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# Standard English Language Acquisition Among African American Vernacular English Speaking Adolescents: A Modified Guided Reading Study

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

STANDARD ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AMONG AFRICAN  
AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH SPEAKING ADOLESCENTS: A  
MODIFIED GUIDED READING STUDY

By

Benjamin T. Lester

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
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This dissertation is an effort to contribute to the knowledge base concerning reading instruction for adolescent students who speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE), as well as their acquisition of Standard English (SE), by focusing on language structure during a modified approach to guided reading (MGR). Emphasis was placed on teaching the eight inflectional morphemes in SE, as well as other literacy strategies to AAVE speaking students. This intervention hypothesized that the teaching and learning of inflectional morphemes, in particular, would increase SE literacy acquisition. The intervention utilized formative experiment methodology and a quasi-experimental time series design. Data sources and collection took several forms: a) KTEA II – reading (letter and word recognition and reading comprehension) and written language (written expression) (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004); b) field reflections; c) student surveys; and d) video-taped MGR lessons. Informal assessments such as the *Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Shanker & Ekwall, 2000) were used to guide instruction for MGR lessons. The findings supported the hypothesis that instruction of inflectional morphemes

in SE has a positive impact on reading, writing, and overall acquisition of SE among AAVE speaking students.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, my family, and Mary Avalos. Their love, encouragement, and support made the completion of this dissertation possible. I will always be grateful.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The United States (U.S.) National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that “in 2000, minorities constituted 39 percent of public school students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, of which 17 percent were Black” (2003, p. 26). Over the past fifteen years, reading performance for African-American students has stalled with no significant changes, while scores for White students have increased significantly (NCES, 2003). In short, these data reveal that reading achievement for African American students is not improving; in fact, the achievement gap may be widening.

In the seven years since the NCES released the aforementioned data, President Bush and Congress enacted the sweeping educational legislation known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). One of the primary aims of NCLB was, and is, to close the achievement gap between minority students and their white counterparts. In President Bush’s 2007 and 2008 State of the Union Address, the President went so far as saying “because we [the Federal government] acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap”. However, President Bush provided no clear source for making such broad assertions. In fact, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that achievement gaps in reading and math have remained constant since 1990 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). In the six NAEP assessments since 1992, an average of 51% of African American students scored below basic on reading achievement compared to an average of 26% of white students. In 2007, the score gap between White and Black students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade was not significantly different than in previous NAEP assessments (U.S. Department of

Education, 2007). Furthermore, recent publications by the Harvard Civil Rights Project and the Civic Enterprises in association with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation state that U.S. dropout rates have remained static at about 30% over the past 20 years and are near 50% for African Americans. These data suggest that the achievement gap remains a challenge for educators and policy makers alike.

According to the work of scholars such as Labov (1972, 1995, 1998) and Ogbu (1987), speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) have specific and identifiable literacy challenges when learning Standard English (SE). Specifically, Labov (1972) identified two types of conflicts which African-American students confront when learning SE: structural conflicts and functional conflicts. Structural conflicts describe the differences between linguistic features of AAVE and SE. Functional conflicts refer to the power and prestige functions of AAVE and SE in a given cultural context. This study will focus on literacy challenges that may result from the structural conflicts that AAVE speaking students encounter when learning SE. Labov (1972) specifically stated “it may be necessary to spend much more time on the grammatical functions of certain inflections in the early stages of teaching reading and spelling” to AAVE speaking students (p. 34).

### Significance of the Study

What makes this study unique, in part, is the treatment of AAVE as a second language within the context of SE instruction and acquisition. According to Delpit (1998), AAVE “is the language spoken by many of our African-American children. It is the language they heard as their mothers nursed them and changed their diapers and played peek-a-boo with them. It is the language through which they first encountered love, nurturance, and joy” (p. 17). As a language that is rule-governed and systematic,

AAVE is rooted in the “Black American Oral Tradition and represents a synthesis of African (primarily West African) and European (primarily English) linguistic-cultural traditions” (Smitherman, 1998, p. 30). Other scholars, including O’Neil (1998), Smith (1998), and Baldwin (1998), have endorsed AAVE as a second language and have stated that the real debate about AAVE status has more to do with power and cultural capital than it does with linguistics.

In scholarly research, the term code-switching is often used when second language learners use two (or more) languages while speaking the same utterance. For this study and others, code-switching is applied to African American students as they switch between AAVE and SE, which is sometimes referred to as academic language (Blake & Van Sickle, 2001; Sulentic, 2001). Whether one labels the simultaneous use of languages bilingualism or code-switching, the aforementioned research supports the notion that African American students enter school having to acquire SE, a language system that is very different from AAVE, their first language. Within the literature and among scholars in the field of linguistics, AAVE is perceived as a “first language” (L1) in the context of schooling (Labov, 1995, 1998; O’Neil, 1998; Smitherman, 1998).

#### Purpose of Study

This study was conducted in an effort to contribute to the knowledge base concerning reading instruction for adolescent AAVE speakers, as well as their acquisition of SE, by focusing on language structure during a modified approach to guided reading. Pilot studies utilizing modified guided reading strategies have led to promising results for Spanish-speaking English language learners (see Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, & Rascón, 2007). Based upon the premise that AAVE is a distinct language, four exploratory

research questions were developed for the study concerning an approach to reading instruction that enables the possible cross-linguistic transfer and interference between AAVE and SE to be examined. First, what is the impact of modified guided reading (MGR) on the reading achievement of high school students who are African-American Vernacular English speakers? Second, what is the impact of MGR on the writing achievement of high school students who are African-American Vernacular English speakers? Third, what are the strengths and challenges associated with implementing MGR? Fourth, what are high school students' perceptions of MGR?

### Relevant Theory

The theoretical framework for this exploratory study was the interactive reading model (Rumelhart, 1977), following a sociopsycholinguistic perspective (Cummins & Das, 1977; Nassaji, 2002) and carried out via a modified guided reading (MGR) approach to literacy learning and language acquisition. MGR has been found to be successful with English language learners (native-Spanish speakers) in field-based pilot studies (Avalos, Chavez, Plasencia, & Rascón, 2004; Avalos, Plasencia, & Chavez, 2005).

The interactive reading model compartmentalizes the reading process into two interdependent subcomponents: the reader's world knowledge base (top-down) and the reader's cognitive processing strategies (bottom-up). "In this model of the reading process, the processing strategies work together in parallel, that is, at the same time, with access to the knowledge base to permit the reader to construct ideas and meaning from the printed text" (Birch, 2002, p. 2). Studies of second language (L2) reading often incorporate the interactive view of reading (Fitzgerald, 1995), and the applicability of this model for L2 learners has been specified in previous work (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey,

1988). Within the context of L2 research, scholarship consistently supports the notion that L2 learners have much more difficulty with literacy skills associated with their cognitive processing strategies, i.e., bottom-up processing skills (Birch, 2002; Eskey, 1986, 2002).

Birch's (2002) hypothetical model of the bottom of the reading processor is a well conceived explanation of how bottom-up literacy skills are processed and interact with top-down literacy skills (see figure 1). From this perspective, Birch's model describes how the comprehension of text comes from the interdependent workings of world knowledge base and cognitive processing strategies. The world knowledge base and "cognitive processing strategies must be working together so accurately and efficiently that they work at an unconscious level. All the knowledge of English graphemes, morphemes, and words must be readily accessible in long-term memory" (Birch 2002, p. 148).

Due to the high degree of divergence between their AAVE world knowledge base and cognitive processing strategies and SE world knowledge base and cognitive processing strategies, many speakers of AAVE struggle with the automaticity, or unconscious processing, associated with good reading practices. Emphasis on the skills related to the bottom of the reading processor is believed to increase the automaticity and comprehension of texts of speakers of AAVE, thus leading to increased achievement in SE literacy (Birch, 2002; Eskey, 1986; Jiménez & Gamez, 1996; Labov, 1972; Segalowitz et al., 1991).

Similarly, a MGR approach to teaching SE literacy aims to increase automaticity and ameliorate comprehension of texts through an interactive understanding of the

reading process. In particular, MGR is grounded in “reinforcing and strengthening our [teachers’ and students’] understandings and appreciation for the details of low-level knowledge and processing strategies” involved in SE literacy (Birch, 2002, p. 146). The emphasis on bottom-up literacy skills makes the MGR approach to teaching SE to speakers of AAVE appropriate; however, the grand conversations, teacher modeling, and integration of the language arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking) also promote the top-down skills needed to be successful readers and writers. Therefore, the interactive reading model (Rumelhart, 1977) is played out through MGR’s focus on both bottom-up and top-down literacy skills.

This interaction between the bottom-up and top-down literacy skills takes place through two primary mediums: instructional foci and teacher scaffolding. More often than not, the instructional lessons of MGR focus on bottom-up skills. For example, lesson foci may include grapheme to phoneme relationships, common spelling patterns, meaning and use of prefixes and suffixes, inflectional morphemes, etc. Teacher scaffolding is the primary medium for teaching and incorporating top-down literacy skills. For example, a teacher may lead a student group in creating a semantic map or story map to work on main ideas, supporting statements, character development, sequencing, etc. of a particular text. The next section of the proposal is the literature review, followed by a detailed description of MGR and the research objectives/hypotheses of this study.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

The review of literature is organized into three bodies of scholarship and research forming the foundation for this MGR study. The first section of the literature review explores the linguistic features of AAVE. The second section of the literature review addresses the processes involved in second language (L2) reading. The third section explores the efficacy of corrective feedback, which is a key feature to a MGR approach to teaching SE.

### AAVE Linguistics and SE Literacy Implications

AAVE is best defined as “the uniform grammar used by African-Americans who have minimal contact with other dialects in contexts where only speakers of that vernacular are present” (Baugh, 1983 in Labov, 1998, p. 114). Speakers of AAVE operate under highly organized linguistic rules and structures (Smitherman, 1998). When speakers of AAVE are confronted with learning and using SE, linguistic interference, manifested primarily through homonyms, creates a myriad of acquisition challenges. For example, Labov (1972, 1995) identifies four specific phonological variables of AAVE that conflict with SE: *r*-lessness, *l*-lessness, simplification/weakening of consonants and consonant clusters, and a divergent manner of articulation of certain consonants and vowels. *R*-lessness and *l*-lessness refer to the unpronounced *r* and *l* “when they appear before other consonants or at the ends of words” respectively, e.g. *guard* = *god*, *court* = *caught*, *sore* = *saw*, and *help* = *hep*, *toll* = *toe*, *fault* = *fought* (Labov, 1972, pp. 13 and 15). Simplification/weakening of consonants and consonant clusters at the end of words refers to the tendency of AAVE speakers to “reduce clusters of consonants at the ends of

words to single consonants and reduce the amount of information provided after stressed vowels, so that individual final consonants are affected as well” (e.g. *past = pass, meant = men, hold = hole, seat = seed = see*) (Labov, 1972, p. 15). A divergent manner of articulation of certain consonants and vowels refers to (a) “interdental consonants becoming labiodentals after a vowel , so that the *th* in *breath, mouth, and bath* is pronounced as /f/ and (b) the Southern monophthongization of diphthongs...[wherein] *find = found = fond* and *boil = ball*” (Labov, 1995, p. 47).

Additionally, Labov (1998) identifies “the [habitual] particle *be* [as] the most frequent and the most salient element of AAVE” (p. 117). Based upon the research of Dayton (1986), Labov surmises that the particle *be* “shows three syntactic properties that distinguish it sharply from SE auxiliary elements: (a) It does not accept negative affixation (*\*ben’t or \*be not*). Instead, the negative particle precedes *be* and requires *do* support (*don’t be...*). (b) It does not form tag questions (*\*..., be he?*). (c) It does not participate in auxiliary inversion (*\*Be he doing that?*)” (p. 118). The habitual particle *be* is the most obvious and persistent linguistic marker for AAVE speakers.

In summary, the phonological variances between SE and AAVE are problematic for AAVE speakers in that speakers of AAVE have many more homonyms when learning SE in comparison to other cultural groups (Labov, 1995). With the tendency to simplify/weaken final consonant clusters, speakers of AAVE are challenged by the linguistic meaning and oral pronunciation of SE inflectional morphemes because the SE inflections have no function in the AAVE dialect (Labov, 1972). However, SE inflections often hold essential information such as tense, plurality, comparative, etc. (Finegan, 1999) which are needed to fully comprehend texts in SE (see Table 1).



## Reading in an L2

Most of what we know about L2 reading comes from our knowledge of native language (L1) reading acquisition (Bernhardt, 1993). This section of the literature review discusses the cognitive processes involved in the reading process, how L1 and L2 reading processes differ, the physical processes involved in reading, and strategies L2 readers can use to facilitate the reading process.

### *Second Language Reading: Cognitive Processes*

According to Chomsky (1975), Goodman (1967), and others, human beings are preprogrammed for language acts (listening and speaking) and must be taught to read and write. It is well accepted that reading, and specifically L2 reading, is a very complex, cognitive process we do not completely understand (Bernhardt, 1991; Durgunoglu & Oney, 2000; Geva, Yaghoub-Zadeh, & Schuster, 2000; Jiménez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1996). Although there are differences between first and second language reading (which will be discussed later), most research addressing L2 reading processes is based in L1 reading research (Bernhardt, 1993).

In a review, Shwery (2001) divided theories and methods associated with the reading process into three categories: 1) the information transmission theory and methods, 2) the interaction theory and methods, and 3) the transaction theory and methods. The information transmission theorists propose that reading is a skill-based process which is isolated and relies primarily on decoding skills. This category is most often characterized as a bottom-up interpretation of the reading process.

Later, scholars such as Goodman (1967, 1988), Eskey (1986, 2002), and Cummins and Das (1977) developed a more complex understanding of the reading

process, an interaction approach or psycholinguistic understanding. They argued that proficient readers do not simply decode text and that “the brain is not an empty container to be filled with meaning from the text...[T]he brain is full of knowledge” (Eskey, 2002, p. 6). In fact, they advocated that what the reader brings to the text (top-down approach) is as important, if not more, than the orthography (Anderson, 1999). Thus, the interaction theory of the reading process suggests that reading is a “back-and-forth interaction between the text and what the reader knows about reading (strategies, rules) and the reader’s prior experiences and knowledge with the text’s information” (Shwery, 2001, p. 92). Bernhardt (1991) identified five principal reading factors for L2 readers that account for the back-and-forth interaction: (1) word recognition, (2) phono-graphemic features, (3) syntax, (4) student background knowledge, and (5) student perceptions. Based upon their research, the interaction theorists “view reading not as a linear process, but a process in which readers sample texts, making and testing hypotheses and predictions, relying on their own background knowledge of the text’s content as well as the background knowledge about how language works” (Fitzgerald, 1995, p. 149).

Most recently, reading theorists have suggested that culture and how one is socialized has a great impact on how we conceptualize the reading process. Advocates of transaction theory believe that “a constructed transaction occurs between the reader and the text each time the reader encounters a text...[A]n individual’s social and cultural beliefs and practices, learning intentions, motivations, goals, past experiences, and knowledge are all elements that influence the comprehension outcome when engaged with text” (Shwery, 2001, p. 92). Eskey (2002) concurred with this contemporary interpretation of the reading process by stating that reading is a form of sociocultural

practice. Nassaji (2002) purported that, in the construction-integration process, “the constructed textbase becomes integrated into the reader’s global knowledge, forming a coherent mental representation of what the text is about or a situational model” (p. 46). Building upon the psycholinguistic interpretation of the reading process, transaction theorists promote a sociopsycholinguistic understanding of the reading process. The sociopsycholinguistic (i.e., interactive) approach to the understanding of the reading process aligns with a constructivist’s philosophy of teaching and learning commonly accepted in teaching ELL populations (Au, 1993).

#### *Differences in L1 and L2 Reading*

As mentioned earlier, although research on L2 reading processes is based upon research in L1 reading processes, there are noticeable differences between L1 and L2 reading. Ramírez (1994) summarized the literature on literacy acquisition among L2 learners, noting that “the use of extra text-based knowledge, reading...strategies, and metalinguistic awareness of literacy conventions play an important role in L2 literacy acquisition” (p. 95). His summary demonstrated that “effectively” interpreting second language texts as the mainstream L1 student or teacher might interpret them requires more on the part of L2 learners. Since L2 learners typically have different experiences and linguistic knowledge than L1 SE speakers, unknown vocabulary and diverse backgrounds preclude and interrupt the interpretative process (e.g., increased number of homonyms for AAVE speakers). Koda (1996) pointed out that connections between the words of the text and the context (global knowledge) brought to the reading task by the reader are “bi-directional” in that they interact and ultimately influence text comprehension overall.

Students' prior literacy learning (familiarity with orthographic systems, reading strategies, and learning strategies) and cultural knowledge may or may not be congruent with SE syntax, which may be an obstacle to successful L2 reading. In addition, their L1 reading strategies may or may not transfer to literacy in the L2 (Wade-Woolley, 1999; Conner, 1996). Reading strategies which address text decoding and other bottom-up processing skills have been found to pose the greatest challenge to second language readers (Eskey, 1986; Segalowitz, et al., 1991). Eskey categorizes these lower-level skills as identification skills. Identification skills are those that include the straightforward recognition of the lexical units (the individual words and phrases) and the grammatical signals required for the simple decoding of a text (i.e., inflectional endings).

These two differences between L1 and L2 reading processes are most often discussed, investigated, and researched within the scope of *cross-linguistic transfer*. Jiménez (1994) defined cross-linguistic transfer as “the timely cross-linguistic accessing of information involving recognition on the part of a bilingual individual that a situation or problem is similar enough to information learned in one’s other language such that a link is warranted between the two domains” (p. 106). Cross-linguistic transfer is largely dependent upon how congruent a student’s L1 and target language (TL) are in terms of phrase structure, morphosyntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

#### *Second Language Reading: Physical Processes*

Contrary to a commonsensical understanding of the physical processes involved in reading, reading is not a linear process. Eskey (1986) revealed that our eyes do not move across the page, identifying clusters of letters as words, then adding word to word to form phrases, clauses, and sentences, and finally decode meaning. Rather, we use our

eyes to take in whole chunks of text in a series of short, jerky fixations called saccades. The brain takes in information provided by the eyes, relates it to what it already knows about the subject, and thereby constructs a full meaning for the text which becomes part of what it knows about the subject and can thus be used to make sense of what comes next. Eskey summarized these physical processes of reading by quoting Frank Smith (1971): “what the brain tells the eye” is more important than “what the eye tells the brain”.

According to Cummins and Das (1977), the physical aspects of reading processes can be explained through the *simultaneous-successive model of cognitive processing*. This model is based upon a neuropsychological model that divides the brain into three blocks. The first block is responsible for maintaining wakefulness and arousal and consists of the upper brain stem, the reticular formation and the older parts of the limbic cortex and hippocampus. The second block includes the posterior cortex made up of the parietal, occipital and fronto-temporal lobes and is responsible for the input, recoding and storage of information (simultaneous and successive processing occur here). The third block consists of the prefrontal lobes and is responsible for the construction and execution of plans and programs.

Simultaneous processing involves the integration of the individual stimuli arriving at the brain into simultaneous and primarily spatial groups and is linked to the occipito-parietal area of the cortex. Successive processing is linked to the fronto-temporal regions of the cortex and integrates individual stimuli into temporally organized successive series. In the reading process, successive processing may be important for the mastery of initial decoding skills (bottom-up skills), but higher levels of fluent reading may depend

more on simultaneous processing (top-down skills) (Cummins & Das, 1977). Therefore, we may presume that L2 readers will have greater problems with successive processing skills (i.e., vocabulary recognition and decoding) as opposed to simultaneous processing skills such as inferring and predicting (Jiménez, 1994).

*Strategies of linguistically diverse students in L2 reading*

Research has shown that L2 students experience more difficulty with bottom-up processing skills such as word recognition (Birch, 2002; Eskey, 1986; Jiménez & Gamez, 1996; Labov, 1972; Segalowitz et al., 1991). Knowing that the use of reading strategies by the learner distinguishes proficient readers from poor ones, we can divide the types of strategies learners use in two groups: 1) sociopsycholinguistic strategies and 2) metacognitive strategies (Barnett, 1988; Fitzgerald, 1995).

Sociopsycholinguistic process reading strategies focus on the interaction between the reader and the text as advocated by transaction theory. These strategies include, but are not limited to, the following list:

1. Predicting the content of an upcoming passage or section of the text.
2. Concentrating on grammar to help understand unfamiliar constructions.
3. Understanding the main idea to help comprehend the entire reading.
4. Expanding vocabulary and grammar to help increase reading.
5. Guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words or phrases by using what is already known about English.
6. Analyzing theme, style, and connections to improve comprehension.
7. Distinguishing between opinions and facts in reading.
8. Breaking down larger phrases into smaller parts to help understand difficult passages.
9. Linking what is known in first language with words in English.
10. Creating a map or drawing related ideas to be able to understand the relationships between words and ideas.
11. Writing a short summary of what is read to help understand the main ideas. (Anderson, 1999, pp. 82-83; Fitzgerald, 1995, p. 152).

Metacognitive strategies help students think about what happens in the reading process (Anderson, 2002). These strategies include, but are not limited to, the following list:

1. Setting goals to help improve areas that are important.
  2. Making lists of relevant vocabulary (which may include cognates) to prepare for new reading.
  3. Working with classmates to help develop reading skills.
  4. Taking opportunities to practice what is already known to keep progress steady.
  5. Evaluating what has been learned and focusing on the act of reading.
- (Anderson, 1999, pp. 82-83; Fitzgerald, 1995, p. 152; Jiménez & Arturo, 1996).

Studies have shown that no one specific strategy contributes to reading comprehension; however, readers must know how to use a strategy successfully and orchestrate its use with other reading strategies for successful comprehension (Anderson, 1991).

Research also suggests the benefits of teaching reading comprehension strategies directly to L2 readers (Anderson, 1999; Fitzgerald, 1995; Jiménez & Arturo, 1996). Teachers should model and teach pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading strategies (Valdez Pierce, 2001). Examples of pre-reading strategies include brainstorming, previewing, graphic organizers, guided imagery, student generated questions (K-W-L), field trips, videos and films, experiments, book or text study guides, and anticipation guides (Garcia, 1994; Peregoy & Boyle, 1996; Vacca & Vacca, 1996; Valdez Pierce, 2001).

Examples of during-reading strategies are note-taking, semantic maps, vocabulary study, modeling questioning strategies, learning logs, jigsaw reading, directed reading-thinking activities, think alouds, and reciprocal teaching (Garcia, 1994; Peregoy & Boyle, 1996; Vacca & Vacca, 1996; Valdez Pierce, 2001). Post-reading strategies often involve some type of writing exercise.

These may include journal entries, summaries, and graphic organizers. Each type of strategy can be used to assess L2 reading as well as inform instruction.

In summary, the processes involved in L2 reading are much more complex than initially conceived. While the three dominant theories explaining the reading process, the information transmission theory, the interaction theory, and the transaction theory, differ slightly in their interpretations, each has been more of an evolution of the prior theory than an outright rebuttal. There seems to be a consensus that the reading process, including L2 reading, involves an interaction between the reader and the text. However, there are differences between L1 and L2 reading, primarily students' prior literacy skills and students' cultural knowledge. If students are unfamiliar with orthographic systems, reading strategies, learning strategies, and the syntax of a TL (e.g., SE), this may create a challenge to the acquisition of proficient L2 literacy skills. It was also noted that L2 learners may have more difficulty with successive processing skills, thus leading to problems associated with initial decoding skills (Cummins & Das, 1977; Jiménez, 1994). In an effort to address these challenges, the teaching of sociopsycholinguistic reading strategies seems to benefit L2 readers (Anderson, 1999; Fitzgerald, 1995).

#### Efficacy of Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback, also identified as error correction and negative evidence, is an integral part of MGR and "serves the purpose of providing the learner with information that an utterance is deviant" in the hopes that the learner will modify his grammar in subsequent utterances (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 292). Fanselow's (1977) study of eleven teachers revealed that teachers were more concerned with errors related to meaning than errors related to grammar. Fanselow videotaped eleven teachers during



the same ESL oral lesson plan and transcripts were made. The transcripts were analyzed based upon (a) how the teacher treated the student's incorrect utterance and (b) utterances that were incorrect that the teacher did not correct. In this particular study, meaning and comprehensible utterances seemed to be more important than grammatically correct utterances.

In an attempt to identify "features of corrective interaction that are likely to be more effective in eliciting correct performance", Chaudron (1977, p. 29) developed a model for communicative discourse with corrective feedback from classroom interactions in French immersion classes. Data were collected and analyzed from transcripts of classroom discussions. Similar to Fanselow (1977), Chaudron (1977) found that errors were more often corrected for meaning than grammar. Of particular importance, Chaudron (1977) found that the key to the efficacy of error correction, regardless of what type of technique was used, was the learner's awareness and comprehension of the correction by the teacher.

In one of the first comprehensive literature reviews on error correction in foreign language teaching, Hendrickson (1978) identified five themes or general findings. First, correction of oral and written errors ameliorates subsequent oral and written proficiency. Second, there isn't a standard protocol for when and how often language teachers should correct students' errors. Third, there is doubt as to which errors should have higher priorities for correction. Fourth, there is a "wide variety of techniques that teachers currently use to correct their students' oral and written errors" (p. 396). Fifth, it is not clear that error correction is always beneficial to students.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) undertook an observational study of six French immersion classrooms in an effort to investigate the forms of corrective feedback that were utilized by teachers, along with the efficacy of that feedback. Data were collected from audio recordings of four fourth grade and two sixth grade classrooms. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six categories of corrective feedback: recast, elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, and repetition (Table 2). According to their findings, “the single largest category is the recast, which account[ed] for just over half (55%) of the total number of teacher turns containing feedback” (p. 53). However, recasts were the least efficient form of corrective feedback, with only 31% of recasts leading to uptake (i.e., learner’s responses to feedback) (p. 54). Elicitations were the most successful form of corrective feedback so much so that “all learner utterances following elicitation involve[ed] uptake with an almost even distribution between repair and needs-repair” (p. 54).

Lyster (1998) continued his research and investigated “the discourse contexts in which recasts naturally occur and whether these contexts appear to provide young classroom learners with helpful opportunities to notice the gap between their initial erroneous utterance and the teacher’s corrective reformulation” (Lyster 1998, p. 58). Lyster coded 377 recasts used by four teachers and evaluated the efficacy of the recasts. The findings revealed that, while “80% of all recasts were able to focus the learners’ attention on form”, there was very little learner uptake (p. 60). Of 80 incorporated recasts, none led to repair; and of 297 isolated recasts, only 23 % led to repair. This finding supports Chaudron’s (1977) conclusion that learner awareness and understanding of corrective feedback is vital to it resulting in learner uptake.

Carroll, Roberge, and Swain (1992) investigated the issue of corrective feedback by asking three principal questions: “(1) can error correction (implicit negative feedback + positive input) help adult learners construct morphological generalizations? (2) Can error correction help adult learners restrict the domain of application of generalizations in a principled way? (3) Assuming that it has some effect, does error correction have the same effect on adult learners regardless of how much of the language they already know?” (p. 178). Carroll et al.’s subjects included 79 native English speaking adult students learning French. Data were collected by dividing the subjects into two groups based upon proficiency in the target language (TL): intermediate and advanced. Students were trained in word formation rules in the TL and later received feedback during subsequent lessons. Some groups received corrective feedback while the other group did not. The researchers found that “the experimental groups that received corrective feedback did significantly better than the comparison groups that received no feedback” (p. 183). More specifically, Carroll and colleagues’ results demonstrate that error correction has a positive effect; however, it does not help adult learners construct morphological generalizations. Within the scope of their research, corrective feedback seems to be limited to specific lexical items. Interestingly, Carroll et al. state that “feedback sometimes appears to be more helpful to the advanced subjects, and this effect may be due to their increased ability and flexibility in processing, storing, and recalling the information” (p. 186).

In a subsequent study, Carroll and Swain (1993) once again examined feedback and linguistic generalizations. Research subjects included 100 adult Spanish-speaking students who were learning English as a second language. Subjects were divided into four

different groups based upon the type of feedback they received after committing an error: “group A received explicit metalinguistic information, group B was told their responses were wrong, group C’s errors were corrected by teachers when made by students, and when group D made errors, the teacher would ask if the student was sure about the response” (p. 357). Carroll and Swain (1993) also included a control group for comparison purposes that did not receive feedback. The results demonstrate that “a learning effect is due to negative feedback, as all of the treatment groups performed better than the comparison group” (p. 369). Of the four treatment groups, group A performed the best.

In an attempt to understand how learners perceive interactional feedback, Mackey, Gass, and McDonough (2000) conducted a study with ten ESOL students and seven students learning Italian as a foreign language. Data were collected from communicative task interviews, which were transcribed and analyzed for episodes of interactional feedback. Mackey et al. created four categories, morphosyntactic, phonological, semantic, and lexical for analyzing the linguistic content of feedback episodes (Table 3). They found that feedback addressing morphosyntactic and phonological features were most common. However, ESOL students most accurately perceived lexical feedback episodes followed by phonological and morphosyntactic episodes respectively. Students seemed to be concerned with meaning over form in that “students were thinking about the semantic content of the morphosyntactic episodes or not about the content at all” (p. 488). Mackey et al. conclude by stating that students do not readily perceive morphosyntactic feedback as such and are much better at accurately perceiving feedback on phonology and lexis.

Research on error correction in second language (L2) writing is also insightful in the efficacy of this type of feedback. Chandler (2003) investigated error correction by “comparing the improvement in accuracy over a college semester of an experimental group that corrected the grammatical and lexical errors marked by the teacher on each assignment before writing the next assignment with a control group that did not” (p. 268). In addition, Chandler (2003) examined which types of error correction were most beneficial for learner correction. The experimental group consisted of fifteen East Asian college students and the control group consisted of sixteen East Asian college students. Over the ten week instructional period, Chandler found that “mere practice without error correction did not produce more correct subsequent writing, whereas when students corrected their errors before writing the next assignment, their first drafts became more accurate over the semester” (p. 280). Chandler found that the more explicit the teacher correction was, the fewer errors the students made in the future. This study, once again, seems to support the importance of learner awareness in corrective feedback.

Ferris’ (2001) study investigating corrective feedback in L2 writing examined how explicit corrective feedback needs to be. Data were collected from 72 students and eight teachers. Data consisted of in-class essays which were analyzed based on the five most common types of errors: verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word, and sentence structure and their corresponding feedback (p. 169). Ferris found that “the greatest number of errors was observed in the verb category, followed by sentence structure, word choice, noun endings, and articles” (p. 170). Furthermore, students who received explicit feedback performed much better than those students who received zero or less explicit feedback.

Thus, Ferris' research supports the idea that explicitness is positively correlated to learner uptake as a result of corrective feedback.

Corrective feedback, a major feature of MGR discussed more fully later on, has been shown to be effective in teaching a TL to L2 learners. From these empirical studies we can draw several conclusions about the efficacy of corrective feedback. According to Gass and Selinker (2001) there are three primary limitations to the efficacy of error correction: "(a) corrections cannot occur with all incorrect forms, (b) many so-called errors are errors of interpretation, and (c) error acknowledgement, as in the case of expressions of nonunderstanding (e.g., *huh?*), does not provide sufficiently specific information to inform the learner where exactly an error has been made" (p. 292). Nonetheless, research supports the belief that some feedback is better than no feedback at all (Carroll & Swain, 1993).

In a recent literature review, Yamamoto (retrieved 2006) deduced that "corrective feedback can have an impact on learner's interlanguage systems if teachers follow the necessary procedures: assessment of learner's needs, analysis of the nature of errors, and employment of methods that pinpoint errors to make learners notice a mismatch between their output and the target form" (p. 1). In Pica's (1994a) research, she supported and emphasized the notion that the two keys for efficient use of corrective feedback are "(a) correction must bring students' attention to their own errors and (b) it must do so in meaningful, communicative contexts" (p. 70). In addition, the scholarly review of recasts by Nicholas, Lightbrown, & Spada (2001) found that "the effectiveness of recasts may depend in part on the overall development level of proficiency or interlanguage variety of the learner" (p. 752). Research consistently demonstrates that student uptake is higher

and more successful when the students (a) are aware of the corrective feedback, (b) understand the corrective feedback, and (c) initiate the corrective feedback (Ellis et al., 2001).

Overall, the research on corrective feedback is quite mixed. Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1989) supported the notion that corrective feedback reduces linguistic error production in subsequent utterances. Other research such as that by Brock, Crookes, Day, and Long (1986) has suggested that corrective feedback may be more or less effective depending on the learning environment. Nevertheless, corrective feedback remains a viable tool for language teachers. In fact, scholars such as Schachter (1984) have warned that a lack of error correction may lead to learner's internalizing their non-target-like utterances as accurate and correct. This could lead to maladapted linguistic utterances or fossilization. Thus, one can generalize that under certain circumstances corrective feedback is beneficial in the SLA process.

There are a few key elements found throughout the scholarship that one can use as a guide to effectively use corrective feedback in communicative classroom settings. First, it appears that the efficacy of feedback is predicated on the learner's awareness and understanding (learner metacognition) that corrective feedback is being given (Han 2001; Schmidt and Frota 1986). Second, corrective feedback seems to be most useful when students actively participate in or initiate the feedback (Mackey, et al., 2000). Finally, it appears that learner readiness plays a vital role in the ability of the corrective feedback to be converted to uptake (Mackey and Philp, 1998). These elements of corrective feedback are keys to successful implementation of MGR.

During small group instructional settings, students understand that the instructor will be giving feedback through the course of the lesson. This dialogue ensures that the learner is aware and engaged in the feedback being given.

#### Summary Statement

From the review of the literature there are several key points that garner a brief summary. Research on AAVE supports the notion that it is a separate linguistic system from SE. The differences and subsequent cross-linguistic interference between AAVE and SE appear to be most troublesome with bottom-up processing skills. These challenges appear to be the primary obstacles for AAVE speakers gaining proficiency in SE literacy. Corrective feedback also seems to facilitate L2 literacy acquisition when students are aware feedback is being given. In particular, elicitation helps students realize the differences between non-target-like and target-like utterances through comprehensible input and learner uptake. MGR, an intervention not previously studied with AAVE speakers, addresses these concerns in an integrated manner. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of MGR in increasing SE literacy (inflectional endings, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, phonological awareness, motivation, and independent reading practices) acquisition of adolescent AAVE speaking students.

#### Overview Of Research Objectives

The overarching purpose of this study was to facilitate SE literacy acquisition of AAVE speaking students through MGR. More specifically, the aim of this study was to encourage SE literacy acquisition through focused instruction on English inflectional morphemes. It was hypothesized that an MGR approach to teaching inflectional morphemes will increase the students' SE acquisition and thus raise reading achievement.



Therefore, the exploratory research questions were: (1) What is the impact of MGR on the reading achievement of high school students who are African-American Vernacular English speakers, as measured by the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition (KTEA II), using subtests Letter and Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension (Kaufman and Kaufman, 2004)? (2) What is the impact of MGR on the writing achievement of high school students who are African-American Vernacular English speakers, as measured by the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition (KTEA II), using subtest Written Expression (Kaufman and Kaufman, 2004)? (3) What are the strengths and challenges associated with implementing MGR as perceived by the participant observer? (4) What are high school students' perceptions of MGR? See Table 4 for a matrix detailing how each research questions will be measured and analyzed of the independent and dependent variables in this study.

## METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The study utilized formative experiment methodology (Reinking & Bradley, 2004), an MGR protocol (Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, & Rascón, 2007), and a quasi-experimental time-series design (Smith & Glass, 1987). Formative experiments are well suited for a MGR based study because they reflect and are compatible with the flexibility of a MGR approach to teaching SE. A quasi-experimental design is best suited for research contexts, such as educational settings, in which true random assignment of participants to treatment conditions is not possible.

In the following segments, a rationale for the utilization of formative experiments is discussed followed by a detailed explanation of MGR and a sample lesson. Finally, an explanation of time-series design and sample methods is included as well.

### *Formative Experiment Methodology*

Reinking and Bradley (2004) state that Formative experiments (Fes) “accommodate both the variation inherent in classrooms and the need to adapt interventions in response to relevant variation” (p. 153). Based on Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, and Schauble’s, (2003) work, Reinking and Bradley identified and explained the validating characteristics of Fes, informing this study’s research questions. First, Fes are theory driven in their purpose and function. The primary goal of the Fe is to develop theory about both the “*process* of learning and *means* that are designed to support learning” (Cobb et al., 2003, p. 10, as cited in Reinking and Bradley, 2004) [*italics in original*] (see research questions). Second, “Fes investigate how to improve education and learning toward well-specified goals...explicitly justified in relation to theory and practice” (Reinking & Bradley, p. 159). Third, this approach to research is iterative. Initially, the intervention is

implemented in a continuous cycle of data collection and analysis in order to determine the contextual factors enhancing or inhibiting the intervention's effectiveness. The period of data collection must be a reasonable amount of time (four months in this investigation).

Fes are also transformational since it is assumed that the intervention will transform the learning environment in furthering the educational goal; however, the context of implementation (typically real classrooms) may result in important, unexpected developments. It is essential to realize this aspect of Fes since theory may be further developed or more research suggested.

Another important characteristic of Fes is that they must have flexibility in design. Due to the nature of Fes, methods of data collection and analysis may be adapted in response to developments during the study. Baseline data are required in order to compare/contrast end results. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods is appropriate; however, qualitative data are essential due to the systemic nature of the design (Salomon, 1991, as cited in Reinking & Bradley, 2004). Finally, Fes are pragmatic; however, this refers to the underlying principles of pragmatism rather than simply what works best (i.e., "involving practitioners and students in setting research agendas and modifying interventions") (Reinking & Bradley, p. 161).

It must be noted that the contextualized and reactive nature of Fes can just as easily be critiqued for research purposes as lauded. The aforementioned elements of Fes should also be kept in mind when any attempts at generalizations are made. The specific contexts and learning style/needs of participants ultimately make each study using Fes

unique. This unique nature of Fes should be especially taken into account during data analysis and discussions related to educational implications.

Fes have been used recently to examine the implementation of new practices or interventions in real classroom contexts (Reinking & Watkins, 2000; Reinking & Bradley, 2004). While this type of methodology is an experiment, there is a broader goal than that of a typical experiment in a more controlled environment: to inform practice by documenting the variables that play a part in the end results. In other words, theory development is a major goal, yet formative experiments are more practice-oriented since they focus on the issues classroom teachers face when implementing new approaches or interventions, such as MGR, in their classrooms. In this study, Fe experiment design will be used to guide and focus the instruction of English inflectional morphemes and other bottom-up processing strategies.

### *Modified Guided Reading*

Guided reading, the foundation of MGR, is a component of a comprehensive literacy program providing individualized reading instruction to 4-6 students with similar instructional needs (Fountas & Pinell, 1996). It is recommended that these groups meet at least three to five times per week for 20 to 30 minutes each session in order for students to make consistent reading gains. This approach to reading instruction allows teachers to explicitly teach the skills and reading strategies students need, thus facilitating the acquisition of reading proficiency. Multiple copies of leveled texts are carefully selected and used by the teacher based on the student's instructional needs. Teachers model and facilitate learning to build upon the knowledge, skills, and strategies the students already possess.

Typically, guided reading has one or two 20-minute sessions with the teacher introducing the text to support learning needs, students reading while teachers prompt and take anecdotal notes, and word work that focuses on phonological or orthographical awareness. MGR utilizes three plus days of 20-30 minute sessions, an introduction and a shared reading of the guided reading (GR) text; teacher prompts focusing on word recognition while students read; word work focusing on morphological, orthographic, or phonological awareness, and a response to the text (i.e., writing). The three primary features that differentiate MGR from GR are the additional instructional days, focus on morphological awareness, and learning needs based upon literacy *and* linguistic proficiency.

Due to the nature of guided reading, there are many definitions of this approach. Thus, researchers have operationalized guided reading differently. What remains constant throughout the literature on guided reading is the utilization of small groups for highly specialized literacy instruction based on student needs. Additionally, the vast majority of the guided reading scholarship deals with elementary and middle grade students rather than adolescents and adults (for an exception see Massengil, 2004). Some researchers focus on miscue/error analysis during guided reading to raise reading achievement (Moore & Brantingham, 2003). Among the guided reading literature, the use of student learning centers during guided reading time is also prevalent. The use of student created newsletters, reading/writing poetry, and responding to literature through art all lead to literacy gains (Ford & Opitz, 2002; Wiencek, 2002). The majority of the research supporting successful guided reading instruction relates to the instruction of reading strategies. Pre-reading (i.e., anticipation guides, brainstorming, activating prior

knowledge, etc.), during reading (i.e., self-monitoring strategies, active reading through questioning, summarizing, etc.), and post reading (i.e., story maps, summarizing, inferring, etc.) strategies, above all else, teach students that reading is an active process, one that requires a transaction between the text and the students' cognitive processes (Davis, 2000; Lloyd, 2004; Mooney, 1995; Short, Kane, & Peeling, 2000; Sowell, 2003; Villaume & Brabham, 2001). While it appears that guided reading leads to increased reading achievement among native English speaking students (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Guastello & Lenz, 2005; Rashotte, MacPhee, & Torgesen, 2001), additional research needs to be done addressing the efficacy of guided reading practices and linguistically diverse students (Suits, 2003). This MGR study aims to build upon the foundation of the aforementioned guided reading studies and add to the research base on raising English literacy achievement among linguistically diverse students (i.e., African American vernacular English speakers).

#### *MGR Lesson Format*

The MGR lesson cycle lasts three or more days, depending on the instructional reading level of the text, concept(s) introduced, and most importantly, the needs of the learners. Before the lesson begins, a linguistic analysis of the text and identification of teaching points should be completed by the teacher. After introducing the text, the teacher reads the guided reading text aloud, using a shared reading approach with instructional or grand conversations (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Meir, 2003) to ensure comprehension by building on previous experiences of students. Students read the text aloud and write or complete word study activities to build knowledge of the L2 (vocabulary, syntax, morphology, etc.). Explicit instruction is

necessary, comparing/contrasting L1 and L2. An MGR lesson plan framework based on Birch's (2002) work is included to detail the lesson planning process and structure (Figure 2). Italicized font indicates examples of how this is to be completed with possible teaching points identified prior to teaching the lesson. As ELLs become more proficient (orally and literary) they will need less support. With increased proficiency, the framework should be adjusted to reflect more student responsibility as the teacher scaffolds and assists as necessary.

The following provides an idea of how MGR is conducted over three-days or more and is based primarily on the work of Bernhardt (1991), Birch (2002), Fountas and Pinnell (1996), Knox and Amador-Watson (2000), and others as noted:

*DAY ONE: Introduction and Shared Reading of Guided Reading Text*

- a. Purpose: The introduction and shared reading should be seen as scaffolds for AAVE speakers who need more support learning SE syntax and semantics *and* learning to read simultaneously. Both expand the meaning of texts (opportunities for readers to make connections, infer, summarize, synthesize, analyze, and critique), allow speakers of AAVE to become familiar with the sounds and patterns of written language, and experience demonstrations of fluent, phrased, expressive reading.
- b. Process: The introduction of the text will differ depending upon the level of support needed by the group (introduce text; provide title; introduce the concept of the story to support comprehension; elicit predictions, specifically regarding the main idea of the story). While introducing the text, the teacher should ask open questions to encourage student dialogue, encourage the children to talk to each other about topic/concept, and share some comments or personal information. It is important to

validate students' responses as to what they think the main idea of the story is using the pictures, the language structures, and the language of the story (Au, 1993). The teacher should read the guided reading text aloud with expression, modeling fluency, using short, focused conversations with students, and pausing to allow them to respond to the text. Ensuring meaning/comprehension is of utmost importance (Freeman and Freeman, 2004). While reading, model strategies and point out the predetermined challenges identified when planning the lesson.

After reading aloud, the teacher should discuss the text using the pictures, the language structures, the words, and the meaning of the story, reviewing previously planned teaching points or "teachable moments." At this point, the teacher should explicitly identify the vocabulary and word study objectives within the context of the story. Word study should always be conducted connecting the isolated words with the text to bridge/facilitate application of language and content (Cummins, 2003).

Throughout the lesson, it is important to use a consistent set of terms with the students so that they are aware of them when prompted during the guided reading (i.e., blends, hard g, soft g, chunk, etc.). Based on their needs, the teacher should engage the students in looking at important aspects of the print (letters, words, punctuation, where to start, which way to go, etc.) and clarify any confusion.

#### *DAY TWO: Student Reading and Teacher Supporting*

Before beginning, the teacher should briefly discuss the text to activate yesterday's learning points. During students' first read, they should be reading softly with the teacher observing, prompting, and writing anecdotal notes. Teachers choose prompts based on errors made (semantics, structural, graphophonic); however, it is important to



note that prompts such as “Does that make sense?” should be reserved for more orally proficient students as those with lower proficiency levels are still developing their SE and won’t be able to correctly determine if something “makes sense” or “sounds right”. With diverse populations, the *focus* of the prompts should be on word recognition using the following framework adapted from Clark’s (2004) work (Table 5).

During subsequent readings, the teacher supports students as needed and explicitly re-teaches language-learning points based upon the context of the text. Students should be able to read fluently and re-tell the story before going on to a new text. Repetition is important for AAVE speakers to imprint the phonological sounds of SE in order to become fluent readers.

*DAY THREE plus: Responding to the text*

Objectives involving writing, word study, vocabulary, etc. connected to the text, should be highlighted and applied using authentic assignments (Cummins, 2003; Krashen, 2003).

Field studies using this approach to reading instruction demonstrate that L2 language learners benefit from MGR. They gain additional language learning opportunities that native speakers of SE typically acquire implicitly, including detailed vocabulary instruction (discussed while teacher reads text aloud), variables concerning second language text structure (semantics, syntax, morphology), and cultural relevance. Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), also known as academic language or the language of texts, will be acquired more rapidly when using texts as the instructional vehicles for SE acquisition (Cummins, 1981). CALP will be targeted, thus accelerated through MGR because students are actively involved in small group instruction,

previously found to be effective with struggling readers (Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993; Hudson & Smith, 2001; Mohr, 2004). MGR provides teachers with a systematic framework for continuously meeting and evaluating students' language and reading needs, while building upon strengths already demonstrated in the L1, as well as in SE.

### *Time-Series Design*

In educational research contexts, true random assignment to treatment conditions is normally unattainable. Quasi-experimental studies enable researchers to conduct research under such circumstances while addressing concerns related to internal validity. For this time-series/Fe design, there was a treatment group consisting of six students and a control group consisting of six students. Using a quasi-experimental design along with a Fe design enables the researcher to investigate the intervention using more true experiment-like methods, yet retain flexibility to make changes as determined by the needs of the students to the intervention.

According to Smith and Glass (1987), "in the interrupted time-series design a string of observations of the dependent variables [SE reading and writing proficiencies in this case] is made prior to the introduction of the independent variable, or treatment [MGR in this case], after which another string of observations is made" (p. 162). In implementing this pretest/posttest design, the researcher administered the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition (KTEA II) Letter and Word Recognition, Reading Comprehension and Written Expression subtests by using the Kaufman Comprehensive Form A for the first administration, Form B for the second, and Form A for the third during the pretest phase. For the posttest phase, the researcher administered

the KTEA II three separate times after the intervention period, first using Form B, then Form A, and finally Form B (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004) (Table 4).

The utilization of forms A and B during the pretest/posttest administrations addresses many of the threats to the internal validity of the study. Specific threats to internal validity for this proposal include testing effects, history, attrition, and bias (Glass & Smith, 1987). Testing effects occur when the same test is used and eventually participants are able to do well on the test because they become familiar enough with the instrument; therefore, it is no longer a valid measure of their ability. Using the ABA and BAB forms in this respective order minimizes the testing effect. In controlling for the threat of history, a journal was kept reflecting any actions or related occurrences that might have contributed to an alternative explanation of research results. For example, careful records were kept regarding student progress, classroom instruction, or personal events that might explain unexpected progress, or lack thereof. With regard to the threat of attrition, a log was kept to detail participant characteristics; in the event that participants dropped out of the intervention program, patterns of characteristics may be visible to at least partially explain the attrition. Using a standardized test (KTEA-II) and utilizing the ABA and BAB testing format addressed the threat of bias. In addition, videotaped MGR lessons were transcribed and used to triangulate data sources for record keeping purposes (i.e., if there is disagreement or confusion regarding lesson processes or students' needs).

### *Sample Methods*

The sampling for this study was purposive. From a sample population of 15 students, the researcher selected a total of twelve adolescent participants from grades 9-

12; six participated in the treatment group, and six participated in the control group. The six students in the treatment group participated in a MGR program wherein the researcher met with them four to five days a week for one hour each meeting/session during the school day. The control group did not participate in the MGR program and received their usual classroom reading/language arts instruction. In this instance, the normal reading/language arts instruction occurred in one of two classes, Intensive Reading or English IV.

In both classes, the curriculum consisted of the Level C Read 180 (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2004) program. The instructional model for the Level C Read 180 program is based upon ninety minutes of instruction. According to the teacher's manual, the first twenty minutes should be whole group instruction. Then, students rotate into one of three twenty minute small group instructional stations (modeled and independent reading, small group direct instruction, or computer work with the Read 180 software). After a total of sixty minutes, the class ends with a ten minutes whole group wrap-up.

At the high school where the intervention took place, one teacher taught both the Intensive Reading and English IV classes. I met with the teacher about how the program was implemented in his classroom. He said that he strictly followed the Read 180 curricular model and supporting material. In my discussions with the students, however, they consistently stated "all we do is sit on the computer; ain't no teachin' goin' on." All twelve student participants felt that their Intensive Reading and/or English IV classes were not teaching them the literacy skills they needed to be successful.

### *Participants*

All of the twelve participants were speakers of AAVE and selected based upon similar instructional reading levels, as well as a set of specific linguistic requirements. With regard to the similar reading levels, all participants had an instructional reading level (as determined by the classroom teacher's assessment measure, the Scholastic Reading Inventory) within three grade levels of each other. For example, possible groups would have students reading at the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade levels, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade levels, etc.

After IRB approval at the University of Miami and Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the researcher was introduced to Mrs. Freeport, instructor of the On the Job Training (OJT) course at the high school where the intervention took place. The OJT course was an elective course offered to juniors and seniors who have part-time jobs and who are eager to improve their interviewing skills. Students enrolled in this course attended school for half the day and then went to their jobs at noon. This class was offered to both non-college prep and college-prep track students. However, the majority of students in this course had not passed the required reading and/or math standardized test for graduation.

In the first meeting between Mrs. Freeport and the researcher, Mrs. Freeport expressed her delight in providing the students the opportunity to participate in a program that would improve the students' SE acquisition and overall literacy achievement. An important component of the OJT was SE oral language proficiency within the context of a professional interview. Mrs. Freeport felt that this intervention supported many of the same goals as the OJT course. In short, the majority students in Mrs. Freeport's class

were generally highly motivated to attend class and more inclined to participate in the intervention, speakers of AAVE, and reading at least one year below grade level.

After obtaining parental permission and student consent to participate in the study, the researcher administered the KTEA II Oral Expression subtest to fifteen participants from the teacher-selected pool of students. Based upon these data, those students who articulated linguistic features of AAVE (i.e., habitual *be*, *r*-lessness, *l*-lessness, simplification/weakening of consonants and consonant clusters, etc.) in more than 60% of their syntactic utterances were considered speakers of AAVE (see Table 6 for criteria). In determining who would participate in the treatment group, the twelve participants' names were placed in a box. Names were randomly pulled from the box. The first selection was placed in the treatment group followed by selecting a participant for the control group. Subsequently, odd numbered selections constituted the treatment group and the even numbered selection constituted the control group.

## DATA COLLECTION

MGR was implemented over four months in a large Southeastern U.S. high school wherein the researcher met with six speakers of AAVE four to five days each week for one hour. Instruction time was about three hours per week. Data sources identified to measure student outcomes included the KTEA II Letter and Word Recognition, Reading Comprehension, and Written Expression (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004). Data sources to provide formative assessment information and guide instruction were administered during the pre-test phase, and once every four weeks thereafter. These informal measures included an assessment of English inflectional morphemes (Shanker & Ekwall, 2000, Table 8) and writing tasks associated with instructional text (i.e., compare and contrast writing, sequencing, etc.). In addition, field reflections, student participant surveys (Table 9), and videotaped MGR lessons (Table 10) were analyzed to answer applicable research questions (see Table 4). The KTEA II was used for an overall literacy ability baseline measure and administered as a repeated measures pretest/posttest to assess literacy gains.

The materials for this study were leveled informational and narrative texts (i.e., Pinell & Fountas, 1999). Informational texts were used because they often cover high interest material that attracts older students. Additionally, informational texts improve students' cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) since most informative texts are written with school/academic language (lower frequency words) (Derewianka, 1998). Narrative texts were utilized because they incorporate advanced language features such as figurative language, metaphors, and similes. Both text types are important to ensure the acquisition of academic and figurative language ultimately impacting comprehension.

Field reflections were kept in a journal in which the researcher wrote observations following each instructional session with the participants. The field reflections and ongoing inflections assessments were used to gather data on perceived efficacy, or lack thereof, of MGR during implementation.

Two sets of surveys were conducted with each of the treatment group participants in order to ascertain their perceptions of reading. The first was conducted prior to implementation of MGR and the second was done post implementation (see Table 9 for protocol). For a table depicting the timeline for data collection, see Table 10. Throughout the duration of the treatment period, MGR lessons were systematically videotaped in coordination with a second researcher as a means to triangulate data sources and answer any questions that had arisen during or after the data collection period. Furthermore, there was no attrition of participating students in both the control and treatment groups.



## INSTRUMENTATION

The Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition (KTEA II) subtests Letter and Word Recognition, Reading Comprehension and Written Expression were used to collect pre and post intervention data for summative assessments (Table 4). With its latest revision, improvements have been made to both the reliability and validity of the KTEA II assessment. Internal consistency coefficients are extremely stable (range = .93 - .97) for the Letter and Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension subtests. The Written Expression subtest internal consistency coefficients (range = .78 - .85) is not quite as high. As a means to address validity issues, correlation studies were performed with four other major tests of educational achievement (the Kaufman Test of Education Achievement Comprehensive Form, Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Second Edition, Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Third Edition, and the Peabody Individual Achievement Test – Revised Normative Update). Reading composite correlation coefficients ranged from .76 - .88 when compared overall. Likewise, writing composite correlation coefficients ranged from .74 - .83.

Additionally, the Structural Analysis subtest of the Ekwall/Shanker Informal Reading Inventory (Shanker & Ekwall, 2000) was used as a formative assessment throughout the intervention. In following an MGR approach, writing assignments, related to the literary texts, were used to guide instruction based upon students' orthographic proficiencies. Orthographic knowledge (i.e., letter-sound correspondences) is essential for full and successful literacy development. According to Bear et al. (2000), "becoming fully literate is absolutely dependent on fast, accurate recognition of words in texts, and fast, accurate production of words in writing so that readers and writers can focus their

attention on making meaning” (p. 3). There is empirical evidence of the close correlation between instructional reading and developmental spelling levels (Bear, et al., 2000).

Writing samples from students provided the researcher with a relevant gauge of instructional needs throughout the intervention period.

The assessment of English morphemes occurred at the onset of the intervention implementation and once every four weeks thereafter using the Structural Analysis subtest of the Ekwall/Shanker Informal Reading Inventory (Shanker & Ekwall, 2000). The Structural Analysis test focuses on the readers understanding of English morphology. Morphemes such as root words, prefixes, suffixes, possessives, plurals, etc. are tested to ascertain whether students can (a) separate the units of a word and (b) understand each word unit.

Burke’s (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005) reading interview was adapted for use in this intervention as a means to assess students’ reading practices and overall metalinguistic knowledge about reading. This instrument is normally administered as an interview, but was converted to a questionnaire survey. The conversion to a survey format was done to facilitate the administration and collection of the data. The nine interview questions were used in the pre-treatment survey and in the post-treatment surveys (see Table 8). According to Burke, the primary benefit of the reading interview/survey is that, “it provides access to people’s views about reading (p. 135).” Burke adds that “it is a good tool to use at the beginning and end of an instructional program because it shows a student’s shift in attitudes about reading and the reading process (p. 140).” This information guided the researcher in understanding participating students’ perspectives about reading.

## RESULTS

### *Data Analysis*

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this study. Quantitative data collected from the KTEA II (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004) pretests and posttests were analyzed and graphed to view differences in reading and writing achievement after MGR implementation. The statistics resulting from the KTEA II assessments are descriptive in nature and were not used for inferential analysis due to the small number of research participants ( $n = 12$ ). Scores are to be read as percentile rank, i.e., 16 = 16<sup>th</sup> percentile. While collecting the KTEA II data, raw scores from each of the subtests (Letter and Word Recognition, Reading Comprehension, and Written Expression) were converted to standard scores. The standard scores were then converted to percentile rank based upon grade level (12<sup>th</sup> grade in this case) and school term (fall in this case).

Qualitative data collected from field reflections, student surveys, and video-taped MGR sessions were a primary focus and analyzed using a constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Inductive category coding of the data was combined simultaneously with comparison of SE reading and writing development to build hypotheses and facilitate the discovery of new relationships. First, two researchers independently coded the qualitative data. Open coding was discussed and validated between the two researchers. An inter-rater reliability of 0.91 was determined after the researchers coded transcribed video-taped MGR lessons, field reflections, and student surveys. Axial codes were derived from open codes by grouping and categorizing like themes and patterns. Connections among and between the resulting axial codes, formulated the developing hypotheses.

Research question one investigated the reading achievement of AAVE speaking students and asks: what is the impact of MGR on the reading achievement of high school students who are African-American Vernacular English speakers, as measured by the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition (KTEA II), using subtests Letter and Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004)? Following the KTEA II scoring guidelines, percentile rank was determined by combining the standard scores from the Letter and Word Recognition and the Reading Comprehension subtests; the mean of those scores constituted an overall reading comprehension standard score. Subsequently, this standard score was converted to the student's percentile rank for overall reading comprehension using the table in the KTEA II administrator's manual.

In the control group, data from the pretests and posttests suggest both gains and losses in percentile rank with a range from a decrease in percentile rank by five and an increase by twenty. Overall, three of the six students in the control group did not demonstrate posttest gains in comparison to the last pretest while the other three students increased their percentile rank in each of the three posttests when compared to the last pretest assessment (see Table 10). One student, Wood, dramatically increased her percentile rank in each of the three posttests. Two other students, Pakin and Burner, also increased their percentile rank in each of the three posttests, respective to the last pretest. The three remaining students in the control group did not increase their percentile rank in any of the three posttests. That is to say that, Tom, Linton, and Charm scored higher on the reading comprehension pretest than on any of the three posttests.

Wood's extraordinary increase in percentile rank may, in part, be explained by a series of informal conversations she had with the researcher. In seeing each other everyday, the researcher would always ask about classes at school and offer words of encouragement. During all of these brief encounters, Wood would always mention her desire to get out of high school and "move on with her life". She appeared to be an intrinsically motivated individual determined to better herself.

In the treatment group, data from the pretests and posttests suggest gains in percentile rank from all students. Four of the students in the treatment group increased their percentile rank in each of the three posttests when compared to the last pretest (see Table 11). The two other students in the treatment group increased their percentile rank in two of the three posttests, respective to the last pretest. All students in the treatment group recorded increases in percentile rank immediately following the intervention; increases ranged from +1 to +9.

The students in the treatment group appeared to outperform the students in the control group on the posttests. While only three students in the control demonstrated positive gains in percentile rank all of the students in the treatment group increased their percentile rank respectively. The exceedingly high gains from Nixon and Dray may be explained by the thoughtfulness with which they dedicated themselves to the eight week intervention. Prior to being randomly selected for the treatment group, Nixon and Dray expressed their desire to participate in the intervention. Each student wanted to go to college and expressed to the researcher that participating in the study would help them read and write better so they could go to college.

Based upon these descriptive statistics, it appears that MGR had a positive impact on the reading achievement of the students. While the variance between the control and treatment groups cannot be directly correlated to the MGR intervention, the focus on explicit instruction of reading strategies and inflectional morphemes appears to have had a positive impact on student reading achievement. The impact of explicit instruction will be discussed in further detail in research questions three and four.

Research question two investigated the writing achievement of AAVE speaking students and asks: what is the impact of MGR on the writing achievement of high school students who are African-American Vernacular English speakers, as measured by the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition (KTEA II), using subtest Written Expression (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004)? In the control group, data from the pretests and posttests suggest all two students increased their percentile rank in each of the three posttests, respective to the last pretest. Two students increased their percentile rank in two of the three posttests, and two students increased their percentile rank in one of the three posttests (see Table 12). More specifically, Wood continued to demonstrate consistent growth in written expression similar to her growth in reading comprehension.

In the treatment group, data from the pretests and posttests suggest that five of the six of the students increased their percentile ranks in each of the three posttest assessments, respective to the last pretest. Also, five of the six students in the treatment group recorded increases in percentile rank immediately following the intervention; increases ranged from +3 to +32. Richer, Dray, and Martin, appeared to make dramatic improvements in their written expression (see Table 13).

Although one student in the treatment group appears to have regressed, Smithy, the students in the treatment group outperformed the students in the control group on the writing posttests. While only two of the students in the control increased their percentile rank by ten or more, five of the students in the treatment increased their percentile rank by ten or more. Based upon these descriptive statistics, it appears that MGR had more of an impact on participants' writing achievement than reading achievement

In the treatment, three students had exceedingly high gains, Richer, Dray, and Martin. Richer was in a group of three students, was extremely motivated, and did not have any absences during the intervention. Richer took her studies very seriously and was in the process of applying to colleges and technical schools. Unfortunately, she had not passed the reading portion of the high stakes standardized test needed for graduation; she had taken the test three times previously. Her desire to attend some form of postsecondary education gave her the motivation she needed to work hard during the intervention. Her extraordinary gains may reflect her dedication and genuine effort to better her reading and writing skills through intervention.

Likewise, Dray's exceedingly high gains may have been the result of her intrinsic drive and dedication. However, Dray also worked one-on-one with the researcher. The one-on-one setting allowed for focused instruction based upon Dray's specific individual needs. While the content of the instruction remained the same across all students in the treatment group, the level and quality of the direct feedback that Dray received may have served her better. This individualized instruction may, in part, explain Dray's gains.

Similar to both Richer and Dray, Martin's dedication and desire to go to college made him a serious student. He was in a group of three students. Martin was in the high

school band and attempting to get a college scholarship. He had not passed the states' high stakes standardized test and was determined to graduate and qualify for a band scholarship. Thus, Martin's intrinsic motivation may have had an impact on his exceedingly high increase in achievement.

Contrary to Richer, Dray, and Martin, Smithy did not display any written achievement gains after the MGR intervention. In a private conversation with the researcher, Smithy explained that he knew he did not do well on the post assessment. He said, "My mind is on other things. I'm sorry; I just don't think I did good." In a follow-up conversation, Smithy explained that he was taking on more responsibility at work and might have to transfer schools. In short, Smithy's lack of progress may have been a result of the stress he was under outside of the academic setting.

Research question three investigated the efficacy of MGR from the researcher's perspective and asks: what are the strengths and challenges associated with implementing MGR as perceived by the participant observer? Based upon data from field reflections and transcribed video-recorded lessons, the resulting inductive category codes were used in conjunction with the work of the treatment group students to build hypotheses. Prior to developing hypotheses, it was apparent that there were several overall strengths and challenges implementing MGR from the participant observer perspective.

### *Strengths*

During the data analysis, it became evident that explicit instruction, small group settings, immediate feedback, and repetition of reading skills/strategies were major strengths of the intervention (see figure 3 in the appendix for examples of coding).



Contrary to inquiry based models of teaching, this study utilized explicit instruction of specific reading strategies and skills through the MGR format. As in other intervention research (e.g., Baumann, 1984; Engelmann, 2007; Martella et al., 2006; Walker et al., 2006), the students found the explicit instruction extremely valuable. Each lesson started with the researcher reading the title of the literary passage and asking students to activate their prior knowledge based upon the subject of the title and/or predict what the story might be about. Once the researcher read through the passage, the students practiced top-down reading strategies and connected the subject of the passage to experiences in their own lives. The specific top-down reading strategies were taught to the students by the researcher during the first MGR session. These strategies included relating the information in the text to the students' lives, sharing how much information they already know about the topic, and explicitly discussing how the new information was related to what they already knew. Based upon this line of thought, the researcher and students' discussed different conclusions that could be drawn from the text and inferences that could be made. The overarching purpose of the top-down strategies was to connect the text to the students' life experiences as a means to facilitate comprehension.

Then, students wrote a main idea for each section of the literary passage and an overall summary statement for the text. Next, another student in the group would read the text. After the reading, the researcher and students focused on bottom-up reading strategies. Identification of new vocabulary words, exercises focusing on English inflectional endings, and writing activities occurred during this time.

The student participants found the systematic approach to each literary passage extremely beneficial. Three of the students in the treatment group specifically commented

that they knew about reading strategies, but they did not know how to use them until the researcher taught them how to apply the strategies during the reading process. By the end of the 8-week intervention, students were independently implementing the entire systematic approach in other classes and on standardized assessments. One student approached the researcher after finding out that she had passed the state's high stakes standardized test; it was the fourth time she took the test. She told the researcher, "You know, I used our top-down and bottom-up strategies on the reading test. I know that's what made the difference. I get to graduate!"

The ability to teach in a small group setting was also a major strength of the intervention. The treatment group consisted of six students; however, these students met in three different groups. One group included two students, another group was made up of three students, and one student received individual instruction. These groupings were a result of the students' schedule and were in no way related to literacy proficiency. As noted in the field reflections and transcribed video lessons, students were able to ask questions that they normally would have been afraid to ask. The small group setting created a safe environment wherein students could ask questions about the reading process that they were "supposed" to already know without fear of being ridiculed from peers. During the instruction on the possessive -s inflection, a student asked about the difference in the apostrophe before and after the -s. He later told the researcher that he didn't feel comfortable about asking that question in his other reading class.

As a result of the small group setting, there were no behavioral issues. The students were focused and attentive throughout the 8 weeks of treatment. The students were extremely self-motivated and wanted to learn. Additionally, the nature of small

group teaching created an environment wherein the students were encouraged to work diligently. As a result of having a classroom environment in which respect for others was expected, the students' mature behavior was contagious and they began to encourage and support each other. The personal attention the researcher was able to give each student helped in creating trust between the students and the researcher, too. This trust relationship raised the expectations of the teaching and learning throughout the study.

The immediate feedback the researcher was able to give during the intervention also became a clear strength during data analysis. Similar to the findings of Han (2001), Mackey et al. (2000), and Schmidt and Frota (1986), learner readiness (i.e., cognizance of the feedback) was central to the feedback being meaningful. The coding of the feedback fell into two primary categories: feedback related to clarifying bottom-up processing misconceptions and feedback related to correcting students' inaccurate comprehension of texts. The most common misconceptions were associated with the inflectional ending third person singular –s and the inflectional ending possessive –s. Confusion with the third person singular –s is a result of AAVE not having that grammatical construction in its oral production. For example, a passage from the *Fall of the House of Usher* read, "Usher shakes his friend." However, the students read, "Usher shake his friend." This type of bottom-up processing error occurred frequently in the beginning of the intervention. Through immediate feedback from the researcher, the students were able to become cognizant of their bottom-up processing error over the duration of the intervention. Misconceptions regarding the possessive –s were evident because students would arbitrarily put the apostrophe before or after the –s and would not be able to differentiate between singular and plural possessive. Once immediate feedback was given

through explicit instruction of singular and plural possessive –s, students became cognizant of the placement of the apostrophe and how the possessive –s affected understanding of the sentence. Several students made comments that clarifying these misconceptions helped in their overall comprehension of the text because as one student stated, “Things made more sense, now.” Furthermore, this comment supports the findings of Tomasello and Herron (1986) in that corrective feedback reduces language errors in subsequent language acts.

Also, feedback related to correcting students’ inaccurate comprehension of texts also turned out to be a major strength of the MGR intervention. Inaccurate comprehension of texts manifested itself by students not being able to (1) identify the main idea, (2) differentiate between details and main idea, and (3) draw appropriate conclusions, as well as inferring information incorrectly. Instances where the students could not identify the main idea or differentiate between main idea and details were opportunities to provide explicit instruction on these reading skills. If students could not identify the main idea, the researcher would guide them by asking the topic of the text and ask to locate the sentence with the topic in it. Other students would also provide peer instruction. For example, one student mentioned that the main idea is usually in the first paragraph. The student went on to say, “If you still have trouble finding the main idea you can check the last paragraph, too; the topic in the first and last paragraph is usually the main idea.” The immediate feedback also allowed the researcher to clarify how to draw conclusions and infer meaning from the text. The students were directly taught how to connect information from the text in order to draw a conclusion and to connect the information from the text to their own lives to make inferences.

Finally, the systematic nature of MGR and resulting repetition during the 8-week intervention allowed the treatment group to learn and internalize the reading skills and strategies that were taught. The researcher taught twelve lessons during the 8-week intervention. Each of these lessons isolated one of the eight English inflectional morphemes and studied it through the context of a specific text. Additionally, each lesson was implemented using the same MGR structure. By the third week, the researcher saw the students taking the lead on how to approach each new text. On one occasion, the researcher began the lesson by discussing specific vocabulary terms that may have been new to the students. However, he was interrupted by one student saying, “We have to do our top-down strategies first; we study the words later.” Through the repetition, the students were able to internalize the reading strategies and practices that were taught during the intervention.

In summary, the strengths of this intervention, explicit instruction, small group settings, immediate feedback, and repetition of reading strategies, resulted in an engaging instructional environment and led to greater overall literacy achievement.

### *Challenges*

During the data analysis it became evident that arranging instructional time and coordinating with other teachers were the two primary challenges in implementing the intervention (see figure 4 in the appendix for examples of coding). Block scheduling was used in the high school where the intervention took place. Each day was either an even day (periods two, four, six, eight) or odd day (periods one, three, five, seven). Thus, the researcher met with the student participants every other school day. Additionally, several of the students’ schedules changed during the intervention. This changed the instructional

time for the student and posed a further challenge to the overall scheduling. The change in student schedules also led to the challenge of working with new teachers.

Originally, all students participating in the intervention were being taught during their elective course (job-share) class time. This meant that the researcher arranged and coordinated with one teacher. However, once the students' schedules started changing, the researcher had to meet with other teachers to get permission to work with students on specific days at specific times. For the most part, this was not a problem. However, a couple of teachers had to be convinced that the intervention was a worthwhile effort and later made the scheduling accommodations. For example, in one particular case a student was enrolled in a webpage design course. This course did not have a regular classroom teacher; a permanent substitute filled the position three weeks into the school year. Feeling the reluctance of the permanent sub, the researcher met with the permanent sub on several occasions to discuss an appropriate time to meet with the student for the MGR intervention. Furthermore, the student in discussion was a senior, had not passed the high stakes reading test needed for graduation, and was reading on a third grade level. In short, these challenges added a dimension of stress and educational diplomacy but did not interfere with the implementation of the intervention.

The overall implementation of the intervention was not a challenge in and of itself. It required no more planning and collecting of materials than a typical instructional classroom setting. With that said, it must be noted that "a typical instructional classroom setting" can vary quite a bit among educators. For that reason, "a typical instructional classroom setting" is to be understood as a setting wherein a teacher evaluates his/her students through a needs assessment and plans instructional activities in response to those

specific needs. During this particular intervention, the researcher collected leveled texts from a variety of literary genres. Each text was carefully chosen so that specific English inflectional morphemes could be isolated for instructional purposes through MGR lessons. From the researcher's perspective, the implementation of this intervention was not challenging.

### *Developing Hypotheses*

Two major hypotheses developed from the data from research question three. The first hypothesis is that utilizing direct, explicit instruction reinforces appropriate and efficient reading practices and clarifies students' reading misconceptions. As with previous research (Baumann, 1984; Engelmann, 2007; Martella et al., 2006; Walker et al., 2006), explicit instruction provided an instructional setting wherein students were able to internalize new knowledge (e.g., inflectional morphemes) and reading strategies. Then, students were able to effectively use this new knowledge independent of the researcher.

The second hypothesis is that awareness of one bottom-up processing skill (i.e., identifying third person singular –s) builds overall metacognition and inherently supports other pro-active reading strategies. This is related to the work of Mackey and Philip (1998) and others in the sense that cognizance is vital to learner uptake. The data supports the notion that the feedback the researcher gave to the students was done with heightened learner awareness. Over the duration of the intervention, the students used the feedback as a vehicle to become aware of their own learning (e.g., metacognition).

Research question four investigated the effectiveness of MGR from the students' perspective and asks: what are high school students' perceptions of MGR? Based upon

data from student surveys given pre and post intervention, inductive category codes were generated and used to build hypotheses. Prior to developing hypotheses, it was apparent that there were several overall strengths and challenges in implementing MGR from the student participant perspective.

### *Strengths*

During the data analysis of student surveys, it became evident that students felt that explicit instruction, meaningful instruction, and small group settings were major strengths of the intervention (see figure 5 in the appendix for examples of coding). In reviewing the pre intervention surveys, students' reading strategies included "figuring it out with other words", "breaking the word down", "practice", and "skip a word". The students' lack of complete understanding of how to appropriately implement reading strategies became evident during the intervention. In the post intervention surveys, the students stated that the explicit instruction they received helped them clarify their incomplete knowledge of reading strategies they already knew and learn knew and useful reading strategies. Explicit instruction allowed the students to conceptualize the reading strategies as either top-down or bottom-up. In providing this structure and organization, students felt more confident in knowing when and how to apply the strategies.

This finding supports other research (Baumann, 1984; Engelmann, 2007; Martella et al., 2006; Walker et al., 2006) in demonstrating the efficacy of explicit instruction. Additionally, the corroboration between the student surveys and the researcher's field reflections provides more evidence that explicit instruction was effective.

One other strength of the intervention from the students' perspective was the researcher's use of meaningful instruction. From the post intervention surveys, the



researcher was able to construct a definition of meaningful instruction. According to the students' responses meaningful instruction is instruction with a specific purpose related to a specific student need. Following up on pre intervention survey responses, the researcher asked students about their current and past reading instruction. Students did not provide specifics about past instruction, but focused on the lack of instruction they were receiving in their current English literature and reading classes. Every one of the treatment group students expressed displeasure about the instruction saying, in short, that the teachers were teaching a curriculum and not teaching what the students needed. In the post intervention surveys, the students commented that the direct and guided instruction they received from the researcher had more of a difference in their literacy levels than anything they had done since middle school. This general comment, suggests that high school English literature and reading teachings are not as well trained in reading process instruction as their primary education colleagues. Without specific knowledge of the reading process, reading theories, and reading strategies, high school teachers do not have the ability to provide the type of meaningful instruction struggling readers need.

Finally, the students found the small group settings to be beneficial. In informal conversations with the researcher, the students would consistently say they appreciated being able to work in such a small group. They felt that they could concentrate more and ask questions they might be too shy or afraid to ask in their other classes. Furthermore, two of the students specified that liked the personal attention they received. One of them said that, "I don't got to worry about the whole class; we can focus on what I need."

In summary, the strengths from the students' perspectives, explicit instruction, meaningful instruction, and small group settings, mirrored closely the data from the researcher's perspective as well.

#### *Challenges/Suggestions*

During the data analysis it also became evident that rather than articulating challenges to the intervention, students voiced suggestions. The three most salient suggestions that the students made were that they wanted the intervention to be longer, they wanted other teachers to implement the same time type of meaningful explicit instruction methods, and they wanted to have small group instruction in their other classes (see figure 6 in the appendix for examples of coding).

#### *Developing Hypotheses*

Three major hypotheses developed from the data from research question four. The first hypothesis is that if high school English literature and/or reading teachers would offer direct and meaningful instruction, students' literacy achievement would increase. In this case meaningful instruction is instruction that is based upon the specific language and literacy needs of the students being taught. The researcher witnessed, and the students consistently stated that the English literature and/or reading teachers were teaching a curriculum only rather than to the needs of the students.

The second hypothesis is that small group settings facilitate both the remediation and acceleration of reading and writing skills. Data from both the student surveys and researcher field reflections support this hypothesis. This convergence of the data offers greater support to the hypothesis that small group settings facilitate acquisition of literacy skills.

The third hypothesis is that students who believe (a) their teacher respects them and (b) their teacher is highly a qualified, professional will take their education seriously and put forth their best effort. Data from the student surveys and informal conversations with the students revealed a current lack of trust between the students and their reading teacher. From the students' perspective, this broken relationship, whether real or perceived, disrupted their acquisition of literacy skills.

#### *Adaptations to Intervention*

One of the unique features of this intervention was the utilization of Fe methodology. In using a Fe design the researcher was able to make adaptations to the instructional focus based upon the needs of the student participants. The adaptations in this intervention focused upon the re-teaching of bottom-up reading skills. For example, several student participants had recurrent difficulty differentiating between possessive –s and plural –s. The researcher augmented lesson plans to ensure that these inflectional endings were taught again.

Other adaptations included the researcher constructing and/or provided reading practice with past tense –ed wherein the student would be forced to articulate the –ed ending. The –ed inflectional ending can be pronounced three distinct ways: (1) /t/ as in looked and walked, (2) /d/ as in opened and loved, and (3) /Id/ as in elected and needed. In providing reading practice wherein the past tense verb ending in t (e.g., want) or d (paint), the students were forced to articulate the –ed ending, thus becoming more cognizant of the past tense –ed inflectional ending.

These adaptations were based upon the specific and immediate needs that students demonstrated during the intervention. In short, the flexibility of Fe methodology enabled the researcher to quickly adjust the teaching during the intervention.

#### Fidelity Of Treatment

Six video recorded MGR sessions were reviewed by a second researcher for fidelity of treatment. Both researchers worked together throughout the data collection period and met once a week to discuss implementation of the intervention, the data being collected, and analysis of the data. The Fe's methodology and time-series' design complimented this framework of collaboration between the researcher and the supervising professor while also promoting triangulation of the data.

## DISCUSSION

### *Summary of Main Findings*

This intervention appeared to be successful in improving the SE reading and writing proficiency of the AAVE speaking student participants. Three main findings regarding the student participants and the format of the MGR intervention merit further review and discussion.

First, focused inflectional morpheme instruction was successful in raising literacy achievement in AAVE speaking students, specifically as demonstrated by the Written Expression subtest scores of the KTEA-II. Due to the linguistic structure of AAVE, students who speak AAVE have inherent difficulties with inflectional endings in SE. The six students in the treatment group demonstrated gains on average of almost three grade levels while the control grade averaged one grade level. Based upon data from the field reflections and student surveys, this is significant. It appears that the focused inflectional morpheme instruction filled in the linguistic gap between SE and AAVE. Students became more aware of the linguistic meaning held in the endings of words. This awareness resulted in the students becoming more alert and active in their own reading and more cognizant of their own writing. This finding corroborates the findings of another study where morphology has been used to increase the literacy achievement of students (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007).

Second, explicit instruction of reading strategies empowered students with the ability to apply strategies that worked for them (Baumann, 1984; Engelmann, 2007; Martella et al., 2006; Walker et al., 2006). The instruction of top-down and bottom-up reading strategies provided the clarity the students needed to take new reading strategies

and misunderstood reading strategies and put them to use effectively in their own reading (Anderson, 1999, pp. 82-83; Fitzgerald, 1995, p. 152). For example, in the pre intervention survey several students mentioned predicting as a reading strategy. However, during the MGR instruction it became evident that the students did not know how to properly use prediction as a reading strategy. Through explicit instruction, the researcher was able to teach the concept of prediction within the reading process. Students learned that predicting involved being able to differentiate between main idea and details, involved drawing conclusions from information in the text, and making inferences. Most of the student participants conceptualized predicting as simply making a guess. While inquiry based models of instruction are valuable in certain learning settings, explicit instruction proved to be beneficial because it left no doubt in the students' minds about how to apply these reading strategies with any text. The resulting confidence that each student had in engaging a text empowered them with the belief and tools they needed to read more successfully.

Finally, caring about the well-being of students built a trusting relationship between teacher and student and raised expectations for both (Greene, 1991). Data from the field reflections and student surveys supported the conclusion that a sense of respect between teacher and student was key to the educational success of the students. At the root of this respect relationship is the ability to genuinely care for the well-being of someone else. Students, especially older adolescents, are quite adept at reading people's feelings and intentions. As much as a teacher tries to hide his or her feelings about a particular person or group, those feelings eventually bubble up to the surface. For example, four of the six students in the treatment group shared the same reading teacher.

The students had repeatedly told the researcher that they hated the class because the teacher did not care about them and taught a curriculum that they did not think was useful. In conversations with this teacher, the teacher told the researcher that he did not have high expectations for any of the students and did not know why some of the students even came to school. From the students' perspective, this teacher had already given up on them so why should they put forth the effort. Contrary to this particular teacher's apathetic view of the students, the researcher's relationship building with the students led to a positive instructional setting and positive academic gains (Noddings, 1991).

### *Implications for Instruction*

The findings from this intervention have several implications for the classroom instruction of students in general and particularly AAVE speaking students. First, small group instruction appears to work in both the remediation and acceleration of reading and writing skills for struggling adolescent readers. Data from the KTEA-II, field reflections and video-taped lessons, and student surveys all support the claim that small group instructional settings provide an environment wherein meaningful instruction takes place. This triangulation of the data offers strong evidence that the group size plays a vital role in successful teaching and learning for adolescents in a remediation instructional setting. Small groups provide opportunities for explicit instruction that is based upon the specific needs of the student. It also supports the creation of a trusting environment wherein students are more willing to ask questions and clarify misunderstandings. Secondary reading teachers must be creative in trying to arrange their instructional time in a way so that they can divide their class into small group settings. Perhaps teachers can start class with a whole group activity and then break up into learning centers/stations focused on

specific bottom-up or top-down reading strategies, specific grammar features, etc. One of these centers/stations could be an MGR intervention led by the teacher. While this would take creative planning and trust building among students, the academic gains would make it worth the extra effort.

Second, high school English literature teachers need to be trained in reading practice, theory, and strategies. All too often, high school English teachers expect their students to come to the classroom with accomplished reading skills and practices. Based upon conversations with high school teachers and drawing from personal professional experience, the dominant mindset of high school English teachers seems to be that they teach literature and are not responsible for teaching reading and language arts. Thus, the question arises, should teachers teach the curriculum or to the needs of the students? Perhaps high school English teachers can do both with the appropriate training. With training, English literature teachers could open a discussion about *Othello*, *Hamlet*, or any other work of Shakespeare using top-down reading strategies. During the reading of such works, the teacher could scaffold and provide explicit instruction on how to draw conclusions and make inferences from the text. Or perhaps during a unit on American short stories, the teacher could call attention to the grammatical construction of person in the work of Edgar Allan Poe. In doing so, the teacher would be calling attention to tense which could lead to a discussion of third person singular –s.

Finally, and most importantly, students need to know that the teacher believes in them before they can believe in themselves. When working with any student, particularly older adolescents, it is clear that students must know that the teacher cares for and respects them. When the researcher asked about the academic instruction in the students'



other classes, they always began the conversation by first organizing their classes by the teachers they thought were good teachers and teachers they thought were doing a poor job. From the student perspective, being a good teacher first meant that the teacher respected the students and second was professionally competent in teaching the academic content. The students articulated that if they knew a teacher did not respect them, there did not seem to be a point in working hard in that class. Although shortsighted and self-defeating, this was the overwhelming belief among all the student participants. Therefore, it is important to flesh out the connection between respecting someone and believing in someone; for the students, they were one and the same. Students came to the conclusion that a teacher who did not respect them inherently did not believe in them and thus, had low expectations for them in the class. Often times, a student cannot believe in himself or herself if there is not an expectation of success and belief from the teacher. If students enter the classroom expecting to fail, they often meet that expectation making the classroom experience unpleasant for themselves and the teacher. However, if students enter the classroom expecting to succeed, they often meet the expectation, making the classroom experience pleasant and stimulating for themselves and the teacher.

On several occasions throughout the intervention, the researcher had different student participants make comments such as, “Its nice havin’ your support”, “It feels good...you believin’ in me”, or “Thanks for treatin’ me the way you do.” These statements were affirmations in the trust relationship that the researcher was able to develop between teacher and student. Academic success is contagious. The first step towards academic success is respect between teacher and student, and the seed of respect is caring.

### *Limitations of the Intervention*

Due to the Fe methodology of this study, the external validity (quantitatively speaking) and the transferability (qualitatively speaking) are suspect. While the findings of this study add to the existing literature on the acquisition of SE for speakers of AAVE and inform teacher practice, the findings should be interpreted keeping in mind the specific context (e.g., inner city high school) from which the data was produced. For example, the small number of participants (six in the treatment group and six in the control group, totaling 12) does not reflect a typical classroom reading instruction model. Thus, the findings from this study do not lead to statements inferring causality; however, teachers using small group instructional models within their classrooms may experience similar results when following the MGR lesson's focus on language learning within reading objectives. Additionally, the student participants felt extremely honored to participate in a university study. This may have resulted in a Hawthorne effect (Smith & Glass, 1987) and, in part, be responsible for the positive gains in the intervention.

Other limitations to the intervention included threats to internal validity (e.g., student absenteeism, scheduling conflicts, and students' personal issues, history, etc.). Student absenteeism was a minor issue during the intervention. Prior to the commencement of the intervention, the researcher explained to potential student participants that attendance was of utmost importance for the success of the intervention. Students who were absent one day met with the researcher to discuss why they were absent. During this time, the researcher stressed the importance of being present, attempted to arrange a time to make up the missed MGR session, which was not always successful, and most importantly to make sure the student was well and "okay".

As mentioned earlier, scheduling was an issue three weeks in to the school year. After students had been assigned to either the treatment or control group, three treatment group students' schedules changed. The researcher had to meet with the students' new classroom teachers and coordinate a time to meet. The threat of history (e.g., students' personal issues) seemed to influence the intervention more than any other threat to internal validity. Since the researcher was working with seventeen and eighteen year-old juniors and seniors, many of the students had adult responsibilities. All of the participating students worked. In private conversations, two of the students talked to the researcher about the stress of working to help pay for family bills such as electricity. One of the student participants was a mother, and she spoke to the researcher about the responsibilities of being a teen parent. All of these life factors could have played a role on the efficacy of the MGR intervention program.

To control for the threat of history, the researcher maintained a log showing no external events occurred during the data collection period that may have influenced student outcomes. Although random assignment was used, due to the small n the use of random assignment most likely did not eliminate between group differences. In using multiple group/single intervention time series design, the researcher was able to examine and display the data for individual participants in each group.

Several other limitations may have influenced this MGR intervention. Two of the six students in the treatment group had a different English literature teacher from the other four students. This is important because the level of expertise in reading and language arts practices, theories, strategies, etc. can vary between teachers. This variance in teacher knowledge may have had an impact on the instruction the students received in

their everyday classes. Secondly, the MGR instructional setting occurred in a corner of the school library. Adjacent to this corner was the entrance to the media productions studio. On certain days, there were noisy conditions in this corner of the library. On one occasion, the instructional setting was moved to another area of the library. The noise level in the instructional setting may have had an impact on implementing the intervention. Finally, instructional grouping were not equal in number. One group of students was made up of two, another grouping was made up of three, and one student received one-on-one instruction. The uneven nature of the grouping of the students was a result of scheduling conflicts and may have had an impact on the intervention.

#### *Suggestions for Further Research*

Recently, language-based reading interventions have started to appear in the literature on literacy achievement (Avalos et al., 2007; Chandler, 2003; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007; Mackey et al., 2000). This MGR intervention supports the findings of this current research (i.e., efficacy of language-based reading interventions) in that using language learning as the vehicle for higher literacy achievement can be successful. Furthermore, as a result of implementing and analyzing the data of this MGR intervention, several topics for future research have been identified. Given the positive impact of focused inflectional morpheme instruction with speakers of AAVE, it would be worthwhile to investigate the efficacy of derivational morpheme instruction and/or morphosyntactic instruction in general. While studies have examined the usefulness of morpheme instruction at the elementary level (Keiffer & Lesaux 2007), an MGR study that focused on morpheme, particularly derivational, instruction with older adolescent students, would provide a deeper understanding of how best to teach struggling

adolescent readers. In fact, Keiffer and Lesaux's (2007) work demonstrated that a better understanding of morphology led to increased reading comprehension and that this became more important as students grew older.

Another avenue for further research would be to implement MGR with a larger sample size to reflect a more typical classroom instructional setting. One of the major limitations of this intervention was the atypical size of the instructional groups. Under normal circumstances, the English literature and reading classrooms at the high school where the intervention took place had a minimum of twenty three students. Replicating this intervention with a classroom size of twenty or more would be representative of a typical high school English/reading class and improve upon the generalizability of the findings. However, this intervention could be interpreted as a pilot study because of the Fe design. Thus, at least two more replications may be necessary before designing a study with larger numbers of participants.

One last potential direction for further research would be to train a group of high school teachers in contrastive linguistics between AAVE and SE, along with MGR (i.e., small group instructional methods, explicit instruction, reading and language arts skills training) and implement an MGR intervention based upon the specific linguistic and literacy needs of the student population. Unfortunately, most high school English teachers are formally trained as literature educators and not trained as reading specialists. While some high schools may have reading teachers with formal training in reading theory, practice, and strategies, this is a large minority of the high school teaching pool. High school English teachers can explain the difference between literary genres, compare and contrast U.S. and world literature, and deconstruct an epic poem. However, often

they can't explain the interactive reading model or teach top-down and bottom-up reading strategies as they simply have never been instructed. Creating an intervention wherein explicit instruction of specific bottom-up and top-down reading strategies and challenging grammatical features were embedded within the context of the curriculum, such as MGR, could perhaps be effective in both teaching grade level content and raising literacy achievement.

## GLOSSARY<sup>i</sup>

Inflectional morphemes : A bound morpheme that creates variant forms of a word to mark its syntactic function in a sentence. Examples : The suffix *-s* added to a verb (as in *paints*) marks the verb as agreeing with a third-person singular subject ; *-er* (*taller*) marks adjectives for comparative degree.

Morphosyntax : This refers to the link between words and syntactic patterns.

Phrase structure rules : Rules that attempt to specify how the phrases in a sentence are structured. Examples : Sentence is made up of a Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase.

Pragmatics : The branch of linguistics that studies language use, in particular the relationship among syntax, semantics, and interpretation in light of the context of situation.

Semantics: The study of the systematic ways in which languages structure meaning, especially in words, phrases, and sentences.

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<sup>i</sup> All definitions used are those stated in *Language Its Structure and Use* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Edward Finegan and Essential Linguistics What You Need to Know to Teach Reading, ESL, Spelling, Phonics, Grammar by David and Yvonne Freeman.

## FIGURES

Figure 1. Birch's Hypothetical Model of the Bottom of the Reading Processor

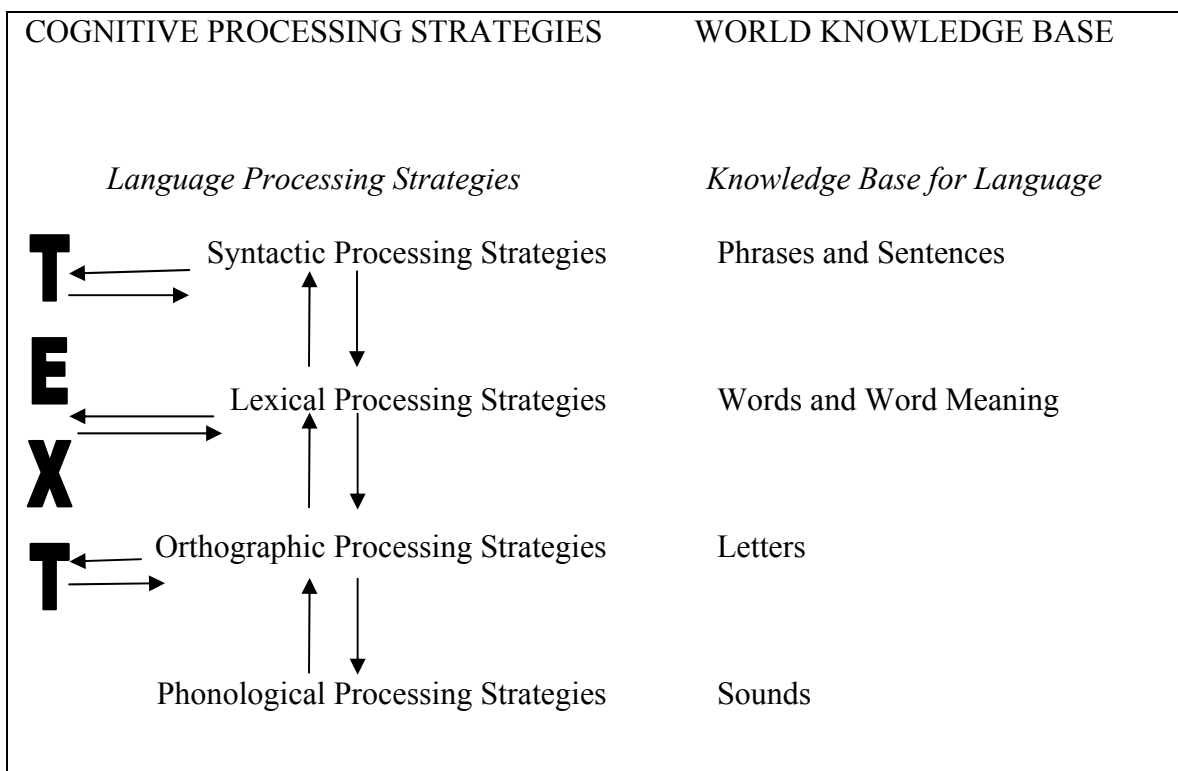




Figure 2. Framework for Modified Guided Reading for AAVE Speakers

*Planning the Lesson*

1. Determine objectives of lesson(s) based upon instructional needs (English literacy and language learning). *Students will determine the main idea or essential message from text and supporting information*
2. Group students (using Informal Reading Inventory or other assessment results from SE).
3. Select guided reading books based upon objectives and students' instructional reading levels: *Four-Legged Friends: A story collection: How Dogs and People Became Friends*
4. Analyze the text and identify literacy challenges based upon the whole student:
  - a. Semantics
    - i. Vocabulary (identified for teaching) should: focus on common English morphemes (i.e., affixes) or orthographic patterns (when possible) for beginners; include 2-4 words for *receptive vocabulary* and 5-9 words for *productive vocabulary*<sup>1</sup>; be important to understanding the meaning of the story whenever possible.

Receptive	Productive	
<i>Jackal</i>	<i>howling</i>	<i>shivered</i>
<i>Pleaded</i>	<i>rumble</i>	<i>crisp</i>

ii. Figurative Language: *Deep in the jungle... (p. 11); ...long into the night... (p. 13)*

iii. Homophones (different words with the same pronunciation)

<sup>1</sup> *Receptive vocabulary* is defined as low frequency words that are important to understand, but not necessarily used in every day speech. *Productive vocabulary* is defined as high frequency words that are commonly used in every day speech (Birch, 2002).

1. different spellings, but sound the same *through, threw; eight, ate*
  2. different meaning, same spellings *bank as financial institution, bank of river*
- iv. Homographs (same spelling, different pronunciation) *bow, bow; lead, lead*
- b. Grammar (Complex Syntax; Punctuation): “...talked quietly among themselves (p. 17);  
...among the remains of the fire. (p. 13)
  - c. Text Structure (Narrative or Expository) *Narrative: Includes an explanation of an event (how dogs and people became “best friends”*
  - d. Content or Concept (Cultural Relevance): *Jackals might be foreign to them since they probably have not lived where there are jackals (Africa); differences between the dog and the jackal.*
  - e. Strategy Instruction (i.e., think alouds, elicitation of predictions, word identification):  
*Elicit predictions when providing title to ascertain prior knowledge; think alouds; structural analysis*
  - f. Word Study Focus (that the text lends itself to): *Past tense markers/inflectional endings (-ed; --ing; irregular=crept); Making Words lesson will focus on adding –ed to words to become the past tense, and adding –ing to words ending with consonants to teach doubling of consonants.*

Figure 3. Strengths from the Researcher Perspective

Data – Field Reflections and Taped MGR Lessons	Open Code	Axial Code
<p>Richer – “You know, I used our top-down and bottom-up strategies on the reading test. I know that’s what made the difference. I get to graduate!”</p> <p>Smithy – “The way you teach it [reading]...I really get it.”</p> <p>Martin – “The stuff in my other class don’t help. I need help with specific things. We just read in the other class.”</p> <p>Dray – “Studyin’ the different parts of words helps me a lot.”</p> <p>Nordon – “I can read pretty good, but got to understand better. I think the top-down and bottom-up strategies help me understand.”</p> <p>Nixon – “I know I got to keep up when I read [comprehend while reading]. The top-down strategies help with that.”</p> <p>Researcher note – “Students need and want specific and direct instruction. They do not seem to be receiving needs based instruction. Rather, they are being taught a curriculum.”</p>	Curriculum and instruction	Direct Instruction
<p>Martin – “Nah, ain’t too much learnin’ goin’ on in reading class ‘cause the teacher got too many people to worry about.”</p> <p>Nixon – “I can’t learn in my other reading class because there is too much craziness goin’ on. They’re too many people who don’t care about learnin’.”</p> <p>Researcher note – Students appear to benefit from the individualized instruction. They are not afraid to ask clarifying questions and seem to be engaged during instruction.</p> <p>Researcher note – Based upon conversations with several students, they said they are able to focus more during our small group instruction because “there ain’t nobody messin’ up class and actin’ foolish.”</p>	Personal attention	Small Group Settings

<p>Smithy – “I like the way you let me know when I said something wrong.”</p> <p>Martin – “When you let me know I said something, it helps me. Sometimes I don’t even realize that I said it wrong.”</p> <p>Researcher note – “The students appear to be positively responding to the feedback and correction given during instructional time. They do not get frustrated and immediately correct their errors.”</p> <p>Researcher note – “The students seem to be more cognizant of the reading errors they were committing in the beginning of the intervention. Perhaps the error correction is making a difference.”</p>	<p>Feedback and correction</p>	<p>Immediate Feedback</p>
<p>Richer – “We have to do our top-down strategies first; we study the words later.”</p> <p>Martin – “I know we doin’ the same routine with each story, but I think that helps me.”</p> <p>Dray – “The practice is what makes you a better reader. I need to practice everyday just like we do.”</p> <p>Researcher notes – “The repetition of the top-down and bottom-up reading skills seems to be working. The students appear to have internalized these strategies and do not need to be prompted to use them.</p>	<p>Repetition</p>	<p>Repetition of Reading Skills</p>

Figure 4. Weaknesses from the Researcher Perspective

Data – Field Reflections	Open Code	Axial Code
<p>Researcher note – “Students are on a block schedule so their classes meet every other day.”</p> <p>Researcher note – “Several students in Mrs. Freeport’s class have had to change their schedules. Will their new schedule allow them to continue to participate in the intervention?”</p>	Student schedules	Arranging Instructional Time
<p>Researcher note – “Since several of the students’ schedules have changed, arrangements will need to be made with their new teachers. Meet with the new teachers to explain the intervention and discuss an appropriate time to meet with the students.”</p>	Teacher schedules	Coordinating with Other Teachers

Figure 5. Strengths from the Student Participant Perspective

Data – Student Surveys and Informal Conversations	Open Code	Axial Code
<p>Richer – “Before [the intervention] if I don’t know a word I would skip it and try and figure it out. Now I know how to use context clues and word parts to find the meaning.”</p> <p>Smithy – “I used to just try and break the word down. Now I know to use the root word, prefixes and suffixes, and the inflectional endings to help figure out the word. Teaching me how to do that made it [using the strategy] make more sense.”</p> <p>Martin – “I knew about a lot of reading strategies, but I did not know how to use them. I feel comfortable asking about how to use them in our group.”</p>	Curriculum and instruction	Direct Instruction
<p>Richer – “We study things I don’t need [in reading class]. I need help with vocabulary. Studying prefixes and suffixes...that helps. But we don’t get that in the other class [reading class].”</p> <p>Smithy – “Man, he [reading teacher] just teaches us from the book. Then, we get on the computer.”</p> <p>Martin – “We don’t do much. We just read and talk about the story.”</p> <p>Dray – “We read books and work on the computer. I don’t know if it helps much.”</p>	Student focused instruction versus curriculum focused instruction	Meaningful Instruction
<p>Richer – “I like that we are in a small group. I can definitely focus more.”</p> <p>Smithy – “Most these kids in the other classes don’t care about school. I know I messed up my freshman, sophomore, and junior year so I got to catch up. I take my studies serious now.” This quote was taken from a conversation when Smithy was talking about the positive aspects of a small group setting.</p> <p>Martin – “I knew about a lot of reading strategies, but I did</p>	Personal attention	Small Group Settings

<p>not know how to use them. I feel comfortable asking about how to use them in our group.”</p> <p>Dray – “In the small group, I can ask questions I don’t ask in my regular class. It is just too crazy to ask anything.”</p> <p>Nordon – “Yeah, its [small group] cool. I don’t get distracted much.</p>		
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Figure 6. Challenges/Suggestions from the Student Participant Perspective

Data – Students Surveys and Informal Conversations	Open Code	Axial Code
<p>Richer – “I wish we could keep meeting. This [the intervention] really helps me.”</p> <p>Smithy – “They [the school] needs to make this a class all year long.”</p> <p>Martin – “Some of my other friends need help too. Can they do this program next semester?”</p> <p>Nixon – “I got friends at other schools that need this class too. Will they have this program at other schools?”</p>	Continuation of the program	Duration of Intervention
<p>Richer – “Other teachers need to teach us top-down and bottom-up strategies like we do here [in the intervention].”</p> <p>Martin – “We need to be taught strategies because it don’t help to just sit and read a book.”</p> <p>Dray – “They [teachers] should teach us what we need not what the teacher book says to do.”</p> <p>Nordon – “Reading class is boring. We don’t do much.”</p> <p>Nixon – “I need to work with a teacher and not sit on the computer.”</p>	Curriculum and instruction	Direct Instruction
<p>Richer – “I wish our regular classes had fewer students. They need to get of the kids that don’t care about school and help this one that do.”</p> <p>Smithy – “We need less students in classes. Our classes are pretty big. I think we would learn more.”</p> <p>Martin – “I know people would do better if we had smaller class sizes. People could focus more and the teacher wouldn’t have spend all the time getting’ on people.”</p> <p>Dray – “In the small group, I can ask questions I don’t ask in my regular class. It is just too crazy to ask anything. They [the school] should do something so they can teach</p>	Personal attention	Small Group Settings



the kids that want to be here. A lot of people come just to socialize.”		
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## TABLES

Table 1. Inflectional Morphemes of English (Finegan, 1999)

Lexical Category	Grammatical Category	Examples
Noun	Plural	cars, churches
	Possessive	car's, children's
Verb	Third person	(she) swims, (it) seems
	Past tense	wanted, showed
	Past participle	wanted, shown (or showed)
	Present participle	wanting, showing
Adjective	Comparative	taller, sweeter
	Superlative	tallest, sweetest

Table 2. Categories of Corrective Feedback (Lyster and Ranta, 1997)

Category	Definition	Example
Recast	Involves the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.	Student: "The boy like Gatorade." Teacher: "Yes, the boy <i>likes</i> Gatorade."
Elicitation	Refers to at least three techniques that teachers use to directly elicit the correct form from the student: a) teachers elicit completion of their own utterance by strategically pausing to allow students to "fill in the blank", b) use questions to elicit correct forms, and c) ask students to reformulate utterances.	a) "The boy..." b) How do we know <i>passed</i> is in the past tense?" c) "Could you repeat that please?"
Clarification request	Refers to problems in either the comprehensibility or accuracy, or both.	"I pass by the house yesterday." "What?"
Metalinguistic feedback	Contains either comments, information, or questions	"It's plural." "Is it third-person

	related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form.	singular?"
Explicit	Refers to the explicit provision of the correct form. As the teacher provides the correct form, he or she clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect.	"Oh, you mean..." "You should say..."
Repetition	Refers to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance. In most cases, the teacher adjusts their intonation to highlight the error.	Student: "The boy like Gatorade." Teacher: "The boy <i>likes</i> Gatorade."

Table 3. Categories for Analyzing the Linguistic Content of Feedback (Mackey et al., 2000)

Category	Definition	Example
Morphosyntactic	Utterances which exhibit confusion between words and syntactic patterns.	Nonnative Speaker: "There is a three bird my picture." Native Speaker: "Three birds in your picture?" Nonnative Speaker: "Three bird yeah."
Phonological	Errors in utterances based upon the sound system of SE.	Nonnative Speaker: "The rear, rear [rleks]." Native Speaker: "The rear what? Legs?" Nonnative Speakers: [regs] Yeah.
Semantic	Refers to ways in which languages structure meaning, especially in words, phrases, and sentences.	Nonnative Speaker: He is on the tree. Native Speaker: He is standing on the tree? Nonnative Speaker: Yeah, standing on the tree.
Lexical	Refers to erroneous utterances based on	"She drink juice everyday for lunch."

	inappropriate word choice and use.	
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Table 4. Matrix Outlining Research Questions and Design

<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Instrumentation for Measurement</b>	<b>Frequency and/or Duration</b>	<b>Data Analyses</b>
<i>MGR</i>	<i>Reading Achievement</i> Research Question One	KTEA II – 1) Letter and Word Recognition and 2) Reading Comprehension	Six – Three pre intervention assessments and three post intervention assessments	Descriptive statistical analysis (Smith and Glass, 1987)
	<i>Writing Achievement</i> Research Question Two	KTEA II – Written Expression	Six – Three pre intervention assessments and three post intervention assessments	Descriptive statistical analysis (Smith and Glass, 1987)
	<i>Strengths and Challenges of MGR</i> Research Question Three	Field Notes Video Taped MGR Lessons	Ongoing throughout data collection	Qualitative analysis using grounded theory techniques (i.e., coding, conceptual ordering, etc.) (Strauss and Corbin, 1998)
	<i>Student Perceptions of MGR</i> Research Question Four	Student Surveys	Pre and Post intervention	Qualitative analysis using grounded theory techniques (i.e., coding, conceptual ordering, etc.) (Strauss and Corbin, 1998)

Table 5. Guided Reading Prompts for Diverse Populations (Clark, 2004)

General Cues To Prompt Thought	Cues to Prompt Specific Action		
	Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences	Word-Part Identification Strategies	Use of Contextual Supports (sentence structure or picture supports) <sup>1</sup>
What do you know about that?	The first <i>g</i> is hard; the second <i>g</i> is soft.	Is there a chunk you know?	Let's read to the end of the sentence...
What are you going to do to help yourself out?	It's a soft <i>c</i> .	Can you take something off?	Use pictures and words.
If you're stuck, what can you do?	Throw away the <i>g-h</i> .	Take off or cover up the ending and see what the word is.	Do you recognize anything in the picture that would make sense there?
What do you think?	Remember, the <i>g-h</i> can make an <i>f</i> sound.	Look for a little word.	
How are you going to figure that out?	It's a double vowel.	It's a compound word. What's the first word? What's the second word?	
Look for something you already know how to do.	What do you think that <i>e</i> sound like?	Will you hear the <i>o</i> or the <i>a</i> ?	
Look and think what you need to do.	That <i>y</i> is acting like an <i>i</i> ; It's a blend. I see a blend.		

<sup>1</sup> When using contextual prompts, it is important for students to feel comfortable using their primary language, if necessary, to assist them in completing their thoughts, identifying objects in pictures, etc. (Knox and Amador-Watson, 2000). The teacher should gently provide the SE words for the vocabulary that the students are not able to express in SE.



Table 6. Criteria for Identifying Speakers of AAVE

Major Linguistic Features of AAVE		Syntactic Utterances	
r-lessness	Examples: <i>guard = god, court = caught, sore = saw</i>	Frequency	Percentage
l-lessness	Examples: <i>help = hep, toll = toe, fault = fought</i>	Frequency	Percentage
Simplification/weakening of consonants and consonant clusters	Examples: <i>past = pass, meant = men, hold = hole, seat = seed = see</i>	Frequency	Percentage
Manner of articulation of certain consonants and vowels	Examples: <i>breath = breaif, mouth = mouf, bath = baf, find = found = fond, boil = ball</i>	Frequency	Percentage
Habitual <i>be</i>	Examples: When June come, I <i>be</i> outta school.	Frequency	Percentage

Table 7. Assessment of English Inflections Based upon the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.\* (Shanker and Ekwall, 2000).

bake	pale	slow		Number Correct
er – baker	er - paler	er – slower		/9
ed - baked	ing - paling	est – slowest		
s - bakes	est – palest	s - slows		
				8 = mastery

\*Each assessment of English inflectional morphemes will be based upon the inflections as they appear in the weekly readings.

Table 8. Individual Student Survey Questions (Goodman et al., 2005)

Pre-instruction
1. When you are reading and you come across something you don't know, what do you do?
2. Do you ever do anything else?
3. Who do you know who is a good reader?
4. What makes him/her a good reader?
5. Do you think she/he ever comes to something she/he doesn't know when reading?
If the answer is yes, what do you think he/she does about it?
6. What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn't read well?
7. How did you learn to read? What do you remember? What helped you to learn?
8. What would you like to do better as a reader?
9. Describe yourself as a reader?
Post Instruction
1. When you are reading and you come across something you don't know, what do you do?
2. Do you ever do anything else?
3. Who do you know who is a good reader?
4. What makes him/her a good reader?
5. Do you think she/he ever comes to something she/he doesn't know when reading?
If the answer is yes, what do you think he/she does about it?
6. What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn't read well?
7. How did you learn to read? What do you remember? What helped you to learn?
8. What would you like to do better as a reader?
9. Describe yourself as a reader?

Table 9. Model of Data Collection

PRE-ASSESSMENT 2 weeks	FORMATIVE TREATMENT 8 weeks	POST ASSESSMENT 2 weeks
KTEA II	English inflections (informal reading inventory based upon Ekwall/Shanker)	KTEA II
KTEA II	Field reflections (journal)	KTEA II
KTEA II	Video-taped MGR lessons	KTEA II
Individual student surveys	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	Individual student surveys

Table 10. Control Group Reading Comprehension – Percentile Rank

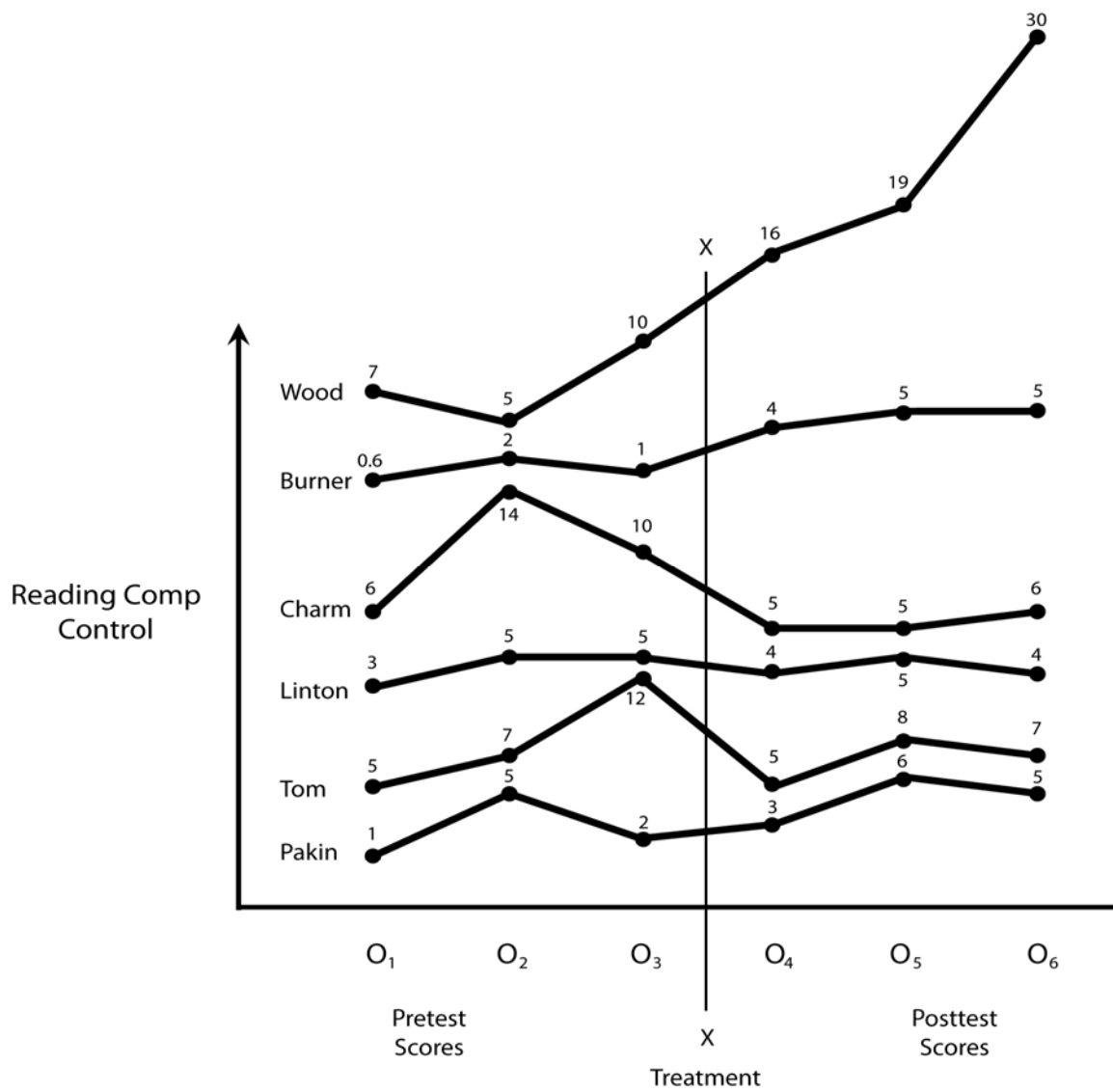


Table 11. Treatment Group Reading Comprehension – Percentile Rank

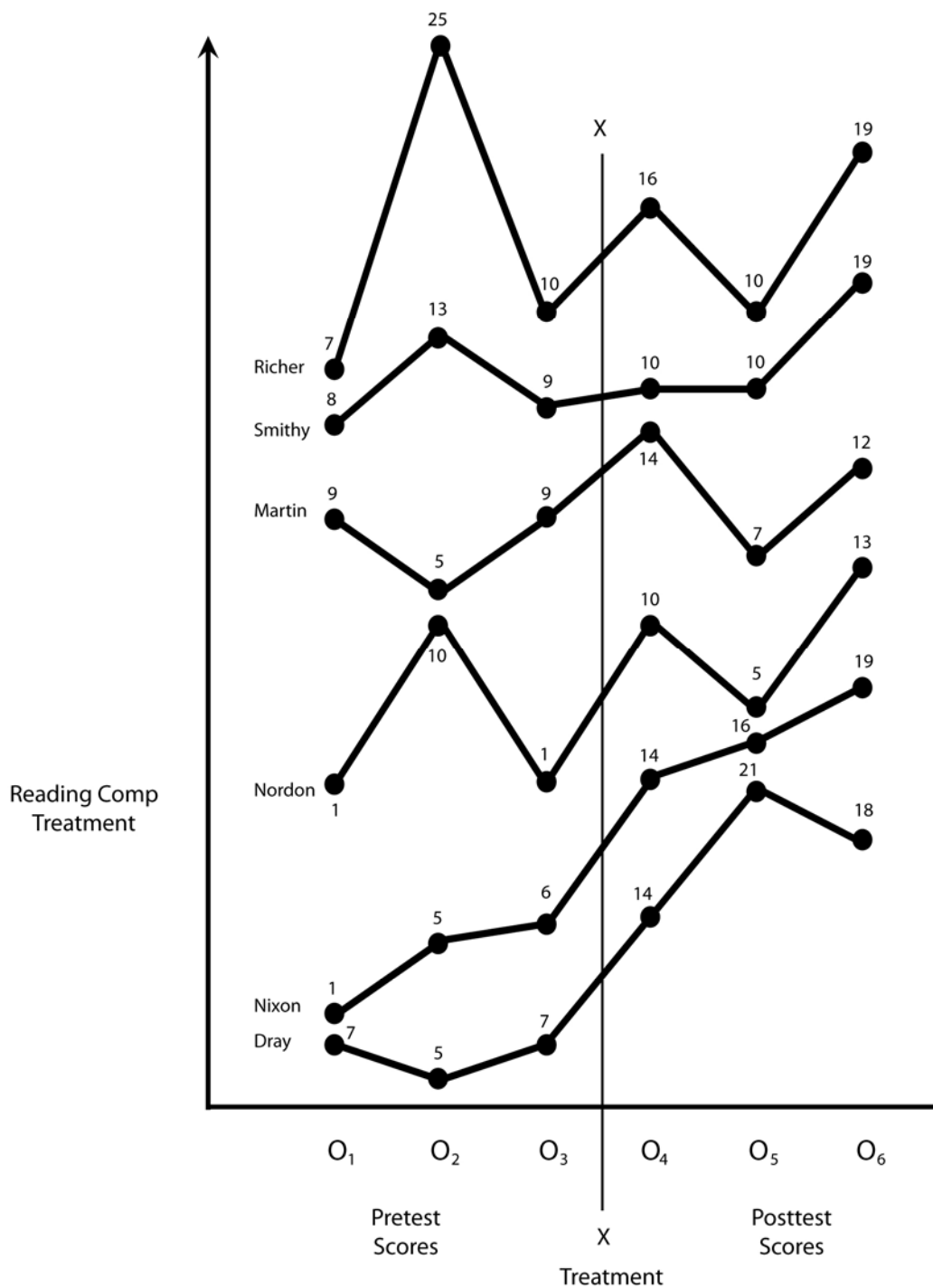


Table 12. Control Group Written Expression – Percentile Rank

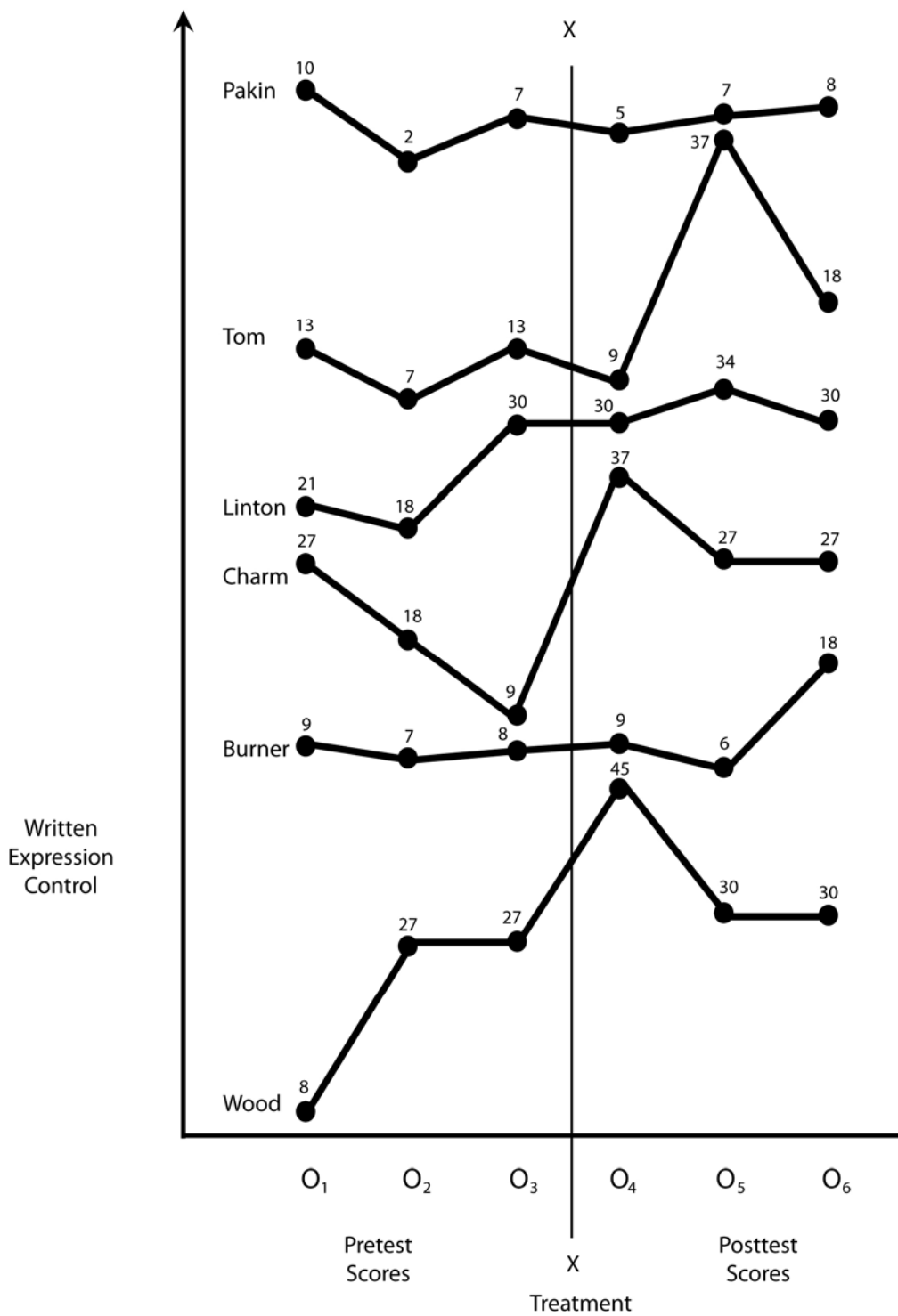
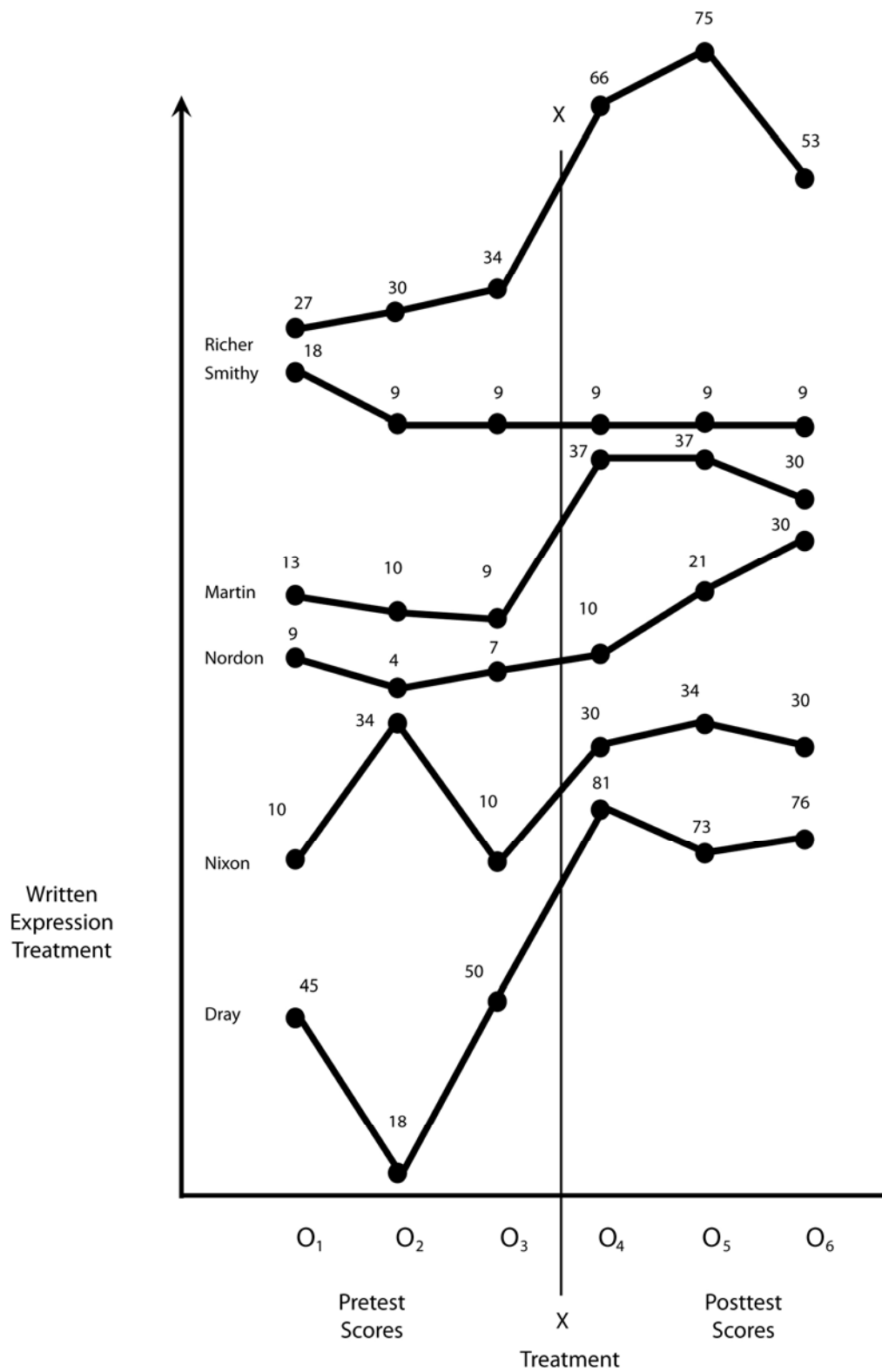


Table 13. Treatment Group Written Expression – Percentile Rank





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