content and vocabulary through extensive discussions of the texts, none of the small group members,

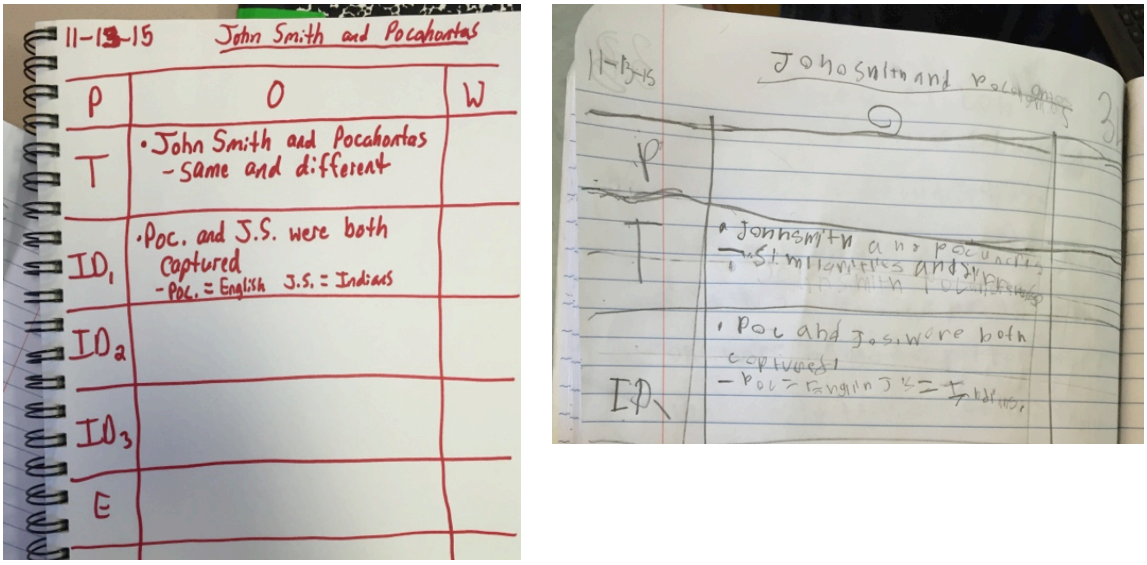


Figure 15. Daniel's Small Group Writing

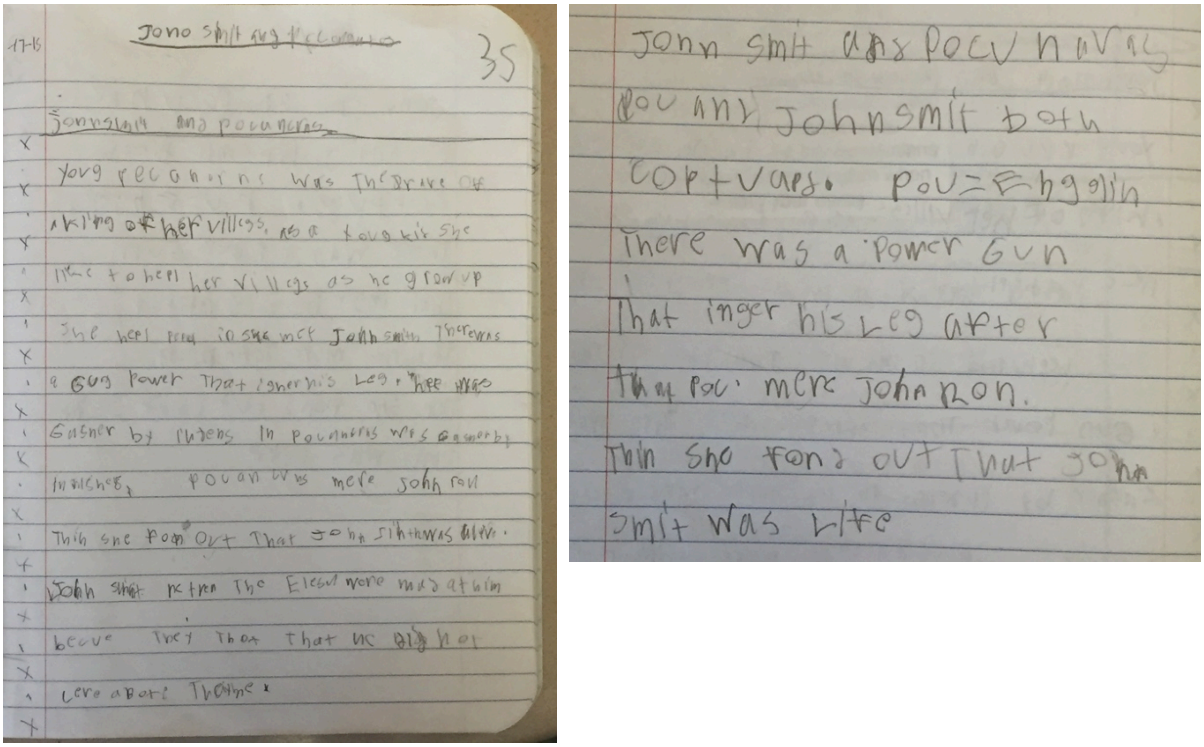


Figure 16. Daniel's Final Writing on John Smith and Pocahontas

including Daniel, could read the text independently or refer to it without extensive teacher assistance. Thus, I argue that while using grade-level text exposes students to what they might see on the test, it does not necessarily lead to improved reading proficiency or to increased motivation to read independently.

UDL is often described through the use of the image of three children of different height watching the baseball game from behind a fence. Accommodations are often depicted as boxes of different heights that allow students see over the fence – children of different height require boxes of different size. Guided by the social model of disability (Gill, 1994) that focuses on improving the interaction of an individual and environment, UDL approach claims to eliminate the need for boxes by instead replacing the wooden fence with a chain-link fence. Now children can see the game without the boxes. By the same token the students are provided access to grade-level text (baseball game) through a chain-link fence of multiple supports designed to include a wide range of learners. What remains unsolved is the fact that students are still watching on the sidelines, instead of actively participating in the game (independent reading).

Modeling Test-Taking Strategies

Additionally, literacy block time was extensively used to model test-taking strategies while preparing for the achievement and language proficiency assessments. Below I provide an excerpt from Ms. Sullivan's classroom. I summarize her interaction with students around a text and a question asking students to find the main idea and support it with the evidence from the text. Fabricio was out of the classroom in his ESL class, so he walked into the classroom in the middle of activity. By that time, the teacher was finishing reading the text aloud to students. Fabricio only caught the last few sentences of the text.

Whole group instruction. Students are at their desks. Ms. Sullivan is projecting the MICA site on the active board.

(41) 9:38-9:51 Ms. Sullivan: "Let's look. The main message. Let's go back and look- this was a pretty long message. Didn't we say we could use what as a clue? The title. So, I click the highlighter here and I highlight that, because that might help 'Something Strange in the Woods' So remember, look up here, I will click that little red marker there and I will mark that puppy out (Ms. Sullivan is talking about eliminating answer choices tool, which masks answer choices). What seems scary might not be? What seemed scary but wasn't in our story? Why was he initially scared? I don't know if that would be the main message, I didn't read anything that made me think 'Oh, there aye trying to teach me that.' (Ms. Sullivan goes through answer choices and discusses them with students). What would my answer be? Remember even if I got Part A right, I must back that up in part B. If we want full credit, we want to make sure that we get Part B correct as well. What evidence supports Part A? So, let's think what did we choose for Part A? So, one of these was one of the clues for that answers. (Ms. Sullivan reads the answer choices to students and asks for their feedback). How does this sentence help understand the main message of the text? This is my answer and I can click next. You all did a great job with this. What did I say you do as you move from each question? Make sure that you are reading your text before and that you are checking. You need to make sure that you have read the text first and that you checked that they haven't given you another text, underneath it, to read. And that you are going back into the text, alright? Remember I read those passages to you. I won't be reading those passages to you on the test. Just trying to save a little bit of time today. How many of you think it would be beneficial to use that red mark to eliminate answers that you feel are wrong.

Kevin: "I will be distracted by it."

Ms. Sullivan: "If that doesn't work for you or you are somebody that kind of forgets to click back off, you do not have to use it. I do not want you use anything that you feel like is going to hinder or make more difficult for you. How many of you feel like a highlight is something that is beneficial? I would probably like the answer eliminator myself, but you do not have to use anything you do not want. There is a lot to handle. If this is just one more thing for you to worry about, don't worry about it. You all did very well with it!"

Fabricio is playing with his watch and looking out the window. He

> is not engaged in the discussion, volunteers no answers, and seems to have no idea what is happening. Since he missed the first good portion of this activity, during which the text was read, he was unable to contribute during the discussion. (field notes, 01/08/16)

While exploring test as a genre in of itself is an arguably important skill to have in the current environment of standardization, it is dubious whether such episodes as the one describe above are helpful to Fabricio (paragraph 41). While he understood how to take a test (which is evidenced from his participation in the practice assessments I observed), his access to the meaning of the texts and test items was limited because of a large gap between Fabricio's literacy and language development and what tests required students to bring to bear.

"We Have to Get You Ready for Testing"

Finally, teachers often referred to assessments as an authoritative voice in the classroom, making the high-stakes test an invisible, but an always-present actor and decision-maker in the classroom. Ranging from the emphasis on the importance of having the necessary technology in the classroom to be able to take the online test to using specific strategies on the assessment to boost points students receive for their writing task, teachers injected references to TnReady throughout literacy instruction. Daniel even asked his ESL teacher one day what would happen if he did not pass the test. She assured him that he would do fine, but the heightened accountability for both students and their teachers was permanently integrated within the fabric of literacy instruction. Below are several extracts from the field notes, which illustrate the presence of the TnReady in many activities students did.

> When we took our practice MIST test, we have pulled all chrome books from 2nd or go tot the library. Our goal is for every student in 3, 4, and 5 grades to have access to a Chrome Book. Now we only have 8. Don't you think it'll be fun to have 25 Chrome

> Books so that all can work on your research simultaneously? My wife had 18 Chrome Books donated, they are 1-to-1. We can have it happen too. We want that to happen before February. (field notes, 11/12/15)
>
> Guys, we are going to get ready to have a nine-week test in writing in the next few weeks. And you will be expected to use POWTIDE and to do it just like it would be on TnReady. (field notes, 11/16/15)
>
> Today, in literacy we are going to talk about counterclaim. If you use it in your writing, it will give you major points on the test. (field notes, 01/12/16)
>
> […] there will be not a whole lot of taking it easy between now and the end of the school year because we have to get you ready for testing. (field notes, 01/12/16)

The pressures of state tests was overwhelmingly present for all students, and especially ELLs who were also required to take a language proficiency assessment at the same time as TnReady. This contradicts the intent of state and district administrators who repeatedly underscored the need for lowering student anxiety when it came to the assessment.

> I tell teachers this who occasionally call and say I have a child who cries every time he or she has to take a test, I used to tell my kids, this test is not about you, it's about me; do the best you can; make me look as good as you can but don't stress over it, because there is no reason to make kids test anxious over this. (ESL Coordinator interview, 12/14/15)

Discussion

Various types of instructional activities aimed at preparing students for standardized assessment took place across classrooms and settings. Classroom teacher responsible for the literacy testing scores of Daniel and Fabricio took the test and its influence of what classroom

instruction should look like to heart. Almost every single observation I conducted included a reference to testing or an activity that reflected the nature of the state assessment. Figure 17 includes several prominent practices that I observed in both schools.

Because the assessment required students to produce a writing piece based on textual evidence retrieved from one or more on grade-level texts, the lynchpin of literacy instruction in the district, and by extension in the observed classrooms, was writing about reading. Teachers modeled how to read writing prompts, break them down, search for information in texts, and used that information in order to compose an essay. Although the drawbacks on exclusively using on-grade level texts as basis for writing was discussed in the previous chapter, the positive shift from multiple-choice questions, which dominated the previous generation of achievement tests, cannot be overlooked. To take the evolution of assessment, and by extension instruction, further for ELLs, consideration must be given to the types of texts and linguistic scaffolds or accommodations that are provided. I argue that if teachers augmented their practice with the use of text sets (Giorgis & Johnson, 2002; Mathis, 2002) and multilingual resources, the impact on ELLs' achievement could be immeasurable.

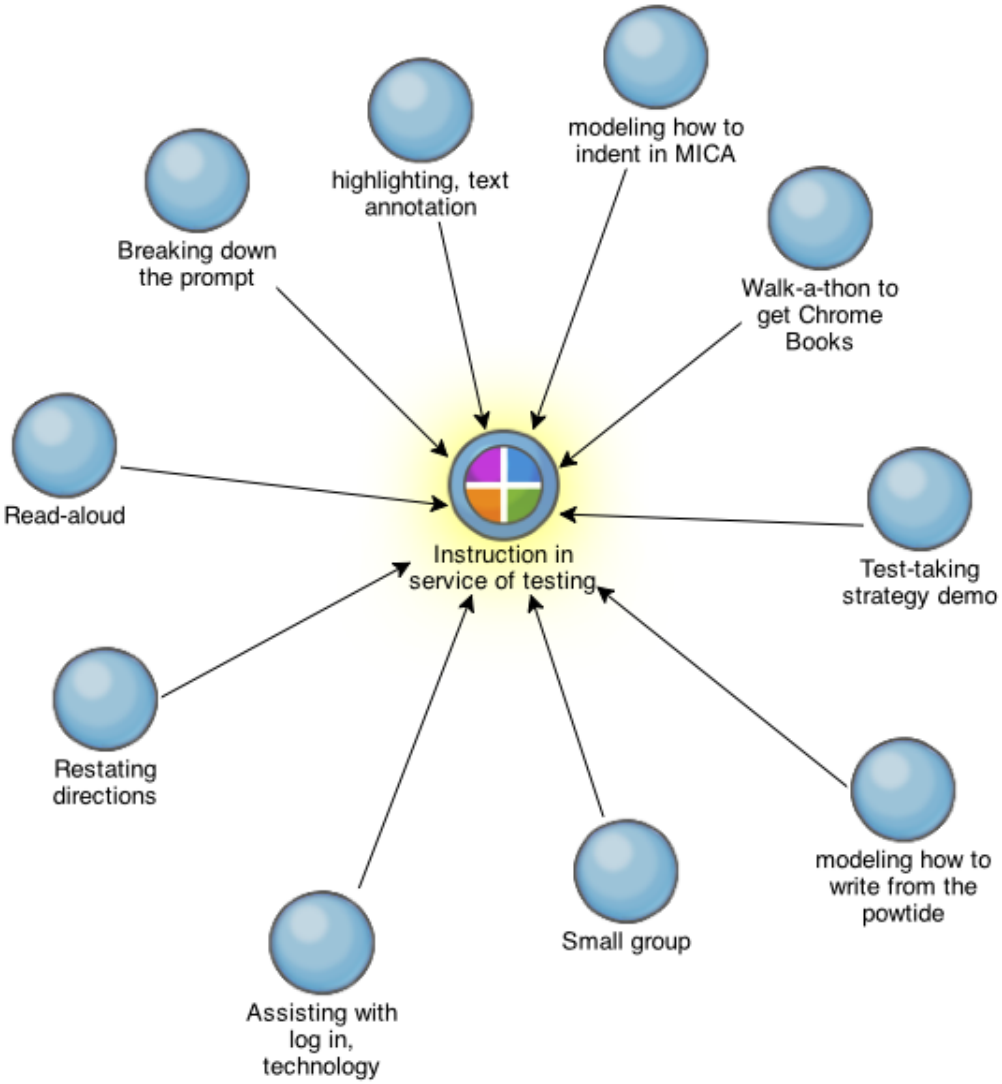


Figure 17. Instruction in Service of Testing

CHAPTER 7: INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS

Chapter Overview

"Children know 'facts' about educational materials, but often organize them in their own manner" (Mehan & Wood, 1975, p. 43). I argue that teacher know certain "facts" about ELL and their accommodations, but often organize them in their own manner based on their beliefs and knowledge of literacy and language development. The complexity of daily interactions with children, and particularly ELLs, cannot be overstated when it comes to assigning appropriate accommodations that allow students access to the assessment and instruction. As Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated, teachers provided students with a wider array of accommodations than those prescribed by the state assessment. By taking up a broader definition of accommodations, as not simply changes or modifications to test administration procedures to ensure assessment validity of ELLs, but instead daily pedagogical techniques teachers utilize to instruct and assess students, I open spaces for examining the complexity of within-classroom ELL accommodation use.

The cases of Daniel and Fabricio described in this study demonstrate that the work of accommodating or differentiating that teacher do is fairly complex. Knowledgeable teachers with insight into their students' language and literacy development, gathered through formative diagnostic assessments and daily interactions with their students, understand what might prevent each individual student from demonstrating their knowledge. Teachers then attempt to remove any construct-irrelevant barriers through differentiating test items, test instructions, and providing verbal prompting aimed at setting students up for success. While standardized tests are developed and normalized for particular groups of students and a particular content, classroom assessments can be carefully differentiated to ensure that each student can access the test making

the information obtained through the test administration useful in some way. In the interest of gaining a fuller picture of what students can and cannot do, teachers utilize a variety of techniques that are not accounted for within the standardized high-stakes testing research or practice. I now turn to a discussion of the synergetic, joint enactment of accommodations across systems and settings, drawing on the theoretical propositions of the bioecological model of human development, followed by the connections to the sociocultural and sociolinguistic theories that underpin this work.

Entangled Systems of Accommodation Use

The reality of the classroom seems to contradict the assumption shared by the state assessment coordinator who argued that although there are "many things we (educators) do for instructional support, they are not really accommodations for testing" (Assessment coordinator interview, 12/14/15). In fact, state testing accommodations, classroom testing accommodations, and instructional supports seem to influence one another in a variety of ways. The relationship is not only there, but it is also very complex, and appears to depend on the student, teacher, and context. Accommodation work goes on within various systems of context that surround ELLs.

Microsystems

At the microsystem level, or within immediate contexts that involve focal students, Daniel received differentiated test (e.g., spelling test), extra time, small group and alternate setting, read-aloud, prompting, restating the question, and reteaching. Fabricio was often provided differentiated test (e.g., spelling test), differentiated text, extra time, small or alternative group setting, read-aloud, and prompting. He sometimes also skipped the test altogether. No

bilingual dictionaries were given to either of the boys and no computer-based translation tools (e.g., Google Translate) were ever introduced as a possibility.

Overwhelmingly, however, teachers relied on their knowledge of literacy development and what counts as effective literacy instruction even if it contradicted the state prescribed accommodations. Echoing the work of Mehan (1978), I argue that such "puppeteering, cueing, and cutting-off practices are not the result of sloppy test administration but are inevitable aspects of the social interaction that comprises testing encounters" (p. 55). By the same token, the negotiation of scaffolds and supports available to students during instructional time reflected teachers' attempts at making texts and task comprehensible to ELLs.

Mesosystems

The accommodation work at mesosystem level, or within relationships among microsystems, varied greatly for each focal student. In Daniel's case, two systems seem to run parallel to each other with little to no interaction. If any interactions existed between the microsystem of mainstream classroom managed by Mr. Williams and the microsystem of an ESL/RTI class taught by the Ms. Yoo Mee, my observations did not capture them. The teachers' goals for Daniel were framed differently in that the ESL/RTI class aimed at building independence, whereas the mainstream classroom literacy instruction and assessment revolved around grade-level standards and texts. For Fabricio, the mesosystem level interactions were even more complex, because there were so many microsystems, within which he interacted during his literacy time. While the classroom teacher attempted to control what took place when Fabricio worked with his two teaching assistants, there was no cohesion or connection between the mainstream classroom, the ESL classroom, and the Special Education classroom practices.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that misalignment and contradictions between microsystems can cause confusion and delay in development. At the same time, children's development is enhanced if similar goals, norms, and values are adopted across microsystems.

Exosystems

At the exosystem level (defined as relationships between settings, one of which does not include the student but in which events occur that affect him), the decision-making to arrange students' days in a particular way or to provide a specific intervention does not usually include the elementary school students. However, those decisions determine what goes on in each microsystem that includes ELLs. For instance, the decision made by Cumberland Elementary to hold the RTI/enrichment time for everyone at the third grade level at the same time reduced stigma associated with RTI interventions or ESL pull-out instruction. At the same time, a number of decisions made at Jonesboro Elementary impacted the daily interactions and I would argue the development of Fabricio. Exposing Fabricio to as many as five staff members who would support him throughout the day did not seem to accomplish the intended goal of improved achievement. Instead, it contributed to creating a disjointed day for Fabricio and also Evan, a special education student who went to the same support staff except for the ESL teacher. More accommodations and supports did not seem to pay off for Fabricio who received disconnected lessons that only confused him. Considering a model of typical reading development (Spear-Swerling & Sternberg, 1996), we can visualize Fabricio getting off track at the phonetic-cue word recognition, as he has mastered the alphabetic principal and some phonological awareness, yet his sight word bank and incomplete phonetic cue use in word recognition make recognizing words challenging. In order to help Fabricio to get back on track to progress to controlled word

recognition and, subsequently, to automatic word recognition, a cohesive systematic intervention plan combined with oral language development goals should have been implemented. Instead, participating adults tried their best at providing Fabricio with directions to get him back on track, but most directions fell short and took him even further away from the road to proficiency. From this perspective, departmentalization and disconnect among contexts is clearly detrimental to ELLs.

Macrosystem

At the macro-level, the lack of consistency and communication in terms of allowable accommodations on high-stakes assessments created a context of uncertainty. Teachers of these two boys discussed that they did not really understand what the requirements were, as Mr. Williams put it, "everything is so new and up in the air, we are still very fuzzy on accommodations" (Mr. Williams interview, 11/18/15). Furthermore, the significance of English-only policies, discussed in the introduction to this study, cannot be ignored. I take up these policies and connect them to sociocultural and sociolinguistic perspectives to show how teachers managed to navigate the terrain of assessment and instructional accommodations with their ELLs.

Within-Classroom Accommodation as Language-in-use

Children's language and literacy development reflects the interactional patterns and environments in which they function every day. Drawing on the ideas behind sociocultural theory and sociolinguistics, I argue that the accommodation and accessibility features within universal design need to go beyond the simplicity of language medium (e.g., providing a

bilingual dictionary) and instead account for the complexity in literacy and language development of emergent bilinguals.

Defining Accommodations in Research and Practice

One complicating factor in studying how teachers accommodate diversity in literacy and language assessment and instruction is the inconsistency of terms and definitions used within educational research and by practicing educators. Guided by the notions that learning and development stem from social interactions (Tharp & Gallimore, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978), accommodations can be termed as linguistic scaffolds, which play a mediating role in developing new understanding and knowledge through interactions with a knowledgeable other, e.g., a peer or a teacher. Such understanding of accommodations as an "agentive practice" (Schissel, 2012, p. 300) of providing "multilingual scaffolds" (p. 314) in both instruction and assessment, allows teachers more flexibility in supporting emergent bilinguals. As Moll (2014) argues "discourse resources can be strategically combined to provide children with the support they need to participate more profitably in reading lessons" (p. 79) and by extension in literacy assessment.

Furthermore, the assumption that all accommodations,--and the more the better--help students to demonstrate conceptual understanding and knowledge is simply inaccurate (Myers & Kopriva, 2015). Yet it is so pervasive that it causes well-meaning educators and administrators to do whatever it might take to offer as many accommodations as possible to students. In the case of Fabricio, his referral to Special Education services came in the year when he was to take the state standardized test for the first time. Because Special Education referral would guarantee the text-to-speech, or read aloud, accommodation, perceived useful by the administration, Fabricio's path to Special Education was fast-tracked.

Conflating accommodations made available to emergent bilinguals with those of children who are identified as learning disabled has been long argued to be a misguided practice. While not ignoring the diversity between and within each of these groups, I propose that accommodations should be considered and made available on an individual basis in both assessment and instruction. Within emergent bilingual group, for instance, the diversity of language and literacy needs must be essential to decision-making in regards to accommodation use. The two focal students in the present study provide a vivid example of how different student needs at the same grade level within the same designation as an English Language Learner might be.

Imagining New Possibilities for Accommodations through Translanguaging

Thinking about expanding the definition of accommodation can be aided through the emerging work of translanguaging scholars who remind us that in contexts where multilingual communication is expected and encouraged, children skillfully draw on a multitude of available linguistic and other modal resources to construct meaning (Kenner, 2004). However, when impenetrable boundaries are created between languages, children's access to a valuable source of knowledge and sense-making might be closed.

In the participant interviews, when I asked about Fabricio's and Daniel's knowledge of Spanish as a potential resources, answers ranged from "I don't think he speaks Spanish" to an honest "it would be good to know" whether he can speak or read in Spanish. When asked about the best pedagogical approaches to educating ELLs, leveraging their home language practices with the school curricula was never mentioned. Instead, teachers talked about close reading, text annotation, scripted programs, and pull-out English support classes. When Fabricio's mother

came to the IEP meeting I attended, not once was any reference to Spanish as a potential resource made either by school personnel or the mother herself. I did not hear the children speak Spanish or even refer to speaking Spanish at home. The only glimpse into the potentially bilingual life of Fabricio was his frequent stories of trips to Mexico with his father. Daniel often gravitated towards another Hispanic boy in his classroom, but they never spoke Spanish during my observation times.

Yet, research looking at instruction and assessment through the lens of translanguaging or language brokering demonstrates the benefits of allowing children to use all linguistic resources to make meaning. Creese and Blackledge (2010) emphasized the interdependence of knowledge across languages in multilingual students and showed that during partner work, for example, "it is the combination of both languages that keeps the task moving forward" (p. 110). In the field of assessment, López et al. (forthcoming) developed a math assessment, which allows adolescent ELLs to see and hear test items in either Spanish or English and respond to the test using either language or both (as cited in Wei and García, 2016, p. 9).

Emphasizing the importance of rethinking how language and pedagogy function within multilingual educational spaces, Wei and García (2016) also argue that education can be a transformative translanguaging space where children and their teachers transcend socially constructed language systems, structures, and practices to engage diverse multiple meaning-making systems and subjectivities, to generate new configurations of language practices and education, and to challenge and transform old understandings and structures. They further posit:

> Research on translanguaging in schools not only creates the possibility that bilingual students could use their full linguistic and semiotic repertoire to make meaning, but also that teachers would "take it up" as a legitimate pedagogical practice (p. 8)

Taking up languaging and translanguaging in order to understand how children develop dynamic linguistic repertoires, we recognize that first language is not separate from the second language, but instead they are both parts of one language system that a developing person possesses. As such, aggressively monolingual Anglo-American beliefs (Venuti, 2008) encapsulated by English-only policies devalue and underuse the linguistic repertoires that can enhance and accelerate literacy and language development of ELLs. The subtractive influences of an English-only mentality was foregrounded in the classrooms interactions observed in this study.

Refining the Conceptual Map of Assessment Policies

As testing practices move toward computer adaptive assessments and universal design for learning becomes the underpinning theory for accessibility features and accommodation use, classroom research into how these practices are enacted offer an opportunity to inform high-stakes testing practices. Although I do not advocate for the use of high-stakes testing results as a proxy for student achievement or teacher effectiveness per se, I argue that the current landscape of assessment, and the accommodation practices associated with it, should be under close scrutiny from researchers. One area of concern, in particular, is the lack of coherence across high-stakes achievement tests, English proficiency tests, and classroom assessment. Creating assessments and, in turn, instructional situations, in which students like Fabricio and Daniel

experience repeated lack of success, contradicts the very purpose of accommodation use, which aim to level the playing field for ELLs and make assessment and instruction accessible.

The state ESL coordinator shared her hopes for the future that includes a more sophisticated use of language proficiency tests in relation to the achievement test:

> I would love to see that test (WIDA) help us figure out which children really need TnReady. Because when they are absolute beginners, when they are on a certain level, it is guess work on TnReady. They are not truly taking a test, they are sitting for a test. But if you can't work in that language, it'll be like you giving me a Russian test, I have no idea. And so, I would love to see it used a little differently than it's being used. And it's fine for accountability. But we know that if they are absolute beginners or even more advanced beginners, they really do not have enough language to access that TnReady test. Or any achievement test! Wouldn't it be so fair? (ESL coordinator interview, 12/14/15)

Studying Accommodations from Within Classrooms

As demonstrated in the literature review section, the majority of studies investigating testing accommodations were large-scale quantitative analyses. This research, alongside others who examined the enactment of ELL accommodations in the classrooms, calls for a more descriptive approach to looking at accommodation use both within assessment and instruction. While quantitative studies by their nature aim to explore the relationships between variables, I argue for the usefulness of the case study approach that involves classroom observation at its heart. While the objectivity of observation research can be called into question, Mehan and Wood (1975) write,

> The relation between descriptive analysis and things described will always be essentially incomplete, but this need not be a reason for abandoning entirely the attempt to talk *about* things. (p. 174, emphasis in the original)

Additionally, an orientation towards a more interpretive stance is warranted. If the interpretation is perceived as experiential and understanding as dialogic, then the focus on in-depth description can allow for a more insightful view of accommodation use. Such an approach can help researchers not only to answer the existing questions, but also to raise new, sometimes unexpected, questions related to the observed phenomena. Case study research, in particular, can provide insight into what kinds of variables and instructional adjustments can be tested in experimental studies. For example, the use of verbal prompting to make tests accessible needs additional examination.

Furthermore, future research into how ELLs use accommodations can explore students' interactions within computerized testing platforms. Advanced screen capturing software can record student activity with more precision. While directly observing students tinker with an online test provides a glimpse into their reality, the precision of screen-capturing software is missing from the present study. New studies have already begun examining the impact of computerized accommodations on student achievement (Roohr & Sireci, 2017). Think aloud protocols may also offer insight into students' interactions within the online platforms and the accommodations they offer.

Finally, researchers should question the assumptions that underpin Universal Design for high-stakes and classroom assessment, as it is not at all clear whether the ideals on which UD is based play out as intended. It is especially critical today when teachers of ELLs face increased

accountability and emergent bilinguals experience immediate negative consequences (e.g., retention, classroom exclusion) of poor performance on literacy and language high-stakes assessments. Moreover, the limitations of universal design in making grade-level texts and tasks accessible to ELLs on assessment extends to instructional practices, which in this study mirrored the high-stakes assessment in the kinds of texts and tasks students experienced throughout their literacy instruction.

Conclusion

When considering assessment accommodations for ELLs, the intimate connections between language and literacy, testing and instruction, and teachers' beliefs about students and learning are often overlooked. Researchers focus on removing construct-irrelevant variance, which aims to reduce the language barrier that hinders access to content. It may never be possible to remove language from content. If the goal of assessment is to learn about what students know and provide useful information on how to build on that knowledge, much can be learned from studying the practices of dedicated teachers who support ELLs' access to knowledge in their classrooms every day. At the same time, innovative theories of learning and language development should be introduced into the classrooms in order to test their substance and utility, and to provide teachers with an even further enhanced linguistic toolbox. Finally, examining concepts and principles used to develop instruction and assessment for ELLs must always be informed by classroom realities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Email Invitation to State Department Personnel

Dear _____,

My name is Natalia Ward. I am a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my dissertation research, I aim to examine how teachers interpret and enact within-classroom ELL accommodations during language and literacy instruction and assessment. In order to paint a broader picture of ELL accommodations in Tennessee, I seek to interview key state experts in the field of ELL assessment and instructional accommodations. If you decide to participate, I will email the consent form and the interview questions to you in advance. The interview will take about thirty minutes to an hour at a location of your choice. It can also be conducted virtually, e.g., via Zoom. I will audio-record our interview for transcription and analysis. Once the transcription is complete, I will send the file to you for verification purposes.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your expertise and insight with me. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Natalia

Natalia Ward
Doctoral Candidate
Literacy Studies
Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
nward2@utk.edu

APPENDIX B
Email Invitation to District Level Personnel

Dear _____,

My name is Natalia Ward. I am a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my dissertation research, I aim to examine how teachers interpret and enact within-classroom ELL accommodations during language and literacy instruction and assessment. I am seeking your recommendation in terms of what schools and potentially which teachers could be fitting participants in such a study.

Also, in order to paint a broader picture of ELL accommodations in Tennessee, I seek to interview key district experts in the field of ELL assessment and instructional accommodations. I would love to interview you in order to get insight into current state of ELL accommodations. Your district has already approved this research project. If you decide to participate, I will send the consent form and the interview questions to you in advance. The interview will take about thirty minutes to an hour at a location of your choice. The interview can also be conducted virtually, e.g., via Zoom. I will audio-record our interview for transcription and analysis. Once the transcription is complete, I will send the file to you for verification purposes.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your expertise and insight with me. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Natalia

Natalia Ward
Doctoral Candidate
Literacy Studies
Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
nward2@utk.edu

APPENDIX C
Email Invitation to Principals

Dear _____,

My name is Natalia Ward. I am a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my dissertation research, I aim to examine how teachers interpret and enact within-classroom ELL accommodations during language and literacy instruction and assessment. Your district has already approved this research project and allowed me to contact you directly. I am seeking to observe ELLs in two excellent classrooms during one or two literacy units of study this year to get insight into how teachers utilize accommodations during instruction and assessment of ELLs. I am seeking your recommendation of who these potential teacher participants might be.

Also, in order to paint a broader picture of ELL accommodations in Tennessee and in your district, I seek to interview key administrators, that's you! If you and two of your best teachers decide to participate, I will send you the consent forms and the interview questions and we can set up a time, convenient for you, to meet and discuss this project further.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your expertise and insight. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Natalia

Natalia Ward
Doctoral Candidate
Literacy Studies
Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
nward2@utk.edu

APPENDIX D
Email Invitation to Teachers

Dear _____,

My name is Natalia Ward. I am a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my dissertation research, I aim to examine how teachers interpret and enact within-classroom ELL accommodations during language and literacy instruction and assessment. In order to do that, I seek to interview excellent teachers and observe them and their ELLs during one or two literacy units of study this school year. Your district and your principal have already approved this research project and allowed me to contact you directly. If you decide to participate, I will send you the consent form and the interview questions in advance. We can also set up a time to meet and discuss the details of this project.

Thank you for your willingness to share your expertise and insight with me. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Natalia

Natalia Ward
Doctoral Candidate
Literacy Studies
Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
nward2@utk.edu

APPENDIX E
Invitation Letter to Families (Parents & Children)

(Note: This letter will be translated into the family's native language if needed. The translated letter will be provided to the district research office and the UTK IRB office.)

Dear _____,

My name is Natalia Ward. I am a student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I am excited to invite you and your child to participate in my dissertation research project. I want to look at how teachers support children learning English as a second language during reading and writing instruction and during tests. To do that, I would like to watch how the teacher teaches your child in the classroom. You or your child will not need to do anything special, just let me visit the classroom and watch the lessons. Your school and your child's teacher already agreed to participate, so I would really love for your child to be a part of my project. If you decide to participate, please read, sign, and date the forms attached to this letter. One form is for you and the other is for your child. I would be happy to meet with you to talk about the details of this project.

Thank you!

Natalia

Natalia Ward
Doctoral Candidate
Literacy Studies
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The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
nward2@utk.edu
865-684-0815

APPENDIX F
Consent Forms

Consent Form (State Department Personnel, District Personnel, Principals)
Interpretation and Enactment of ELL Accommodation Guidelines: Case Study of Two Upper-Elementary Classrooms

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study for the purpose of examining teacher interpretation and enactment of within-classroom instructional and assessment accommodations with ELLs. As a participant in the study, you will be asked to participate in one interview.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

As a participant in this study, you agree to participate in one formal interview, conducted by Natalia Ward, that would focus on within-classroom accommodation ELLs receive during instruction and assessment, as well as how these relate to the accommodations provided on high-stakes assessments. The interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and added to the larger dataset collected for the purposes of this study. By agreeing to participate, you allow the investigator to conduct one interview with you, audio-record the interview, transcribe, and analyze it for the purposes of the study. The transcripts will be shared with you to ensure accuracy and to allow for an opportunity for further feedback.

RISKS

The risks of this study are minimal and not expected to be greater than those encountered in everyday life. The most likely risk would be breach of confidentiality, which is addressed below. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may end participation at any time simply by emailing Natalia Ward at nward2@utk.edu. If you decline to participate, you will not be required to participate in the study. All electronic data generated in connection with this study will be stored on a password-protected computer belonging to the principal investigator. Any printed or digital materials will be stored in a locked office when not in the care of the investigators. In compliance with University of Tennessee policy, all data will be destroyed three years following the completion of the study.

BENEFITS

The project benefits the larger academic community in which there is interest in within-classroom accommodation use with ELLs. Participants in this study are not expected to receive direct benefits as a result of participating

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your confidentiality is an especially important concern. Therefore, although some relevant demographic information will be collected, your participation will be completely confidential. The investigator will take great care to use pseudonyms in reference to all people and places within every written draft, conversation, and presentation created in connection with this study. In compliance with the University's policy, all data will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, please contact Natalia Ward (nward2@utk.edu; 865-684-0815). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research IRB Compliance Officer at (865) 974-7697.

PARTICIPATION

It is critical to note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate without penalty, and you may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty by simply emailing Natalia Ward at nward2@utk.edu. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be disregarded during analysis.

CONSENT

_____ I have read and received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's printed name: _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02557-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 10/26/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 10/25/2016

Consent Form (Teachers)

Interpretation and Enactment of ELL Accommodation Guidelines: Case Study of Two Upper-Elementary Classrooms

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study for the purpose of examining teacher interpretation and enactment of within-classroom instructional and assessment accommodations with ELLs. As a participant in the study, you will be asked to participate in one formal interview and several informal conversations and to allow the research to observe your classroom during a unit of study.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

As a participant in this study, you agree to grant access to the investigator, Natalia Ward, for purposes of data collection. The data collection procedures will involve a formal interview, observations of one or two literacy units of study, and several potential informal conversations to discuss the observations. Furthermore, the researcher will be gathering information on literacy and language development of ELLs in your classroom, as well as classroom artifacts pertinent to the observed unit of study (e.g., lesson plans, texts read by the students, texts produced by the students, visuals, audio recordings of critical student/teacher interactions). By agreeing to participate, you allow the investigator to access and analyze the aforementioned data gathered via interviews, observations, and document analysis.

RISKS

The risks of this study are minimal. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may end participation at any time simply by emailing Natalia Ward at nward2@utk.edu. If you decline to participate, you will not be required to participate in the study. All electronic data generated in connection with this study will be stored on a password-protected computer belonging to the principal investigator. Any printed or digital materials will be stored in a locked office when not in the care of the investigators. In compliance with University of Tennessee policy, all data will be destroyed three years following the completion of the study.

BENEFITS

Participants in this study will receive no tangible benefits as a result of participating. The researcher has neither stated explicitly nor suggested implicitly that any financial, material, or symbolic gain will come as a result of participating. You are not required or expected to participate in this study, and participation or non-participation will in no way benefit or hurt you. The project only benefits the larger academic community in which there is interest in within-classroom accommodation use with ELLs.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your confidentiality is an especially important concern. Therefore, although some relevant demographic information will be collected, your participation is completely anonymous. The investigator will take great care to use pseudonyms in reference to all people and places within every written draft, conversation, and presentation created in connection with this study. In IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02557-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 10/26/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 10/25/2016

compliance with the University's policy, all data will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, please contact Natalia Ward (nward2@utk.edu; 865-684-0815). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer.

PARTICIPATION

It is critical to note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate without penalty, and you may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty by simply emailing Natalia Ward at nward2@utk.edu. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be disregarded during analysis.

CONSENT

_____ I have read and received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's printed name: _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02557-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 10/26/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 10/25/2016

Parent Consent Form

Note: *This consent form will be provided in the participants' native language if necessary (the foreign language translations will be submitted to the district and the UTK IRB).*

Dear _____,

You and your child are invited to participate in a research study that will look at ways classroom teachers help children learning English as a second language. The school district approved this study and your child's teacher already agreed to participate. I, Natalia Ward, ask that you allow me to observe your child at school during regular classroom activities. I will take notes about what is going on in the classroom; take photos of books your child reads and your child's work. I will also ask your child's teacher to share his/her test scores and school-related information with me. Nothing extra will be required of you, as a parent, or of your child, as a student. I will also audio-record some of the conversations between your child and his teacher.

Your privacy is an especially important concern. So, your and your child' participation is completely confidential. I will take great care to use fake names in reference to all people and places within every written draft, conversation, and presentation created in connection with this study.

All information I collect about your child and the classroom will be put on a password-protected computer belonging to me. Any printed or digital materials will be stored in a locked office when not in my care. These materials will be destroyed three years after my study is finished.

I want to assure you that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may say no without penalty, and you may stop participating at any time by emailing me at nward2@utk.edu, calling me at 865-684-0815 or sending a note to your child's teacher. If you decide to stop, your child's data will be disregarded during analysis.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, please contact Natalia Ward (nward2@utk.edu; 865-684-0815). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the UT Office of Research IRB Compliance Officer at (865) 974-7697.

CONSENT

_____ I have read and received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's printed name: _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02557-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 10/26/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 10/25/2016

Student Assent Form

Note: *This form will be provided in the participants' native language if necessary (the foreign language translations will be submitted to the district and the UTK IRB).*

Dear _____,

My name is Natalia Ward and I am a student at the University of Tennessee. I am studying how teachers help students with reading and writing. I want to ask for your permission to watch you in your classroom, as you are learning and doing your daily activities. I might ask to take a picture of your writing or a book you are reading. I will also ask to audio-record some of your conversations with your teacher.

You do not have to participate, but I would really appreciate it if you could be a part of this study. I will be able to write articles and teach other teachers how to help their students if I can learn from you and your teacher. You will not get any extra credit or any special gifts for participating.

No one will know your name when I write and talk about what I learn. I will take great care to use a fake name, so that no one can guess who you are. Again, you do not have to participate, but it would really great if you would.

ASSENT

_____ I have read (listened to) and received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's printed name: _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02557-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 10/26/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 10/25/2016

APPENDIX G
Data Collection Tools

Interview Guide for Teachers

(The questions below serve as a guide for the discussion with the participants.)

Demographics:

1. How many years have you been teaching? What grade levels? What are your areas of certification?
2. What is the highest level of your education attainment?
3. What have been the demographics of your school?
4. Describe your experience teaching ELLs.
5. Describe ELLs you have in your classroom this year.

Teaching and Assessment:

6. How do you make decisions about what/how to teach certain material?
7. What does differentiation mean in your classroom?
8. What has worked well for ELLs in your class?
9. Describe your reading groups arrangement this year.
10. What kinds of assessments do you use? How do you administer them? Are the any specific ways you assess ELLs?
11. Which assessments provide the most useful data? least useful?

Accommodations:

12. What are the accommodations ELLs receive on the high-stakes tests?
13. How do you select or assign accommodations in your classroom?
14. What accommodations might be really useful for ELLs in your class?
15. Describe the supports or professional development around accommodations you received? would like to receive?
16. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that I haven't asked you about?

Interview Guide for Principals and State/District Officials

1. Describe your current job/position.
2. What types of careers did you have that may have led you to get this position?
3. Within your current job, what do you do in terms of making decisions about the teaching of ELLs (e.g. curriculum, classroom observations, meetings, readings)? What about testing of ELLs?
4. Do you work with accommodations for ELLs? If yes, what do you know about accommodations and how does your work relate to test accommodations?
5. Describe your experience with testing practices and accommodations that are used with ELLs in the state/district/school
6. What do you think about the current state and district tests and testing of ELLs? What inferences can be made from these test scores?
7. How did the nature of test change when the state switched to the new high-stakes assessments?

8. What changes have been made to the ESL testing accommodation when the state switched to the new high-stakes assessments?
9. What impact has this change had on ELLs, their teachers, and schools?
10. How can assessment and instruction move forward for ELLs?
11. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that I haven't asked you about?

Observation Guide (Field Notes Template)

Date: _____	**Observation #:** _____	**Teacher:** _____	**Start time:** _____:_____	**End time:** _____:_____
Running Time	**Activities (What are students doing? Instruction/Assessment; Independent/small group/whole group**		**Artifacts (Photos of texts, instructional materials, student work, etc.)**	

VITA

Natalia Ward was born in a small town of Gorky, Russia to two educators who were appointed to teaching positions there upon their receipt of teaching certification. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education, specializing in English and French as foreign languages from Kaluga State Pedagogical University in Kaluga, Russia. Upon moving to the United States, she completed a Master of Science in Education, focusing on English as a Second Language, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. During her time teaching second language learners in public schools, she realized the importance of literacy in the lives of children. That inspired her to obtain a Ph.D. in Teacher Education with a concentration in Literacy Studies and work under the tutelage of Dr. Anne McGill-Franzen. As a graduate student, Natalia had the privilege to assist in the summer reading book distribution study and many other projects that strengthened her belief in the importance of educational research that is consequential to teaching practice. Upon completion of this dissertation, Natalia will have graduated with a Ph.D.