RETHINKING OF THE TEACHING OF BEGINNING READING: THE ROLE OF READERS THEATER IN THE TAIWANESE EFL CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

Title: Rethinking of the Teaching of Beginning Reading: The Role of Readers Theater in the Taiwanese EFL Curriculum

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Elementary English language teachers in Taiwan face many challenges: limited instruction time, lack of appropriate materials, and insufficient in-service training. This is especially true when applied to the teaching of reading. This study sets out to design a course based on a popular reading technique known as Readers Theater.

Previous researchers of L1 learners of both children and adults have indicated that Readers Theater is a valuable technique for improving oral fluency in reading (Samuels, 1979; Dowhower, 1991; Rasinski, 2003; Bridges, 2006). Experiments on repeated reading method (also know as Readers Theater) also suggest that this technique helps foreign language learners to prepare students for higher level of reading skills (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008; Tsou, 2007). In order to ascertain the viability of this technique in the Taiwanese reading context, a survey of more than 50 Taiwanese instructors was conducted. While respondents have significant reservations about the proposed course’s time commitment, after-school learning support mechanism, and future in-service training to this new technique, the responses are favorable. Based on survey results, a course design that uses both in-class and on-line modules was designed and presented.

This Reader’s Theater project includes a course framework and a learning module for fifth and sixth-grade EFL teachers containing materials, lesson plans, and other teaching resources. The course serves as both supplementary reading materials within the class and extensive reading activities which involves oral reading practices and independent reading activities off campus. In class materials are explained and exemplified; out of class activities take advantage of the latest capabilities of online computer technology. Future piloting and research-based experiments of the completed course design are suggested as to test the soundness of the module and design.

Keywords: Readers Theater, reading course design, elementary school, computer-assisted technology, supplementary reading materials, extensive reading, reading instruction
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MA TERMINAL PROJECT APPROVAL FORM

November 17, 2008

The examining committee appointed by the Department of Linguistics for the Terminal Project submitted by

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has read this terminal project and determined that it satisfactorily fulfills the program requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Chen-Mao Wang
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

With the advent of globalization, the need for English as a tool of communication is significant. The Ministry of Education of Taiwan ruled in 1999 that English education should be compulsory in elementary school education starting with the fifth grade. Later, an amendment of General Guidelines of Grades 1-9 Curriculum for Elementary and Junior High School Education in 2005 advanced the compulsory beginning age as early as third grade. This indicates that associating with people internationally is necessary. English, therefore, has gradually become an indispensable language to facilitate cross-cultural communication, and enhance multicultural understanding and appreciation.

The earliest version of Taiwan’s General Guidelines put an emphasis on creating a spontaneous and enjoyable learning environment that raises students’ interest and cultivates students’ basic communicative competence. Its later revised versions also promoted interactive modules to create a lively and positive learning atmosphere, and encourages teachers to adopt real-life, interesting, and authentic materials. The guidelines describe clearly that English education at an elementary stage should cast its main focus on listening and speaking whereas reading and writing are considered secondary but are not ignored. The role of reading and writing is still valued in the elementary school English curriculum in order to prepare students for a higher level of learning with text-based materials in middle and high school (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 1999-2008).
1.2 Statement of the Problem and Its Solutions

Many EFL public school teachers find it difficult to provide level-appropriate authentic materials filled with pragmatic settings for students to practice their English orally within the classroom. Outside the classroom, the foreign language learning setting provides limited sources to allow students to exercise target language skills they learned. Other than formal instruction, foreign language learners have nearly no access to receive adequate language input and to produce expected language output. This is especially true when applied to the teaching of reading. Reading instruction receives even less attention because teachers tend to believe that reading which is involved with complex cognitive process usually takes more time to foster. They believe the enforcement of a well-planned instruction is time-consuming. In addition, Taiwanese students’ lack of reading habits makes limited amount of reading instruction laborious. Varied-leveled students are usually mixed up in Taiwanese EFL English learning classrooms of over 30 students. Their discrepant ability and extent of after-school access to target language make the teaching of reading even more difficult to properly implement. All these reasons make the teaching of reading a less popular issue to address on in public school EFL education.

Readers Theater is an application of repeated reading method that emerged in the late 1970s (Samuels, 1979). It has lately become a popular technique in first language (L1) (Rasinski, 2003) and foreign language (FL) teaching settings over the last five years. L1 reading researchers experimented with elementary school pupils who find reading challenging. Researchers of FL have also proved it effective as a way to motivate learners, to engage readers of different reading levels, and to involve in the activity of
reading (Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2002; Taguchi et al., 2004; Gorsuch and Taguchi, 2008; Tsou, 2007). This technique attempts to develop students’ reading fluency and reading comprehension by engaging students in reading unconsciously. It allows multi-leveled students to participate in reading-aloud oral interactions with texts at different levels. As it connects the training of reading skill and oral skill, it attempts to save teachers’ time and lends itself to a foreign language class setting.

For many beginning readers, offering them extensive opportunities to read is essential but outside regular language classes they have few resources. Practicing Readers Theater scripts in class is not enough for learners to enhance their reading skills learned in class, especially when oral expression demonstration is limited and unreachable after class. Teachers who usually have filled schedules can not always be accessible for students at all times after class or out of school. Other than that, many teachers find it a dilemma when students are less motivated to approach supplementary materials because there isn’t a flexible and accessible mechanism to either complement or extend their in-class learning.

This project inserts a computer-assisted element into Readers Theater in order to expand learners’ exposure to written materials after school, retain learners’ autonomy in reading, and increase their opportunities for using English. It provides a course framework and a learning module for fifth and sixth-grade EFL teachers as well as their students. The course serves as both supplementary reading materials within the class and extensive reading activities outside of it. In-class materials are explained and exemplified. Out-of-class activities such as oral reading enhancement practice and independent reading activity take advantage of the latest capabilities of online computer
technology. With the help of technology, the project is designed to improve students' mastery of written text materials and eliminate the discrepancies among students by offering every student equal opportunity in the learning of a foreign language.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

There are four central focuses of this study. First, the study attempts to investigate the difficulties and challenges faced by Taiwanese EFL teachers in teaching reading and by students in terms of learning to read. Second, the study attempts to discover what kind of materials teachers and students find motivating in a reading curriculum. Third, the study discusses the possibility and feasibility of the entire course framework. Last but not least, the study attempts to provide teachers with sample modules and sample materials as a pedagogical application to facilitate students' acquisition of vocabulary and sentence patterns and to foster students' reading habits.

1.4 Research Questions

The study begins with an assumption that there is a need for structured reading curriculum for public school teachers at an elementary level. In order to find out the current scenario in the Taiwanese EFL teaching and learning context and teachers' attitude toward cross-cultural reading topics, a survey was administered to fifty teachers. The following research questions are identified from the survey. The collected responses are referred as directions to tailor the needs of teachers and students in this project.

RQ 1: From a teacher's perspective, what are the difficulties for the implementation of reading instruction in the current EFL context? What are the difficulties for EFL
students to learn reading at an elementary level?

RQ 2: What resources are used to support students' extended reading habits and speaking enhancement after school in current EFL context? How can teachers make the most use of technology in the future to help students' language learning?

RQ 3: How do EFL teachers currently deal with reading in public schools? What do teachers believe about the teaching of reading and what do teachers do to teach reading?

RQ 4: What are the possible topics that could motivate elementary school fifth and sixth graders to retain their interest in English reading and language use out of school?

RQ 5: Will the reading curriculum increase students' reading autonomy and their cross-cultural awareness and recognition of diversity if small c culture\(^1\) issues are incorporated in the syllabus? Why and why not?

1.5 Organization of the study

The present project is composed of six chapters. Chapter One introduces the background, the purpose, and the central research questions of the study. Chapter Two reviews previous literature regarding the stages of reading development, reading fluency, the effectiveness of the Readers Theater method, and current technology application in assisting reading. Chapter Three describes how I collected the information to the research questions and analyzed them. Chapter Four discusses the major findings and examine the feasibility of the present study. Chapter Five exemplifies the proposed implications of Readers Theater technique. Finally, Chapter Six summarizes key findings of the research and conclude with suggestions for future research.

\(^1\) Small c culture refers to the intended routine aspects of how in reality members of a discourse community live their life.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the national English curriculum guidelines of Taiwan, English language learning tends to focus more on the cultivation of listening and speaking skills at an emergent stage in the third and fourth grade. However, although speaking and listening competence is explicitly addressed in the guidelines, it also stipulates that reading and writing activities should not be ignored. Instead, reading and writing are meant to be appropriately incorporated into the entire curriculum to create mutual benefits in language proficiency of all four skills (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2008). However, the Ministry’s guidelines are not followed to the letter in a real class setting. Many language teachers stay at teaching low-level of pre-lexical processes of reading (such as orthographical and phonological identification of words), and seldom move onto post-lexical reading processes (e.g. using basic cognitive and metacognitive strategies that activate background schema). Tsou (2007) worries the fact that the current approach to teaching speaking and listening skills is not sufficient. She suggests that more efforts should be devoted to explicit teaching of reading after students receive phonics instruction in class.

This chapter starts to explore the previous experiments of repeated reading method conducted in L1 and FL contexts. It goes on to discuss L1 learners’ developmental stages of reading and relates that to the participants in this study. Next, it reviews the effectiveness of using Readers Theater (RT) as a technique of repeated reading method and the suggested arrangements for an ideal RT program. In the end, it examines computer elements which potentially support the design of this Readers Theater course.
2.1 Repeated Reading Research in L1 and FL Context

Samuels (1979) employed the technique of repeated reading in his study experimenting on L1 students who have difficulty reading. Based upon Automaticity Theory proposed by LeBerge and Samuels (1974) and Verbal Efficiency Theory proposed by Perfetti (1988), this technique proved to be effective. While Automaticity Theory posits lower-level pre-lexical processes of reading can be automatized with practice (such as decoding), Verbal Efficiency Theory posits that higher-level post-lexical reading processes can also be automatized through practices (such as fluency). Samuel’s repeated reading method is a technique to engage readers to re-read a short passage silently or orally with either unassisted model or assisted live or audiotaped model. Its intervention for slow readers particularly showed significance in improving their reading speed and reading fluency (Samuels, 1979).

In recent studies, the US National Reading Panel (2000) identifies a set of subskills to assess the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. These subskill indicators include phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension strategies. As reported in this document, a fluent reader is expected to be able to “read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression” (p. 3-11). In other words, reading fluency is then officially recognized as the key to achieve the goal of good reading ability. Fluency instruction has therefore become appropriate for learners aged from second grade to high school, especially for struggling readers (Chard, Pikulski & McDonagh, 2006).

Readers Theater is considered one of the most promising techniques for fluency instruction both in first language (L1) and foreign language (FL) research. This
technique plays a crucial role in word recognition, reading fluency and reading comprehension. Based on repeated reading method, Readers Theater makes reading activity and learners' oral reading progress visible. Many reading researchers have tested this claim on English language learners (ELLs) and learners with limited English proficiency (LEPs) and have remarked on the value and effectiveness of expressive reading and oral reading (Dowhower, 1991; Rasinski, 2003; Tyler & Chard, 2000; Corcoran, 2005; Bridges, 2006). Recently, scholars have conducted a series of studies to investigate whether repeated reading was an effective supplement to an L2 and FL literacy program (Taguchi, 1997; Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2002; Taguchi et al., 2004; Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008). Blum et al. (1995) conclude that repeated reading improves readers' motivation to read and their ability to read books fluently and accurately.

However, Taguchi (1997) finds that EFL learners showed significant progress in reading rate with practiced passages but failed to show transfer of effects in terms of unpracticed passages except for the lowest level readers, who showed a significant improvement in their oral reading rate of new passages. Tsou (2007), who targets elementary EFL English learners in Taiwan, also reports similar results. Judging from both cases, students seem to perform significantly better in reading accuracy and reading fluency but not in reading comprehensibility. Nevertheless, both researchers ascribe the lack of clear transfer effects for reading rate and comprehension to the shortness of the treatment period, 10 or 15 weeks. Tsou (2007) further suggests that more consistent intervention and more frequent use of comprehension questions after every reading implementation will result in better comprehension in the long run.
2.2 Developmental Stages of Reading

Chall (1983, 1996) claims that learners of a language need to undergo six stages until they acquire reading proficiency. She lists the process of reading development as the six stages laid out in Table 2.1: *pre-reading stage*, *initial reading* [or decoding] *stage*, *ungluing and fluency stage*, *learning new information stage*, *multiple viewpoints stage*, and *construction and reconstruction stage*. Foreign language learners also experience the same process, and are assumed to encounter similar developmental stages over the course of learning how to read. However, depending on their native language and individual differences, the time span may vary longer or shorter.

**Table 2.1** L1 Reading Developmental Stages and Approximate Age (Chall, 1983, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Developmental Stages</th>
<th>L1 Learners’ Approximate Age at the Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 0: Pre-reading</td>
<td>0 through 6-year-old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Decoding</td>
<td>G1 through G2 (6-7 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Confirmation and Fluency</td>
<td>G2 through G3 (7-8 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Reading for learning the new</td>
<td>G4 through G8 (9-13 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Multiple Viewpoints</td>
<td>G9 through G12 (14-18 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Construction and Reconstruction</td>
<td>throughout college and beyond (18 and over)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LeBerge and Samuels (1974) observe that a fluent reader is someone who decodes text automatically without paying excessive attention. In this matter, he/she is apt to leave attention free to be used for comprehension. Samuels (1979) further explores this automaticity theory and characterizes learners reading behavior according to learners’ word recognition skill relating to stages of different fluent level shown as in Table 2.2 (p.88).
Table 2.2. Characteristics of Learners’ Reading Behavior at Different Fluent Levels
(Samuels 1979, p.88)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Different Fluent Levels</th>
<th>Characteristics of Learners’ Reading Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-accurate Stage</td>
<td>The student has great difficulty in recognizing words even when a reasonable amount of time is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy Stage</td>
<td>The student is able to recognize printed words with accuracy but attention is required. His/Her reading is rather slow and halting, and without express. Though high word recognition accuracy exists, comprehension seems rather poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Stage</td>
<td>The student can recognize printed words without attention. Oral reading rate is faster than speaking rate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Samuels’ (1979) and Chomsky’s (1978) experiments with the technique of repeated reading supplemented reading programs in helping readers of difficulties. They both find that even though comprehension seems limited when learners read text passages for the first time, they are better able to comprehend with each follow-up reading. Samuels further explains that the decoding barrier to comprehension over the intervention period can be gradually overcome. As less attention is required for decoding, more attention becomes available for comprehension (p.87).

The experience of EFL learners in Taiwan, who start learning English as a foreign language from the age of nine as elementary school third-graders, reflects the continuum of these two stages. For fifth and sixth graders, their reading proficiency corresponds to Samuels’ model at “Accuracy Stage” and Chall’s developmental stages in between stages one and two, during which developing decoding ability is in high demand. Students at this stage require explicit reading instructions to assist them to advance to the next level, and developing reading fluency that helps them to accelerate this process from decoding to comprehension is essential.
2.3 Readers Theater: An Application of Repeated Reading Method

Readers' Theater is an application of the technique of repeated reading. It integrates oral reading, literature, stories and performing arts. In this reading technique, students tell a story in a most entertaining form without makeup, sets, props, costumes, or memorization of lines while reading directly from the script is the only thing required. Students are encouraged to use voice intonation, facial expressions, gestures and body languages to appropriately interpret the emotion, beliefs, attitudes, and motive of the characters in the script (Walker, 1990; Carrick, 2001, Griffith & Rasinski, 2004). Through this technique, students' interest, confidence, and motivation to read is positively reinforced (Rinehart, 1999; Corcoran, 2005, Rinehart, 2001).

There are many advantages to applying Readers Theater in language classes. Rinehart (2001) identifies four of the most crucial advantages of this technique: 1) it increases students' patience with reading, 2) it improves students' confidence with their own attempts, 3) it generates interest in continued initiatives and willingness to read, and 4) it provokes enthusiasm about reading. In a sense he indicated that students who practice Readers Theater are more likely not to give up when meeting unknown vocabulary, more willing to pick up something new to read, and feel good about themselves as readers. They tend to become more proactive, seeking out opportunities to read more independently. He alleges that "the more sustained and successful reading experience they obtain, the greater reinforcement these benefits have in increasing reading ability and forming reading habit" (p. 67).

Furthermore, Readers Theater provides a learning environment that connects spoken language and writing language. It offers a potential channel to "bring dialogue and
characters to life through combinations of verbal and visual expression” through written texts (Rinehart, 2001: 67). Under such scenario, teachers may take advantage of this opportunity to integrate day-to-day topics into reading materials in order to make students successful in the experience of reading instruction. The drama component of Readers Theater provides students with imagery-based information that allows performers to combine the lines meaningfully to re-create the details of the story and eventually helps boost reading comprehension (Rose et al., 2000; Turner & Paris, 1995, Sloyer, 1982). There is also research that shows that Readers Theater may potentially have benefits in the area of pronunciation. Schreiber (1980) and Dowhower (1991) observe that the prosodic cuing (e.g. pausal intrusions, length of phrases, appropriate ness of phrases, phrase-final lengthening, terminal intonation contours, and stress) students perform while doing their oral reading enables the readers to read with greater ease, reproduce appropriate phrases, and achieve greater understanding of the reading task. Readers Theater in this way reinvents reciprocal merits to both strengthen language learners’ reading and speaking proficiency.

Readers Theater assists students’ vocabulary acquisition as students’ master vocabulary in the process of reading. Cognitive linguists Posner and Snyder (1975) believe that automaticity in vocabulary recognition plays a crucial factor among fluent readers. Samuels (1976) refers to this psychological process as “automatic decoding.” In order to have both fluent reading and good comprehension, learners have to be brought “beyond accuracy to automatic decoding” (p. 323). That is to say, at any given moment, attention can only be at one place at a time. Therefore, if two sources of information are presented simultaneously to a person, each of which demands attention for its processing,
the individual may find neither can be processed at the same time. Because most of their attention is spent on decoding while processing the text, less fluent readers’ remaining attention is not enough to immediately transfer into comprehension. Fluent readers, on the other hand, are able to decode automatically with the services of attention and thus are able to attend to processing meaning at the same time as they decode (Samuels, 1976). Many reading researchers like Eskey (1988) and Taguchi et al. (2004) also highlight the importance of automaticity in word recognition skills. Stanovich (1992) even stresses, “Excellent reading comprehension will not be observed in the face of deficient word recognition skills.” (p.4) However, Readers Theater provides a technique to bring repetitive vocabulary to readers’ attention unconsciously, and then gradually minimize necessary attention spent. The preserved attention is eventually allowed to go into higher level of reading activity—the process of meaning or comprehension—as soon as word recognition is effortless for readers.

Readers Theater can be used as intensive reading skill training as well as extensive reading training. In intensive reading skill training, teachers who implement Readers Theater in class focus on the explicit teaching of vocabulary, high-frequency words, grammar, pronunciation and discourse cues. Nation (2001) acknowledges that such instruction of high-frequency words are more essential in L2/FL setting. Non-native speakers need exposure to high-frequency words because this essential group of words “deserves time and attention being paid” and the “incidental learning of the same words can raise learners’ awareness of particular words...while reading” (p. 157). In the extensive reading training portion, Readers Theater uses simplified text to encourage learners to practice reading extensively. Its recycled use of repetitive vocabulary,
phrases, and sentence patterns in the scripts enhances the purpose of extensive reading and transforms it into constituent reading habit formation. It brings up students' attention to target language aims while engaging them in a variety of written texts which develop learners' vocabulary growth and fluency (Nation 2001; Cobb, 2007).

Rasinski (2003) sums up all the benefits and claims that Readers Theater connects spoken and written language, strengthens decoding skills, fosters fluency, and boosts comprehension. For teachers, Readers Theater allows visual evaluation of reading process. For students, on the other hand, it intra-personally builds students' self-confidence in reading and interpersonally creates community participation (p. 19-36). All the benefits reinforce the relevance and pedagogical values of using this technique for foreign language beginning reading.

2.4 Review of Reader Theater Program Design

Based upon the previous literature review, Readers Theater seems to be an effective tool in classroom application in many ways. Nevertheless, how to display this technique with structured and well-sequenced instruction shall be the greatest concern for most practitioners. Rinehart (2001) finds in several empirical studies about the use of Readers Theater as clinical treatment and identifies the following instructional guidelines. He suggests that teachers do not have to obtain prepared material as the appropriate text, but can "choose and adapt text that emerges from the life of the classroom" (p.70). He continues to recommend that a broad array of different genres of reading and writing activities are also compatible while teachers implement Readers Theater material in class. However, manageable level of reading text is required to provide materials that fall
within students’ instructional level (Nation, 2001; Rinehart, 2001). Most important of all, practice is necessary and essential to make students’ reading more fluent and summative performances are an incentive to bring successful experience in order to further trigger students’ learning motivation (Rinehart, 2001: 70-73).

Prescott (2003: 23) and Carrick (2006: 216-224) go on to describe a more structured Readers Theater course procedure for L1 learners in grade schools and middle schools. However, a more adaptable framework proposed in Tsou’s (2007) study illustrates a more plausible plan to implement Readers Theater technique in the EFL context. For her experiment in the study, a 15-week long Readers Theater course (with 30 minutes of instruction per week) is implemented. The framework in the following Table 2.3 incorporates the ideas previous researchers have proposed and is established mainly on the base of Tsou’s (2007) framework but slightly modified for adaptation of the Readers Theater course this project attempts to present.
Table 2.3 Readers Theater Course Framework (adapted from Prescott, 2003; Walker, 2005; Carrick, 2006; Tsou, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Procedure Focus</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Class</td>
<td>Choose a script</td>
<td>Choose a prepared script, or self-created adaptation of scripts from featured textbook lines/picture books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>Demonstration and discussion</td>
<td>Discusses the script contents with students and meanwhile demonstrating and explaining what is considered reading fluently. Have students practice the lines while they try out different parts in groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class</td>
<td>Assign parts</td>
<td>Assign or have students choose their roles themselves. Circulate the room to either supervise or give timely feedback on students’ performances. Encourage students to additionally add on cues between the lines for specific expressions. (e.g. sadly, angrily, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>Highlight parts and assure important language points</td>
<td>Have students highlight parts of the role they play and practice the lines by reading out loud. Encourage students repeatedly practice the line until they are familiar with the lines. Have them pay attention to the emotion while reading-aloud. Assign the students practice their lines at home and in groups during school. Point out the common errors or parts the entire class should take notice of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Class</td>
<td>Brainstorm staging details</td>
<td>Discuss with students over staging details. Assist students to make appropriate decision for gestures, facial expressions, simple costume pieces, positioning, and other performance aspects. Re-group the class in roles and have the entire class practice the whole scripts together twice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Class</td>
<td>Rehearse</td>
<td>Rehearse entrances, exits, and any stage movements until students run smoothly and readers feel comfortable with them. Supervise rehearsal between the groups giving advice for final modification. Assign the students practice their lines at home and in groups during school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Class</td>
<td>Perform</td>
<td>Have the cast read the play aloud as a group for an audience made up of peers (usually in class), parents, school board or others (for a bigger scale).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Readers Theater Course with CALL Supporting Technology

If oral reading fluency instruction can be an aspect of mature reading as Samuels (1979) has argued, then it is necessary for any commuter-assisted language learning (CALL) tools of Readers Theater to take speech and audio into account. Blum et al. (1995) demonstrates a home-based repeated reading with an audio model that serves as a significant supplement to literacy instructional programs for second language learners. In this study, students were able to read fluently even when they got access to imitate the
model of audiotapes at home. Blum and colleagues eventually conclude that "repeated reading with an auditory model provides critical support as scaffolding which enables novices to feel like expert readers" (p.555). More recently, Pluck (2006) also reports the results of previous research that found that the use of audiotaped read-aloud programs showed significant gains with L2 learners in reading in just four months.

Beside audio speech modeling, a project conducted by Johnston (2006) and her colleagues applied audiotape-embedded technology to evaluate students' oral reading progress for school district students in a state-wide large-scale online system in Ohio. The Fluency Assessment System used archived fluency samples for student portfolios and for individual assessment purposes. Students participating in this pilot project were motivated by the use of computer, received immediate feedback, and could make an attempt anytime without consequence or sanctions. In addition, positive results of the online assessment system include enabling students to practice repeatedly, record whenever they want, save samples over time, and share samples with parents (p.131). While Fluency Assessment System was being used for evaluation, the student-and-computer interaction bears many similar attributes with this Readers Theater project.

There are many other advantages that technological inventions can assist learners to learn English as a second or foreign language. Cummins (2008) emphasizes the sociological aspect of the use of CALL. He believes that less affluent students (especially low-SES students\(^2\)) can be more capable of using technological resources if schools can level out the discrepancy by offering them opportunities in school or once students have Internet access out of school. Cummings also stresses the importance of

\(^2\) Low-SES students means low social economic status students.
communicative CALL use. Therefore, he suggests that CALL-based language learning frameworks should avoid only incorporating the curriculum focus on "transmitting information", but broaden it to include the development among students of higher order thinking ability (p. 63).

This Readers Theater project contains a course module relating to CALL use is based on teachers' and students' co-constructing knowledge and understanding. It provides learning and practicing framework that is not only transmission-oriented but also transformation-oriented. Guthrie (2004) comments that this type of online platform helps develop students' cognitive language processes, sustains students' sense of achievement in reading, increases their levels of engagement, and motivates their willingness to process literary works.

To sum up, based upon these elements explored in this literature review section, the Readers Theater course design attempts to provide an optimal framework that allows language learners to work both in-class and out-of-class. More explicitly, it will allow learners to both practice in class with peer groups and reinforce learners' reading ability out of class with the help of technology. The online nature of the course presents a friendly and flexible environment that builds students' connection with literary work, allows students to practice without anxiety or stage fright, improves students' understanding of level-appropriate materials, and enhances students' mastery of word recognition. The following chapter analyzes the needs of teachers and students in the EFL context and the pursuit of Readers Theater courses.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the needs of teachers and students for the development of ideal reading materials, I administered an online questionnaire with the built-in survey tool in ANVILL (A National Virtual Language Lab) interface established in the server at the University of Oregon (http://tinyurl.com/4op3ma). I collected responses from participants from May 24th to June 30th 2008.

The purpose of the needs assessment was to find the answers to the five pre-determined research questions: 1) to explore the difficulties for the implementation of reading instruction in the Taiwanese context and for EFL students to learn reading at an elementary level; 2) to investigate students’ after-school support and learning environment that could potentially extend students’ reading habits and speaking ability in an EFL environment; 3) to discover how EFL teachers deal with reading in current English learning program at public schools; 4) to find interesting reading topics involving cross-culture communication to motivate elementary school fifth and sixth grade students; and 5) to discuss whether small c culture-featured reading materials can increase awareness of diversities in target language culture and create learner autonomy in reading.

The survey was organized in six major parts in order to collect valid and reliable data for detailed analysis: (a) demographic data, (b) language teaching and learning environment in Taiwan, (c) teachers’ individual teaching perspectives or attitude toward certain techniques, (d) correlations between oral reading and speaking, (e) contents of

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3 Small c culture refers to the intended routine aspects of how in reality members of a discourse community live their life.
desired reading material, and (f) micro-teaching suggestion for reading instruction.

3.1 Instrument: Online Questionnaire Survey as Needs Assessment

To collect data related to the points mentioned above, I administered an online survey, which consisted of forty-three items, to English teachers in Taiwan who currently work in an EFL teaching context. Both qualitative and quantitative data were included in the survey. (For paper version of the questionnaire, see Appendix A.)

The survey was built in ANVILL interface because ANVILL provided Chinese compatible interface that offered the participants a confusion-free environment to freely express their opinions without the interference of a language barrier. In order to avoid possible misunderstanding, when professional terminology was used in the question items of the survey, a more explicit description, example, or relevant picture was given to facilitate participants’ understanding.

Different item types were used in the survey: multiple choice items (both one answer and more than one answer are used), five-point scale (“agree, mostly agree, no comment, mostly disagree, and disagree”, or “always, usually, sometimes, seldom, and never”), and short answers. EFL teachers were asked to reflect on the facts and beliefs according to their personal experiences and perspectives on a five-point scale. They were required to select from one of the five options that best describes the real situation of language teaching and learning scenarios in public elementary schools in Taiwan. Participants were allowed and encouraged to add their comments as in short answer section to each respective item if they felt like providing further justification or explanation. (See Figure 3.1 below for all types of question items in ANVILL)
environment.)

Figure 3.1 All Types of Question Items in ANVILL Environment

3.2 Participants

Nearly 140 EFL teachers from Kaohsiung, Tainan, Chiayi, Yunlin, Taipei and many other parts of Taiwan were contacted to participate in the study. 63 responses were received and 50 of them were valid. Of all the respondents, 7 were male teachers and 43 were female. All the participants were public elementary school English teachers who have worked since English curriculum was adopted in elementary school education in 1999. They had an average of 4.38 years of teaching experience. Every one of them
taught elementary school fifth and sixth graders for several years in a regular weekly 2-hour fashion. However, their ages varied from 22 years old to 50 years old: 48% of whom were in their twenties (21 to 30) and 52% of them had ages spread evenly from 31 to 50 years old. A total average age for the entire participants was 33.7 years old.

Since every school managed their personnel differently, many of the English teachers were assigned to serve in other positions rather than simply being subject teachers. Except for the majority of participants (42%) who were English subject teachers, there existed a great variety of positions including: 28% as administrative assistants who spent most of their time in administrative duties and projects and meanwhile taught eight to sixteen periods as subject teachers, 20% as home-room teachers who had to take care of five to eight other subjects in one single class, 10% as administrative supervisors who were mostly in charge of major school business and had merely one to three periods of classes to teach. I attempted to collect sources nationwide with 8% from the north of Taiwan, 34% from the central, 56% from the south, and 2% from off-shore islets. Of all the school types these teachers were teaching, 22% taught in metropolitan and 24% in suburban areas where there was good access to technology, 42% from township areas where technology might not be as popular but still accessible in class, and 12% from villages where technology was less available. Table 3.1 demonstrates the demographic profiles of all 50 participants in detail.
### Table 3.1. Participant Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Position at School</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Type of School (by location)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-25y</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-2y</td>
<td>Subject Teacher</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30y</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3-5y</td>
<td>Home-room Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35y</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6-9y</td>
<td>Administrative Assistance</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40y</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10y</td>
<td>Administrative Supervisor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45y</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-50y</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All numbers are presented in percentage (%)*

As for teachers’ workload at school, 28% teachers taught 2-6 hours per week, 22% taught 8-12 hours a week, 18% taught 14-18 hours, and lastly a great majority of 32% teachers had to instruct more than 20 hours. Not surprisingly, half of the teachers had a fairly big size class composed of over 30 students, and another 30% had more than 20 students whereas the remaining 20% only had fewer than 20 students in their language classes. Though the overall pool of participants (50 people) is not absolute quantitatively, the participants represented nearly all types of profiles in elementary school English education in Taiwan. I used this instrument in an attempt to identify and analyze their feedback and responses that related to this project. For a closer look at the participant profiles, Table 3.1 provides a spreadsheet layout.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

Due to the online nature of this survey, participants are those teachers who have easy technology access, and who are good at applying computer assisting tools to education use. Notification of this survey was sent through e-mail to teachers who actively participated in workshops and voluntarily shared teaching experiences and opinions on
public internet-based forums. Some of them are members from local governments' Compulsory Education Advisory Groups (CEAG). Therefore, participants in this survey are assumed to be technologically capable enough, possibly open to new methods, and willingly express their comments and perspectives with a positive attitude. Of all the fifty responses, an average time of 15 minutes and 5 seconds was spent on responding to this survey.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Since the survey combines the characteristics of quantitative, qualitative, and interview research, the analysis of the entire database is based on the following five principles.

I. Five-point Likert Scale (the continuum of agree/disagree)

Responses to most of the items (e.g. item 12-21, 26-30) are assigned numbers: agree as 5, mostly agree as 4, no comment as 3, mostly disagree as 2, and disagree as 1. Though an average of these items was calculated at first, however, it didn’t seem clear enough for a in-depth and thorough discussion. Instead, I took out the neutral feedback (no comment as 3) and combined the agrees and the mostly agrees to “positive” and on the other side bound the mostly disagrees and the disagrees as “negative.” In this sense, the tendency of respondents’ standpoints can be obviously observed and examined when it corresponded to the description of each item.

II. Five-point Scale (the continuum of always/never)

Question items about teachers’ implementation in class (e.g. item 22-25) are used to compare with those about teaches’ belief in the teaching of reading (e.g. item 26-30).
For these items, I decided to view them holistically as indicators of teachers' behavior and teachers' beliefs about current reading syllabus.

III. Multiple Choice (more than one answer)

The many other items that asked respondents to answer in multiple choice format (e.g. item 33-36, and 38) are counted in different ways. Each single option in these items is calculated respectively and regarded as an individual item to compare with other options within the same questionnaire item or with results of other questionnaire items. They are also used as evidence in later discussions and interpretations to bolster final conclusion for needs assessment.

IV. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative items (e.g. item 37 and 39) in this study are two open-ended interview questions. They are optional and participants are encouraged to freely respond in short-essay format. The survey received 38 out of 50 responses for item 37, and 29 out of 50 responses for item 39. Both of them are reviewed to answer all five research questions. See Chapter Four for suggestions for the design of Readers Theater course and its future implementation in a reading curriculum.

3.5 Results and Interpretation

3.5.1 Research Question 1

From a teacher's perspective, what are the difficulties for the implementation of reading instruction in the current EFL context? What are the difficulties for EFL students to learn reading at an elementary level?

To answer this question, I relied on items 18-21, and 34 in the survey (see complete
survey results in appendix A). Most respondents (88%) said that they could hardly spare extra time to enforce a regular complete reading program in an already-tight two-hour weekly syllabus. Students' readiness for reading seems to be another concern: insufficient amount of vocabulary (84%) and limited grammar structure (26%) both prevent students from approaching text-based materials willingly. Seldom use of English library resources (84%) indicates that they either do not form reading habits or are not motivated at all. According to the teachers, students' insufficient competence prevents them from doing reading for pleasure. Even where there are ample books available (including graded readers and picture books), not being able to understand the text still keeps the students from enjoying reading very much.

It is uncertain whether the teachers underestimate their students' command of language ability. What does seem clear is that teachers sensed there are too many stepping stones needed to accomplish independent reading and all that they had currently is limited time. They expressed a need for a systematic plan or some technique with an all-in-one nature that comprises the training of vocabulary, the application of grammar into sentences, and the formation of good reading habits.

3.5.2 Research Question 2

What resources are used to support students' extended reading habits and speaking enhancement after school in current EFL context? How can teachers make the most use of technology in the future to help students' language learning?

I used the results from item 14 to item 17 in the survey to answer this question. As shown in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2, respondents identified four ways students could obtain
obtain out-of-school English language help. In descending order of popularity they are: private language institutes (84%), language courseware such as audio CDs (70%), Internet-based resources (44%), and parents (30%). While private language institutes were the overwhelming first choice, home study materials such as CD courseware were also favorably regarded.

Table 3.2. Use of After-school Learning Support Tools and Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Support Tools</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Language Institute</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based Programs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All numbers are presented in percentage (%)

Note1: Parenthesized numbers in this column are sums added from responses expressing agree and mostly agree.

Note2: Parenthesized numbers in this column are sums added from responses expressing mostly disagree and disagree.

It is evident that private language institutes have a substantial influence on students’ performance in an academic grade-oriented social settings. But the lack of free and wide accessibility in private after-school education creates potential disadvantages for lower-SES families because they usually cannot afford this type of education. This fad tends to undermine parents’ role in students’ foreign language learning (30%). On the other hand, courseware such as audiotape and CD-ROMs, however, play a crucial role in EFL students’ learning that allows them to receive native-like modeling (70%). Web-based technology seems to have a lot of potential (44%) since it may provide
The lack of pervasive household web services and platforms seems to currently reduce the possibility of using the Internet. However, the latest report shows that nearly 75% of households in Taiwan are equipped with broadband services (Taiwan Network Information Center, 2008). With increased Internet accessibility, respondents may positively anticipate that technology-based after-school language learning modules would
critically benefit and reinforce students' learning within five years. If the course is built online and provides students with interactive modeling and self-recorded devices, students might feel supported by this platform and be able to practice already acquired language, and even produce new language more effectively.

3.5.3 Research Question 3

**How do EFL teachers currently deal with reading in public schools?** What do teachers believe about the teaching of reading and what do teachers do to teach reading?

I summarize the results from item 22 to 29, 31, 32, and 35 examining teachers' beliefs and teaching behavior to answer this question. As previously mentioned, time is a key issue in the teaching of reading in Taiwanese elementary schools. Based on teachers' own self reports, much more time is spent on oral communication (speaking and listening) than reading. (Table 3.3 demonstrates what percent of time teachers say that they dedicate to reading or speaking in lectures.) The reasons for these results are varied: some teachers point to the fact that their students aren't ready for reading, others mention curricular pressures, and still others talk of their own lack of skills.

**Table 3.3 Percentage of Time Teachers Spent on Teaching Reading and Speaking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Time Spent</th>
<th>On Reading</th>
<th>On Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20% and below</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21% to 29%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31% to 39%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41% to 49%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% and over</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All numbers presented in Reading column and Speaking column are in percentage (%)*

However, even with these circumstances, teachers still make their best effort to
implement activities related to reading. According to results shown from items 22 to 29 in the survey, teachers believe there are several learning activities they may employ in class to make potential advancement. As can be seen in Table 3.4, these activities include (in descending order of frequency): read-aloud activities (90%), sight word training (58%), drama-based activities (46%), and silent independent reading (10%). While there are significant differences in these activities, teachers do seem to believe that activities particularly involved with drama and reading-aloud can help to improve oral and reading proficiency (96%).

Table 3.4. Teacher Beliefs and Deeds on Activities in the Developing Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Activities</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent Independent Reading</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10 (2+8)(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Word Training</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>58 (20+38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read-aloud Activity</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>90 (26+64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama-based Activity</td>
<td>96(^2)</td>
<td>46 (4+42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All numbers presented in Reading column and Speaking column are in percentage (%)

*Note 1: The number in the parenthesis indicates how much percent of people *always* do so in class (the former digit) and how much percent of people *usually* do in class (the latter digit).

*Note 2: There are subcategories in this displayed item. (Items 27 to 29) All 96% of the participants responded that drama can enhance students' comprehension to passages and students' English oral proficiency, and also can help teachers evaluate students' development of oral performance.*

Teachers seem to believe that reading-aloud is an effective technique as a way for verifying students’ comprehension and tend to favor this technique (90%) over drama-based activities (46%). Although they did not show as much interest in drama-based activities, the reason may simply relate to greater familiarity with the read-aloud technique and perceived ease of preparation for read-aloud activities.

Nevertheless, the fact that more than 40% of the teachers indicated their belief that drama-based techniques can be useful is quite interesting. Comments suggested that
teachers felt this type of activity would be able to make reading more engaging and lively because aspects of drama were incorporated. Although only some had heard of Readers Theater, it seems likely that its focus on both comprehension and oral production may satisfy teachers and address some of their concerns about time.

3.5.4 Research Question 4

What are the possible topics that could motivate elementary school fifth and sixth graders to retain their interests in English reading and language use out of school?

In order to design Readers Theater scripts that motivate students to read independently, the survey asked participants to select six topics that they think would address this issue in item 38 of the survey. The results are shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. Topics That Students May Feel Interested in Learning in Reading Curriculum

Note: The participant pool is 50 people.
As can be seen from the chart, teachers believed that their students would be most interested in the practical aspects of day-to-day life in the United States and other English speaking countries. The results’ focus on small c culture is not surprising given the age of the students and their lack of previous exposure to the target culture. It also suggests that teachers are looking for materials serving as springboards which enable students to easily connect the world in which they live and study to future cross-culture study.

The results of survey are as follows: 72% of teachers believed that students would be most interested in comparisons of food and eating habits between the target language culture and their own. Other top interests include: unique sport hobbies (68%), elementary school students’ daily school life (68%), festivals (66%), weekend activities and entertainment (62%), etiquette and greetings (58%), pop music (50%), personal interests (40%), and child’s play (34%).

Scripts for the proposed Readers Theater syllabus, therefore, will be designed and sequenced based upon these results and according to key dates in the school calendar. That is, the topics will mirror the interests of students and the sequence will go chronologically along with the school years’ occasions that connects with students’ daily living activities.

3.5.5 Research Question 5

Will the reading curriculum increase students’ reading autonomy and their cross-cultural awareness and recognition of diversity if small c culture issues are incorporated in the syllabus? Why and why not?

According to the survey responses, the results to this research question are
somewhat inconclusive. Teachers were unanimously positive about the idea of integrating small c culture topics into the contents of reading materials. They agreed that if the materials were relevant and interesting, students would engage in them with greater motivation. However, they had concerns in two areas: text difficulty and teacher preparedness. Given the level of the students—elementary school students who have only had two to three years of prior training—some teachers worried that the texts would be too difficult to really qualify as “pleasurable” for extensive reading. Given the backgrounds of the teachers, some of them were worried that they would not be able to properly prepare or teach their students the nuances of small c US culture without access to reference materials.

3.6 Results Summary

Several important findings emerged from the survey of Taiwanese teachers’ needs for a desirable reading course design:

1) Although teachers are receptive to the idea of doing more reading instruction in the fifth and sixth grade EFL curriculum, most of them are wary of the time commitment necessary to do it well because there are only two hours of instruction per week. 2) Web-based interface and materials can be a potential and helpful source for students’ extended learning after school once the technology takes advantage of the use of audio and visual support related to the course. 3) Reading aloud is the most common activity that teachers most frequently adopt in class. If drama-based activity can connect to read-aloud activity, such technique as Readers Theater may have a good chance to become as popular. 4) Readings that feature day-to-day life of target culture can have a
bigger chance to retain students’ interest and engage them in reading. 5) Small c culture topics are likable but still cast some doubts onto the teachers if teachers themselves do not personally have relevant target culture experience to teach.

To summarize the results after reviewing all the data in this needs assessment, I as a researcher and course designer reached the following conclusions. If there is an ideal reading course that both meets the needs of teachers and students and solves the current teaching and learning dilemma that involves reading, it will have to be 1) a program that does not exclude the learning time of other three skills in a regular English class; 2) a technique that takes care of students’ vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension; 3) a design that fills the gap of students’ insufficient competence; and 4) a tool that can maintain students reading habits and transfer them into further advanced independent reading.

Readers Theater, therefore, becomes the adopted technique in this course design because teachers seem to have a favorable reaction to using this technique to accomplish some of the reading goals. The following chapter will discuss how the course is organized to be implemented in a regular classroom setting and online environment after class.
CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF THE COURSE DESIGN

The course design is a project that contains materials and resources provided for students in order to reciprocally support their in-class learning and after-school reinforcement. This chapter will first introduce the structure of the course. Then, I will justify its feasibility in the Taiwanese EFL curriculum setting, suggesting how the mechanism and other outside resources could lend a hand to magnify the course design in students' learning. In conclusion, I discuss the restrictions and limitations this course design hasn't yet explored.

4.1 Organization of the Course

This course consists of two parts: the in-class supplementary reading materials and the out-of-class online extended reading module (See Figure 4.1 for a graphical representation of structure of the course design). Because this course is established to complement the insufficient role of reading addressed in the national Ministry guidelines, the difficulty of the scripts are managed not exceed students' reading comprehension level and must be level-appropriate. However, to some extent there may be extra language input used contextually in the paper-based script lines as $i + 1$ input\textsuperscript{4} for the students to infer as they read. Therefore, the recycling use of language content (including vocabulary, sentence patterns, and pronunciation rules, etc.) from students' regular English class will appear repetitively, offering them enough scaffolding to perform oral reading confidently.

\textsuperscript{4} Based upon Steven Krashen's Input hypothesis in which he suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some "$i + 1$" input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence, so that learners' acquisition may take place more easily.
Figure 4.1. Structure of the Readers Theater Course for Oral Reading Fluency

The on-line extended reading module, on the other hand, takes advantageous use of audio/visual clips, text-to-speech (TTS) technology, and self-recorded Message Board system. This interactive interface provides a way of learning which allows students to imitate the modeling as many times as possible after school. By offering this unlimited supportive tool for learning, the module provides students with a comfortable environment to practice their oral reading and to engage in assisted independent reading once they have web access. This reinforcement is expected to help students receive benefits fulfilling the purpose of extended reading: the mastery of text—fluency.

This Readers Theater course specifies its focus on the training of two of the four
language skills: reading and speaking. The whole course takes place on two occasions: at school in language class and after school at home (or where Internet is accessible). Theoretically, the course provides native-like language input to the training of reading and speaking in class and out of school. It also offers students the opportunity to produce their language output in an anxiety-free environment. Pedagogically, this course bolsters students' learning not only with expressive intonation demonstration, but also with suggestive instructions for teachers to assist students' reading comprehension.

Current materials and resources in this course design provide support to meet the needs of all three groups involved in the learning of reading: the students, the teacher, and the parents. During class, teachers are given ideas and multimedia resources for implementation and are suggested to discuss with the class over script lines in order to take students to comprehension level. For students, the following in-class group work practice and rehearsals and the after-school self-practicing tools may both enhance students' experience of oral reading. Parents may also be given a chance to participate in the after-school tutoring intervention in the online reading module. They may help their children to form consistent English reading habits by referencing the teachers guide provide in the module. By connecting teachers' and parents' efforts together, this course design hopes to narrow the discrepancy among students in the way that even low SES students could participate with guidance given the supportive opportunity to succeed and become a better readers.

4.2 Feasibility and Justification of the Course

The survey results in Chapter Three point out several issues that concern teachers in the practical pedagogical field. One of the most crucial comments is the management of
time within the classroom. Instructors feel it is still demanding but necessary for them to design a thorough syllabus in order to have equal focus on the development of all four language skills. Since students' in-class learning time is rigorous, how to allocate the use of time prudently and wisely is especially important. In addition, some teachers believe that it is also important to require students to dedicate themselves to reading outside of the classroom. Teaching reading with this Readers Theater course seems to be feasible in several ways, to be laid out below.

According to the survey, Readers Theater appears able to accomplish the reading goals mentioned in the guidelines. At the most basic level, Ministry Guidelines suggests that students at this level should be able to accurately pronounce alphabetic words, identify text with its sounds, and read out loud text-based course texts or easy stories. When working with a Readers Theater script, students have to sound out words, identify and learn new vocabulary and recognize and pronounce the words in isolation. At a higher level, where Ministry Guidelines are not very specific, Readers Theater seems to bring issues such as negotiation of plots and understanding of texts to the forefront.

Using this Readers Theater course in class is time saving. The course is subject to the Ministry guidelines which urge to help students develop integrative skills in English education. It connects the training of speaking to reading and better assists students' transformation in their developmental stage of reading from the decoding level to fluency level. Sequenced procedures scaffold students' ability in getting adapted to more complex text materials step by step. Students at different literacy level are supported within the designed scripts while each of them can find their own place improving their
reading ability in this activity. The storylines are scripted in a way to make learning happen in a contextualized situation and cross-culture context. The course makes the role of reading more prominent in the curriculum while facilitating students' vocabulary acquisition. The repetitive use of target vocabulary, sentence structure, pronunciation, and grammar ties in with the main course objectives by supplying a highly structured intensive reading learning experience.

Given the reasons above, this course, serving as a supplementary role in the curriculum, does not interfere in the time needed for the other three skills in a regular English class. From a pedagogical standpoint, this course is actually a time saver.

Practicing reading orally outside of class complements what students aren't able to complete in class and allows for fostering students' constant reading habits with the help of online technology. According to LeBerge and Samuels' Automaticity Theory (1974) and Perfetti's Verbal Efficiency Theory (1988), decoding may be automatized with constant practice and therefore readers may reach the fluency of reading with vocalized reading practices. Taking this into account, the course module makes use of online technology and synthesized voice technology to fulfill this objective. Students participating in class with peer group reading rehearsal are able to use this course module out of class with well-thought support. By asking students to dedicate themselves to practicing oral reading after school, the online course module is able to reinforce what students have learned in class via self-modeling Text-to-Speech synthesized voices and self-recording Message Board without going for after-school private institute programs. Thus the design would make their after school effort more efficient and link it tightly to the curriculum.
The procedure of using this course module seems to be pedagogically sound. Students start out their learning of oral reading with controlled introduction to the materials from their teacher. Then, they gain a lot of support in class within small groups, and finally perform individualized work on the Internet with synthetic voices (TTS speech technology) and a discussion board (Message Board forum platform). This controlled-to-free procedure would scaffold students' with stepping stones, over the long run building their ability to decode vocabulary efficiently and read out loud text materials fluently.

The interesting topics are a bonus to increase students' interest, and may present cross-cultural contents that may help retain students' reading habits as long as they keep using this module to improve their oral reading skills. By providing an extensive reading environment, the course hopes this ritual may possibly be transferred to promote advanced independent reading.

To sum up, this Readers Theater course has all the advantages EFL teachers have been looking for—time-saving, meaningful practice, extended connections with major course materials, and interesting enough topics to create learner autonomy. In addition, teachers do not need to have sophisticated cultural awareness to teach these materials but to guide their students with interactive discussion over appropriate expressiveness to enhance students' comprehension of text materials. The supplementary and the assisting role of the course stand out and make this project more flexible and approachable to both teachers and students. The following section will discuss the relevant issues this project does not address and provide directions for future research in this field.
4.3 Limitations and Restrictions

Several issues come up when it comes to implementation of this project, particularly in the areas of: training, and resources. First and foremost, teachers who do not have much knowledge about RT will need a series of in-service training to recognize this reading technique. Since most teachers at the current stage aren’t yet familiar with this technique, the quality and quantity of good RT script is limited. Therefore, in a near future it is suggested that workshops may enable teachers to adapt current textbooks into appropriate RT scripts that best serve their particular pursuit and class levels. Secondly, for parents to be actively involved in RT, they will also need seminars from school administrations to teach them how to make most use of this course module to guide their children after school.

Technology resources are key to the success of this project since computer availability and Internet connection are required. Resources vary widely in Taiwan from rural to urban areas. Establishment of educational infrastructure still requires funding from governmental subsidy or school-proposed projects to make this course design come to realization. Good models for how to do this exist but they aren’t widely known. Teachers and school administrations in rural regions particularly need to figure out an appropriate mechanism to work this way out.

These limitations are not covered in this Readers Theater course design, but they offer directions for other researchers. If future program developers, practitioners, educators and researchers can find solutions to overcome these restrictions, I believe this proposed Readers Theater course design could eventually benefit students’ reading fluency and oral reading mastery effectively with the least effort made from teachers and parents.
CHAPTER FIVE
PEDOLOGICAL APPLICATION

In order to make teachers understand how this actual Readers Theater course functions, this chapter demonstrates the creation of sample materials and a sample module of a web-based framework that presents the teaching resources and learning materials that comprise this Readers Theater course. A special feature of this Readers Theater course is the use of an online framework to facilitate and extend in-class study.

5.1 Goals and Objectives of the Course

The objective of the course coheres with Ministry guidelines for elementary school English education: motivating students’ learning interest and fostering the ability to use English. However, the course still places high emphasis on preparing students with fundamental competence of reading for more advanced academic reading that middle school education requires. Here is a list of course goals and objectives featuring five phases: awareness goals, attitude goals, pronunciation skills goals, reading skills goals, and knowledge goals.

➢ Awareness

Goal 1: By the end of the course, students will be able to work with classmates in group rehearsals and performances, and become more aware of their improvement in overall oral reading fluency.

Objective 1a. Students will learn how to work in pairs and small groups to learn to give and receive feedback on Readers Theater performance.

Objective 1b. Students will keep formative portfolios individually which includes their self-assessment, peer evaluation, scripts, and teacher assessment.
Attitude

Goal 2: By the end of the course, students will **be able to read** autonomously extra-curricular English picture books, simple story books or the easiest level of English conversation magazine (e.g. *Let's Talk in English*).

**Objective 2a.** Students will be able to read storybooks independently and understand the meaning of stories mostly, but may have to guess at meaning of longer or more complex material.

**Objective 2b.** Students will develop their personal reading preferences and strategies as they discover topics of their interest by doing extensive reading.

Pronunciation Skills

Goal 3: By the end of the course, students will **have developed the ability to read out loud** story books/scripts with desired authentic accent by using pronunciation, stress, and intonation without hesitation.

**Objective 3a.** Students will be able to provide others with positive and explicit feedback in pronunciation, stress, and intonation when practicing oral reading.

**Objective 3b.** Students will be able to model intonation heard from authentic CD demonstration properly, and compare and modify their own speech production without hesitation.

**Objective 3c.** Students will be able to mark on scripts using personal symbols as notes to remind themselves of native-like pronunciation, stress, and intonation.

Reading Skills

Goal 4: By the end of the course, students will **be able to recognize and read** the basic sight vocabulary of 220 words without hesitation.

**Objective 4a.** Students will be able to identify and speak out in correct pronunciation the designated 220 sight words within 1 second each on seeing flashcards of words referred to it.

**Objective 4b.** Students will be able to read easy story texts fluently when encountering sight words in them.

**Objective 4c.** Students will be able to save as much energy on decoding sight words for
more in-depth comprehension of holistic story lines.

➢ Knowledge

Goal 5: By the end of the course, students will be able to recognize differences between Chinese culture and American culture, and will respect and appreciate both.

Objective 5a. Students will identify and articulate about the characteristic of their home culture with manageable English and visual aids.

Objective 5b. Students will be willing to share with peers and parents parts of Chinese culture or American culture they appreciate.

5.2 The Rationale of the Design

General Considerations

In an EFL public elementary school setting where English lecture is finite and viewed merely as a subject to stimulate students’ interest to a foreign language, time management is the most important concern. This year-round supplementary Readers Theater consists of six units. For the sake of time and flexibility, the course only covers merely three units every semester. Except for midterm week and finals week, the course follows the regular syllabus and is made into two 18-week programs for building reading fluency. Each unit takes 15 minutes out from 12 regular English classes consecutively and lasts for 6 weeks (180 minutes in total). Though it may seem too long for a single unit, this Readers Theater course is designed to complement existing Ministry curriculum, so it may in fact save teachers’ time. Activities in this Readers Theater focus on reading aloud and oral fluency fulfilling the purposes of traditional drills and practices and wisely condensing excessive consumption of time in just a few steps.

This course uses a Topical/Functional Syllabus that takes place in socio-cultural settings. The entire plot is conversation-based and attempts to be as close to reality as
possible. Each unit follows a conversational story of Readers Theater script featuring the experience of an American teenager who comes to Taiwan along with his working parents. His parents who are in Taiwan for business are eager to make their son acculturated in Taiwanese culture. As the boy starts his adventure in Taiwan, he shares different perspectives, customs, and habits of his culture. His acquaintance with a Taiwanese boy of his age elicits interpersonal and interactive experiences as these representatives interact with each other and share their own culture with one another.

5.3 Scope and Sequence

The course attempts to meet the needs of EFL students: a desire to share with others their own culture and to know other people better, especially those from English-speaking countries. The focus is on young learners’ daily lives. The topics were chosen to highlight or coincide with key dates in the school calendar. They are: 1) public transportation, 2) extracurricular activities, 3) holiday fun items and activities, 4) food and eating habits, 5) weather and clothing, and 6) hobbies and plans. Table 5.1 demonstrates a brief description of the syllabus scheduled with school calendar dates. For a more detailed scope and sequence chart of the course, please see Appendix D.

East-West cultural exposure is the core idea of the storylines. By providing scenarios containing cross-cultural elements and experiences, the course attempts to involve students with more than just traditional oral reading practices. It is hoped that the employed syllabus can fulfill the purpose of motivating students intrinsically, encouraging open-minded attitude with international perspectives, and fostering appreciation of different cultures.
Table 5.1. Brief Scope and Sequence Chart with School Calendar Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Month (Weeks)</th>
<th>Topics/Functions</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Culture Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September (3), October (3)</td>
<td>How do you go to school?</td>
<td>Public Transportation</td>
<td>Time for school, Ways to go to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>October (1), November (4), December (1)</td>
<td>What are you going to do after school?</td>
<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td>Reading habits, TV programs, and places teenagers frequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>December (3), January (3)</td>
<td>Happy New Year!</td>
<td>Holiday Fun Items and Activities</td>
<td>Comparison of Christmas traditions and Chinese New Year Traditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3-Week Winter Break**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Month (Weeks)</th>
<th>Topics/Functions</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Culture Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February (1), March (4)</td>
<td>How do you eat that with?</td>
<td>Food and Eating Habits</td>
<td>Eating Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>April (4), May (2)</td>
<td>How come the weather be so hot?</td>
<td>Weather and Clothing</td>
<td>How people dress for specific activities and weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>May (3), June (3)</td>
<td>What do you usually do for leisure?</td>
<td>Hobbies and Plans</td>
<td>Personal outdoor/indoor activity preferences and summer plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers in parenthesis in Month column represent the number of weeks the unit has spent time on.*

Starting from the beginning of the school year, the Readers Theater course will be both linguistically and personally interesting. The storyline will talk about “*school culture*”, and then “*learning culture.*”. It ends up the first semester with “*holiday celebrations*” in December and beyond Christmas, New Year and Chinese (lunar) New Year. Coming back from a 3-week winter break after Chinese New Year which they able to use and internalize the language elements they’ve learned from previous term as much, students will discuss “*food culture*” (the most fascinating part of Chinese culture), “*weather & clothing*” (the relation between local geographical weather and clothing for specific activities and weather), and “*hobbies & plans*” (different hobbies and planning culture for summer).

These learner-centered topics are intended to bring up more *familiar* interest and
experiences in learning an *unfamiliar* foreign language (such as English), and build up more positive feedback and interest in their future English learning experiences in the long run. By enjoying these interesting topics that includes lots of repeated reading practices and rehearsals, students may achieve the course’s attempted goal: a level-appropriate fluency in reading and speaking.

5.4 Procedure of Using This Course Module

Because this project has in-class and out-of-class components, the following descriptions will show how to use this module on different occasions. (For organization of the course, see Chapter 4.1) *Figure 5.1* displays in flowchart to clearly explain the module in detailed chronological sequence. In *Figure 5.1*, those procedures that require technology assistance are marked with the boxes in dotted lines, where as those that only require paper-based materials are displayed in full lines.

*Procedure 1: Reading Materials as Readers Theater Scripts*

- Where: At school in class
- Who: The teacher
- When: During class after the target vocabulary and sentence patterns are explicitly taught before getting in-depth to explaining the textbook text
- How: The teacher distributes the material to students in class as supplementary reading materials (or extended reading activities). If possible, it is better suggested the teacher adapt the scripts featuring the textbook story in the attempt to achieve two goals with this single effort.

*Procedure 2: Oral Reading Modeling*

- Where: At school in class
- Who: Teacher or CD
- When: After the delivery of Readers Theater scripts
- How: Have the students take notes of the sounds of modeling when they feel necessary. Keep the students expressing and speaking with proper emotion that fits the right situation while at the same time discussing the connotation of lines using various ways as pantomiming with facial expressions, acting out,
gesturing, or dramatic voicing. Focus on the prosodic expressions and intonations especially.

Figure 5.1. Flowchart of the Procedure of the Readers Theater Course

Procedure 3: *Technology-assisted tool as Online Teachers' Resource: ANVILL Website*

- Where: At school in class
- Who: The teacher
- When: When eliciting the topic of the course or motivating students to explore the interest to the related topic
- How: Log on to the web-based Readers Theater course built in ANVILL. Check the resources of materials, video clips, worksheets, scripts and advising lesson plans that can be used as supply resources for teachers.
Procedure 4: Readers Theater Script Practice and Rehearsal

- Where: At school in class
- Who: Students as a group of five persons to six persons
- When: After the modeling and reading discussion, form the students into groups of five or six (better suggested with heterogeneous varied levels).
- How: Have the students practice rehearsing their lines within the group. Encourage them to use either Chinese or English to correct one another whether the addressed expression fits well with the proper scenario of lines.

Procedure 5: Technology-assisting tool as Online After-school Support: ANVILL

- Where: At home
- Who: Individual student
- When: After school, after students learn how to appropriately express their reading orally in class
- How: Require students to check the script online and listen to the online modeling, recoded by human voice or TTS device. Assign as homework and encourage students to do the oral reading practices with the built-in tools in the site including Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology and Message Board.

Procedure 6: Technology-assisting tool as Online Oral Reading Practice: Text-to-Speech Software and Message Board

- Where: At home
- Who: Individual student
- When: After-checking how the uncertain lines should be expressed on the online version of Readers Theater script page, students record their lines
- How: Assign students to access to RT Course for Oral Reading Fluency course website online when getting back home as after-school extended reading activity. Students, who are able to have their personal accounts to log onto this course site, are asked to record themselves reading their own lines using the Message Board system. Listen to students’ production randomly once in a while and pick out common mistakes and address in class.

Procedure 7: Evaluation of Readers Theater Group Performance

- Where: At school in class
- Who: Students as a group of five persons to six persons; Rest of the class as raters and audience
- When: At the last class of every 6 week (end of every unit)
- How: After several weeks of learning and practice, the evaluation is the moment the course is looking for to examine the progress of reading skills students have made. Students practice with their own group as a whole to the rest of their classmates and their teachers, who evaluate their speaking and overall reading performance.
5.5 Sample Materials

As mentioned earlier, the rationale of this designed *Readers Theater course* is to: 1) improve literacy skills by taking advantage of culturally interesting RT scripts; 2) arrange target language aims (such as vocabulary, sentence pattern, expression, and grammar forms) in the lines with contexts that are closely related to students’ use of English in a foreign language situation; and 3) better prepare students for reading by accelerating the process of decoding, increasing automaticity, and allowing them to save as much energy for processing the texts as possible. There are three parts in the paper-based material design of every unit: the rhythmic chant in Readers Theater script form, the main Readers Theater script, and the reading activity worksheets. Here I will describe an illustration of each part of the course by using the first unit (*How do you go to school?*) as an example of the sample materials. (See Appendix E for more detail.)

*Rhythmic Chant in Readers Theater Script Form*

In order to scaffold learners’ language ability and lower learners’ anxiety about processing long passage reading, this part of the material is made to gradually prepare students for reading step by step. To begin with, the “*How do you go to the hospital?*” *Jazz Chant* is a reader-friendly text that allows students to practice as a class or as half of a class and to build up their word recognition. The rhythmic nature of this material provides students repetitive language forms in a low-affective environment and enables students to adapt themselves to an input-loaded environment.

Next, the “*How do you go to the hospital?*” (*adapted Readers Theater script version*) is another building block employed in the course before moving the students onto more
complicated and comprehension-required Readers Theater script practice. This material adapts the jazz chant in the previous step into the Readers Theater format in order to help students become familiar with the format of group reading. This group reading bridges the jazz chant and full-length Readers Theater story script. Since students are already accustomed to the vocabulary and grammar, they can move from reading word by word to a more fluent reading level. At this moment, based upon the two procedures, students are well-prepared and capable enough for the main reading activity—the script. These two materials recycle the language elements through different types of reading texts attempting to lower as much as possible students' anxiety so that they may feel that reading in a foreign language isn't hard as they might have thought, (See Appendix E)

Main Readers Theater Script

The Readers Theater Script (see Appendix F) involves day-to-day topics from students' native culture and target language culture. Passages are contextualized so that students acquire awareness of both Eastern and Western culture through the script. As mentioned, the entire course is a series of stories based upon two families, one from Taiwan and one from the United States. All the story background takes place in an EFL situation such as Taiwan, and attempts to simulate the cultural background the target students universally share. In the scripts, there are ways for students to introduce their native culture and ways of negotiating with people from different cultures than theirs. Target language structures and phrases are embedded naturally in the lines. The course is based on a topical/functional syllabus, so vocabulary and grammar and culture awareness dimensions are embedded explicitly according to topics and situations. That
is, a topic sentence or phrase won’t be analyzed but will repeatedly appear and be read by students as a chunk as they practice and rehearse it.

Reading Activity Worksheet

Reading activity worksheets (see Appendix G, also see screenshots in Figure 5.2) are tools to help the teacher implement the Readers Theater Course in order to extend the lesson or scaffold students’ vocabulary acquisition. For example, the Transportation Word Maze worksheet is a vocabulary enhancement activity that serves as a tool to spirally review word recognition of target vocabulary for Unit 1 so that students may be able to proceed to the next stage of reading: comprehending the written text of Readers Theater script. As seen in other examples, Writing Activity and Smart PDA are tools that enhance the use of language aims (target structures and phrases) in writing and move the students onto an advanced stage of writing for authentic day-to-day language. For instance, in Smart PDA worksheet, students fill out the chart of daily activities in class. It makes their assignment of recording their own daily activities easier and more communicative. Pronunciation activities addressing the suprasegmental level of prosody are also included to increase the awareness of oral reading and suprasegmental level of pronunciation. Students will work with this worksheet to mark word stress, sentence stress, intonation, or linking in the sheet according to native-lake tape/CD modeling.
5.6 Readers Theater Course in an Online Environment

For the online part of the Readers Theater course, this part of the project design is created in the website environment of ANVILL located on the following website (https://language.uoregon.edu/anvill/node/226). The overview of the website is provided as a screenshot in Figure 5.3 below. This section will explain the structure of the online course module and the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) technology application.
5.6.1 Structure of Online Course Module

Three main parts comprise the online course module: motivation triggers, Readers Theater script, and Teachers manual. Further descriptions are elaborated in the following subsections. The module is an online environment where each student can log in with a given account and can navigate themselves through the course content. Most importantly, students can react to the reading and do the oral reading practice assignment on their own. The layout of the module can be seen in Figure 5.3 above in the column on the far right.

Motivation Triggers
The first section called Motivation Triggers stores online video clips extracted from Youtube, the video sharing website. In this section, topic-driven clips from both a Taiwanese and American perspective are provided. They can be used in class as a warm-up activity to motivate students and to initiate further discussion. After watching the short clips, students are asked several guiding questions and comprehension questions to start the lesson. They are also able to access these clips as long as they log on the website to do their own assignment and after-school learning. Figure 5.4 demonstrates two clips built into the online module depicting how students of Taiwan and the United States go to school.

Figure 5.4. Motivation Triggers of the Readers Theater Course Built in ANVILL

Readers Theater

The second section of the module is composed of three parts: warm-up, main script, and extended activity resources. In this section, the website first provides teachers with the material to extend the lesson or scaffolding students’ vocabulary acquisition. These are online versions of materials described in the previous section of Assist Reading Activity Worksheet and are displayed here in warm-up section and extended activity resources section.
The main script section provides an interface that students can clearly see the entire script. As they click on the lines they are unfamiliar with, the modeling of Text-to-Speech technology or the recording of human voice will demonstrate the lines students can imitate. Students are able to take advantage of the synthesized human speech technology to practice along as much as possible until they think they are confident enough to move onto the next stage of the oral reading assignment on Message Board.

![Figure 5.5. Online Environment of the Main Script of Readers Theater](image)

**Teacher’s Manual: Lesson Plans**

The last section of the module is a compilation of lesson plans designed for teachers' use. They contain detailed procedures which show teachers how to implement Readers Theater and what to do in their class. This also serves as an online resource available for teachers to refer to at any time. (See Appendix H for a paper version of lesson plan.)
5.6.2 Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) Technology Application

In this section, I talk about two technology applications I use in this project: Text-to-Speech technology (TTS) and Message Board. For online components of this project, I use online TTS service to assist students to acquire their receptive information for the modeling and I apply Message Board system to help students produce and submit the results of their oral reading, facilitating formative assessment.

Text-to-Speech Technology

Limited classroom practice and peer rehearsals are not enough for students to master the acquired language without continuous reinforcement after school. Oral reading that involves in expression requires authentic modeling of intonation and constant practices even out of regular classes. Therefore, the online Readers Theater course may address this concern because it provides students with an environment to retain this habit of reading and speaking using multiple technologies. For instance, using Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology as a tool to model the reading online helps students decode the text when they are unable to reach teachers’ demonstration at hand. In this way, students can pick up a word, a phrase, or passage and hear it instantly without having teachers being at presence.

However, there definitely exists a debate over whether TTS or human voice modeling should be adopted as a substitute for authentic modeling. While human voice recording is less costly and produces the language as target-like as possible, it is energy consuming to find the appropriate vocals in an EFL setting. It also takes a lot of time for post production such as taping, editing and uploading. On the other hand, simulated
Text-to-Speech technology compensates for the disadvantage of human voice recording by giving students the command and autonomy of controlling whatever text they want to hear, and has a wider accessibility to language learners once they are logged onto the network. Nevertheless, the lack of real emotion and expressiveness and the costly investment are the biggest concerns for both language teachers and stakeholders.

No matter which method I finally plan to adopt, this module will help many EFL learners who are seldom exposed to target language input. This Readers Theater course, especially because of its online component, can do great work for readers who are in need of proper oral reading demonstration.

*Message Board*

The other technology that functions behind this project is Message Board which provides practice in oral reading. Message Board is built into the Readers Theater website as shown below in *Figure 5.6*.

In this module, Message Board is used for teachers to receive students’ submission of assignments and also a place for students to practice and rehearse without being afraid of making mistakes due to peer pressure. Though students using Message Board may not interact with other people on the computer, it serves as a very helpful tutor as they use Message Board accompanied with TTS technology comfortably as best as they can and as many times they want. *Figure 5.6* shows the Message Board in the online environment for oral reading practice and oral reading assignment.
5.7 Course Evaluation Plan

In this course design, six types of assessment are employed throughout the entire twenty-week semester. Although these may seem like a lot of testing, teachers may flexibly choose only some of them to adapt to their particular class. Because this is a supplementary course, many of the assessment plans are short and can be incorporated into regular periodical evaluations. Otherwise, the entire plan will make teachers’ jobs easier because it is a built-in progress report that maps students’ improvement. Therefore, teachers don’t have to do extra grading to measure students’ progress.

These tests are basically designed to be administered by classroom teachers. The procedures won’t be too complicated and each single test only takes a small amount of time. The diagnostic oral test and the oral reading achievement test does not count into
score but serves as indicators for teachers to examine the progress of students and the effectiveness of the course. The rest of the four types of evaluation are formative evaluations (sight word quiz and thought group reading puzzle assessment) and summative evaluations (midterm grammar assessment and Readers Theater performance). Table 5.2 exhibits the schedule of assessment plan of a semester that is designed for the implementation of the Readers Theater course. The following sections describe the rationale of the tests.

*Diagnostic Oral Test (once per term)*

**Description**

The test will consist of two parts. The first part is an info-gap question and answer activity to be carried out with another partner, and the second part is in an oral reading format that students will have to read aloud expressively to show their fluency and comprehension. (For more detailed description, see appendix I.)

**Rationale**

The oral diagnostic test is a comparison to the oral reading achievement test at the end of the term. The result will not be calculated as a part of students’ grade but will serve as evidence of how much progress each student makes after the semester oral reading program. Students are to be scored subjectively according to a standardized rubric.

*Sight word Quiz (six times per term)*

**Description**

There will be two sight word quizzes for each unit (implement twice a week). The quiz will consist of 10 random sight words drawn from the pool. Each student will have to read out loud and pronounce it correctly to show his/her mastery. Therefore, they may get different sight words in this test, but will be given a very clear vocabulary pool
inventory to refer to at the beginning of the term.

**Rationale**

Students will be tested on their word recognition ability. Each student will only take half a minute to complete the test. They will not be asked about the meaning of the words, but rather to read out the words with correct pronunciation and the least hesitation possible. Frequent short assessment like this allow the students and the teacher to easily see progress.

*Table 5.2. Schedule of Assessment Plan (Fall Term)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>First Class of the Week</th>
<th>Second Class of the Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beginning of the term</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Oral Test</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Week of September</td>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Oral Test Part</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Week of September</td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Week of September</td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Week of September</td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Week of October</td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong> Thought Group Reading</td>
<td><strong>Puzzle Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Week of October</td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Unit 2 Midterm #1 Grammar Assessment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
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<td>4th Week of October</td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Week of October</td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Week of November</td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #11</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 2</strong> Thought Group Reading</td>
<td><strong>Puzzle Assessment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2 Readers Theater Performance #1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readers Theater Performance #12</strong></td>
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<td>3rd Week of November</td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong> Readers Theater Performance</td>
<td><strong>Readers Theater Performance #13</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #14</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #15</strong></td>
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<td>1st Week of December</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #16</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #17</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Week of December</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #18</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #19</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Week of December</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 17</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #21</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Week of December</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sight word Quiz #22</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong> Thought Group Reading</td>
<td><strong>Puzzle Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Week of January</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3 Readers Theater Performance #21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readers Theater Performance #22</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 19</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong> Readers Theater Performance</td>
<td><strong>Readers Theater Performance #23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Week of January</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong> Oral Reading Achievement Test</td>
<td><strong>Oral Reading Achievement Test</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong> Oral Reading Achievement Test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Week of January</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong> Oral Reading Achievement Test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thought Group Reading Puzzle Assessment (three times per term)

Description
There will be one reading puzzle quiz for each unit. Students' reading comprehension will be tested in a paper-based test. They will have to reassemble several chunked sentences (organized as thought groups) about a short paragraph excerpted from the Readers Theater scripts they use in class. It could be modified into multiple-choice format so that students only have to fill out corresponding number of the sentences and put them into correct sequential order.

Rationale
The main goal of this thought group-reading puzzle assessment is to test how well students understand the script/paragraph. Meanwhile, students will have to exercise their sentence/paragraph weaving competence to organize the given chunked thought group pieces together. This test will serve as an achievement test for the test takers at the end of each unit. It will be scored with an exact answer method and students can complete assembling the sentence within a timeframe of 20 minutes.

Midterm Grammar Assessment (twice per term)

Description
The grammar test is a traditional paper-based achievement test to be carried out twice throughout the term. The content is based on the main textbook and mainly in the form of multiple-choice. They will be tested with literate knowledge in grammar, reading comprehension and phonics knowledge.

Rationale
The goal of these 2 midterm quizzes is to ensure that students understand the grammar points addressed in the main course (not in this supplementary RT course, even though they both are correlated). Traditional, objective, exact answer type of items would be the best to adopt because of time constraint.
Readers Theater Performance (twice per term)

Description
There are two Readers Theater performances being assessed in the term throughout. Students will work in groups of 5 or 6 to carry out 2 of the 3 scripts they’ve learned in the class. The performance for each group lasts 10 minutes. Students will grade each other among groups and grade themselves as well. They will keep the self evaluation sheets and peer evaluation sheets as feedback for their fellow students while watching other people’s performances.

Rationale
This assessment is more flexible and has the characteristic of alternative assessment. Self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and teacher’s evaluation consists of the whole assessment package. Students will be scored according to their oral language performance on the stage (eye contact, volume, facial expressions, stage movement, intonation, and pace) and learning attitude (enthusiasm, teamwork spirit, daily practice, and props).

Oral Reading Achievement Test (once per term)

Description
Like the diagnostic oral test, this test consists of two parts. Till the first part is an info-gap question and answer activity to be carried out with another partner (but featuring various sentence patterns covered in this term’s lessons), and the second part is in an oral reading format (another two prepared passages different from that at the beginning of the term) that student has to read aloud expressively to show their fluency and comprehension.

Rationale
The baseline comparison for The oral reading achievement test is the oral diagnostic test taken at the beginning of the term. The result will not be calculated to students’ grade but will serve as a record as to how much progress each student makes after the semester’s oral reading program.
5.8 Summary

This chapter demonstrates the pedagogical applications of this proposed Readers Theater course design. It covers all the elements of the course: goals and objectives, the rationale of the design, scope and sequence, procedures for how to use the course, and sample materials. From a technology and evaluation standpoint, this chapter also introduces a web-based framework that incorporates two types of speech-based language practice. Accompanying the material is an evaluation plan that can regularly examine students' reading progress. The author of this project hopes that the information provided in this course design is ready to be implemented by educators.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

For the last ten years, the Taiwanese national curriculum for early English language education has put a fairly high focus on listening and speaking. Based upon the survey conducted in this study, teachers feel that this movement somewhat succeeds. However, this intensive focus on listening and speaking has marginalized reading.

As many teachers reflected in the survey, students’ lack of reading ability results from several factors: limited exposure to text-based materials, low motivation, and inconsistent reading habits. Even though many experienced teachers have noticed and acknowledged the problem and have tried their best to make reading happen in their class by using many strategies, a great demand for structured reading curriculum with good materials embedded in the regular English class still remains. Recent reading research and the needs survey in this study suggest that the reading technique known as Readers Theater could be adaptable to complement the parts that the current regular reading curriculum fall short to address.

6.2 Conclusion

The course design presented in this project has presented a module of how Readers Theater can fit into the regular timeframe in public elementary school English curriculum and lends itself to an online environment. It includes sample materials and sample lesson plans whose focus is to improve students’ acquisition of vocabulary and understanding of written texts. Given that this project contains a year-long plan, it
overcomes a previous limitation of other researchers (Taguchi, 1997; Tsou, 2007). However, there still remain restrictions and limitations that this project hasn’t yet covered. (See chapter 4.3)

This course itself can be a tool that allows teachers to observe the reading progress each student has made. The design combines the following objectives: 1) to integrate target vocabulary, sentence patterns, and grammatical points into text-based scripts, 2) to reinvent the definition of reading by transforming introverted cognitive behavior to extraverted performance, 3) to connect reading and oral expression in the form of oral reading, 4) to provide web-based interface as remedial instruction resources on the world wide web, and 5) to take advantage of cross-cultural topics motivating students to read extensively and independently.

The module of this design attempts to meet the needs of EFL teachers in Taiwan and aims to be effective for students’ reading development. However, the module’s effectiveness should first be tested in a pilot program. Future experimental researches with this year-long course design have to be made to see if it proved an effective method of improving students’ reading fluency and reading comprehension.
References


recognition, fluency, and comprehension. NY: Scholastic.


Appendix A: Results and Instrument of Needs Assessment (in English)

Dear Valued Teacher,

Thank you for volunteering to take this survey conducted by graduate student of the University of Oregon. The purpose of the survey is to investigate current needs of elementary school students and teachers of Taiwan.

By filling out the following questionnaire, you consent to the participation of the relevant research in elementary school primary reading curriculum development. The research is conducted by Chen-Mao Wang, cwang6@uoregon.edu, who is working on an MA in Linguistics, Language Teaching Specialization, at the University of Oregon. Your participation is voluntary but will provide crucial and precious feedback to the material design. Your answer will not be valued but will reflect on the situation in practical education realm. Literal description of personal insight and special needs is even favorable. Any information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used in the project.

Best wishes!
Chen-Mao Wang
University of Oregon Graduate Student

Demographic Data
1. Your gender:
   7 Male
   43 Female

2. Your age:
   1 21-25 years old
   6 41-45 years old
   23 26-30 years old
   4 46-50 years old
   8 31-35 years old
   0 51-55 years old
   8 36-40 years old
   0 Older than 56 years old

3. How long have you been teaching in elementary schools?
   1-5 year(s) 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years
   20-25 years 26-30 years Over than 31 years

4. How long have you been teaching English in public elementary schools?
   14 1-2 year(s) 22 3-5 years 12 6-9 years 7 Over than 10 years
5. What’s your current job position at school?
5 Administrator (teaching only one or two, or simply no English classes)
10 Home room teacher, teaching few English classes
21 English subject teacher (including subject substitute teacher)
14 English teacher who works as administrative

6. Which age group of students have you taught English before? (check all that apply)
Grade 1 & Grade 2 (Age 7-8)
Grade 3 & Grade 4 (Age 9-10)
Grade 5 & Grade 6 (Age 11-12)

7. How many hours were regulated in the program for students to learn English weekly?
One hour  Two hours  Three hours  Four hours  More than five hours

8. How many English classes do you teach this semester?
14 1-3 class(es)  11 4-6 classes  9 7-9 classes  16 Over than 10 classes  0 Other:

9. How many students per class do you have in average this semester?
10 Fewer than 20 people  4 21-25 people  10 26-30 people  20 30-33 people  5 More than 33 people

10. Which part of Taiwan are you teaching?
4 Northern Taiwan  17 Central Taiwan  28 Southern Taiwan  0 Eastern Taiwan  1 Off-shore islets

11. What type of school are you currently teaching?
11 Metropolitan type  12 Suburbs of metropolitan type  21 Township city type  6 Countryside village type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. I spend the equal amount of time on teaching reading and speaking.</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 21 0 20 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13. I think that students have many opportunities speaking English in their community when they get out of language class.</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 2 0 14 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14. I think that listening to tape or CD is the major way for students to practice speaking English after language classes.</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 27 1 13 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15. I think that parents’ guidance is the major way for students to practice speaking English after language classes.</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 14 0 13 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Partly Agree</td>
<td>No Comment</td>
<td>Partly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I think that students’ participation in private language schools is the major way for students to practice speaking English after language classes.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I think that using internet-based programs or websites to learn English authentically is the major way for students to practice speaking English after language classes.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I think that students frequently borrow English outside readings from school library.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I think that reading English picture books is very easy for students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I think that students will actively read either textbook passages or English outside readings.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I think that there is ample time for teachers to teach English reading strategies in current curriculum.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. To help students read, I usually encourage them to do silent reading</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. To help students read, I usually encourage them to memorize sight words</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. To help students read, I usually encourage them to read aloud</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. To help students understand passages better, I usually have my students act out the lines in drama</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Reading aloud enhances students’ speaking proficiency</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Acting out from passages or scripts helps students’ understanding to the content</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Acting out from passages or scripts helps students’ speaking proficiency</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Including drama element in curriculum and assessment plan helps teachers realize students’ oral proficiency development and performance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. Involving explicit suprasegmental instruction in pronunciation lectures (e.g. intonation, connected speech, etc.) helps students understand passages better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31. How much percentage of time do you spend on reading?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>less than 20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>41-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>more than 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?

32. How much percentage of time do you spend on speaking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12</th>
<th>less than 20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>31-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>41-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>more than 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?

33. What do you think of the main reasons that make speaking English well difficult in current teaching environment? (Check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>47</th>
<th>Not enough practice environment after school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Course content is not practical enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Students do not like to participate speaking in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Course materials are not interesting enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Others:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?

34. What do you think of the main reasons that make students think reading English is difficult at the stage of learning? (Check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>42</th>
<th>Vocabulary sentence pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Grammar &amp; sentence pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Unable to understand the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Do not have regular reading habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Others:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?
35. What do you think may be the major difficulties that cause teachers think teaching basic English reading is difficult? (Check that all apply)

- Do not have enough time
- Not enough support from parents and administration
- Insufficient capability of students'
- Preparing extra material is time-consuming

**Why?**

36. What of the following content do you teach when you teach pronunciation? (Check 3 at most)

- Phonics (e.g. b vs. p)
- Minimal pairs
- Compare similar sounds with Chinese
- Word stress
- Linking
- Intonation

**Why?**

37. In addition to teaching festival, do you think teaching American daily living culture issues (e.g. greetings, eating culture, different types of food, school kids’ living, etc) could be included in the curriculum to increase students’ cross-culture awareness and recognition of ethnic groups? Why? Why not?

**Comments:**

38. I think that it would be better to interest 5th and 6th graders if following topics or themes be included in the curriculum. (Check 6 that you suggest the most. If other options are preferable, please list is in “Comments” blank below)

- American elementary students’ school life
- Personal interests (e.g. collection of coins, bills, stamps, etc.)
- Food and eating habits (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner.)
- Festivals (e.g. festival food, origin, customs, specialties, etc.)
- Unique sports hobbies (e.g. football, soccer, hockey, etc.)
- Shopping culture, frequent resorts on weekend
- American etiquette, greetings, expressions
17  Child's play (e.g. Nursery rhymes, chants, child's play)
25  Pop music genre (e.g. R & B, hip-hop, country, jazz, rock, etc.)
14  Literature (e.g. stories, folklore, legends, fairy tales, etc.)
 6  American geography (e.g. Weather & clothing, ethnography)
 4  American history, relics and historical site

Others:

39. Other opinions on how to teach students basic English reading?

Comments:

40. Are you interested in receiving phone interview?

☐ I'd like to
☐ NOT interested

Candidates who answers "NOT interested" will not have to answer the following two questions:

41. Specify your time that you are willing to be contacted:

Saturdays
Sundays
Weekday evenings:
Others:

42. Specify the communication tool that you are willing to be contacted:

MSN Account:
Skype Account:
Telephone No.:
E-mail Address:

43. Other comments on this research issue or questionnaire:

Comments:
Appendix B: Raw Data of Qualitative Questionnaire Items

**Question Item 37**

In addition to teaching festival topics, do you think American daily living issues (e.g. greetings, eating culture, different types of food, school kids’ living, etc) could be included in the curriculum to increase students’ cross-culture awareness and recognition of ethnic groups? Why? Why not?

Participant 5  
Yes. Because knowing a culture, especially form a small perspective, helps students’ true understanding to another culture. It won’t result in superficial, rough, nor biased understanding. Comparing the difference and similarity of the two cultures helps to increase recognition of different ethnic groups. Students can not only receive the stimulation of target culture, not entirely assimilate it, but also establish a set of evaluation system to identify themselves.

Participant 6  
Yes, through familiar language use in cultural topics it can make language learning more practical.

Participant 7  
Yes. It is more down to earth. It allows students to learn multi-cultures and makes students appreciate different culture and customs. Otherwise, it make language learning easier and more interesting through day-to-day issues.

Participant 8  
Yes, this is more authentic for students, and arouses their interests in learning about the country, which may be another way to encourage them to learn a new language.

Participant 9  
I think so...but I think the intensity might not be strong enough. However, it is quite meaningful to learn more about cultures of different countries.

Participant 10  
Yes.

Participant 11  
Yes, because it is an authentic learning material. Culture issues will not only be interesting but also provide broad vision for learners.

Participant 12  
YES. Incorporating daily living issues in the material design is helpful for to increase students’ cross-culture awareness and recognition of ethnic groups. In daily lives, there inevitably exists misunderstanding due to the difference of east-west culture. But if there is timely and appropriate intervention, this sign can be avoided. It can therefore increase students’ motivation in learning, knowledge of different culture and customs and generous attitude of accepting and understanding. Isn’t this establishing broad and wide vision that we are hoping for? (cross-culture awareness and recognition of ethnic groups) Students growing up under this context are able to integrate their home culture and target culture they make connection with, and are capable of developing perspectives of out of the box. This is what so-called “a progressing culture”!

Participant 14  
Yes. Learning a language is leaning another culture. It entails the formation of understanding, respect, and open-mindedness to different groups of people. It holds positive attitude and rationale behind it.

Participant 15  
Yes, because multiple aspects of culture learning not only increases students’ interests of learning but also envisions their perspectives.

Participant 16  
Yes, culture is very important.

Participant 17  
Of course yes. It increases multi-culture recognition.

Participant 18  
Yes, because it will be practical and interesting. However, I often can not be able to locate adequate material or media for my teaching. I have always wanted to collect as many interesting multi-media materials in culture or in genuine living which should interact with students’ background knowledge and experiences. It is very hard to find
them.
Participant 19
Yes, because culture is part of language learning.
Participant 20
Yes, I agree with the American daily culture issue. SO the students can get to broad
their mind as well as their perspectives about the whole world.
Participant 21
YES.
Participant 23
Yes.
Participant 25
[Perhaps.] Every region and every school has different situation. It won’t be totally
effective to translate such materials into every school or every class.
Participant 26
Yes, it can increase the recognition of different culture.
Participant 27
Multi-culture learning helps to increase the recognition of different ethnic groups.
Participant 28
Yes. Realistic daily dialogues help students to compare and understand similarities and
differences between our own culture and a foreign culture.
Participant 29
Knowing customs of other countries can broaden global vision, humble students, and
enrich the knowledge that they do not know.
Participant 30
[Yes.] It can increase the recognition of ethnic groups, but about this issue, it might
seem too deep for elementary school students to explore.
Participant 32
Partially agree! The reason is because American perspectives do not represent global
perspectives! Why British English is not considered English? How about Australian
English? New Zealand, Singapore, and other European English? Are their English not
English? I was so surprised that there exist several English teachers who still think this
way!
Participant 33
Yes, it is because of mutual understanding of representing cultures of both sides that
facilitates the fusion of different perspectives and culture.
Participant 34
Many teachers themselves only know superficially about the US culture and customs
as well. It’s hard for them to personally experience a different culture. I suggest the
government should do something to promote English teachers to engage in
experiencing foreign language cultures.
Participant 35
Yes!
Participant 36
Yes! Knowing different cultures certainly can increase the recognition of different
ethnic groups.
Participant 38
Yes.
Participant 39
Yes, I agree.
Participant 40
There is not much information about this issue in textbooks seen in Taiwan. Ethnic
groups of Taiwan are far different from the US. I don’t even know where to start
teaching from.
Participant 41
[Yes.] The first step of learning a language is to understand the culture of that culture.
After knowing the difference and similarity of both home culture and target culture, the
next step is to appreciate the strengths of target culture so that learners can increase
cross-culture awareness and recognition of ethnic groups.
Participant 43
Yes, it can increase students’ interests in learning different culture and through the
process of recognizing they should be able to gain more international perspectives.
Participant 44
Ok.
Participant 45
Expressions in different countries naturally bear their own uniqueness. Therefore,
involving these issues can offer students more opportunities to recognize them and
realize them.

Participant 46  Yes, learning languages in a real-life-based situation makes students interested in other cultures.

Participant 47  Yes, through the learning of culture, students’ interests and effectiveness of learning English can be aroused.

Participant 48  Yes, because it enables learners to understand more in-depth of the US day-to-day living matters.

Participant 49  Yes. The purpose of language learning is to communicate. In order to create good interaction and communication with native speakers, it is necessary to understand their daily culture first in order not to offend them or result in embarrassment.

Participant 51  Yes.

Participant 52  Yes. The purpose of learning English is exactly to know different ethnicity of different culture background. So English teaching can definitely includes the instruction of raising cross-culture awareness and recognition of different ethnic groups. However, the instructor himself/herself should have positive attitude, accurate understanding of target culture, and sufficient preparation, or it had better left it unexplored.

Participant 54  Yes, kids can know people’s living habits in different culture through lively content.

Participant 55  Yes, it can foster students’ global perspectives!

Participant 56  Yes. Acknowledge new culture through basic daily life. Compare and contrast strengthen students’ experiences.

Participant 57  Life is culture. The best way to understand the subtle difference between cultures is to experience different styles other ethnic groups live.

Participant 58  Yes. Most of the concept students receive about how US people live are from TV broadcast. Most of the time they superficially talk about festivals. If the knowledge is bottom-up from daily living issues, students are less likely to have misconceptions over different cultures.
Appendix C: Needs Assessment Instrument in Chinese

親愛的老師：
個人正在美國 University of Oregon 就讀英語語言教學研究所，目前擬定設計一系列適合國小高年級學童培養初階閱讀、發展閱讀策略以及英語口語訓練的補充教材。您同意填寫以下問卷，將參與此相關領域的研究，這會是一項非常寶貴的回饋與重要的參考資料。您的作答沒有對錯好壞，只反映您個人對此項描述的看法，您回的饋將安全保密僅供作學術研究之用。更非常歡迎您經由文字陳述特別見解或語言就者聯絡。在此由衷的感謝您撥空填寫問卷。

並祝您
教學愉快  闔家平安

基本資料
1. 您的性別
   男性
   女性

2. 您的年紀
   21-25
   26-30
   31-35
   36-40
   41-45
   46-50
   51-55
   56 以上

3. 您已經在國小任教教學幾年？
   1-5 年
   6-10 年
   11-15 年
   16-20 年
   20-25 年
   26-30 年
   31 年以上

4. 您擔任公立國小英語教師的任教年資有幾年？
   1-2 年
   3-5 年
   6-9 年
   10 年以上
11. 您任教的學校歸類屬性
都城區
都會郊區
鄉鎮縣市型
村落型

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<tr>
<td>12. 我花在教閱讀上的時間和花在教聽說的時間一樣多</td>
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<td>13. 我覺得在走出教室後，學生在生活的社群內有很多機會說英語</td>
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<td>14. 我覺得學生在家聽 CD 或卡帶是課後練習口說英語的主要途徑</td>
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<td>15. 我覺得學生在家由父母親指導是課後練習口說英語的主要途徑</td>
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<td>16. 我覺得學生放學後參加美語才藝班是練習口說英語的主要途徑</td>
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<td>17. 我覺得學生放學後利用網路學習道地的英語是練習口說英語的主要途徑</td>
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<td>18. 我覺得學生利用學校英語圖書資源借閱英語圖書的頻率很高</td>
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<td>19. 我覺得學生認爲閱讀英語繪本很容易</td>
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<td>20. 我覺得學生會主動閱讀課文篇章或課外英語讀物</td>
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<td>21. 我覺得現行課程中有充裕的時間讓老師教如何英語閱讀</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. 我常鼓勵學生做默讀（silent reading）以助他們閱讀</td>
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<td>23. 我常鼓勵學生記憶高頻單字（sight word）以助他們閱讀</td>
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<td>24. 我常鼓勵學生閱讀時一邊讀一邊邊字唸出來（read aloud）以助他們閱讀</td>
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<td>25. 我常讓學生參與戲劇性演出或朗讀活動來幫助學生了解篇章的文意</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. 邊讀邊將字唸出來（read aloud）會增進學生的英語口說能力</td>
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<td>27. 在課堂上演戲有助於增進學生對篇章的理解力</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. 在課堂上演戲有助於增進學生的英語口語能力</td>
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</table>
29. 用演戲融入教學的方法來評量學生有助於老師了解學生的
語口語表現發展

30. 在發音教學裡面融入超音段（suprasegmentals）的教學（如：
語調、速音……等）的教學有助於學生對篇章的理解力

31. 我現在教課程上課時間約佔多少比例
☐少於 20%   ☐20-30%   ☐30-40%   ☐40-50%   ☐超過 50%
為什麼？

32. 我現在教課程上課時間約佔多少比例
☐少於 20%   ☐20-30%   ☐30-40%   ☐40-50%   ☐超過 50%
為什麼？

33. 現簡的英語教學環境中，學生很難將英語說好的主因（可複選）
☐課後沒有練   ☐課內教材差   ☐學生課內參 ☐課內教材內   ☐其他
習環境         用性不夠         與說的意願不         容不夠有趣
高
為什麼？

34. 我覺得下列是造成英語初階閱讀的障礙的主因（可複選）
☐字彙   ☐文法句型   ☐無法理解內容   ☐沒有閱讀習慣
為什麼？

35. 我覺得下列是造成老師教授英語初階閱讀困難的主因（可複選）
☐上課時數不足   ☐校方或家長 ☐學生的能力   ☐要另外準備   ☐其他
不支持         不足應付         教材耗時麻煩
為什麼？

36. 我教發音時，會教以下什麼內容（最多選三項）
☐自然發音   ☐近似音比較   ☐與中文類近   ☐單字的重音   ☐連音
（如：比教 b, p）
☐音調起伏   ☐其他
為什麼？

37. 您覺得除了節慶教學外，在英語課融入美國日常生活文化議題（例如：打招呼、
飲食文化、各類食物、學生生活……等）可以增加族群認識與跨文化意識
嗎？為什麼？為什麼不？

Comments:
38. 我覺得課程中應該建議融入什麼內容主題，高年級學生會覺得較實用有趣（若 Orbit 未能詳盡之其他項目，請於 comments 欄中補充）（請複選六項）
- 美國學童學校生活
- 興趣嗜好（如：蒐集美元硬幣、郵票等）
- 食物、飲食習慣（如：早午晚餐）
- 節慶（如：節慶食物、來源、習俗、特色等）
- 運動嗜好（如：橄欖球、足球、曲棍球等）
- 購物文化、休閒去處
- 美式禮節、打招呼方式、通俗用語
- 兒時玩意兒（如：兒歌、童謠、兒童遊戲、童玩）
- 流行音樂類型風格（如：R & B、hip-hop、鄉村、爵士、搖滾等）
- 文學（如：故事、民間傳奇、傳說等）
- 美國地理（如：氣候衣著、人文差異）
- 美國歷史（如：古蹟、紀念遺址）

Comment 其他有關於如何教授學童英語初階閱讀的意見：

39. 其他有關於如何教授學童英語初階閱讀的意見：
40. 您有興趣接受電話訪談嗎？
- 願意
- 沒興趣

以下第 39 項填寫「不願意接受進一步訪談」者可免填
41. 願意接受連絡的時間：
- 週六
- 週日
- 週一至週五晚上
42. 願意接受連絡的方式：
- Skype
- MSN
- 電話
- E-mail

本問卷若有未盡周延之處，敬請您不吝指教，歡迎您與我聯繫：cwang6@uoregon.edu
十分感謝您寶貴的意見！
非常歡迎您將這個網址
寄給其他英語教育界的工作夥伴，一同參與相關課程與教材的研發與討論，
老師您若有更多的想法願意分享，或有其他的問題需要協助者，
歡迎您與我聯繫：cwang6@uoregon.edu
敬祝
教學愉快 事事如意
University of Oregon 研究生 王振茂 應謝
### Appendix D: Scope and Sequence Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month (Weeks)</th>
<th>Topics/Functions</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Readers Theater Techniques</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Culture Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong> Sept (3), Oct (3)</td>
<td>How do you go to school?</td>
<td>Public transportation&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Present simple tense</td>
<td>Introduction to the process of Readers Theater practice and performance</td>
<td>Phonemic Awareness Review</td>
<td>Time for school, Ways to go to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct (1), Nov (4), Dec (1)</td>
<td>What are you going to do after school?</td>
<td>Extracurricular Activities&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Present progressive Preposition</td>
<td>Highlighting and emotion footnotes</td>
<td>Intonation flow and rhythm</td>
<td>Reading habits, TV programs, and places teenagers frequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong> Dec (3), Jan (3)</td>
<td>Happy New Year?</td>
<td>Holiday Fun items and activities&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Simple future tense</td>
<td>Ways to practice group reading 1: Choral Reading</td>
<td>Connected speech</td>
<td>Comparison of Christmas traditions and Chinese New Year Traditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3-Week Winter Break

| Unit 4 Feb(1), Mar (4) | How do you eat that with? | Cooking methods & food<sup>4</sup> | Countable and uncountable nouns | Ways to practice group reading 2: Round Robin Reading | Stress on one and two-syllable words | Eating Culture |
| Apr (4), May (2) | How could the weather be so hot? | Weather & Clothing<sup>5</sup> | Adjectives that tell weather and sense of touch | Ways to practice group reading 3: Instant Reading | Stress on multi-syllable words | How people dress for specific activities and weather |
| May (3), Jun (3) | What do you usually do for leisure? | Hobbies & Plans<sup>6</sup> | Frequency adverbs | Staging and props | Intonation and Stress in sentences | Personal outdoor/indoor activity preferences and summer plans |

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<sup>1</sup> Unit 1 Vocabulary: by bus, by bike, by scooter, by taxi, on foot, by airplane, by KRT, by train, by high-speed rail

<sup>2</sup> Unit 2 Vocabulary: be going to daycare center, be going to language school, be going to piano lesson, be going to sports practice, be going to chess class, be going to learn some talents, be going to stay at home, be going to watch TV, be going to the public library, be going to check out some books to read

<sup>3</sup> Unit 3 Vocabulary: rice dumpling, dumplings, lantern, pineapple, daikon radish, rice cake, spring couplet, Christmas tree, present, snowflake, snowman, snow angel, ornament, roll, carol, church

<sup>4</sup> Unit 4 Vocabulary: to simmer, to steam, to fry, to stir fry, to bake, to boil, to bake, to marinade, to stew, to pickle, to cook, salad

<sup>5</sup> Unit 5 Vocabulary: hot, warm, cool, cold, freezing, chilly, T-shirt, shirt, jacket, coat, fleece, gloves, sweatshirt, shorts, pants, jeans, boots, sneakers, socks, stockings

<sup>6</sup> Unit 6 Vocabulary: sports, coins collection, stamp collection, play computer games, music classes, soccer, summer camp, board games, museum, watch/see movies, always, usually, often, seldom, never
Appendix E: Sample Rhythmic Chant in Readers Theater Script Format

**Jazz Chant**

**How do you go to the hospital?**

How do you go to school?
   I go on foot.
How do you go to the park?
   I go by bike.
How do you go to the movies?
   I go by bus.
How do you go downtown?
   I go by MRT.
How do you go to Tainan?
   I go by train.
How do you go to Japan?
   I go by plane.

How do you go to the hospital?
   I go by scooter.
Wow, amazing! You can ride?
No, I can’t. But my brother can.
How do you go to the supermarket?
   I go by car.
Wow, surprise! You can drive?
No, I can’t. But my mom can.
Sounds nice! Very well!
But why aren’t you happy then?
‘Cause they’re both sick!
   Where at?
At the hospital.
Well, well, now, how do you go to the hospital?
   I go by taxi…

( Inspired by Graham’s (2001) *Jazz Chants Old and New*)

**Readers Theater Script**

**How do you go to the hospital?**

R2: How do you go to school?
R1: I go on foot.
R3: How do you go to the park?
R1: I go by bike.
R4: How do you go to the movies?
R1: I go by bus.
R5: How do you go downtown?
R1: I go by MRT.
R6: How do you go to Tainan?
R1: I go by train.
ALL: How do you go to Japan?
R1: I go by plane.

R2+R3: How do you go to the hospital?
R1: I go by scooter.
ALL: Wow, amazing! You can ride?
R1: No, I can’t. But my brother can.
R4+R5: How do you go to the supermarket?
R1: I go by car.
ALL: Wow, surprise! You can drive?
R1: No, I can’t. But my mom can.
ALL: Sounds nice! Very well! But why aren’t you happy then?
R1: ‘Cause they’re both sick!
R6: Where at?
R1+R2: At the hospital.
ALL: Well, well, now, how do you go to the hospital?
R3+R4: I go by taxi…

( Inspired by Graham’s (2001) *Jazz Chants Old and New*)
Appendix F: Sample Readers Theater Script

David and his family have just arrived Kaohsiung. This is their first time to visit Taiwan because his dad is a super engineer working for the 2009 World Games. His dad, Ryan, is a famous architect in America. He comes to Taiwan to help build cool stadium for the Game. Chuck and his family live in Kaohsiung. He is eleven years old and now studying in 5th grade at an elementary school. He and his family are excited to host David’s family for the following year.

(At Kaohsiung International Airport)

David: Wow! I can’t believe it! We are here in Taiwan!
Mom: Yeah! Look at all the busy cars and people. I wonder if our host family is this busy too.
Mandy: And I wonder how they look like too.
David: Hey, there’s a guy holding a sign of our name! “Welcome Smith family!” I bet it must be them.
Dad: Hello. We are the Smith Family. My name is Ryan. Nice to meet you!
Josh: Nice meeting you! Welcome to Kaohsiung, Taiwan. I bet you guys must feel pretty tired already. Let’s just get settled in my house and then you can have a shower and join the dinner with us.
Dad: That sounds perfect! Thank you so much, Mr. Wang. We really appreciate it.

(The kids talk to each other)

David: Hi! My name is David. What’s your name?
Chuck: My name is Chuck. Nice seeing you!
David: How do we go to your house?
Chuck: Oh, usually we go by KRT.
David: KRT? What’s that?
Chuck: Kaohsiung Rapid Transit System. It’s really cool, fast, and convenient.
David: I guess it must be. But what does that look like?
Chuck: Oh, over there. Did you see the tram and track over there?
David: Oh, that’s awesome! We have a similar kind in America.
Chuck: But today we are taking my dad’s car. He is driving us home.

(On the road)

David: Look at all those scooters. There are so many of those on the road.
Chuck: Oh, yeah! Have you seen them before?
David: No, not too often. We don’t have so many scooters in America.
Chuck: Interesting. I never know about that. Scooters are very common in Taiwan because we think it’s very convenient. We go to almost everywhere by scooters.

David: That’s smart. We usually have to drive to places when we are in America.

Chuck: I think that’s because we’ve got everything close by each other, and driving doesn’t seem to be very necessary.

David: True. That’s why we go almost everywhere by car. America is big.

Chuck: I guess so.

Mandy: That’s a lot of transportation we learned today. Airplanes, KRT, cars and scooters! Then how do you go to school then?

Chuck: We have different several kinds of ways to go to school.

David: Really? Wow! That’s pretty interesting!

Chuck: Some people go to school on foot…

Mandy: I go to school on foot.

Chuck: Some people go to school by bike…

David: I go to school by bike.

Chuck: Some people go to school by bus…

Mandy: Well, my cousin goes to school by school bus.

Chuck: …and some go to school by scooter.

David: Scooter? You guys can ride scooters?

Chuck: Not us. Their parents ride them to school.

David: OK. That sounds fair. But some of my classmates’ parents drive them to school.

Chuck: You mean by car? Yeah, some go to school by car.

David: So, how are we going to school tomorrow?

Chuck: I don’t know. It’s up to you. By car, by scooter, by bus, by bike, or on foot?

David: I’d like to go on foot.

Mandy: I’d like to go on foot, too.

Mom: Come on, kids. You’re not going to school on foot tomorrow...

David & Mandy: MOM!

Mom: …because it’s your first day to school tomorrow, and Chuck’s dad is driving all you guys to school BY CAR!

David: Oh, that’s not fun at all. I want to see all those scooters on the street.

Mandy: That will be so cool!

Mom: Well, not tomorrow. Maybe some other day.

Chuck: That’s OK. We’ll have a lot of chance to.

David: Well, I’m already looking forward to it.

Mandy: Me either, I can’t wait to go to school on foot already!
The pictures above are the places and transportation vocabulary provided as a hint to help you finish the following writing task. Try to fill in the box below each vocabulary item and then write 5 sentences by using the following sentence pattern: “I go to ________ by __________.”

1. I go to ________ by __________.
2. He goes _________ by __________.
3. She ____________________.
4. ________________________.
5. ________________________.
Manage your time well! Keep track of what you do after school. You may use the following English phrases to keep your one-day journal. If you like, you are welcome to keep it in Chinese.

go to daycare center, go to language school, go to piano lesson, going to sports practice, go to chess class, go to the public library, go learning some talents, go staying at home, go watching TV, go checking out some books to read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Write down what you did in Chinese</th>
<th>Try to express that in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trasportation Word Maze

Draw a continuous line through the neighboring box that has transportation vocabulary in it. Start from the arrow marked with “Start Here” and then trace along with the clues given until you reach the “Finish” box!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MRT</th>
<th>school</th>
<th>rat</th>
<th>stand up</th>
<th>small</th>
<th>doctor</th>
<th>chair</th>
<th>rabbit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bike</td>
<td>driver</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>bicycle</td>
<td>train</td>
<td>high-speed rail</td>
<td>story</td>
<td>desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus</td>
<td>boat</td>
<td>toy</td>
<td>car</td>
<td>tree</td>
<td>KRT</td>
<td>pilot</td>
<td>classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit down</td>
<td>plane</td>
<td>run</td>
<td>airplane</td>
<td>sea</td>
<td>subway</td>
<td>singer</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teach</td>
<td>on foot</td>
<td>taxi</td>
<td>scooter</td>
<td>student</td>
<td>truck</td>
<td>fish</td>
<td>cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen</td>
<td>clown</td>
<td>box</td>
<td>put away</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>motorcycle</td>
<td>school bus</td>
<td>helicopter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start Here ➔ Finish!
Lesson 1

◆ Goal:
  ◆ Students will increase their ability in using prepositional phrase to tell how to get to a place in an EFL community.

◆ General Objective:
  ◆ Students will comprehend and produce the following vocabulary and target sentence pattern listed in the “language needed”
  ◆ Students will produce appropriately in written and spoken form to ask or answer questions relate to how to get to a place

◆ Terminal Objective
  ◆ Students will correctly request information about how people go to certain places
  ◆ Students will respond appropriately how he/she gets to a place.

◆ Enabling Objectives:
  ◆ Students will develop repertoire of language learning strategies from language learning activities, different types of participation, and group work.
  ◆ Students will be able to identify and speak out in correct pronunciation of designated 220 sight words within 1 second each on seeing flashcards of words referred to it.

◆ Language Goals:
  ◆ Vocabulary:

  Name of places: school, supermarket, hospital, post office, park, bookstore, library, park, police station, bus station, daycare center, language school, home

  Name of transportation: by bus, by bike, by scooter, by taxi, on foot, by airplane, by KRT, by train, by high-speed rail

  ◆ Target Sentence Pattern:

  How do you go ...? I go... by...

  ◆ Materials: small pieces of papers, flashcards from textbook content, video clips of an American boy’s life (which features on how he goes to certain places through
different kinds of transportation), individual writing worksheet, Readers Theater performance scripts, Word Maze worksheet

◆ **Activities:**

1. **Warm-up: Instant Poll Survey** (5 minutes)

   Distribute to each student a small piece of paper. Ask students “How do you go to school?” Instead of having the students respond verbally, have them draw their answers down on their own paper. On the back of the paper, each student has to write down his/her own name. The papers will be collected and put into a box for the next activity. The activity is to see if make students really think about how they exactly go to school.

2. **Tally the Votes:** (10 minutes)

   Tally the votes (answers) one after the other as the teacher elicits different varieties of public transportation as target vocabulary. Every time the teacher draws out a different type of transportation, he should introduce the vocabulary respectively in English. If the small card shows repetitive vocabulary, have the students put the vocabulary into target sentence.

3. **“Topic Sentence drill”:** (7 minutes)

   Review the topic sentence and target vocabulary several times. Have the students play Bingo game buy having them dictate a complete sentence to circle out the vocabulary item on their sheet. The first five people that make three straight lines win the game.

4. **Watch Video Clip:** (15 minutes)

   Have the students watch “The Day of David”, a clip based on an American boy’s life, describing how he goes to school, how he goes to school, how he goes after school sports practice, etc. Have students to watch closely and tell them the question will focus on what he does and how he goes there. After watching the clip, discuss with the students how Ryan goes to school. Put down complete sentence to help students visualize what they said about the answer. Review the answers as the teacher erase on by one from the chalkboard. Ask students, “How to you go to school?” and “How do you goes to a certain place?” This time students are encouraged to speak in English to express their real life situation. Once they encounter any unfamiliar
vocabulary and expression, write them in written form for later activity’s use.

5. **Sequence and Share:** (8 minutes)

   Have students group into 5 persons for each. Distribute to each group a set of strips that describe how the boy in the film goes to certain places by taking certain kind of public transportation. However, the strips are in random order. Have the student read and recall what they saw in the clip and why they put into such order. Have the group interact and discuss why they put into that order.

   Have the students practice speaking out how himself/herself go somewhere by some kind of transportation. Each person has to tell two other people five sentences of how he goes somewhere. Have them write down these five sentences as homework. Students may turn it in at the beginning of the next class.
Lesson 2

◆ Enabling Objectives:
- Students will be able to model intonation heard from authentic CD demonstration properly, and compare and modified their own speech production without hesitation.
- Students will be able to mark on scripts using personal symbols as notes to remind them of better pronunciation, stress, and intonation.
- Students will be able to save as much energy on decoding sight words for more in-depth comprehension of holistic story lines.

◆ Activities:
1. Jazz Chant: (10 minutes)
   Distribute to Ss the self-created Jazz Chant “How do you go to the hospital?” (See Appendix G, page 7). The sheet includes one Jazz chant, and one easy Readers Theater script that was adapted from Jazz Chant. Have the Ss first listen to the Jazz chant modeled from the teacher or audio CD, and then have them pay attention to the rhythm and the linking sound of lines. Then, beat the rhythm and have the Ss chant along as a whole class before sending them to Readers Theater play form.
   Assign Ss in groups of five people. Have them choose a character of their own and mark the lines they should read. Then, have everyone play their own character in this modified version of Jazz chant—Readers Theater script. This activity is designed as a scaffold built for Ss to help them get across and come along with longer passages of Readers Theater scripts (See Appendix G, page 9-10), the major material for the purpose of developing reading fluency.

2. Readers Theater as a whole class: (15 minutes)
   Have the whole class divided into groups of 5. Distribute to students the designed Readers Theater script. Have yourself, or CD, modeling the script. Have the student imitate the prosody attributes of English such as intonation, stress, rhythm, and pronunciation of the sound. Do not give them a hard time getting by those overwhelming demonstration. Have them repeat after you as a class together.
   After modeling and drill practicing, discuss with the whole class over each lines what kind of emotion students have to address while reading them. Do not focus on
the subtle differences for grammar point. Just go directly to the meaning in the script. Have the students speak out the answers instead of telling them everything about it. During discussion, encourage students to keep notes on their personal script whatever could help them memorize the sound or the meaning or even the expressive motion of how to read a particular line.

3. **Readers Theater as a group**: (8 minutes)

   Have each student within the group assigned to a character according his/her interest and language ability. Walk into the lines to make minor rearrangement to see if they are properly assigned enough. (For example, do not have struggling readers read difficult lines far beyond their ability can achieve.) Have each single student practicing reading their respective lines. Have them practice as in a small group the lines they've just imitated. Give timely advice to help Ss' decoding strategies, pronunciation, and intonation.

4. **Jigsaw Reading Activity**: (9 minutes)

   After the first 15 minutes of practice within the group (heterogeneous group which has reader 1 to reader 5), separate out characters in the group and form new homogeneous group. (For example, readers 1 get together in one group, and readers 2 get together in another group) Then, have Ss practice the whole script once again as a whole class to enhance word recognition and reading fluency. After that, have the homogeneous groups practice on their own. It is during this time that peer advice and social communication comes into students learning and peer feedback is given.

5. **Wrap-up: Word Maze** (3 minutes)

   Each student gets a *Transportation Word Maze worksheet* (See Appendix G, page 8). In this worksheet, they will get hints from the maze over transportation vocabulary so that they can trace them to reach the finish line. The purpose of this activity is to double-check Ss' word recognition after they practice the Readers Theater script. This worksheet built the basic schemata for students to the next level of learning which makes them ready for reading more successfully later.
Lesson 3

◆ Enabling Objectives:

◆ Students will be able to read easy story texts fluently when encountering sight words in them.
◆ Students will be able to save as much energy on decoding sight words for more in-depth comprehension of holistic story lines.
◆ Students will be able to be aware of how words, body language, and social interactions influence the communication in English.

◆ Activities:

1. “Writing Task”: (4 minutes)

   Collect Ss’ homework assignment Transportation Word Maze worksheet from the end of last lesson. Check the homework collection as a formative evaluation to see how the Ss do in the previous class.

2. Quiz: The “Writing Activity”: (6 minutes)

   Ss will be given “Writing Activity worksheet” (See Appendix G, page 13). In this activity, Ss are supposed to advance their level from vocabulary recognition to the use of it. They are asked to write five sentences of how someone goes somewhere by a certain kind of transportation. First, they have to fill out the vocabulary item on the sheet. Next, they have to complete the designated five sentences. Some of those are in cloze form, and the last two sentences are free of control activity that Ss have to present their own linguistic knowledge of how to use these vocabulary. This worksheet is designed in the concept of “semi-controlled to free of control” so that allows Ss to scaffold their knowledge over the learning activities.

3. Sounds Great (15 minutes)

   Distribute to the students the Pronunciation worksheet (See Appendix G, pages 11-12). Explain the three activities are centered on word stress and sentence stress (intonation). Have Ss listen to the example first. Play the CD and ask Ss notice that there is a black dot on a particular word. Have them listen to the CD and postulate the reason the particular word is blacken-dotted.

   After eliciting the reason (black dots are the stress syllable in the sentence or in the word), the teacher make the Ss do A set of the activity, which focuses on stress in
phrase. Then discuss with the Ss as a whole class and have Ss check each other before moving on to the next activity. Have the Ss do B set of the activity, which lays focus on stress in sentence level. Then check answers of B set. The C set goes on as the same form as well.

This activity is designed to make Ss aware of the subtle differences in language intonation, which is a very essential factor that affects the fluency and understanding of reading and passages. In order to make Ss to self-monitor themselves, this activity provides them with guidelines and standard to follow so that they are able to read aloud with comprehension.

4. **Discussion of meaning for Readers Theater script:** (18 minutes)

Continuing the Readers Theater session from last lesson, the teacher discusses the meaning with the whole class of students. The reason that this activity does not show up until now is to have the Ss become familiar with the written form of words first and then Ss will understand better when the whole class are discussion further. Because during the previous modeling session Ss have already built up their connotation, they can understand the script better once more explanation and pragmatic information is discussed. However, when discuss the lines, bring more attention to students on how the lines are read and how the lines are expressed. So discuss with students, if necessary, what the emotion or facial expression a particular character might shows while students read the lines to audience. This process is considered part of the guided reading methods that builds up students reading fluency as well.

5. **Writing Activity: Smart PDA** (2 minutes)

Distribute to each student the “*Smart PDA*” worksheet (See Appendix G, page 14). This activity is to recycle the language materials Ss have previously learned, and furthermore, make them combine the meaning and use into the form they understand, and eventually have the students involved in their future learning. In this particular activity, students are asked to keep one day after-school journal when they get back home. They have to keep what they do and where they go to some day after school. They are asked to put down the activity they do on the left column of the chart, either in Chinese or in English., and then come back to next class in order to put those
information into a newly formed written sentence form. Before assigning them this homework, explain some of the choices in the hints provided in the box to make more comprehensible.