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## ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to address the need for the intermediate and upper grade level English as a Second Language (ESL) students to become independent learners in the literacy process. The subjects, 13 boys and 3 girls from Pakistan, Philippines, Jordan, Israel, Korea, Turkey, and Thailand were dependent on the teacher when they had difficulty with words and had poor self-confidence in their learning strategies. The author met with the subjects' parents to discuss ways to encourage the children to become independent learners in the literacy process. Students wrote reactions in literature logs to books they read and used a self-monitoring approach to reading and thinking. A group list of new vocabulary words from a basal reading selection was designed by the students to define meaning using the context of the material. By keeping a portfolio, students were involved in the assessment of their own writing. Results of the study showed that students learned to use the context of the reading material, dictionary, or encyclopedia to determine the correct spelling or meaning of a word. They became familiar with many books written in English and had more self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process. More time was spent at home studying than on watching television. A reading strategies questionnaire, use of time questionnaire, and title recognition test are appended. (Contains 28 references.) (JP)

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ED 365 110

Helping Elementary English-as-a-Second-  
Language Students to Become Independent Learners by  
Improving Their Reading Strategies

by

Debra E. Kaminsky

Cluster XLII

A Practicum II Report presented to the  
Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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This practicum report was submitted by Debra E. Kaminsky under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

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Sept. 30, 1993  
Date of Final Approval of  
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## ABSTRACT

Helping Elementary English-as-a-Second-Language Students to Become Independent Learners by Improving Their Reading Strategies. Kaminsky, Debra E., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Bilingual Education/Reading Habits/Recreational Reading/Sustained Silent Reading/Reading Attitudes/Attitudes Toward Reading/Student Motivation/Reading Aloud To Others/Parental Encouragement/Reading Role Models/Reading

This practicum was designed to address the problem of the need for the intermediate and upper grade level ESL students to become independent learners in the literacy process. The students were dependent upon the teacher instead of using the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia when they had difficulty with the spelling of a word or its meaning, and they had poor self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process. The goal of the practicum was to improve elementary grade ESL students' strategies as independent, self-directed learners.

The writer met with parents of ESL students to discuss ways they could encourage the children to become independent learners in the literacy process; students wrote reactions in literature logs to books that they read; used a (SMART) Self-Monitoring Approach to Reading and Thinking; group list of new vocabulary words from a selection was designed by the students to define using context of the material; students involved in the assessment of their own writing by keeping a portfolio; and prepared a grant so that reading materials would be available to the students.

The results of the practicum were very successful. The students independently used the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia to determine the correct spelling or meaning of a word. They became familiar with many books written in English and had more self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process. More time was spent at home studying than on watching television.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting is an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program in a large metropolitan city in the midwest. The socioeconomic status of this community ranges from the low to the upper middle class income level. This is an old and changing multiethnic community.

The school in which this project is being conducted has a student enrollment consisting of approximately 500 students whose racial/ethnic background is made up of 42.1% white, 44.0% Hispanic, 6.4% black, and 7.5% other. Its teaching staff is 59% minority and 41% nonminority. The population involved in this project includes 13 boys and 3 girls, who are intermediate and upper grade level ESL students. The children come from Pakistan, Philippines, Jordan, Israel, Korea, Turkey, and Thailand. They are quite fluent in the English language.

### Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is the ESL teacher of this program. She has a bachelor of arts degree in psychology, general social sciences and elementary education. She holds a master's degree as a reading specialist and has completed additional coursework in educational administration and supervision and English-as-a-Second-Language instruction. She is certified as an early childhood and intermediate and upper elementary educator, reading specialist supervisor, and English-as-a-Second-Language instructor in two states. She has worked with various ethnic groups, has had experience working in a variety of schools with all grade levels and different programs. She has been a teacher trainer and curriculum developer at the city and state levels.

Her concern is for the educational progress of her students in learning and using English as a second language, and meeting the students' and their families' needs in adjusting to the American lifestyle. English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students are taken from their regular classroom and grouped according to their fluency and grade level. Listening, speaking, reading, writing, culture, various content areas, and survival skills are some of the things that are taught to the students on a daily basis during their 40-minute class period.



CHAPTER II  
STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The intermediate and upper grade level ESL students needed to become independent learners in the literacy process. The students needed to become independent learners in the area of literacy involving listening, speaking, reading and writing. In brief, the intermediate and upper grade level ESL students' ability to function as independent learners in the literacy process needed improvement.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of this problem was supported by observations, interviews, and questionnaires. During the fall of 1992, observation and record keeping of three 40-minute ESL class periods indicated that when the students had difficulty with the spelling of a word or its meaning, all 16 of the students were dependent upon the teacher instead of using the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia. The children showed no interest in the

dictionary, or encyclopedia, and had not been encouraged to use the context of the material to determine the meaning of unknown words. For two weeks during the fall of 1992, children were interviewed on Monday and asked whether they had used the context of the material, a dictionary or encyclopedia during the past week to figure out the meaning of unknown words. None of the children had done this.

The results of a teacher-made title recognition test indicated that none of the 16 children were familiar with all 10 real titles of popular children's books, nor could they distinguish between the 10 made up titles. The children were not familiar with many books written in English and needed to have access to many different books that were easy for them to read and enjoy.

The results of a teacher-made questionnaire completed by the children in the fall of 1992 indicated that 14 out of 16 students had poor self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process. Self-awareness and knowledge of their roles as readers were crucial for successful text learning. Closely related to self-awareness is self-image. The children often did not see themselves as competent readers. They had a poor self-image by avoiding reading tasks, procrastinating, approaching assignments without a sense of purpose, or displaying little confidence in their ability to comprehend texts. In other words, they often did not read because they believed that

they couldn't read successfully.

After completing a teacher-made questionnaire of the students' use of time after school from 3:00 p.m. to 10 p.m., all 16 of the students spent more time watching television than studying or doing work for school.

#### Causative Analysis

It is the writer's belief that there were several causes for the problem. The children had not been encouraged by their teachers to be independent learners and seek out answers to their questions without depending upon their teacher. There are subtle, culturally ingrained things that teachers do to promote a learned helplessness. This includes such actions by teachers, subtle and otherwise, such as doing things for children that they could do for themselves and classroom discussions that do not invite thinking but rather teach children to look into teachers' eyes for cues as to correct answers. The children were not encouraged to use the context of the story, the dictionary, or the encyclopedia to find out the meaning of unknown words.

The children were not familiar with various books. There was not a regular librarian in the school at that time, and the children were not encouraged to use the public library. Many of the parents were afraid to allow their

children to go to the library by themselves. Therefore, the children did not have ready access to books and were not encouraged to do reading for pleasure.

The children did not have self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process. The students needed to know how to analyze a reading task and devise plans for reading, how to construct meaning from reading, and how to get out of trouble when they ran into obstacles while reading. The students needed to develop positive reading self-images, attitudes, and interests, and gain control over their reading strategies that promoted their academic success. They needed to learn to see themselves as capable of learning and succeeding.

More time was spent watching television than doing schoolwork. Watching television at home does improve the children's listening and speaking comprehension, but it may also take away from the emphasis on reading for improving and developing reading strategies. The children were not trained with a self-monitoring approach to reading and thinking. They had not experienced control over reading and reading to learn. The students lacked the knowledge of their own reading processes.

#### Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Review of the literature gives evidence of the problem

of the need to improve students' ability to become independent learners in the literacy process. Tierney (1990) suggests that the mechanical view of reading has given way to a view of reading as a creative enterprise involving multi-faceted considerations of the subjectivity of meaning making, shared understandings held by communities of readers, and reading as the flexible orchestration of problem solving strategies in conjunction with the thoughtful consideration of ideas. In addition, inference and evaluation are seen as essential to achieving basic understanding as they are to the critical thinking that grows with interpretation and the ability to recount literal detail. The time when reading comprehension skill was connected with reading speed or the ability to regurgitate the text have given way to a broader view of reading.

Many strategies and techniques are used by good readers to help themselves understand printed texts of various types. Limited English Proficient students can make use of these same tools if they are shown what they are and are provided with many opportunities to use them according to Sutton (1989). By working with the decoding skills, language development, concept expansion, and thinking processes that are all so critical to the literacy process, the teacher can help the student whose English is somewhat limited to become truly proficient and a more independent learner.

Good readers know when they have or have not understood something, and they know what to do when their comprehension breaks down. Reading for remembering involves the application of many processes that have traditionally been called study skills, such as, underlining, note-taking, previewing, rehearsing, reviewing, and so on. Moreover, the conscious selection of the recall-facilitating basic processes can be seen as a metacognitive activity. Metacognitive skills include the knowledge and control that a person has over his own thinking and learning activities. A good reader is aware of how to adjust his or her reading strategies to achieve his or her purpose and can do so effectively according to Lewin (1992). The important thing is that students are actively selecting their reading strategies so as best to achieve a particular goal.

In many reading and writing classrooms, most of the ideas discussed follow the lead of the teacher, not the child. Rather than having the student set his own purposes, ask his own questions, explore the characters and events for himself, the teacher has a set of questions to which she expects students to answer and a set of criteria for judging their answers. Students need to be encouraged to evaluate issues, explore possibilities, adopt various perspectives, experiment with ideas, and discover new insights. Educators that have the desire to improve their

students' ability to become independent learners in the literacy process need to be made aware of the factors that are involved, so that they can enhance the students' ability to become more successful and literate adults in our society.

Micklos (1992) points out the importance of turning students into independent thinkers and emphasizes that educators need to encourage their students to bring their thoughts as a reader to the text. Biggam (1992) notes that children are not given the opportunity to discuss their reactions to what they have read in a nonthreatening way. She points out that the key is to talk about books with children the same way that we would discuss books with an adult friend, by seeking their reaction.

Lamana (1992) discusses the importance of children being trained to extend their comprehension into higher levels of thinking. Analyzing the students' errors will serve as an indicator of problem areas. The Commission on Reading in its summary of research (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) concluded that schema activation is a powerful and important comprehension strategy and they stress the importance of working with students' prior knowledge. Students need to be told to use their prior knowledge when necessary for various comprehension processes. For instance, when teaching students to make connective inferences, teachers will want to remind students

to think of what they already know about the events and then to determine how they might be related. As part of comprehension monitoring, students need to learn to identify the comprehension failures that result from not having the background knowledge assumed by the author.

Gaskins (1992) maintains that one of the main goals of an educator is to help students to become self-regulated learners. He points out that students need to be aware of, and know how to use learning strategies. Bergman (1992) suggests that students do not know how to use strategies to monitor their understanding and solve problems as they read.

The literature reveals several causes for the problem Chamot and O'Malley (1986) suggest that as limited English proficient students reach the upper elementary grades, they have to deal with increasingly challenging cognitive and linguistic demands in the literacy process. Padron (1986) suggests that bilingual students become concerned primarily with decoding and therefore do not develop the strategies that are needed for understanding textual material. Teachers need to help their limited English proficient students deal with the cognitive and linguistic demands and help the students to make greater sense of what they read.

Otto (1988) suggests that some educators view reading as a series of hierarchical and sequential skills, instead



of it being a constructive process that results from a complex set of interactions between the reader and the text. Resnick (1987) points out that comprehension should relate to the context of the situation and that students lack the ability to use their knowledge in new ways to think for themselves. She maintains that problem solving rests upon tying problems to contexts rather than either stripping them of such foundations or relying on overly generalized principles. Problem solving hinges on the availability and connectiveness of multiple schemas, including the ability to flexibly use multiple analogies and several cases.

Becker (1990) maintains that a recent national survey by Johns Hopkins University Center for Research in Elementary and Middle Schools found that routine drill-and-practice activities were used twice as often as oral communication activities in middle grade English classes. Sleeter and Grant (1986) support the case that too many English and language arts teachers structure their classes to be assembly lines instead of laboratories in which students' active participation helps them to grasp the relevancy of literacy skills to their lives. Spiegel (1992) suggests that literacy educators view writing in the literacy process as a process of communication, not as a set of mechanics to be mastered and then applied.

Coley and Hoffman (1990) maintain that some teachers

give negative messages to their students about their chances for reading success. They suggest that students quickly learn to see themselves as incapable of learning and develop a passive orientation to learning, or a learned helplessness. The students may manifest a poor self-image by avoiding reading tasks, procrastinating, approaching assignments without a sense of purpose, or displaying little confidence in their ability to comprehend textual material. There are subtle things that teachers do to promote learned helplessness, including doing things for children that they can do for themselves and classroom discussions that do not invite thinking but rather teach children to look into teachers' eyes for cues as to correct answers.

CHAPTER III  
ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the practicum was to improve elementary grade ESL students' strategies as independent, self-directed learners.

Expected Outcomes

1. Observation and record keeping of three 40-minute ESL class periods will indicate that 9 of the 16 students will not come up to the teacher requesting help with the spelling of a word or its meaning, but rather will use the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia to determine the correct spelling or meaning of the unknown words.
2. When children are interviewed on Monday and asked whether they had used the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia during the past week, 9 of the 16 students will report having used them.
3. By the end of the implementation period a second administration of the title recognition test will reveal

greater independent reading and knowledge of books by a mean score increase of at least 25% (i.e. from 48% to 73% correct responses).

4. By the end of the implementation period a second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire will reveal that the students have more self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process by a mean score increase of at least 25% (i.e. from 33% to 58% correct responses).

5. By the end of the implementation period a second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire of the students' use of time after school from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. will reveal that the students will spend more time studying or doing schoolwork than watching television by a mean score increase from 1 hour to 2 hours being spent studying or doing homework, and a mean score decrease from 4 hours to 3 hours of time being spent watching television.

#### Measurement of Outcomes

The outcomes were measured by observation and record keeping of the number of students not coming up to the teacher requesting help with the spelling of a word or its meaning, and using the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia to determine the correct spelling or meaning of the unknown words. The children were interviewed on Monday and asked whether they had used

the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia during the past week. By the end of the implementation period a second administration of the title recognition test revealed greater independent reading and knowledge of books by a mean score increase. By the end of the implementation period a second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire revealed that the students had more self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process by a mean score increase. A second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire of the students' use of time after school from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. revealed that the students spent more time studying or doing schoolwork than watching television by a mean score increase by the end of the implementation period.

#### Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

A log of daily activities was kept to record unexpected events, and to focus on the outcomes of the practicum.

CHAPTER IV  
SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The intermediate and upper grade level ESL students needed to become independent learners in the literacy process. The students needed to become independent learners in the area of literacy involving listening, speaking, reading and writing. In brief, the intermediate and upper grade level ESL students' ability to function as independent learners in the literacy process needed improvement.

Watson (1989) maintains that as children interact with each other through and about literacy, they gain additional perspectives on how to go about becoming effective readers and thinkers. Whole language has freed many children to experiment with and explore literacy. She suggests that children should be encouraged to be risk-takers, to try things out in reading and writing, and to take pride in their efforts even if their products are less than perfect. Children are viewed and view themselves as members of a community of readers and writers who work together to meet genuine needs and fulfill real

purposes through reading and writing. Duffy and Roehler (1987) suggest that instruction should provide children with a repertoire of strategies to be used flexibly and accordingly to meet reading needs.

Fitzgerald (1987) maintains that students' revision in writing and critical reading both involve dissonance location and resolution. Certain types of revision while writing would appear to necessitate critical reading, and critical reading may often lead to revision of ideas or printed text. She suggests that teachers should enhance the development of both revision and critical reading so that students ultimately initiate and carry out both on their own.

Weinstein, Ridley, Dahl, and Weber (1988), Delpit (1988), and Durkin (1990) point out that in order to achieve long term application of literacy skills, students must see the personal relevance of these skills to their lives. Rouse (1988) suggests that in order to encourage students to become independent thinkers, opportunities must be given for social interactions that enable students to take responsibility for their self-expression and the manner in which it is executed.

Children in a classroom should be involved in learning to read by reading, learning to write by writing, and be involved in meaning centered, integrated language arts activities. Resnick (1988) and Goodman (1989) suggest

encouraging reflection and reasoning to create a successful program for teaching independent thinking skills. Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) and Slaughter (1988) point out the importance of the teacher intentionally structuring the learning environment to be in a more participatory mode of interaction with students, to empower the learners.

Baumann (1988) maintains that teachers provide time for students to practice their developing literacy abilities in meaningful ways. He suggests giving students opportunities to experience the value of what they are being asked to learn or do. In addition to allowing for diagnostic information for teachers, these opportunities are helpful in motivating students to want to learn more.

Otto (1988) suggests that the reader use clues given by the author to activate appropriate prior knowledge which can serve as a basis for making predictions and creating independent thinkers in the literacy process. Fountas and Hannigan (1988) and Heymsfeld (1989) suggest that a classroom have a variety of interesting opportunities to use language, motivate students to move from reading to writing, and writing to reading and therefore experience this important connection.

In addition to the solutions suggested by the literature, other ideas were explored. A meeting was held after school hours to discuss ways that limited English-speaking parents could encourage the children to



become independent learners in the literacy process. The children were given one class period per week for silent reading. They wrote their reaction in their literature log to the author's writing, a character's behavior, or an event in their selected book that triggered a personal experience.

The individual children listed all of the words that they could think of in their native language with the same words in English, when they were given a topic area, in a period of 5 minutes. The children worked in pairs using a (SMART) Self-Monitoring Approach to Reading and Thinking. Group thinking conferences with the students were held in class to focus on thinking about consonance and dissonance among authors, readers, and texts as it related to the materials that students read and/or wrote.

Students did story impressions to predict the events of the story in their basal readers, by providing the students with fragments of the actual content. After reading the set of clues, the students were asked to make them comprehensible by using them to write a story of their own in advance of reading the actual material. Students identified new vocabulary words in the basal reading selection as they first read the selection, and later they met with the group to create a group list of new vocabulary words to define, based on its meaning in the context of the sentence in the story.

Students were involved in the assessment of their own writing by keeping a portfolio and selecting 6 things that they had written. They wrote a paragraph on why they selected those 6 writing samples and reflected on their own progress. Local newspapers were brought for the class to read and discuss current events. Students wrote and read their own news about current events to their classmates using a microphone in the room. They assessed how well they felt that they had read their own news report at the bottom of their paper.

A newsletter was sent home to the students' parents discussing some of the activities that were being done in class. Ideas were given on how to encourage the children to become more independent learners in the literacy process. The children purchased recreational reading materials once a month with a publisher's book club. A proposal for a grant was written by the writer and funded so that recreational reading materials could be purchased for use with this project.

#### Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The intermediate and upper grade level ESL students had access to an average of three to five titles per child and about half of these were recycled for new books every 30 days for independent reading. There was a greater emphasis on increasing students' ability to function as

independent learners in the literacy process involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Pencils that have reading slogans printed on them, various stickers, and attractive stamps were given as awards for various accomplishments throughout the project.

The project succeeded because the writer was excited about having the children use the materials that had been received through the money that was awarded with the grant. This excitement was shared by the children. The writer was also enthusiastic and motivated to improve the intermediate and upper grade ESL students' ability to function as independent learners in the literacy process with this project.

#### Report of Action Taken

First, learning new vocabulary words through the use of context clues, dictionary, glossary, and the encyclopedia was discussed with the children. The teacher showed the children some of the new dictionaries and reading materials, and talked about them to motivate the children to enjoy using them. Consonance and dissonance among authors, readers, and texts as it relates to the materials that the students read and/or wrote, were discussed. A meeting was held after school hours to discuss ways that limited English-speaking parents could encourage children to become independent learners in the literacy process.

The children were given a 40-minute period each week to look through and read one or two books, and write their reactions in their literature logs. The teacher read when the children read, and everyone was free to discuss something exciting or interesting that was being read at the time. The teacher tried to apply what the students were reading to the students' experiences, as well as to real life situations. The children selected a book to borrow and take home on a weekly basis.

During the second and third months, the children were given book order forms from a publishing company's book club. The various books were discussed with the children. A letter was sent with the book order to encourage the parents to order the books for the students' reading pleasure.

The children and the teacher had a silent reading period for 40 minutes each week. The children borrowed one recreational reading book per week from the classroom library and wrote their reactions to the book in their literature logs. The literature logs were collected every other week so that the teacher could write responses to encourage and develop the students' thinking processes. The students designed a book cover with a two paragraph summary of the book that they enjoyed reading. These were put in the students' portfolios.

The individual children listed all of the words that

they could think of in their native language and in English when given a topic area, in a period of 5 minutes. Local newspapers were brought for the class to read and discuss current events. Students wrote and read their own news about current events to their classmates using a microphone in the room. The students chose another student to edit their news report and discuss grammar, punctuation, word meanings, and spelling errors. They also decided to do commercial breaks on nutrition, drug education, and safety. The children assessed how well they felt that they had read their own news report at the bottom of their paper.

Students identified new vocabulary words in the basal reading selection as they first read the selection and later, they met with the group to create a group list of new vocabulary words based on its meaning in the context of the sentence in the story.

During the fourth through the sixth months the individual children listed all of the words that they could think of in their native language and in English when given a topic area, in a period of 5 minutes. The children worked in pairs using a (SMART) Self-Monitoring Approach to Reading and Thinking, which is a strategy that involves the two students helping each other to understand segments of the reading assignment that may not be clearly understood. A newsletter was sent home to the students' parents discussing some of the activities that were being done

in class. Ideas were given on how to encourage the children to become independent learners in the literacy process.

The students purchased recreational reading materials once a month with a publisher's book club. Group thinking conferences with the students were held in class to focus on thinking about consonance and dissonance among authors, readers, and texts as it related to the materials that the students read and/or wrote. Students identified new vocabulary words in the basal reading selection as they first read the selection and later they met with the group to create a group list of new vocabulary words to define, based on its meaning in the context of the sentence in the story.

Local newspapers continued to be brought in for the class to read and discuss current events. Students wrote and read their own news about current events to their classmates using a microphone in the room. They assessed how well they felt that they read their own news report at the bottom of their paper.

A record was kept of three 40-minute ESL class periods indicating the number of students having difficulty with the spelling of a word or its meaning and who were dependent upon the teacher instead of using the context of the material, a dictionary, glossary, or an encyclopedia. The children were interviewed for two weeks on Monday and asked whether they had used the context of the material,

dictionary, glossary, or an encyclopedia during the past week to figure out the meaning of unknown words.

The teacher-made title recognition test indicating the number of children who are familiar with all 10 real titles of popular children's books and the 10 made up titles, was given again. The teacher-made questionnaire indicating the number of children who have poor self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process was given again. The teacher-made questionnaire of the students' use of time after school from 3:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. was given again.

During the eight month implementation phase of this practicum, there were no difficulties or deviations from the implementation plan encountered by the writer. Everyone involved in this practicum were enthusiastic and interested throughout the implementation phase.

CHAPTER V  
RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The intermediate and upper grade level ESL students needed to become independent learners in the literacy process. The students needed to become independent learners in the area of literacy involving listening, speaking, reading and writing. In brief, the intermediate and upper grade level ESL students' ability to function as independent learners in the literacy process needed improvement.

It is the writer's belief that there were several causes for the problem. The students were not encouraged by their teachers to be independent learners and seek out answers to their questions without depending upon their teacher. The children were not encouraged to use the context of the story, the dictionary, or the encyclopedia to find out the meaning of unknown words. The children were not familiar with various books and did not have ready access to books. They were not encouraged to do reading for pleasure.

The students did not have self-confidence in their



learning strategies in the literacy process. They needed to know how to analyze a reading task and devise plans for reading, how to construct meaning from reading, and how to get out of trouble when they ran into obstacles while reading. The children needed to develop positive reading self-images, attitudes, and interests, and gain control over their reading strategies that promoted their academic success.

More time was spent watching television than doing schoolwork. Watching television at home does improve children's listening and speaking comprehension, but it may also take away from the emphasis on reading for improving and developing reading strategies. The children were not trained with a self-monitoring approach to reading and thinking. They had not experienced control over reading and reading to learn.

The solution strategy that was utilized consisted of enabling the intermediate and upper grade level ESL students to have access to an average of three to five titles per child and about half of these were recycled for new books every 30 days or independent reading. There was a greater emphasis on increasing students' ability to function as independent learners in the literacy process involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Pencils that had reading slogans printed on them, various stickers, and attractive stamps were given as awards for

various accomplishments throughout the project.

The goal of the practicum was to improve elementary grade ESL students' strategies as independent, self-directed learners. Expected outcomes for this eight month practicum were developed. Observation and record keeping of three 40-minute ESL class periods before implementation indicated that when the students had difficulty with the spelling of a word or its meaning, all 16 of the students were dependent upon the teacher instead of using the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia.

Through observation and record keeping of three 40-minute ESL class periods at the end of the implementation, it was expected that 9 of the 16 students would not come up to the teacher requesting help with the spelling of a word or its meaning. All 16 of the students used the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia to determine the correct spelling of the unknown words by the end of the eight month implementation.

After the eight month implementation period when the children were interviewed on Monday and asked whether they had used the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia during the past week, it was expected that 9 of the 16 students would report having used them. Prior to implementation, the children were interviewed on two successive Mondays and asked whether they had used the context of the material, a dictionary or encyclopedia during

the past week to figure out the meaning of unknown words. None of the children had done this. During the last two weeks of the eight month implementation, all of the students reported having used either the context of the material, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia during the past week.

It was expected that by the end of the eight month implementation period a second administration of the teacher-made title recognition test would reveal greater independent reading and knowledge of books by a mean score increase of at least 25% (i.e. from 48% to 73% correct responses). Prior to implementation, the results of the teacher-made title recognition test indicated that none of the 16 children were familiar with all 10 real titles of popular children's books, nor could they distinguish between the 10 made up titles. The children were not familiar with many books written in English and they needed to have access to many different books that were easy for them to read and enjoy.

By the end of the implementation period the second administration of the teacher-made title recognition test revealed greater independent reading and knowledge of books by a mean score increase of 48% (i.e. from 48% to 96% correct responses). The children were enthusiastic about the books that were now available to them.

At the end of the eight month implementation period it was expected that a second administration of the

teacher-made questionnaire would reveal that the students had more self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process by a mean score increase of at least 25% (i.e. from 33% to 58% correct responses). Prior to implementation, the results of the teacher-made questionnaire indicated that 14 out of 16 students had poor self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process. The second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire at the end of the implementation period revealed that the students had more self-confidence in their learning strategies in the literacy process by a mean score increase of 53% (i.e. from 33% to 86% correct responses). The children saw themselves as more competent readers. They approached assignments with a sense of purpose and had more confidence in their ability to comprehend texts.

By the end of the implementation period it was expected that a second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire of the students' use of time after school from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. would reveal that the students would spend more time studying or doing schoolwork than watching television by a mean score increase from 1 hour to 2 hours being spent studying or doing homework, and a mean score decrease from 4 hours to 3 hours of time being spent watching television. The results of the questionnaire completed by the children prior to implementation indicated

that all 16 of the students spent more time watching television than studying or doing work for school. At the end of the eight month implementation period, a second administration of the teacher-made questionnaire revealed that the students spent more time studying or doing schoolwork than watching television by a mean score increase from 1 hour to 2½ hours being spent studying or doing homework, and a mean score decrease from 4 hours to 1½ hours of time being spent watching television.

#### Discussion

The expected outcomes of this practicum were met. The project was successful because the writer was enthusiastic and motivated to improve elementary grade ESL students' strategies as independent, self-directed learners. The writer was excited about having the children use the materials that were received with the money that was awarded with the grant. This excitement was shared by the children.

Based on the results of this practicum, the writer concludes that students need to become independent learners in the area of literacy involving listening, speaking, reading and writing. The children should to be encouraged to seek out answers to their questions without depending upon their teacher. Providing time for the children to read, varying the books and materials that are available,

and making sure most of the materials will be easy for the children to read will enable them to develop a better attitude towards reading, as well as to become more familiar with various books. It is necessary for students to know how to analyze a reading task and devise plans for reading, how to construct meaning from reading, and how to get out of trouble when they run into obstacles while reading. Students must learn to see themselves as capable of learning and succeeding.

#### Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the plan could be used with students who are in programs other than English-as-a-Second-Language.
2. It is recommended that the plan will be used with intermediate and upper grade level ESL students in future years.
3. It is recommended that research will be reviewed to be aware of current and interesting strategies to promote students' abilities to function as independent learners in the literacy process.

#### Dissemination

This project has been shared with other members of the school faculty. They were very interested in the project and the results. The writer presented this

practicum at a statewide conference for administrators, educators from preschool to college level, and book publishers who work in the field of bilingual education and English-as-a-Second-Language. The project was well-received.

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APPENDIX A

READING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Circle yes or no.

1. I usually know the purpose for what I am reading  
and writing about. yes no
2. I can choose topics that I want to write  
about and books that I want to read. yes no
3. I am able to predict how something that  
I am about to write about or a story  
that I am about to read will turn out. yes no
4. I am able to relate new information in my  
reading and writing to things that I know  
already. yes no
5. I am able to react to things that I read  
about. yes no
6. I know different ways to find out the  
meaning of new words that I do not know. yes no
7. I am able to tell the difference between  
important ideas and less important ideas  
when I write my own papers and read  
other people's work. yes no
8. I am able to improve the first copy  
of a paper that I did by rewriting  
and rereading. yes no
9. I am able to appreciate how an author

writes.	yes	no	38
10. I am able to think about ideas from others about my reading and writing.	yes	no	
11. I am able to share with others the way that I feel about my own writing and another author's writing.	yes	no	

APPENDIX B

USE OF TIME QUESTIONNAIRE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

How do you use your time after school from 3:00 p.m. to  
to 10:00 p.m. on a regular school day? Fill in the blanks  
and leave the line blank if it is not a regular activity  
that you do.

Hours/Minutes

Activity

\_\_\_\_\_

Watching television

\_\_\_\_\_

Reading for pleasure

\_\_\_\_\_

Studying

\_\_\_\_\_

Talking on the phone

\_\_\_\_\_

Listening to music

\_\_\_\_\_

Playing with friends

\_\_\_\_\_

Sleeping

\_\_\_\_\_

Eating

\_\_\_\_\_

Other activity \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

TITLE RECOGNITION TEST

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Put a check next to the title of real books.

- \_\_\_ The Baby in the Forest
- \_\_\_ Where the Wild Things Are
- \_\_\_ Whistle for Willie
- \_\_\_ The Monkey in the Wild
- \_\_\_ All at Once
- \_\_\_ The Very Hungry Caterpillar
- \_\_\_ Whales in Illinois
- \_\_\_ I Speak English for my Mom
- \_\_\_ Why Am I Different?
- \_\_\_ The Giving Tree
- \_\_\_ A Trip on a Boat
- \_\_\_ Make Way for the New Kid on the Block
- \_\_\_ The Tree That Came Alive
- \_\_\_ Harry the Dirty Dog
- \_\_\_ Donna's First Day in a New School
- \_\_\_ Dreams Can Come True
- \_\_\_ Make Way for Ducklings
- \_\_\_ Madeline
- \_\_\_ The Velveteen Rabbit
- \_\_\_ The Magical Schoolbus