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Creating Balance in L2 Reading Classrooms: Case Studies of Three Elementary English Teachers in Korea

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study was motivated by growing dissatisfaction with the traditional structural view of reading instruction reflected in the current national elementary English curriculum in Korea. Drawing upon the research on balanced reading instruction and teacher knowledge, the study intended to gain insights into effective L2 reading instruction from teachers' knowledge and experiences.

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' knowledge and practices in English as a foreign language reading classrooms in Korea and to identify the professional experiences they judge to have shaped their practice. I conducted multiple case studies of three elementary English teachers who have been active in professional development. Data collection primarily comprised classroom observations and interviews for a period of six months in 2006.

The findings suggest that the notion of balanced reading instruction should be broadened to include some issues unique about L2 reading. They include how to integrate the four language skills; provide phonics instruction addressing the differences between English and Korean; and make the most of students' first language. Implementing balanced L2 reading instruction also involves questions about how to create balance in the following areas as students go through different stages of reading development: planned teaching of phonics versus use of teachable moments; various types of texts; grouping of students; learners' cognitive and language needs; and practice versus meaningful use of language. My research suggests that the essence of balanced L2 reading instruction lies in its continuously emergent nature as teachers try to adapt instruction to the needs of students through a cycle of observation, practice, and

reflection. It does not refer to a particular program for teachers to follow.

The findings also shed light on how teachers can be better prepared for creating balanced reading instruction. Despite their extensive professional development, the teacher participants had varying needs to improve their practice, including knowledge of phonology, high-interest storybooks for young L2 learners, and instructional strategies for phonics instruction. Teacher education programs should be varied to accommodate these needs. There should also be support for teachers' communities where they could share their practical knowledge about reading instruction developed from experience.

To my father who nurtured me emotionally and intellectually,
but who is no longer with me.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Teaching second languages in elementary school has continued to grow more popular worldwide because of globalization. English has been a required subject in Korean elementary schools since 1997 as a result of the government's new language policy to make the nation more internationally competitive. The emphasis is mainly on developing students' oral communication skills in the national curriculum as a reaction to the traditional English instruction. It was pointed out that the heavy focus on written English as well as the dominance of the grammar-translation method in classrooms had resulted in students' inability to cope with international communications. For this reason, many of the innovations in English education in Korean elementary schools have focused on oral language fluency. Less attention has been given to innovations in literacy practices.

Taking a closer look at the curriculum (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 1997), reading instruction seems to have a limited role in the current national curriculum and to be based on the traditional bottom-up view of reading. Reading is thus delayed during the first grade of formal English instruction, grade three, and the later introduction of written English is strictly controlled grade by grade: the alphabet for grade four, words for grade five, and sentences for grade six. Although the emphasis on oral language has been considered to be successful in developing learners' communicative fluency (Lee, Choi, Boo & Lee, 2001), I have wondered why we have to keep students from print, an important source of meaningful input in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context where contact with native speakers is rare. As an English learner, I have learned much about English through reading. I have wondered how we can teach reading in English effectively to students instead of rejecting it as a needless additional difficulty. These questions were important motives for my research.

My conceptualization of effective L2 reading instruction began with a look at first language (L1) reading research because of the dearth of research in this area (Birch, 2002). Current L1 reading research seems to endorse a balanced approach to reading instruction rather than a particular method or approach (Cummins, 2003; Strickland,

1998; Pressley, 2002). What particularly drew my attention was research on exemplary teaching of L1 literacy (Morrow, Tracey, Woo &Pressley, 1999; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block & Morrow, 2001; Pressley, Rankin, Yokoi, 1996; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Whereas different approaches to reading instruction--skills-first versus whole language approaches--have been debated intensely in L1 reading research, teachers in these classrooms reported "blending practices derived from both whole-language and direct skills instruction perspectives" (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block & Morrow, 2001, p. 42). The classrooms were filled with complex articulation of skill instruction and whole language so as to be sensitive to the strengths and interests of its students. Research on exemplary teaching of L1 literacy thus contributes to our understanding that effective instruction rests more on teachers than on a particular method or approach. It also calls more attention to the development of teachers who can balance instruction to the needs of students.

Discussions about teachers' thoughtful eclecticism in particular educational contexts are also found in the second language acquisition literature (Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These researchers have argued that the concept of method prescribes what and how to teach so as to marginalize teachers and to diminish the importance of teachers' professionalism. They also agree that "absent from the traditional view of methods is a concept of learner-centeredness and teacher creativity..., and teaching methods must be flexible and adaptive to learners' needs and interests" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 247).

Research on exemplary teaching of L1 literacy and current discussions about teachers' eclecticism led me to think about the importance of descriptive research on teaching. In particular, my research was motivated by the idea that if effective instruction rests on teachers, it would be valuable to investigate the actual practices of teachers in L2 reading classrooms and to gain insights into effective L2 reading instruction from their perspectives and experiences. My research was also based on the assumptions that any discussion about improving instruction cannot be separated from teachers, students, and teaching context and that change must grow from within rather than be imposed from outside.

Given the assumption that effective instruction does not occur by accident, I was also interested in a special group of teachers who have been active in professional development. From my teaching experiences in Korea, I knew that there was a group of teachers who tried to improve reading instruction on their own initiatives (e.g., doing action research and taking a graduate course). I wondered how they were teaching reading in English, what knowledge they held about L2 reading instruction, and how they developed their knowledge. I wanted to conceptualize what effective L2 reading instruction might be like in Korean elementary classrooms from these teachers' knowledge and experiences.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of my study was to describe the practices of professional development (PD)-oriented teachers in elementary EFL reading classrooms in Korea, to investigate the knowledge that guides their practices, and to identify the professional experiences they judge to have shaped their practice. The specific research questions were as follows:

- How do a select group of teachers implement reading instruction in their classrooms?
- What are the rationales for their actions in practice? What knowledge do these teachers hold about teaching EFL reading?
- What experiences have influenced the way they teach? What are the common threads in their professional experiences?

Significance of the Study

At the heart of any educational research lies hope for improved teaching and successful student learning. Our hope for improved teaching justifies research on teacher knowledge and practices; findings in such research may contribute to improving teaching through an enhanced understanding of how teaching works and how teachers develop professional knowledge through various sources. There is a large body of research on L1 reading instruction, and in-depth descriptions of instructional practices in L1 reading

have been well portrayed in the studies of exemplary reading instruction (Mazzoni & Gambrell, 2003; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Some researchers have also provided in-depth descriptions of the way teacher knowledge is enacted in teaching practices and how teachers develop knowledge of L1 reading instruction (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block & Morrow, 2001; Tams, 2002). Conversely, there has been little research on L2 reading instruction for young learners, and very few studies have provided portrayals of instructional practices in L2 reading as an expression of teacher knowledge. My research helps fill this gap.

The present study will be a valuable resource for those who seek ideas to improve their teaching practices, those who educate thoughtful teachers-in-training, and those who are in charge of developing the curriculum and materials in Korea. Since English became a required subject in Korean elementary schools, teacher education has been a pressing issue. One promising model for teacher education is case methods by which teachers are given vicarious experiences to examine (Merseth, 1996). This research will provide teachers and teacher educators with rich accounts of the instructional practices in L2 reading classrooms to examine. Teachers may be able to use the findings of this research to reflect upon their own practices. The present study will also advance discussions about how reading instruction can be improved in an EFL context from teachers' perspectives. Teachers' perspectives on reading instruction then can be represented in discussions about any innovation in the next national curriculum and textbooks; the development of the 8th national curriculum is currently in progress in Korea. Research indicates that what constitutes effective practices is not only what research says about reading instruction but also how teachers adapt each method to students in a specific context (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999). I hope my study will contribute to the creation of an atmosphere which values teachers' experiences and knowledge in professional discussions.

The present study also presents an enhanced understanding of how a select group of teachers had developed knowledge of reading instruction through various sources and how their knowledge informed their practices. My research then may provide valuable insights into how teachers can be better prepared for L2 reading instruction and carry some implications for designing and implementing teacher education programs in Korea.

Conceptual Framework

View of Teaching and Teachers

This study is based upon the assumption that teaching is complex, uncertain, unstable and unpredictable, and it involves teachers' continual interpretation of the environment (Freeman, 1996). According to Schön (1983), "in the varied topography of professional practice, there is high, hard ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and there is a swampy lowland where situations are confusing "messes" incapable of technical solution" (p. 42). Teaching does not simply involve technical, theoretical knowledge but also requires the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do. To cope with the complexities of teaching, teachers have to constantly interpret their subject matter, students, and their classroom contexts. They then thoughtfully adapt instructional methods or materials to the students and the environment. Teachers thus can be seen as active thinking decision-makers and reflective professionals who "link thought with activity, centering on the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do" (Freeman, 1996, p. 99).

Teacher Knowledge

The notion of teacher knowledge is as complex as teaching. Understanding the notion of teacher knowledge requires embracing the fundamental tensions regarding what counts as knowledge. Two major threads on teacher knowledge include teacher knowledge from a theoretical, even propositional stance and a more practice-oriented conception of knowledge (Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001). A theoretical conception of teacher knowledge refers to a shared body of knowledge teachers need to acquire. In contrast, a practice-oriented conception of knowledge refers specifically to the knowledge that teachers gain from their teaching experiences. In my study I take the position that teacher knowledge is multifaceted and can be understood fully by relying on both conceptions of knowledge. Carter (1990) defines teacher knowledge as the total knowledge that a teacher has at his or her disposal at a particular moment, which underlies his or her actions. Drawing on Carter (1990) and Verloop, Driel, and Meijer (2001), I define teacher knowledge as the total knowledge teachers have in planning, implementing, and reflecting upon practices. Teachers draw on various sources of

knowledge in practice, and teacher knowledge is considered to embrace both theoretical and practical knowledge.

Effectiveness L2 Reading Instruction: A Balanced Approach

The concept of effective L2 instruction appears throughout my study. I acknowledge that the notion of effectiveness is controversial and difficult to define. I nevertheless adopted a normative conception of effectiveness for the present study. Shulman (1986a) stated two different conceptions of effectiveness: a correlative conception and a normative conception. In a correlative conception, effectiveness is "assessed as a function of empirically demonstrable relationships with academic achievement measures (or attitude scales, interest inventories, and the like)..." (p. 28). In a normative conception of effectiveness, "a given exemplar is compared to a model or conception of good teaching derived from a theory or ideology" (p. 28). Therefore, what counts as effective teaching is theory-laden (Tobin & Fraser, 1991).

My study drew upon research on exemplary teaching of L1 reading as a guide in order to make sense of my research data and to think about what effective L2 reading instruction might be like in Korean EFL contexts. Research on exemplary teaching of L1 reading deepened my understanding of what effective reading instruction is like (Mazzoni & Gambrell, 2003; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). In particular, these studies confirmed that effective teachers committed to a balanced approach to reading instruction so as to be sensitive to students' knowledge, skills, and interests. Students in those classrooms thus experienced reading through a variety of activities and materials as they went through the process of reading development. Drawing upon the research on exemplary teaching of L1 reading, a discussion about effective L2 reading instruction is grounded in the term balanced reading instruction in my study.

The term balanced reading instruction is a popular phrase that has emerged in the reading literature (Baumann & Ivey, 1997; Fitzgerald & Noblit, 2000; McIntyre & Pressley, 1996; Pressley, 2002; Raphael & Pearson, 1996; Strickland, 1996). Some researchers have also suggested combining different approaches to reading instruction although the term balance was not explicitly mentioned (e.g., Hall & Cunningham, 1996; Spiegel, 1992). Taking a closer look at the literature, the meaning of balance is associated

with avoiding extremist positions and combining different approaches to reading instruction. Nevertheless, there seems to be little agreement on what is balanced and how balance is created. My conceptualization of what is balanced was based on earlier characterizations of balance such as curriculum balance between literature envisionment and skills/strategy instruction and instructional balance between teacher-initiated instruction and instruction responsive to students (e.g., Baumann & Ivey, 1997). In so doing, however, it was necessary to include multiple dimensions of L2 instruction that emerged from the findings of my study such as grouping, use of L1 versus L2, learners' cognitive and language needs, and meaningful use of language versus practice.

Thinking about how balance is created, the common and most immediate image of balance may be balancing scales, which means an equal emphasis on two different instructional approaches and dividing instructional time fairly between them. Drawing upon Fitzgerald and Noblit (2000), however, I took the position that balanced reading instruction means neither equal emphasis on different approaches nor a single program in which a certain amount of time is allocated to skills instruction and another allocated to authentic reading. A truly balanced approach may vary across contexts, and balance is created in a dynamic and principled way relative to students' needs and abilities. Fitzgerald and Noblit make clear that the meaning of balance should reside in the kinds of knowledge and skills students need to have. For example, learners may be unbalanced in their knowledge about reading they have at particular stages of reading development. Balance then can be created when instruction addresses the kind of knowledge they need to learn. Creating balance is indeed based on teachers' thoughtful, informed decisions about the instructional practices that are appropriate for particular students in particular contexts. It was then of particular importance to listen to the teachers' interpretation of the students' needs and their reasons for their practice in order to make sense of what was happening in the participating classrooms. I was also particularly attentive to the needs of Korean learners of English and considered what is known about the characteristics of L2 readers and L2 reading in order to conceptualize what balanced reading instruction might be like in Korean EFL classroom contexts.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

My research aimed to explore teachers' knowledge and practices in English as a foreign language (EFL) reading classrooms in Korea in order to gain insights into what effective L2 reading instruction is like in this context and how Korean teachers of English could be better prepared for L2 reading instruction. This chapter begins with an overview of English education in Korea to illustrate how reading instruction has changed in Korean EFL contexts. A review of the literature is then presented in two main areas which have guided my research: L2 reading instruction and teacher knowledge.

English Education in Korea

Historical Overview of Elementary English

Looming global competition has set a sense of urgency in Korean society that education should prepare coming generations for English-dominated global communications. Although English was first introduced into elementary schools in 1982, it was one of the extra-curricular activities in the curriculum so that it did not draw much attention from teachers. In the midst of this socio-economic pressure, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MOE) announced a plan in 1995 to include English in the 6th national curriculum as a required subject from 1997. It was also supported by the *critical period hypothesis* which states that there is "a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire" (Brown, 2000, p. 53); Although it continues to be controversial, the critical age is considered to be around the age of six for a native-like accent and 15 for a native-like grammatical competence (Ellis, 1994). A special committee to develop an English curriculum was appointed, and the curriculum was finally promulgated in November 1995 (MOE, 1995). According to the curriculum, English was to be taught starting from grade three for two hours a week. Textbooks were developed by private publishers and authorized by the government, and 16 books were finally selected as authorized textbooks to be used in schools. As the 7th curriculum was developed in 1997 (MOE, 1997), the government chose to develop single national

textbooks and CD-ROMs because of the economic crisis in the country, but the main characteristics of elementary school English remained the same.

Since English became a required subject in elementary schools, teacher education has become a pressing issue. To prepare teachers for English education, the MOE has designed and implemented 120-hour in-service teacher education programs since 1996. The program allotted 84 hours for developing teachers' target language proficiency, 34 hours for second language pedagogy, and 2 hours for microteaching (MOE, 1996). In 1996, a total of 25,000 teachers received in-service training and 700 received 4-week overseas training. It was reported that by 1998 the total number of teachers who had received training was 45,302 (Kwon, 2000). For the improvement of pre-service programs, the 13 universities of elementary education increased the average credit hours of English-related subjects from 20.1 to 31.4 (Kwon, 1997).

Characteristics of Elementary School English Curriculum

Elementary school English is very different from secondary school English in many respects. The most significant difference is its total exclusion of written language during the first year (grade three) of instruction. Only spoken English is taught in the first year, and reading is limited to the identification of letters of the alphabet in the second year (grade four). Compared to the traditional secondary English curriculum which failed to recognize the importance of speaking, incorporating speaking in the elementary curriculum was a revision long overdue. Drawing on the functional-structural syllabus for second language curriculum (Littlewood, 1981), the curriculum provides a list of nine broad categories of communicative function. Each of the categories is illustrated with exemplary sentences, which serve as the guidelines for textbook developers. The curriculum requires elementary English to be taught primarily through games, activities, songs, chants, and role play. It also does not require teachers to evaluate students' progress with paper-and-pencil tests, but to describe their progress based on classroom observations and performance tests.

English Reading Instruction

As mentioned earlier, reading instruction seems to have a limited role in the current national curriculum of elementary English and to be based on a part-to-whole view of reading. The limited role of reading in the curriculum can be explained mainly by

two reasons. First of all, there appears to be consensus that the dominance of the grammar-translation method has resulted in not only students' low interest in English learning but also their inability to communicate with other English speakers (Joh & Choi, 2001; Lee, 2001); in translation-focused reading classrooms, teachers read the text aloud, explain grammar and vocabulary, and ask comprehension questions. Second, some suggest that the early introduction of written English may overwhelm elementary school learners because they lack the knowledge of oral language most L1 readers bring to the reading process, which in turn may result in learners' negative attitudes toward English learning at an earlier age (Kim, 1997).

There are also conflicting perspectives on when to introduce reading, and some have argued for innovations in reading practices. In particular, proponents of a whole language approach have called for the early introduction of reading so as to integrate four language skills right from the start (Boo, 1999; Choi, 1999). They argue that learners are able to experience reading in rich contexts when four language skills are integrated, and storybook use may make reading classrooms more enjoyable. Proponents of phonics instruction also claim that more attention should be given to helping learners acquire the alphabetic principles through phonics approaches (Kim, 1999; Lee, 2004). Although they take different approaches to teaching reading, they agree that more attention should be given to innovations in literacy practices. Lee (2005) similarly argues that a careful examination of the curriculum and textbooks reveals no principled approach to teaching English reading.

Despite the fact that reading is not a major component of the curriculum, it is interesting that some teachers have tried to improve reading instruction on their own initiatives. For instance, Park's (2004) review of teachers' action research reports shows that 128 action research papers on primary English education were submitted to the contest from 2001 to 2004 in Kyeonggi province. Among those papers, the topic most studied (21 out of 128) was storytelling or using storybooks through whole language. Some teachers have also reported their action research papers on phonemic awareness or phonics instruction in academic journals (Lee & Lee, 2001; Park & Jeong, 2005). My study aimed to gain insights into effective L2 reading instruction from the teachers who took initiative to improve the practice of teaching reading.

L2 Reading Instruction

Taking a closer look at reading research reveals that "we know a lot about reading in general, but much less about L2 reading and how best to teach L2 reading more specifically" (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 97). L2 reading researchers have often been criticized for borrowing too much from research on first language reading (Eskey, 2005), and there has been little research on effective L2 reading instruction for young learners. Nevertheless, research on L1 reading provides a good foundation for exploring both the characteristics of L2 reading and the nature of effective L2 reading instruction (Eskey, 2005). In this section, I review the current trend in L1 reading research, focusing specifically on research on exemplary teaching of literacy, in order to gain insights into effective beginning reading instruction in general. I then discuss what is different about L2 reading and how different approaches to teaching reading may work for young L2 learners.

Lessons from L1 Reading Research

L1 reading educators and theorists have been searching for the best way to teach reading, and Jeanne Chall (1967) referred to the ongoing arguments involved in this search as the 'great debate'. The debate has centered on the relative effectiveness of two approaches to teaching reading: a code-emphasis and a meaning-emphasis approach (Chall, 1997). Each approach has differing views on both the manner in which reading is defined and the way phonics skills are taught. A code-emphasis approach focuses on learning the alphabetic skills, arguing that automatic word recognition is essential in order for children to read the text with ease and speed (Adams, 1994). A meaning-emphasis approach focuses on reading text for meaning, right from the start, expecting that word recognition skills can develop without explicit instruction and are consequences of reading experience and print exposure (Coles, 2000; Goodman, 1986). Although the issues around each approach have been hotly debated, there has been increasing awareness that direct teaching of phonics skills is not incompatible with a concurrent focus on encouraging reading for meaning (Shanahan & Neuman, 1997; Stahl, 1997; Strickland, 1998), and that it seems illusionary to seek the best method to teaching reading (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999). As such, research to date seems to endorse a balanced approach to reading instruction that incorporates varying amounts of explicit phonics

instruction together with an emphasis on reading authentic texts for meaning as students go through the process of reading acquisition. The idea of balanced instruction shifted attention from the best method to the effective practices which show a combination of different approaches to reading instruction according to the needs of students. Research on exemplary teaching of literacy sheds much light on the nature of effective reading instruction in this regard.

Research on exemplary reading classrooms emerged from the idea that the best way to teach reading is not only in the method but also in the teacher, and that there is much we can learn from researching good teaching. Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) stated: "our assumption, consistent with expert theory (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988; Ericsson & Smith, 1991; Hoffmann, 1992), was that effective primary reading teachers would have a privileged understanding of literacy instruction. That is, they would be aware of the elements of their teaching, in part because their teaching is the result of many decisions about what works in their classrooms and what does not" (p. 365).

In order to investigate exemplary teachers' insights into literacy instruction, Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) surveyed the instructional practices of primary teachers who were nominated by their supervisors as effective in promoting literacy. The supervisors were asked to provide explanations for their nomination based on the following possibilities: achievement records of students; conversations with the nominated teacher supporting his or her teaching philosophy and practices; direct observation of the teacher's practices; interactions with the teacher during in-service sessions indicating the teacher's ability to integrate sound principles of reading instruction; and positive comments from other teachers, parents, or administrators. The most significant finding of their study was that teachers claimed commitments to balanced reading instruction. They integrated the attractive features of whole language with explicit skills instruction in a balanced way. Phonics was taught in ways that were consistent with students' needs during ongoing reading and writing rather than in isolation. Another interesting finding was that there were shifts in instructional practices between kindergarten and grade two; teaching of the alphabetic principle decreased with increasing grade but instruction of higher-order reading skills was reported more often. There were also differences for students with different abilities so that weaker readers

received more explicit/extensive instruction with regards to word identification skills. However, there were few differences in the quality of instruction for students of all abilities. The teachers also reported commitments to the following: literate classroom environments; extensive and diverse types of reading; integration with other curricular contents; teaching of comprehension strategies; teaching students to plan, draft, and revise as part of writing; making literacy learning motivating; monitoring of learners' progress in literacy; and various grouping strategies. The study was intriguing in terms of illuminating the characteristics of effective primary literacy classrooms, but the nature of a survey study did not allow much information about how effective teachers balanced different approaches to reading instruction from lesson to lesson. It also remained unclear whether teachers' reported practices reflected their actual teaching practices.

Unlike Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996), another study focused on classroom observations and in-depth interviews to gain a qualitative understanding of effective literacy instruction. Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998) observed the instructional practices of both outstanding teachers of literacy and typical teachers in nine first-grade classrooms. They found that most teachers, to some extent, used some combination of authentic reading and writing with explicit skills instruction. However, outstanding teachers combined two approaches in a well-integrated way; whereas typical teachers did so in a disjointed way. Explicit skills instruction was meaningfully linked to authentic reading and writing activities in high-achievement classrooms, allowing the simultaneous progress of both reading processes: from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts. High-achievement classes also demonstrated instructional density in that multiple goals were integrated into a single lesson. Reading and writing were integrated in these classrooms, and those literacy activities were also connected to other subject areas. Some general characteristics with effective teaching emerged in the high-achieving classrooms as well: extensive use of scaffolding; encouragement of self-regulation; high expectations for all students; expert classroom management; and awareness of purposes.

Morrow, Tracey, Woo, and Pressley (1999) investigated the characteristics of exemplary first-grade literacy instruction in six classrooms. The study confirmed the findings of other research on exemplary literacy teaching. In these classrooms, explicit

skill development was taught in the context of authentic reading and writing, and the teachers took advantage of teachable moments to teach phonics skills. Strong cross-curricular connections were also observed in literacy practices, and the classrooms had literacy-rich environments so that students had many choices of reading materials and learning centers. Exemplary teachers provided varied reading and writing experiences so that the children experienced literacy in a variety of ways, including shared literacy activities, independent activities, and guided reading and writing activities. These teachers were also very warm and caring, and skilled at classroom management.

To sum up, research on exemplary reading instruction supports the conclusion that effective teachers are thoughtfully eclectic rather than adhering to a particular method (Bauman, Hoffman, Moon & Duffy-Hester, 1998; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block & Morrow, 2001; Pressley, Rankin & Yokoi, 1996; Wary, Medwell, Fox & Poulson, 2000). Duffy and Hoffman (1999) argue that "the best instruction results when combinations of methods are orchestrated by a teacher who decides what to do in light of children's needs" (p. 11). To put it another way, there is no best method for teaching reading, and instruction should be balanced according to the needs of students. As such, good teachers matter much more for effective instruction than a particular approach or materials. What then does this finding tell us about effective reading instruction for young L2 learners? Effective L2 reading instruction may result when teachers know different methods very well, understand the characteristics of both L2 reading and L2 learners, and balance different approaches to teaching reading to the needs of L2 learners. The following section presents a review of what is known about L2 reading and readers.

What is Different about L2 Reading from L1 Reading?

Research confirms that there are significant differences between learning to read in L1 and L2 (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Effective L2 reading instruction should then be based on a sound understanding of what differentiates L2 reading from L1 reading. Normally L2 learners begin the reading process with different knowledge from L1 readers so that reading in a second language is influenced by factors that are normally not considered in L1 reading research (Grabe, 1991). For instance, if L2 learners are already literate in their L1, their L1 literacy backgrounds affect the way in which they proceed in

the development of L2 reading. In addition, L2 learners' oral language development does not precede literacy development in many cases. These differences highlight issues related to oral language and reading, as well as L1 and L2 reading.

Oral language and reading. L1 reading research indicates that "learning to read is affected by the foundational skills of phonological processing, print awareness, and oral language" (Whitehusrt & Lonigan, 2001, p. 12). As oral language development does not often precede literacy development in L2 learning, L2 readers face unique challenges in learning to read due to their oral language constraints. The acquisition of reading skills in the absence of a well-developed oral-aural competence is apt to be very different from the typical L1 reading context, in which knowledge of phonology, vocabulary, and syntax is generally much better developed (Brown & Haynes, 1985).

L2 readers are considered to have limited phonological awareness compared to L1 readers. Phonological awareness refers to "the ability to detect and manipulate the sound structure of oral language" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001, p. 15). It is an oral language skill that can develop without any exposure to print or letters. Its development closely relates to the development of children's spoken vocabularies in that "growing vocabulary creates an implicit need for making comparisons between similar-sounding words" (Goswami, 2001, p. 11). It is then logically assumed that L2 readers have limited abilities to recognize and categorize different phonological units due to limited exposure to L2 oral language. Of importance here is that a child's phonological development has been recognized as playing a critical role in the early stage of reading, the 'code-cracking stage.' (Adams, 1990; Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002; Speece, Roth, Cooper, & de la Paz, 1999; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). As English uses the alphabetic writing system, which maps speech to print at the level of the phoneme, children who can detect syllables, rhymes, or phonemes are better able to learn to read. Conversely, if children cannot perceive the individual sounds in spoken words, they will have difficulty identifying the correspondence between print and the language it represents. It is therefore expected that due to their lack of exposure to the target language, L2 readers will have more difficulties in recognizing and categorizing phonological units as well as in learning to decode print.

Another major difference is that L2 readers have differing amounts of lexical knowledge in their second language. While "first language learners have already learned somewhere on the order of 5,000 to 7,000 words before they formally begin reading instruction in schools" (Grabe, 1991, p. 386), second language learners typically have not learned a large store of oral language vocabulary. It is sure that L1 learners' lexical knowledge provides a tremendous boost for learning to read. In contrast, L2 learners face huge challenges in beginning to read due to lack of lexical knowledge in oral language. Of relevance here is Verhoeven's (1990) study of bilingual children in the Netherlands. In order to investigate the differences in reading acquisition processes between L1 readers and L2 readers, he studied Dutch children and Turkish immigrant children in the Netherlands as they learned to read during the first two grades of primary school. It was found that Turkish children showed slower word decoding when compared to Dutch children and that "both word recognition and reading comprehension appear to be most strongly influenced by children's oral proficiency in the second language" (p. 90). According to Verhoeven, children learn to recognize words in the following ways: phonemic mapping, recognition of orthographic patterns, and direct recognition of words already represented. He pointed out that young L2 learners have difficulty with all of these word recognition processes just because they lack the knowledge of the oral language most L1 readers bring to the process. Furthermore, as their working memory is strained by the struggle to recognize words, they cannot engage higher order comprehension processes. He then concluded that "young L2 readers should be helped to build up their oral skills, and that reading instruction should be matched to those skills" (p. 90). Droop and Verhoeven (2003) found that the largest differences between L1 readers and L2 readers is their vocabulary knowledge and that oral language proficiency plays a more important role in the explanation of the reading comprehension skills of L2 readers than of L1 readers. With respect to pedagogical implications, these findings suggest that young L2 readers' oral language constraints need to be taken into consideration for effective L2 reading instruction. It seems important to provide enough instructional support for their limited phonological awareness and vocabulary knowledge because of limited exposure to the target language.

L1 and L2 reading. Although beginning L2 readers face added challenges due to limited L2 oral proficiency, they may have advantages if they are already literate in their L1. An L2 learner's first language experience may influence his or her overall conceptualization of what reading is like and how the reading process works (Brown & Haynes, 1985). Although interference may occur according to the differences between two languages, L2 learners are able to transfer some literacy skills from L1 to L2. The concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, rhyming, syntactic knowledge, and discourse skills are transferable from one language to another (Tabors & Snow, 2004). Indeed, if it is possible to build on the strengths that a child already has in his or her first language, we can logically assume that L2 readers may develop their word recognition skills with relative ease, even in the absence of sufficient oral language proficiency. One example can be found in research on cross-linguistic transfer.

Durgunoğlu, Nagy, and Hancin-Bhatt (1993) showed that Spanish-speaking beginning readers' performance on English word recognition tests was predicted by the levels of both Spanish phonological awareness and Spanish word recognition. They indicated that although children need to acquire new phonemes or new orthographic patterns in English, similar types of processing underlie both Spanish and English word recognition. In particular, as both languages are alphabetical, children may understand how orthographical symbols are mapped onto the phonological units, and this metalinguistic awareness is not language specific. It is, however, controversial whether the development of L2 word recognition skills is propelled primarily by common underlying cognitive processes or, alternatively, phonological and orthographic elements specific to the second language (Geva & Siegel, 2000; Wade-Woolley & Geva, 2000). While English and Spanish have orthographic similarities, they differ in orthographic depth (i.e., degree of regularity in sound-symbol correspondence). Spanish speakers may not be able to engage knowledge and skills from L1 in recognizing English words especially when the script is complex. They have to develop additional strategies to cope with the opacity of an English writing system. Moreover, studies on L1-L2 orthographic distance effects indicate that different writing systems require qualitatively different processing procedures (Koda, 1996), and that L1-based facilitation occurs where L1 and L2 processing demands are identical (Birch, 2002; Koda, 2005). What complicates the

matter, indeed, is that the extent to which the transfer of L1 literacy skills occurs depends on L1-L2 linguistic distance (Koda, 1996). Although Hangul is alphabetic like English, it is a non-Roman alphabet and also requires the assembly of individual symbols into syllable blocks (Birch, 2002). Both languages are also different in terms of the syllable structure; there is no rime in a syllable in Korean. Korean children thus seem to have difficulties analyzing English words into onsets and rimes (Park & Jeong, 2005). A recent study of 45 Korean-English bilingual children also found that there was limited orthographic skill transfer between the two languages whereas phonological skills are strongly correlated (Wang, Park & Lee, 2006). We need more research to identify "the relative extent to which transferred skills facilitate L2 reading acquisition across various L1 groups" (Koda, 2005, p. 47).

As mentioned, there is no clear picture of how specific components of reading skills from L1 can be carried over to L2 across different languages (Geva & Wade-Woolley, 1998). However, a significant relationship between L1 and L2 reading at a general level has been consistently found among English learners with different L1 backgrounds. Gonzalez's (1986) study of 72 sixth-grade Mexican immigrant children compared their reading comprehension and oral communication skills in both English and Spanish. There was a considerably stronger relationship between English and Spanish reading skills than between English reading skills and English oral skills; Spanish and English reading comprehension scores showed a correlation of 0.55 ($p<0.01$). Gonzalez concluded that L1 reading appeared to be positively related to L2 reading and academic achievement. In Cummins et al's (1984) study of ninety-one Japanese students in Toronto, a moderately strong relationship was also observed between reading performance in Japanese and English despite the differences in writing systems. It was found that while interactional-style dimensions in L1 and L2 were closely related to the personality attributes of the students, their L1 cognitive attributes and literacy skills contributed significantly to the development of L2 cognitive and literacy skills. These studies have shown the positive and significant correlations between L1 and L2 reading despite the different writing systems as well as larger benefits for children with L1 reading experience in L2 reading. Grabe and Stoller (2002) confirm that L2 learners bring metalinguistic knowledge to provide strategic support to the reading process. For instance,

they may be able to use effective reading strategies developed in L1 to monitor comprehension and to analyze and learn new words. However, it has been argued that the extent to which transfer occurs may vary as L2 proficiency increases. L2 reading researchers have proposed that skills and knowledge from L1 can be available for L2 readers, but only when the reader has a certain level of L2 oral proficiency (Alderson, 1984; Clarke, 1988; Lee & Schallert, 1997). That 'a language threshold' exists poses another important question to consider: How much L2 oral proficiency do second language readers need to have to make L1 reading knowledge work? However, it should be noted that a language threshold cannot be determined in absolute terms. Rather, it is likely to depend on the type of reading task and learners' individual differences (Carrell & Grabe, 2002; Urquhart & Weir, 1998). In her review of studies on the relationship between L2 oral proficiency and L2 literacy, Geva (2006) makes clear that L2 children can learn to read and spell words and achieve similar accuracy to that of L1 children even when their L2 oral proficiency is still developing. She further indicates that aspects of L2 oral proficiency such as vocabulary and grammar explain little unique variance in L2 word recognition and spelling skills whereas they correlated significantly with text-based aspects of literacy. Certainly, different reading skills (e.g., word-reading skills and text-level skills) require different levels and aspects of L2 oral proficiency, so it is difficult to pinpoint the level of L2 oral proficiency required for different reading tasks. Of importance then is to consider the level of learners' L2 oral proficiency as well as the nature of reading tasks and to provide instructional support they need. Second language learners should also be encouraged to make the best of available reading strategies and skills in L1 for L2 reading tasks.

Other differences between L1 and L2 reading. Aside from the linguistic differences, there are also a number of non-linguistic factors that distinguish L1 and L2 reading. Grabe and Stoller (2002) identified the following differences for L1 and L2 readers: socio-cultural backgrounds of L2 readers, ways of organizing discourse and texts, expectations of L2 educational institutions, language resources for L2 readers, motivations for reading in L2, and so on.

Among these differences, motivation is an important topic for any second language educator. Learners often do not see the immediate needs of learning an L2 in a

foreign language context, and they may read very little in an L2. Building motivation thus becomes more important in effective L2 reading instruction, and L2 educators need to be mindful of how L2 learners are motivated to read. The different socio-cultural contexts of L2 reading suggest that L2 readers may become motivated to read differently. Research on children's motivation in L1 reading research indicates that L1 readers' motivation has to do with their socioeconomic backgrounds and home reading experiences in addition to instructional factors (Baker & Scher, 2002; Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks & Perencevich, 2004). In contrast, L2 reading occurs mostly in classroom contexts so that children's motivation to read in L2 appears to be strongly affected by instructional factors. Nikolov's (1999) study of Hungarian children learning English as a foreign language showed that children are best motivated in foreign language learning "if they find classroom activities, tasks and materials interesting and the teacher supportive" (p. 53). It is necessary then for second language educators to carefully observe how children are motivated or unmotivated to read and to use instructional strategies to address learners' interests and needs.

Another important difference is that second language learners' cultural background affects reading comprehension. Research on schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Rumelhart, 1980) has had a great impact on understanding reading. It is well known that learners' prior knowledge strongly affects reading comprehension. What learners bring to bear on a particular text depends on their 'primary cultural reference group', which relates to sex, race, religion, nationality, and occupation (Klapper, 1992). As L2 learners bring their own cultural knowledge to literacy practices and do not appear to possess the same degree of cultural knowledge as L1 readers, they are more likely to encounter topics in reading that are new or strange to them (Eskey, 2005; Snyder, 2003). For example, Korean learners of English may have difficulties understanding stories about Halloween. Researchers have also compared understanding of culturally familiar and unfamiliar stories by second language learners from different ethnic backgrounds (Johnson, 1981; Langer, Bartolome, Vasquez & Lucas, 1990). They have shown how L2 readers filter information from second language texts through culture-specific knowledge, which in turn resulted in comprehension difficulties.

In addition to the effect of cultural knowledge on L2 reading, the notion of reading as a socio-cultural practice states that reading is a culturally shaped behavior, and different cultures make various uses of reading and have differing ways of organizing discourse and texts (Eskey, 2005; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Snyder (2003) stated: "the structure of a narrative is predictable when the reader is familiar with how the narrative is organized. For example, European fairy tales beginning with "once upon a time" indicate to a child familiar with that structure that the story will be make-believe, there will be an adventure with troubles, and, at least in the cleaned-up modern versions, all will probably end happily" (p. 26). Indeed, every culture has tales that are well known to children and they have unique narrative structures. Tales also carry unique value systems in different cultures. Thus, it seems important for L2 educators to carefully observe how young L2 readers construct meanings from tales with different narrative structures of the target language culture. L2 educators must also carefully select reading materials that are culturally familiar both in content and in form in order to help young L2 learners understand the text easily. However, reading can also be seen as a cross-cultural activity by which L2 readers learn other ways of thinking and viewing. In that case, teachers may organize activities in order to help children develop cross-cultural understandings and respect for diverse cultures.

In sum, young L2 learners have both advantages and disadvantages in learning to read. Their limited L2 oral proficiency may pose added challenges in the process of learning to read, whereas their L1 literacy background may enable them to learn to read with relative ease, even in the absence of sufficient linguistic proficiency. There are also other differences that distinguish L1 and L2 reading, including differing socio-cultural backgrounds of L2 readers and motivations for reading in L2. It is not yet clear how L2 learners proceed in reading development in relation to L2 oral proficiency, L1 literacy background, and L2 print experiences. Nevertheless, this unique, complex process of learning to read in L2 informs educators of how to adapt different approaches to teaching reading to the needs of young second language learners.

How Do Different Approaches to L1 Reading Work for L2 Learners?

It is not a new idea that bottom-up processing and top-down processing interact as part of skilled reading (Rumelhart, 1994). However, it is not yet clear what balanced

reading instruction might be like for particular learners in particular educational contexts. Research on exemplary practices in L1 reading has shown what should be happening in effective reading classrooms for first language learners. However, L2 reading is different from L1 reading in many respects so that a truly balanced approach to teaching L2 reading requires a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of each approach for L2 learners at different stages.

Phonics instruction for young L2 readers. Some say that word recognition skills are more important for second language learners and that explicit and systematic phonics instruction benefits second language readers (Lenters, 2004). Stuart (1999, 2004) found that the *Jolly Phonics Program* could be effectively used with second language children. Central to the program was the use of meaningful stories to reinforce recognition and recall of letter-sound relationships. Lenters (2004) also argued that phonics instruction appears to address L2 readers' perceived auditory weakness as well as limited orthographic knowledge. Kim (1999) similarly argued for the application of phonics to English reading instruction in Korean elementary schools. However, L2 readers' oral vocabulary constraints need to be taken into consideration in applying phonics. Specifically, L2 educators should be careful about the underlying assumption of phonics that learners already know the sounds of the language (Ediger, 2001). For L1 learners of English, the primary task in learning to read is linking visual word labels to oral vocabulary. Thus, learning to decode print is pivotal in early language development and phonics instruction may be developmentally appropriate right from the beginning of formal reading instruction. In contrast, second language learners are often unlikely to have the target words in their oral language repertoire. In this case, learners may have to learn not only the sounds and graphic forms of the word but also its meaning, as well as the spelling pattern, which might be too complex and burdensome for young children. Different ways of reading words warrant discussion in this regard.

Ehri (1998) suggested that children go through a series of phases in word learning. Initially, children are in a pre-alphabetic stage in which they rely on visual cues to read words. As they develop phonological awareness, they begin to use phonetic cues, first the initial sound and later other salient sounds in words, which is called the partial alphabetic phase. They are in a fully alphabetic phase if they possess working knowledge of the

major grapheme-phoneme correspondences, including vowels, but decoding is slow and laborious at this phase. This stage progresses to the consolidated-alphabetic phase, in which children can use chunks of letters to recognize words quickly and automatically. It is argued that certain instructional methods are not considered to be effective if a child has not reached a certain stage of word recognition. For example, word reading by analogy, a type of phonics instruction, needs to be taught after a child has reached the phonetic cue level (Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Stahl, 1998). Given the different phases of word learning, it may not be appropriate to give young L2 readers phonics instruction right from the start because they may still be in the pre-alphabetic stage of reading. Rather, the 'look and say' method can help them to associate the graphic form of a word with a sound more easily, as well as to learn the meaning of a word (Dlugosz, 2000). In addition, at this stage, phonemic awareness instruction with letters seems more developmentally appropriate rather than phonics instruction (Lee, 2004; Park & Jeong, 2005). For instance, children can be asked to listen for initial and final sounds in the words and select letters for those sounds through game-like listening and sound manipulation activities (see Yopp & Yopp, 2000). Phonemic awareness instruction can be extended to include phonics instruction when children reach the partial-alphabetic stage. Ehri and McCormick (2004) confirmed that phonemic awareness instruction prepares learners to process print alphabetically and helps them to move from the pre-alphabetic to the partial-alphabetic phase of development. They also suggested other instructional implications for each stage of development to help learners to move into the next phase. Although their work focuses on L1 reading, instructional suggestions for each stage of word learning seem of special value even for young second language learners. L2 educators need to carefully consider students' stage of word learning and to choose the instructional support that is more developmentally appropriate for each stage of development.

Whole language for young L2 learners. A number of studies have been undertaken on the use of whole language in second language contexts (Dlugosz, 2002; Elley, 1991; Elley & Magubhai, 1983; Lim & Watson, 1993; Park, 1999), and many second language researchers have argued for whole language (Freeman & Freeman, 1992, 1998; Freeman & Goodman, 1993; Redmond, 1994; Rigg, 1991; Schwarzer, 2001). The

underlying educational philosophy of whole language seems invaluable in motivating second language children to learn to read. Whole language emphasizes students' personal and social connections to meaning, students' choice and responsibility for learning, and acceptance of errors (Watson, 1989). Research on whole language classrooms shows that students' motivation for reading has to do with empowerment (Oldfather, 1993). In the whole language classroom, learners are encouraged to choose personally interesting and relevant books and become motivated to read by taking personal ownership of their reading. Because of instructional constraints in EFL classrooms (e.g., limited time, lack of resources), it may be difficult to encourage Korean learners of English to choose personally interesting storybooks and to do independent reading. However, it seems certain that learners become motivated to read when reading instruction is interesting, meaningful, and relevant to them. Indeed, one of the main concerns in teaching young EFL learners has been how to motivate them to learn the new language.

It has been pointed out that some L2 classrooms often tend to emphasize discrete skills as well as low-level activities, with much attention on learners' limited proficiency of the target language (Hall, 1999). Freeman and Goodman (1993), the major proponents of whole language for L2 learners, argue that part-to-whole instruction emphasizes only the mastery of meaningless and isolated words for second language learners based on the assumption that small parts are easier to learn. For them, "parts of language are more abstract and more difficult to learn" (p. 171). Focusing solely on a skills emphasis approach to reading is devoid of motivating experiences for young learners, which reduces reading to a boring chore (Hamayan, 1994). Korean educators and curriculum developers should consider why reading activities were liked least by fourth grade students in Park's (2003) study of students' feedback on English textbooks in Korea. Young L2 learners need motivating experiences that enable them to initiate and sustain the desire to learn to read. Further, the functional view of reading in whole language also seems to be consistent with communicative approaches to second-language acquisition in that it underscores the authenticity of text and the meaningful, functional use of reading. Although its implementation in Korean elementary classrooms has not yet been fully discussed, it is encouraging that some teachers have tried to apply the principles of whole language to English reading classrooms through their action research projects (Cho &

Seo, 2001; Choi, 2000; Oh, 2000). Their reports show that students' motivation to read dramatically increased in storybook-based reading lessons.

With regards to the limitations of whole language, it should be noted that whereas oral language typically is acquired from immersion in a speaking community, reading simply does not develop in that way. It may be too optimistic to think that L2 reading develops easily by immersing students in reading. Gunderson (2001) also shows that the view that literacy learning is natural is not shared by some cultural groups. In his study of three schools with a large population of ESL students in Canada, some Asian immigrant parents believed that "a whole language approach violated their children's right to acquire the knowledge they needed to succeed..." (p. 265).

The use of authentic storybooks also seems difficult to adopt for young second language learners. The top-down processing view of reading suggests that beginning readers use semantic context cues (e.g., pictures) in reading, despite limited proficiency. Although this view has great potential in encouraging young learners to be more active in meaning construction, research shows that inferring word meanings from context is a slow and uncertain process for beginning readers (Schwanenflugel, Stahl, & McFalls, 1997). In addition, research on vocabulary size found that readers must be familiar with a minimum of 95% of the vocabulary in the text for comprehension to occur (Carrell & Grabe, 2002). Considering that L2 learners' limited oral proficiency and cross-linguistic differences add unique challenges to L2 reading, the application of whole language for young L2 readers is not unproblematic. It then becomes of critical importance to think about how to make reading instruction both comprehensible and interesting in L2 classrooms. First of all, students should be introduced to appropriate storybooks corresponding to their interest and L2 proficiency, and teachers should have a sophisticated repertoire of available storybooks for specific groups of learners. Secondly, it is possible that learners initially listen to meaningful text, and only part of the text (e.g., key words or sentences) can be introduced as written forms.

To summarize, not only L1 readers but also L2 readers need both explicit teaching of word recognition skills and extensive exposure to meaningful texts. A balanced approach to teaching L2 reading then requires a complex articulation of skills instruction and a holistic approach based on detailed monitoring of students as they read (Pressley,

2002). Second language teachers seem to have an important role in this regard. Since it is teachers who make decisions about what to do in light of students' needs, teachers need to be knowledgeable about different approaches to teaching reading. They also need to carefully adapt each approach to the students based on careful observations of how students are doing in reading classrooms. The development of such teachers then becomes critically important for effective L2 reading instruction. Duffy and Hoffman (1999) stated that "the perfect method concept is not a solution. The solution is development of teachers who know a variety of methods and approaches, and who orchestrate those thoughtfully and adaptively according to their students' needs. This requires a different kind of thinking" (p. 13). The idea that teachers are critical to effective reading instruction then raises several important questions for teacher learning and education. How do teachers learn to teach L2 reading? How do they become effective L2 reading teachers? In order to explore these questions, my research attempted to learn from the experiences of professional development (PD)-oriented teachers in EFL reading classrooms.

Teacher Knowledge

There has been increasing interest in teacher knowledge as opposed to focusing solely on research-based theoretical knowledge in educational research. The focus on teacher knowledge can be traced back to discussions about the centrality of teachers in educational innovations as well as the theory/practice dysfunction in the educational community (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Clarke, 1994). Research on teacher knowledge has centered on two aspects: identifying the knowledge base of teaching and uncovering the nature and development of teachers' practical knowledge (Carter, 1990). Although there has been little consensus on what constitutes teacher knowledge, how it develops, and how it relates to practice (Calderhead, 1996), common to such research is the assumption that teachers are active thinking professionals, and their experiences should be valued and represented in professional discussion and policy development. In this section, I review how views of teaching and teachers have changed in educational research and how the knowledge base of teaching has been reconceptualized to include the knowledge that teachers gain from experiences. I then review two important

conceptions of teacher knowledge for the proposed study: teachers' *practical knowledge* and *pedagogical content knowledge*. Finally, I discuss two important issues in studying teacher knowledge: how practical knowledge relates to theoretical knowledge and what counts as knowledge.

Different Views of Teaching

Freeman (1996) described three different views of teaching: the behavioral view, the cognitive view, and the interpretivist view. A behaviorist stance can be characterized by attempts "to describe teaching in terms of sequences of behavior, and then to investigate the relationship of behavior to children's learning" (Calderhead, 1996, p. 709). This view manifests well in the process-product research which relates teachers' observable behaviors or skills to students' learning outcomes. Within this tradition, teacher knowledge is viewed as a set of generalizations that can be identified through classroom research and applied by practitioners. However, it has been claimed that this view tends to codify or simplify the complex processes of teaching, and teaching is divorced from teachers themselves (Freeman, 1996). For example, Jackson's (1968) detailed ethnographic study of classrooms highlighted the complex nature of teaching and revealed that teachers' thinking does have an important role in coping with the complex demands of teaching. In addition, as several large-scale development projects in the 1960s and early 1970s failed to alter teachers' behaviors, researchers began to question the narrow focus of behaviorist studies and to investigate the role of teachers' thinking in curriculum development (Calderhead, 1996). The failure of well-designed curriculum packages to influence teaching and learning processes urged researchers to examine how teachers think about their own work. Researchers then began to devote attention to teachers' cognitive processes and thinking rather than to teachers' behaviors.

The cognitive view of teaching acknowledges the important contributions of teachers' thinking in teaching and learning processes. The studies in this view typically focused on the internal cognitive processes teachers use in thinking about teaching, including planning, decision-making, judgment, and implicit theories (Carter, 1990; Clark & Peterson, 1986). Such information-processing research attempted "to explicate the information teachers use in decision-making and to identify how different information influenced the outcome of their decisions" (Calderhead, 1996, p. 710). One important

contribution of these studies is that they have helped to clarify how the process of teaching looks and works. However, these studies also revealed that "teaching is not simply an activity that bridges thought and action; it is usually intricately rooted in a particular context" (Freeman, 1996, p. 97), and that teachers have a very complex understanding of teaching contexts. Although being an important precursor to research on teacher knowledge, it was quickly recognized that the concepts of planning and decision-making are restricted in explaining the contextual nature of teachers' knowledge.

The interpretivist view of teaching states that teachers develop very complex, contextual teaching knowledge through constant interpretations of the subject matter, learners, and the teaching contexts. Freeman (1996) described the interpretivist view of teaching:

> Teachers are constantly involved in interpreting their worlds: They interpret their subject matter, their classroom context, and the people in it. These interpretations are central to their thinking and their actions. Classrooms and students are not just settings for implementing ideas; they are frameworks of interpretation that teachers use for knowing: knowing when and how to act and react, what information to present or explain and how, when to respond or correct individual students, how to assess and reformulate what they have just taught, and so on (p. 98).

In this view of teaching, teacher knowledge is developed in context and multifaceted in nature comprising teachers' interpretations of subject matter, students, and classrooms. The interpretivist view of teaching then led to more research unraveling the contextual, multifaceted nature of teacher knowledge.

In sum, research on teacher knowledge emerged from dissatisfactions with the way teachers were viewed in process-product studies and in curriculum reform movements. Instead of imposing theory on teachers, researchers have tried to understand how teachers think about their own work and what knowledge they develop and use in practice. Subsequent research has thus focused on uncovering the complex nature of teacher knowledge, and this can be divided into two broad categories: practical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Carter, 1990).

Teacher Knowledge as Practical Knowledge

Within the field of research on teacher knowledge, there has been increasing interest in practical accounts of knowledge in order to do justice to the type of knowledge teachers generate from their experiences. Carter (1990) defined practical knowledge as referring "broadly to the knowledge teachers have of classroom situations and the practical dilemmas they face in carrying out purposeful action in these settings" (p. 299). Investigators of teachers' practical knowledge argue that the knowledge base of teaching resides as much in teachers' daily teaching practices as in research-based theoretical knowledge. More terms have thus increasingly emerged to refer to the knowledge that teachers gain through practice. Examples include Schön's (1983) *epistemology of practice*, Elbaz's (1983) *practical knowledge*, and Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) *personal practical knowledge*. Although they are seemingly similar, it is claimed that they differ in approach and method. In his review of different conceptions of knowledge in research on teaching, Fenstermacher (1994) identified the differences and similarities between the terms explicating teachers' practical knowledge. According to Fenstermacher, teacher knowledge is considered to be inferred best from narratives and stories in the Elbaz/Connelly/Clandinin strand; whereas it is inferred best from action in the Schön strand. These two strands also differ in according the status of knowledge to what teachers simply say or do. In Schön's strand, researchers seem to be more concerned with teasing out precisely what knowledge is involved in action; whereas Elbaz/Connelly/Clandinin "seem prepared to accept teacher statements, stories, and images as knowledge" (p. 13). However, there are also similarities between different terms in that they seek a conception of knowledge teachers generate from teaching experiences. Among different terms in the literature, I have found Schön's (1983) *epistemology of practice* to be the one to best guide my study.

Schön (1983) analyzed the work of various groups of professionals and showed how their professional knowledge is embedded in and developed through their practices. He contrasted *technical rationality* with *epistemology of practice* or *knowing-in-action.* According to Schön, while there are situations where professionals can apply research-based theory, there are also situations that are highly complex and confusing such that a technical solution cannot be applied. Professionals then have to identify the problem by

making sense of the situations that are ill-defined and messy and develop insights into what to do. Their professional practices therefore reveal a way of knowing that does not stem from abstract theory, which is called 'knowing-in-action'. Schön (1983; 1992) further explicates how professionals acquire knowledge by two important notions: *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action.* Professionals engage in reflection-in-action when they encounter unanticipated, problematic situations, make sense of a phenomenon or a problem, and generate new insights that lead to immediate action. They also engage in reflection-on-action when they reflect on what they have done or what they have experienced in order to prepare themselves for future actions. These two notions are critically important to the rigor of what Schön calls the epistemology of practice. Schön (1983) argued that when professionals are engaged in these reflective processes, they become researchers in the practice contexts and construct a new theory of the unique case in the particular context. This process of reflective inquiry to some extent "links the art of practice in uncertainty and uniqueness to the scientist's art of research" (p. 69). Although being epistemologically different from formal, theoretical knowledge, the knowledge acquired in this process is therefore a legitimate form of professional knowing. Schön's epistemology of practice refers to this kind of knowing and knowledge.

Schön's view of how professional knowledge is acquired raises a significant issue of teachers' expertise. It acknowledges the significance of the knowledge that teachers acquire from their own experiences and places more confidence in the judgments they make in practice (Russell & Munby, 1992). It also draws more attention to what teachers know rather than what they need to know (Fenstermacher, 1994). However, it has been claimed that the research on teachers' practical knowledge does not provide generalized conceptions of what teachers know, but presents a theory of how teachers learn by their teaching experiences (Carter, 1990). Another conception of teacher knowledge seems also useful in defining teacher knowledge; that is, teachers' pedagogical content knowledge.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Unlike the practical conceptions of teacher knowledge, Shulman (1986b, 1987) proposed a comprehensive and analytical theory of teacher knowledge. In particular, Shulman's (1987) seven categories of teacher knowledge have often been associated with

the development of a knowledge base for teaching. The seven categories are: (a) content knowledge, (b) general pedagogical knowledge, (c) curriculum knowledge, (d) pedagogical content knowledge, (e) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, (f) knowledge of educational contexts, and (g) knowledge of educational ends, purposes, values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. At the heart of these categories is Shulman's (1986b) focus on subject matter in the study of teaching. He pointed out that research on teaching effectiveness has often focused on content-free pedagogical skills (e.g., how teachers manage their classrooms and organize activities), but not on the subject matter content itself. For Shulman (1987), mere content knowledge is, however, as useless as content-free pedagogical skill. He emphasized the special amalgam of content and pedagogy in explaining teachers' expertise. He indicated that "among those categories, pedagogical content knowledge is of special interest because it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching" (p. 8).

Pedagogical content knowledge refers to teachers' capacity to transfer the content knowledge they possess into "forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students" (Shulman, 1987, p. 15). Shulman and Sykes (1986) stated that pedagogical content knowledge includes:

> Understanding the central topics in each subject matter as it is generally taught to children of a particular grade level and being able to ask the following kinds of questions about each topic: what are core concepts, skills and attitudes which this topic has the potential of conveying to students?...What are the aspects of topic that are most difficult to understand for students? What is the greatest intrinsic interest? What analogies, metaphors, examples, similes, demonstrations, simulations, manipulations, or the like, are most effective in communicating the appropriate understandings or attitudes of this topic to students of particular backgrounds and prerequisite? What students' preconceptions are likely to get in the way of learning? (p. 9).

Building on the work of Shulman and Sykes (1986), Grossman (1990) proposed that pedagogical content knowledge is composed of four central components: (a) knowledge and beliefs about the purpose for teaching subject matter at different grade

levels, (b) knowledge of students' understanding, conceptions, and misconceptions of particular topics in a subject, (c) knowledge of curriculum materials available for teaching particular subject matter and knowledge about both the horizontal and vertical curricula for a subject, and (d) knowledge of instructional strategies and representations for teaching particular topics. In this view, teachers draw on subject-specific knowledge, reflect upon the subject matter, and adapt the content of the lesson to the needs of learners. This specialized knowledge is then critically important to the development of teachers' expertise. This knowledge is also "distinct from, but not unrelated to, practical knowledge" (Carter, 1990, p. 306). He drew a useful distinction between practical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in that "pedagogical content knowledge is to a greater extent grounded in disciplines and in formulations related to school curriculum and the collective wisdom of the profession than practical knowledge" (p. 306). In other words, unlike teachers' practical knowledge that is personal and somewhat vague in focus, research on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is more likely to add up to a codified body of teaching knowledge by focusing on teachers' working knowledge of the subject matter.

Issues in Studying Teacher Knowledge

The preceding discussion shows that teacher knowledge is complex, and there have been different characterizations of teacher knowledge. The various notions of teacher knowledge reveal two fundamental issues in defining and studying teacher knowledge: how does theoretical knowledge relate to practical knowledge?; and what counts as knowledge?

Theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. In the current literature on teacher knowledge, there appear to be two different approaches to depicting teacher knowledge as well as to seeking sources of teaching expertise (Carter, 1990; Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001). One focuses on teacher knowledge as practical, situational knowledge developed through their teaching practices. Teachers are seen as producers of knowledge and the main source of their expertise lies in their practices and reflections on them. The other approach conceptualizes teacher knowledge as more formal and propositional. In this approach, the focus is on identifying the knowledge base for teaching, and teachers' expertise depends on how well they are informed about research-

based knowledge. However, some researchers have proposed that any portrait of teacher knowledge should include both conceptions, and that teachers draw on various sources in developing expertise (Grossman, 1990; Norris, 2000; Verloop, Driel & Meijer, 2001; Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987). Wilson, Shulman, and Richert (1987) stated that "...by emphasizing the practical and to some extent, idiosyncratic knowledge that teachers use, these researchers present a truncated conceptualization of teacher knowledge. Teachers have theoretical, as well as practical, knowledge of the subject matter that informs and is informed by their teaching; any portrait of teacher knowledge should include both aspects" (p. 108).

In order to find common ground between the two approaches, it seems important to understand first how research on teachers' practical knowledge emerged from dissatisfaction with the unhealthy divide between theory and practice. An important motivation for such research was that research-based knowledge often alienates teachers and that such knowledge is too abstract and general to be applied to particular contexts (Norris, 2000). One of the major contributors in the field of teacher knowledge, Clandinin (1986) contends that little credit has been given to the knowledge that teachers gain from their experience. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) also point out that "teachers are the objects of researchers' investigations and then ultimately are expected to be the consumers and implementers of their findings" (p. 3). There is no doubt that by emphasizing teachers' practical knowledge, we can create a healthy atmosphere where teachers' experiences are valued and adequately represented in the educational community. It is however possible that we may limit or devalue teachers' expertise by overemphasizing one aspect of teacher knowledge. Defining teacher knowledge must involve careful reflections upon the relation between theory and practice, which may create healthy connections between them rather than the exclusion of theoretical knowledge.

Theoretical knowledge has been discredited on the grounds that it is both abstract and general in nature so that it is often not relevant to teaching practice. However, Norris (2000) points out that "this characteristic is not a flaw of the knowledge: no knowledge or theory can capture the full complexity of any real situation" (p. 178). Although it cannot be directly applied to particular contexts, theoretical knowledge does have value in

guiding teachers' practices. Ornstein (1991) argued that "scientific generalizations and theories may not always be applicable to specific teaching situations, but such propositions can help in the formulation of a reliable and valid base for teaching in classrooms. Scientific ideas can serve as a starting point for discussion and analysis of the art of teaching" (p. 69). Of importance then is how to apply theory to practice as well as how to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge. Teachers as reflective professionals have an important role in this regard; they are in a privileged position to "particularize abstract theories and to abstract principles from particulars" (Leinhardt, Young & Merriman, 1995, p. 403). In applying theory to practice, good teachers need to be knowledgeable about theory, reflect upon research-based knowledge, and adapt it to their teaching contexts. They should be also able to advance their own insights into what works and what does not work from experience. For teachers as professionals, theoretical knowledge is therefore not opposite to practical knowledge, and both conceptions of knowledge may become intertwined in teachers' minds as well as in their practice as they gain experiences. Bromme and Tillema (1995) similarly argued that becoming a professional requires fusion, not substitution of theory for experience.

Another consideration is that teachers' expertise can be elevated when they draw on various sources of knowledge in practice. Shulman (1987) argued that "teaching is, essentially, a learned profession" (p. 9) and listed four major sources for the teaching knowledge base: (a) scholarship in content disciplines, (b) educational materials and settings of the institutionalized educational process, (c) research on schooling, human learning, and teaching, and (d) the wisdom of practice itself. Grossman (1990) also indicated that teachers acquire knowledge from a variety of sources, including apprenticeship of observation (i.e., experiences as students), disciplinary background, professional coursework, and learning from teaching experience. Indeed, "teaching expertise can rely neither solely on teacher-based knowledge and experience nor solely on university research-based knowledge and empirical theory" (Norris, 2000, pp. 190-191). It was therefore assumed in my study that teacher knowledge embraces both theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, that teachers are both producers and consumers of knowledge, and that their knowledge is acquired from a wide variety of sources.

What counts as knowledge? Another issue in studying teacher knowledge is what counts as knowledge. Is what teachers say or do in classrooms accorded the status of knowledge? In order for teachers to be seen as producers of knowledge, Fenstermacher (1994) claimed that we must attach demands for justification or warrant to the concept of their practical knowledge, arguing that: "there is much merit in believing that teachers know a great deal and in seeking to learn what they know, but that merit is corrupted and demeaned when it is implied that this knowledge is not subject to justification or cannot or should not be justified" (p. 51). However, he did not contend that "claims to practical knowledge are subject to the same scrutiny as claims to formal knowledge" (p. 38). Instead, he proposed a somewhat different approach to the justification of practical knowledge: that is, teachers' *practical reasoning* to their actions. Teachers' practical knowledge is then justified by the development of good reasons rather than the presentation of evidence. For Fenstermacher, practical reasoning is a minimal form of warrant for practical action. It can be also used "as a means for transforming the tacit quality of the teachers' knowing to a level of awareness that opens the possibility for reflective consideration" (p. 45).

Drawing on Schön's (1983) reflective practices and Fenstermacher's (1994) practical reasoning, it seemed to me that in order for teachers to be seen as producers of knowledge, they need to engage in reflective practices and present good reasons for their actions. Thus, in my research I sought teachers' practical reasoning to actions by asking them to present good reasons for the observed practices based on their interpretations of students, subject matter, and the teaching context.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Multiple Case Studies

The purpose of the present study was to understand the instructional practices of three professional development (PD)-oriented teachers in English as a foreign language (EFL) reading classrooms and the knowledge that guides their practices. Understanding teacher knowledge and practice requires a rich description of their practices as well as a deeper understanding of the rationale teachers provide for their practice. I selected a qualitative case study as a research method consistent with the nature of this research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as follows:

> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of meanings people bring to them (p. 2).

One important characteristic of qualitative research is that qualitative researchers attend to the natural settings because they are concerned with context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Teaching is complex and contextual so that any attempt to understand teacher knowledge and practice cannot be separated from actual classroom contexts. Teachers constantly make sense of classroom contexts in order to know what to do and how to do it. Thus, a significant part of teacher knowledge is "developed in context, stored together with characteristic features of the classrooms and activities, organized around tasks that teachers accomplish in classroom settings, and accessed for use in similar situations" (Putnam & Borko, 2000, p. 13). I assumed that teacher knowledge and practice would be best understood when it was observed in their natural classroom settings. Attending to the natural settings also allowed me to provide rich accounts of the instructional practices of the teachers in my study.

Qualitative research may be limited in generalizing the results because it focuses on the contextual nature of the particular setting. However, Scott and Usher (1999) point out that "there is trade off between detail and the ability to generalize" (p. 88). Although qualitative research highlights the particularity of the research context, it may provide

readers with ideas of what to do or not to do in a similar situation. Moreover, a specific instance in the particular setting may illuminate a general problem (Merriam, 1998).

Another characteristic is that "meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 7). Qualitative researchers focus on how the participants make sense of their world and experiences in the particular setting, which is called 'emic views' (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998). In my study, I intended to understand teachers' knowledge that informed their practice. The final product of the study thus went beyond the mere descriptions of what was happening in the classrooms, and special attention was given to the interpretations teachers make of their own teaching practices. I was interested in how the teacher participants in my study made sense of students and classroom contexts, what instructional strategies they used to address students' needs, and what insights they developed through practice. I was keenly attentive to their rationales for practice.

From the different types of qualitative research methods, I selected a case study methodology for this research for several reasons. Merriam (1998) defines qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single stance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). According to Merriam, "the most single defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, the case" (p. 27). I was particularly interested in the cases of three PD-oriented teachers rather than a large sample of teachers, and my research centered on an intensive description and in-depth understanding of these cases. Munby, Russell, and Martin (2001) indicated that although labor intensive, case methodology may prove promising for a richer understanding of teachers' knowledge construction and practices.

In order to achieve an enhanced understanding of how PD-oriented teachers implement reading instruction, I selected to move beyond one case study and conducted multiple case studies of three teachers. Although being limited in generalizing the results of case studies, multiple case studies of teachers may yield an enhanced understanding of different teachers and their practices. Merriam (1998) states that "the more cases included in a study, and the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be" (p. 40).

Site Selection

This study was conducted in selected local elementary classrooms in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) consists of eleven school districts, and there are approximately 560 local elementary schools under the supervision of SMOE. Selection of schools was contingent upon selection of participating teachers, and the participants of this research worked in the different school districts in Seoul. I selected Seoul for my research site because I was familiar with the educational system there; I had completed an education degree and had seven years of teaching experience in Seoul. While conducting this research, my familiarity with the research site allowed me to understand easily what teachers meant when they mentioned the educational contexts in Seoul.

Participants

Purposeful Sampling

Two main threads of educational research provided inspiration for this research: research on exemplary teaching of literacy and research on teacher knowledge. These theoretical underpinnings influenced how I would select participants for this research. In particular, I wanted to seek participants whose practices would deviate from the national curriculum and textbook and show varied types of reading materials and activities to address students' needs. I also wanted to look into the insights they developed through their efforts to adapt instruction to students. As stated in Chapter Two, reading instruction has a limited role in the current national English curriculum, and what is known about effective reading instruction is not reflected in the curriculum. In addition, given the powerful influence of the national textbook on Korean elementary classrooms, my concern was that I would see similar patterns of reading instruction in the practices of different teachers. I assumed that in order to explore teacher knowledge in EFL reading classrooms, it would be of great value to document the cases of teachers whose practices deviated from the mandated curriculum and textbooks; even though these mandates may make it difficult for teachers to apply their professional knowledge to practice. To put it simply, I attempted to explore the cases from which I could gain more insights into L2 reading instruction and used purposeful sampling in order to select participants for the

present study. Merriam (1998) notes that "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61).

My research focused on a special group of teachers who had been actively involved in professional development. I assumed that those teachers had endeavored to improve their teaching practice and that their practice would demonstrate the knowledge they gained from their teaching experiences as well as their professional development. I expected that more insights into L2 reading instruction could be gained from researching their teaching practices. Research also indicates that effective reading instruction "is constructed from a variety of sources, including study, experience, reflection, professional conversations at meetings and conferences, and classroom-based inquiry about new notions and understandings" (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999, p. 13). Teachers' professional development may take many forms, including conducting action research, taking graduate courses and other teacher education courses, attending teacher workshops and conferences, and working with support groups. I nevertheless located the potential participants according to the following criteria because these criteria were considered to be more noticeable than others: 1) teachers who had taken a L2 reading course in a graduate program, 2) teachers whose master's thesis centered on English reading instruction, and 3) teachers who had done action research in the area of L2 reading instruction. I assumed that teachers who had taken a reading course in a graduate program were more informed of research on reading instruction. It was also assumed that these teachers had had more chances to relate theory to practice as well as to reflect upon their practice. Action research can be defined as "a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 162). I expected that teachers meant to be reflective in practice while doing action research and developed valuable insights into what works and what does not work in a certain situation.

Selection of Participants

In an attempt to locate the potential participants, I first searched the electronic educational database *Riss4U* in Korea for teachers whose master's thesis centered on

English reading instruction. As I sought teachers in the specific geographic area, Seoul, I confined my search to one affiliation, the Seoul National University of Education (SNUE). SNUE is the university responsible for educating pre-service elementary school teachers as well as where most in-service teachers in the city go for further study. The search was done in March, 2006 and yielded a list of 14 teachers' names and the titles of their master's thesis in the area of English reading instruction. I then contacted the Department of English Education at SNUE in April, 2006 for their contact information, and information about 11 teachers was obtained. I also contacted an instructor who had taught an EFL literacy instruction course at SNUE and asked her to identify teachers who might be interested in my study. She provided a list of seven teachers and their contact information. In April, 2006 I searched another database by the Seoul Teachers' Association in order to locate teachers who had done action research on English reading instruction, which resulted in a list of seven teachers.

After obtaining lists of potential participants, I first identified teachers who met all selection criteria and found two. I then contacted them by email first and by phone in April, 2006. One of them was teaching grade one students, so she was not teaching English. The other teacher was not interested in my research. I knew that selecting participants would be somewhat difficult in a Korean context where many of the teachers were not willing to open their classrooms to a stranger. I then contacted the rest of the teachers in the lists by email as well as by phone, and interestingly, about two thirds of the teachers reported that they were not teaching English. While locating participants, I came to know that despite extensive efforts to prepare in-service teachers for English teaching by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, many elementary school teachers had been reluctant to teach English in recent years due in part to the government's English-only policy in English classrooms. Thus, a subject teacher was responsible for teaching English at most elementary schools in Seoul. It should be noted that subject teachers cannot be identified with subject specialists in Korean elementary classrooms. Subject teachers refer to those who do not want to work as a homeroom teacher for personal reasons (e.g., pregnancy, working on graduate program), and the decision about what subject to teach is based on the needs of homeroom teachers in many cases. Finally, four teachers expressed an interest in my research. Three of them

met two of my criteria (taking a graduate course and master's thesis), and the other teacher met only one criterion (taking a graduate course). They all worked in different school districts but their teaching experience did not vary much. Two of the four teachers had 14 years of teaching experience, another teacher had 12 years of experience, and the other had six years. The four teachers taught different grades. Two of them taught grade six, and the other two teachers were teaching grades five and four. It was fortunate that I had teachers who worked in different school districts. Students' prior English learning experiences tend to vary depending on the socioeconomic features of the school district, and the schools they worked for varied in this respect. I expected that researching teachers from different districts would enable a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers adapt instruction to students and contexts. I accepted these four teachers as prospective participants and had a meeting with each of them around the end of April, 2006. I provided them with an information letter that outlined the purpose of my research and the nature of a participant's involvement. Signed consent forms were then obtained from all four participants as well as their students and parents. It should be noted, however, that one of the four participants withdrew from this study in July, 2006 for personal reasons so that the final outcome of my research includes descriptions of three teachers' knowledge and practice.

Data Collection

Data collection comprised primarily classroom observations and interviews for a period of six months in 2006 (April to July and September to November). The research design was also flexible enough to accommodate other data sources such as students' activity sheets, teacher lesson plans, and reading materials used. Merriam (1998) suggests that "case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering data, from testing to interviewing, can be used..." (p. 28). The collected data consisted of field notes and videotaped lessons from the observations, verbatim transcripts from the interviews, lesson plans, sample instructional materials, and pictures of classroom environments. I also kept a reflective journal record after each classroom observation.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted over a period of six months (late April to early July and September to November in 2006) in order to document the instructional practices of the three participating teachers. I had a total of eight observations in each participant's classroom, and each observation lasted typically 45 to 50 minutes.

The new academic year begins in March in Korean elementary schools. Because teachers are busy setting classroom expectations with students at this time of the year, I began classroom research in April to secure a maximum amount of time needed for my research. At the time I began this research, the total number of observations was not determined clearly. I discussed the observation schedule for the first semester with the participants during my interview in April and planned four observations in each classroom. Observations were timed to coincide with scheduled English lessons. There was however occasional rescheduling of observations at the participants' request. During the interviews in July, I discussed with the participants again whether the follow-up observations were necessary. I thought that as an English lesson typically lasted only 40 minutes, having four observations was not enough to provide rich and thick descriptions of each participant's practice. I then suggested a need for follow-up observations, and the three participants agreed. I discussed the observation schedule for the second semester with each participant in early September, 2006, through email correspondence. I had four more observations in each participant's classroom during the second semester, and the outcome of this research led to a rich and holistic description of what went on in the classrooms.

As for classroom observations, I first considered how to structure the observation. Merriam (1998) states that "what to observe is partly a function of how structured the observer wants to be" (p. 97). As the purpose of this study was to understand why PD-oriented teachers were doing what they were doing rather than to evaluate their practices, I decided to do unstructured observation rather than structured observation. It has been pointed out that although a structured observational framework may help provide reference points for assessment (Henk, Moore, Marinak & Tomasetti, 2000), it may make the researcher more judgmental and miss important things that are not in that framework. In learning what the observer should pay attention to when entering a classroom,

Boostrom (1994) too noted: "theoretical sophistication is undoubtedly helpful for reflecting on observation notes, but as a guide to observing, it tends to make all places look alike... Such attempts suggest that the observer knows what is out there without looking" (p. 63). While observing classrooms, I also situated myself as a non-participant observer. I sat in an unobtrusive spot and observed what went on during English lessons. I was concerned that students might be bothered by a stranger in their classrooms, but they did not appear to care much about the presence of a researcher who was making notes. As the year progressed, during observation, I increasingly interacted with the students and asked brief questions about how they were doing in the activities in which they were engaged. Information gained from interacting with students was used as another basis for interviews with teachers.

Throughout the observations, I focused on the way the teachers worked with the students and the way students worked with each other in order to gain an understanding of the teachers' philosophy about learning and reading instruction. The types of tasks required of the students were recorded as well to construct a description of the participating teachers' approach to teaching reading. In order to gain a qualitative understanding of students' reading levels, I also documented the types and levels of reading materials for instruction.

Information from the classroom observations was recorded as written field notes throughout the observation periods. Each field note included information about types of instructional activities, instructional materials, grouping, students' engagement, classroom interactions, and special comments and questions. The field notes were then used as a basis for the interviews with each teacher that aimed to uncover the knowledge that guided the teachers' practice. In addition to field notes, I videotaped the lessons to maximize the accuracy of the notes and to facilitate later data analyses. As some of the parents did not want their children to be videotaped, I discussed their concerns with the teachers and placed those children out of the view of the video camera. The videotaped data were used to facilitate conversation with the teachers during the interviews especially when they had difficulties remembering the details of the lessons; the teachers were shown specific parts they wanted to watch.

Finally, after each observation, I kept a reflective journal record of my subjective impressions and understandings of the participants' practices. My reflective journals helped to form questions for interviews with teachers as well as to look back on how my personal preconceptions and biases influenced my interpretation of what happened in the classrooms. For example, when I read through the field notes and reflected on my classroom observations at the beginning, I realized that my hope for this research shaped my ways of seeing. Because of the theoretical underpinning of this study, I assumed that there is much more we can learn from researching good teaching. I was eager to identify good practices to learn rather than to understand their practices in their classroom contexts. Keeping reflective journals also helped me to see my mistakes in collecting data and enhanced my ways of seeing and knowing. While reviewing field notes and journals at the beginning, I realized that I focused too much on the teachers' talk, and my interactions with students were limited even though listening to children's voices was important in interpreting the teachers' practices in light of students' needs. I was increasingly aware that as a researcher I was an important tool for research.

Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of what the participant teachers knew about reading instruction, how their knowledge related to the actual teaching practices, and what experiences they reported to have shaped their practice. I had five interviews with each of the participants, and the interviews lasted from 50 to 90 minutes. The exact time and location of the interviews were determined in consultation with each participant. The interviews were recorded on digital audiotape and transcribed verbatim. Since the interviews were conducted in Korean, the quotes in the findings were then translated into English

The purpose of the first interview was to collect information about the participants' background (e.g., years of teaching experiences and professional development) and to elicit what they knew and believed about reading instruction (see Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions). The first interview was undertaken with each teacher before classroom observations started in order to compile initial information about the participating teachers. I conducted an unstructured interview with each participant in April, 2006, which took on average one hour. I also discussed the

observation schedule with the participants, reviewed the information letter and consent form, and obtained signed forms during the first interview.

The second interview was planned to be done a week after the first two observations in order to clarify observed instructional practices and explore teachers' rationales for them. However, the exact time and location were determined at the participants' convenience. I provided the participants with a list of observed teaching practices and interview questions in advance of the interview. During the interview I first asked participants to check the list of observed practices I created and to clarify if there was anything missing or misrepresented. I then asked them to explain their reasons for observed practices. I asked the purposes of observed instructional activities in terms of students' needs in their classroom. While listening to their interpretations of practice, I asked some questions to clarify or refine their reasons for practice. The questions also included several on-the spot prompts to encourage the participants to elaborate on the issues that I did not expect. For instance, when one of the teacher participants mentioned that she decided to teach spelling-sound relations for the first time in her teaching career, I asked what brought a change in her practice and whether the decision related to the needs of students she was teaching. I also asked the participant teachers what they believed to have influenced their ways of teaching reading in English (e.g., reflection on previous critical teaching moments, knowledge from a graduate course, observation of peers' performance, observation of students' engagement). I conducted the rest of the interviews after every two classroom observations with the same purpose as that of the second interview; although the four interviews had the same purpose, I planned them at different times in order for the participants to recall their classroom practices better. The interviews with the teachers took from 60 to 90 minutes.

During the interviews, I tried to understand the participants' practices from their perspectives. Special attention was thus given to listening to the teachers and seeking their descriptions and interpretations of practice. I was also attentive to the languages teachers use in order to uncover the tacit and intuitive components of teacher knowledge (Verloop, Driel & Meijer, 2001). Harste and Burke (1977) indicated that "despite atheoretical statements, teachers are theoretical in their instructional approach to reading" (p. 32). In addition to the role of a listener, I also worked with the participants in order to

clarify what they meant when they presented practical reasoning for their actions. I attempted to help them think more deeply about their practice and build more sophisticated reasoning for actions by asking what they tried to accomplish; why they chose to teach the way they did; and how the way they taught fitted the goal they wanted to accomplish as well as their students' abilities. In doing so, my intent was not to judge their initial practical reasoning but to help them refine their rationale for practice. Fenstermacher and Richardson (1993) explicate how to elicit and reconstruct teachers' practical reasoning in this regard. Although they emphasize the need for a researcher to help teachers improve their practical reasoning, they are explicit that the intent of reconstructing teachers' initial practical reasoning is "to bring the teacher to 'see' his own rationale for the action, not a rationale that the other might supply" (p. 106). Throughout the interviews, I thus tried to balance my two roles as a researcher, a listener and an inquirer.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis occurred at two levels, descriptive and interpretive. The process of data analyses to some extent intermingled with data collection in that the analysis of the field notes from observation was necessary to think about questions for a subsequent interview. Thinking about questions required me to label the observed practices as well as take a closer look at my records of students' performances and their comments about instructional activities.

Descriptive Data Analysis of the Individual Case

Content analysis was conducted on the data from the field notes and interview transcripts. Content analysis "refers to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identity core consistencies and meanings" (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Content analysis involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data. I began data analysis with the coding process which generated labels to describe each incident, idea or event in the data. I first read through all of the field notes and the interview transcripts, highlighted significant ideas, events, and incidents, and labeled them. In doing so, the transcriptions were subjected to the same type of coding applied to my field

notes. In order to make connections between the field notes and the interview data, I also created tables that listed the teachers' observed practices in one column and their rationale for each practice in the other column. The initial coding process was followed by constructing larger categories or themes that captured recurring patterns in the data. "Themes are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the data" (Creswell, 2002, p. 267). Developing categories or themes thus involved figuring out what things fit together and what things did not. Patton (2002) suggested two criteria in order to verify categories: *internal homogeneity* and *external heterogeneity*. "The first criterion concerns the extent to which the data that belongs in a certain category hold together…in a meaningful way. The second criterion concerns the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear" (p. 465). After the initial coding process, I used subsequent readings of the field notes, transcripts, and tables of their observed practices and rationale to develop and refine larger categories in the data.

From the coding and the categories, I then constructed a brief model of the participating teachers' practices and the knowledge that guides practice (see Appendix B: A Sample Model of the Teachers' Knowledge and Practice). The model included each participant teacher's philosophy about learning and teaching, second language learning, and reading instruction; areas of reading emphasized; observed reading activities; observed writing activities; types of reading materials; teaching strategies; grouping; room arrangement; student engagement and classroom atmosphere; professional development experiences; and sources of teaching ideas. I sent these models to the participants by email in March, 2007 and checked with them if there was something they wanted to add or omit. I next constructed a thick description of the participants' instructional practices, their rationales for them, and the professional experiences they believed to have shaped practice. Excerpts from the transcripts and field notes appear throughout the descriptions in the next chapter. They are identified in the following way: Teachers are assigned a letter by their pseudonyms. Interview data is identified as TI by the date of the interview and a corresponding number. Data from field notes is identified as FN by the date of the observation and a corresponding number. Thus, 'TI L1 April 21, 2006' refers to the transcribed interview data from the first interview with the participant, Lyn. 'FN K1 May 6, 2006' refers to the field note data from the first observation of

another participant, Kay's classroom. When direct quotes from the transcripts appear, interview data is identified by the transcript page number of the quotation as well.

Cross-Case Analysis

Multiple case studies involve collecting and analyzing data from several cases so that "there are two stages of analysis—the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p. 194). I first analyzed and described each participant's knowledge and teaching practice. After I completed the analysis of each case, I began cross-case analysis to identify the similarities and differences in the knowledge and practices of the participants. Cross-case analysis can "lead to categories, themes, or typologies that conceptualize the data from all the cases" (Merriam, 1998, p. 195). The cross-case analysis helped to identify the common threads in three PD-oriented teachers' knowledge, practices, and professional growth. The common threads then led me to questions and thoughts about two broad thematic areas: balanced approach to L2 reading instruction in Korean elementary classroom contexts and L2 reading teachers' professional growth. I then sought well-grounded interpretations of the findings by looking at what is known about the themes as well as how my research could contribute to developing a new understanding of the themes.

Interpretation

Interpretation involves going beyond the description of the data. "Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order on an unruly but surely patterned world" (Patton, 2002, p. 480). Patton indicates that an interpretation may take one of the following: "(1) confirm what we know that is supported by data, (2) disabuse us of misconceptions, and (3) illuminate important things that we didn't know but should know" (p. 480). While reading through the initial description of each participant's knowledge and practices, I contemplated what this description meant with regards to what is known about effective reading instruction. I carefully examined and compared the data with research on exemplary teaching of L1 reading which demonstrated a combination of different approaches to reading instruction to the needs of students. I considered how the participants' practices revealed some common characteristics as well as how they were

different from what research says about effective reading instruction, namely a balanced approach to reading instruction. Being aware of the uniqueness of L2 reading as well as Korean classroom contexts, I also contemplated what insights could be gained from each participant's practice about how different approaches to reading worked for Korean learners of English; and what was unique in L2 reading classrooms which was not reflected in research on L1 reading classrooms. My interpretation also centered on learning and teaching philosophies in different educational contexts. In particular, I contemplated why a certain grouping of students, whole-class instruction, was dominant in the participating classrooms and whether the grouping pattern could be attributed to the learning culture in Korea. I then pondered what should be considered in appropriating balanced reading instruction in Korean EFL classroom contexts. Lastly, my interpretation of the data focused on second language reading teachers' professional growth. I specifically considered what factors limited or facilitated the teachers' attempts to apply their knowledge about reading instruction and what kind of support teachers may need. I thought about the following questions that emerged from the data: What comprises teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in L2 reading classrooms?; What was the influence of teachers' professional development on their practice as well as the development of their knowledge about L2 reading instruction?; What did teachers learn from their teaching experiences?; and How does educational context affect the development and application of teacher knowledge?

While interpreting the data, I was reminded that I was not seeking causal explanations for the findings but sound, reasonable explanations. Patton (1990) warned qualitative researchers that "one of the biggest dangers for evaluators doing qualitative analysis is that, when they begin to make interpretations about causes, consequences, and relationships, they fall back on the linear assumptions of quantitative analysis and begin to specify isolated variables that are mechanically linked together out of context" (p. 423). In my attempt to interpret the data, I did not intend to provide true interpretations but thoughtful, comprehensible interpretations of each participant's knowledge and practices. Packer and Addision (1989) noted that an interpretive account is "the working out of the possibilities that have become apparent in a preliminary, dim understanding of the events" (p. 277). I was however reminded that there might be a certain single-mindedness

in formalizing my thoughts about the data. Although challenging, I tried to find balance between providing plausible explanations for the findings and acknowledging the complex nature of teaching and qualitative research.

Limitations

The findings of the study are limited to the particular cases of three PD-oriented teachers in particular classrooms. The study is thus limited in generalizing the results to other settings although it may provide readers with ideas of what to do or not to do in a similar situation. Data collection, analyses, and interpretation may be limited by my own knowledge of what is involved in classroom instruction as well as in reading instruction. As an observer, I had to make decisions about what to record and what to omit in my field notes. While analyzing and interpreting the data, I also had to make decisions about what was significant and what was not. Finally, given the tacit nature of teacher knowledge, interviewing participants itself was the constant process of constructing knowledge about their practice. The study is thus limited to the extent that the participating teachers were able to express and reflect upon their knowledge and practice as well as the extent to which I was able to help them refine their reflection.

Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted as approved by the *University of Alberta Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board.* All teacher participants were given the information letter and consent form, and I reviewed the purpose and procedures of this study with them. The participants were also informed that involvement in the research was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty or prejudice. As my field notes included accounts of how students were doing in classrooms as well as what they thought of instructional activities, I obtained signed consent forms from both students and their parents. I also provided them with information letters that outlined the purpose of this research and the nature of their participation. In order to guarantee confidentiality, I did not release the names of the participants to anyone, and pseudonyms have been used for the teacher participants. The

information gathered has been treated confidentially and discussed only with my supervisors.

Being deeply aware that my inquiry was shaped and guided by the relationship I developed with the participants, special attention was given to how I would be able to protect the teachers and to build a mutual relationship with them. First, I was flexible in collecting and analyzing data in order to welcome their suggestions. All data collection was conducted with the participants' consent, and I asked for their comments on or critiques of my descriptions of their knowledge and practices. I also made an effort to situate myself not as an expert but as a co-inquirer while conducting this research. I hoped teachers would not regard me as the legislator of classroom practice and felt free to express their perspectives. During the interviews, of primary importance was thus to listen to the teachers' interpretations of their practice. It was also anticipated that the teachers would use the data collection as a tool for reflecting upon their professional lives and benefit from the research. All three participants welcomed me to their classrooms and reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss their practice.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

This chapter provides descriptions of three participating teachers' practice as observed in their English as a foreign language (EFL) reading classrooms, along with their own rationales for practice. The teacher participants, Lyn, Kay, and Donna were elementary school teachers in Seoul, Korea and worked in the three different school districts. Lyn taught grade six as an English specialist, Kay taught a grade four class as a homeroom teacher, and Donna taught grades five and six as an English specialist. The descriptions of each teacher include their backgrounds, their students, the way they worked with the students as well as their philosophy about learning and teaching, the way they taught reading in English and rationale for their practice, and the sources of their teaching ideas as well as thoughts on their professional growth. Although each of the three descriptions is organized in a similar fashion, there are some variations regarding categories that characterized their practice.

Lyn: The Enthusiastic Teacher and Learner

Personal Background

Lyn had 14 years of teaching experience in elementary school. She has completed an education degree with a major in Elementary Education and a minor in Korean Language Arts. Lyn has also completed her master's degree in English education in 2005. Her thesis focused on teaching second language through the whole language approach. She was specifically interested in teaching English through storybooks and integrating language across the curriculum. Lyn was such an enthusiastic learner that she started her doctoral program in English education in September 2006.

Lyn had taught grades one, three, six mostly as a homeroom teacher during her teaching career. Since beginning her master's in English education, she has served more as an English specialist teacher. The year I observed Lyn she was teaching English and music to grade six students; although being an English specialist, she had to teach music in order to meet time requirements, more than 16 hours of teaching a week. She chose to

work as an English specialist, which allowed her to have more time for study and to focus more on her area of interest.

Lyn was passionate about her job as a teacher. During the first interview, she said that "it is important for teachers to have a love of their teaching job. When teachers love their job and are excited about things to learn, kids love to learn those things, too" (TI L1, p. 4). In this respect, English was the subject about which she was excited. She recalled that English was her favorite subject in secondary school. She was also a very confident and energetic teacher. What was striking about her was that she was willing to open her classroom to visitors at any time. She invited her colleagues to observe her classroom at their convenience, and university professors were also welcome to visit for their research. In fact, there were a few occasions when I was observing her classroom with others. For example, she gave a teachers' workshop and demonstrated how a Korean teacher could work together with a native English speaking teacher through team teaching. There were more than 100 visitors from the school district. She also gave a lecture on team teaching after her model lesson. Lyn was an articulate and knowledgeable teacher. Throughout the interviews with me, she enjoyed talking about her practice and expressed her ideas about teaching clearly and enthusiastically, often quoting theoretical articles and books. Although an experienced and confident teacher, Lyn thought that she needed to learn more to improve her teaching, and talking with others about her practice was the best opportunity to do so. Praise and encouragement from visitors motivated her to further her teaching career as well. While working with her on my research, I was fascinated by her willingness to talk about her practice as well as her continuous desire to grow as a teacher.

Lyn's Students and Her Philosophy about Learning and Teaching

Lyn's school is a modern, brick and concrete, four-story building. It is located in a middle-to-high socioeconomic urban community and accommodates about 1,000 pupils in 31 classes. The community is well recognized in the city for its high standard of living and commitment to education. As Lyn was teaching six different classes of grade six as an English specialist, I asked her to choose one class for my research but did not specify any criteria. There were 32 students in the participating class, which was a small size class in the city. Lyn noted that she chose this particular class because the students were very active and cooperative.

Lyn had her own English classroom on the fourth floor, and students went there for English lessons. Signs of an English classroom were apparent in the way the room was arranged. Displayed on the walls were a few wall posters in English illustrating animals, insects, and vegetables. Posted in English on the left side of the blackboard were today's date and weather. Students' English textbooks were placed on the floor in the front of the room, and in the corner was the shelf filled with die, flash cards, and puppets. No student work was posted anywhere in the classroom. Most likely the reason for this was that more than 150 students were sharing the room for English lessons. As is the case in Korean classrooms, a large projection TV screen and a computer with Internet connection were in the room.

With regards to her students' backgrounds, Lyn noted that they came with more prior English learning experience compared to other students in the city. According to her, about 80 % of the students started their English learning before entering an elementary school, and most were taking English lessons after school at various private institutes for more than three hours a week. In addition, five of the students had studied abroad. This high level of prior English learning experiences influenced Lyn's concerns and thoughts on English teaching, which are captured in the following four subsections.

Challenging Students Appropriately. Consistent with her view of a good teacher, Lyn strived to understand her students' level of competence and to adapt her instruction (TI L1 April 21, 2006). In doing so, one of her main concerns was to make instructional activities cognitively challenging to interest the students. Considering her students' high level of prior English learning experiences, she was worried that if she depended solely on the textbook, it might be simple repetition for them and they would get bored. Lyn noted that most of the students had already learned the basic communicative expressions in the textbook at private language institutes, so the national textbook system was limited in addressing her students' needs. She thus made modifications to the curriculum, and her lessons indicated lots of restructuring of the contents of the national textbook as well as substituting the activities with others in order to challenge them appropriately. For instance, I often observed that the text difficulty level of the teaching materials used in her classroom was far beyond that of the national textbook. It was however evident that Lyn also wanted to make sure that the level of texts was little beyond the students' level.

When the linguistic level was low, Lyn organized instructional tasks requiring more cognitive challenges. For example, when the students worked on familiar words and sentences, Lyn provided them with scrambled words and sentences without any context (FN L7 October 11, 2006) or with additional tasks such as figuring out the spy using the clues from their word quiz (FN L2 April 26, 2006).

Lyn's attempts to challenge her students appropriately posed some difficulties and dilemmas for her to think about. She wondered how she could satisfy the needs of the students with different abilities. She was often confronted with the dilemma of which group to focus on when thinking about the meaning of adapting instruction to students. Although overall her students' abilities were high, there were wide variations in their reading abilities in Lyn's English classroom. While a few good students were already reading English novels such as *Harry Potter* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* at the beginning of the academic year, a few students were barely able to read the English alphabet (TI L1 April 21, 2006). In her attempts to address the differences in students' abilities, Lyn tended to focus more on the average rather than to provide one-on-one based teaching. As a specialist teacher who was teaching more than 180 students, Lyn considered focusing on the average as more manageable than on above or below average students.

Providing a Positive, Relaxing Learning Environment. Lyn believed that the most important goal of English education in elementary school was to help students initiate and sustain their motivation to learn English. It was thus particularly important for her to create a positive, relaxing learning environment for students (TI L1 April 21, 2006). Her emphasis on creating a positive learning environment was also influenced by her main concern that some students arrived at her classroom with somewhat negative attitude toward English learning due to their excessive learning experiences at private institutes. Lyn stated that as some of the students were taking more than three hours of private English lessons during the weekdays, they felt tired of learning English and were stressed out. She also noted that since most of the private institutes in the community aimed to prepare students for prestigious secondary schools, the instructional focus was on academic English along with grammar and traditional reading and writing exercises. Concerned about her students' somewhat negative attitudes, Lyn went to great lengths to

differentiate her lessons from those at the private institutes. She used various strategies to make her English lessons enjoyable and motivating such as beginning her class with English pop songs and using lots of game-like language activities.

Lyn's idea of how to motivate students to learn a second language is congruent with the current L2 research on motivation. Based on a synthesis of research on motivation as well as the experiences of 200 teachers, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) suggest ten motivational strategies for language teachers. Two of strategies include creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and making the language classes interesting.

Understanding Popular Culture. In order to make her instruction motivating and meaningful, Lyn was particularly attentive to the students' interests and their pop culture. She stated:

> I think that teachers need to understand kids' pop culture well, even the celebrities they are interested in. This age group of learners is very interested in famous entertainers, and often, pop culture and their peer groups have a strong influence on them. I watch TV programs they like and listen to the popular songs. I want to know what interests this age group of kids. I just want to keep my ear to the ground. If I say like a strict teacher and don't understand what they like, they may feel distance from me (TI L1, p. 12).

Her desire to reflect pop culture was also apparent in her teaching practice. For instance, when the class worked on a topic 'Birthday', she asked her students to find out when the famous pop singers' birthdays are and write them as English sentences (FN L2, April 26, 2006). When the students were learning comparative form, she provided pictures of celebrities to illustrate the meaning of comparative sentences; a very tall comedian was compared with a short one to denote the meaning of *taller* (FN L6 September 20, 2006).

Managing the Class as an English Specialist. Lyn's beliefs about classroom management were strongly associated with her beliefs about foreign language learning. She strongly believed that children learn a foreign language best in a stress- and anxiety-free environment. She also thought that since it was a language classroom where interaction was the key, they should feel free to talk. Lyn stated:

> I don't like the management strategies such as using attention signals and giving stickers…I want to create a liberating environment and believe that is the best for English learning…Rewards and punishment are effective for a short period of time. Kids ask more questions and learn better when they feel liberated…I try to draw students' attention by making instruction more meaningful and interesting to them. I don't want to draw their attention by managing skills (TI L3, pp. 20-21).

Because of her beliefs in a liberating, low-anxiety environment, Lyn was rarely observed getting angry, punishing a student, addressing a student in a negative tone, or using attention signals.

Although Lyn wanted her students to be active and relaxed in her classroom, there seemed to be instances when she was challenged to address their disruptive behaviors. In fact, some students often exhibited disruptive behaviors in her English classroom and some were off task quite often. What was interesting about Lyn's students was that even though they were not attentive while Lyn was explaining, they quickly jumped in as soon as they were given worksheets to do, and they worked well on given activities. I interpreted this pattern as a sign that the level of children's English proficiency was high enough to catch up with these activities. However, when asked about her interpretation of this pattern, Lyn had a belief that children were actually listening to her even when they were talking to each other. She was nevertheless aware that frequent talk among students could be attributed to her teaching style and that a specialist teacher tended to have less control over students' behavior (TI L3 July 14, 2006). She made an additional remark that as she was teaching six different classes, it was hard to get to know each student well and address their disruptive behaviors. In this regard, the way students worked also seemed to reflect Lyn's identity as a specialist teacher. What was interesting about her class was that even though the students mostly worked either as a whole-group or as individuals, they sat in small groups. Lyn did not specify group membership, nor did she guide them on how to work in small groups. She believed that they could work together on worksheets and other instructional tasks on a voluntary basis. To sum up, not only was management in her classroom shaped by her beliefs about successful L2 learning and efforts to lower students' negative attitudes toward English learning, but also by her identity as a specialist.

Lyn's Literacy Teaching Practices

Lyn's teaching practices can be summarized in the following six categories: holistic view of reading; use of storybooks; use of popular music; implicit teaching of phonics skills; teaching of grammar; and writing. I begin this section with a description of her lesson on one summer day.

A Typical 40-Minute Lesson. For a concrete idea of what happens in Lyn's class, it is worth considering the day of June 27, 2006. The 32 sixth grade students came into Lyn's English classroom in twos and threes, and the popular song *Hello* was played on the computer as usual. Some sat in their chairs attentively humming a tune. Others were talking to each other sitting in their chairs. A class leader took the textbooks from the bin at the front and gave them to the students. "Good afternoon! How are you?" Lyn greeted the students in English with a smile when the students seemed ready. The class all chorused, "I'm fine. Thank you, and you?" She followed with routine questions about the weather and the date of the day.

Lyn showed the book, *Willy the Dreamer* by Anthony Browne and reviewed what the class learned at the last lesson. She then briefly told the class that they were going to extend their learning of jobs. She walked up to the computer and presented the electronic storybook *What I Want to Be* (Kizclub, n.d.) on the TV screen. She went over it page by page and asked what each character wanted to be. A few students raised their hands to answer her questions. When the class came up with the difficult word *disease* that was the key to understanding the content of the page, Lyn provided a quick translation of the word in Korean.

Lyn then presented a sentence which described a type of job and asked the class to guess what job it referred to: *A ( ) is a person whose job is to display clothes by wearing them.* About a half of the students shouted *fashion model*, and Lyn presented the word *fashion model* with the picture of a famous fashion model in the country. Here, the students seemed quite excited about figuring out the job words as well as the pictures of the famous people. Lyn followed with the sentence '*I want to be a fashion model*'. She then moved to the next job word *teacher*. In this way, the class went over the descriptions of 18 job words, including *fashion model*, *teacher*, *movie director*, *soccer player*, *scientist*, *fire fighter*, and *president*. While going over these words, Lyn did not seem to

care much about whether the students could understand the whole sentences that described the job words as long as students could figure out what words the sentences referred to. She did not translate the whole sentence, neither did she explain the meanings of unfamiliar words. The students nevertheless did not seem to have difficulties with reading the descriptions in English or figuring out those words.

Lyn followed with the 'Snatch Game' which was intended to develop students' automatic recognition of the words. A student from each table was asked to come to the front to play a group competition game. There were word cards on the desk, and when Lyn explained the meanings of the words in English, each tried to snatch the corresponding cards. The class had a few rounds, and Lyn gave candies to the table which did best on the game.

Lyn then gave out the worksheets, and the class matched the job words with describing sentences and wrote them next to the corresponding sentences. She wrapped up the lesson with a 'Throw the Ball' activity. The class excitingly threw the ball to each other saying "What do you want to be?" and "I want to be a _____." (FN L3 June 27, 2006).

Holistic View of Reading. Lyn thought that reading for meaning is paramount in learning to read. When asked about her approach to reading instruction, with no hesitation Lyn defined it as a top-down, meaning-focused, holistic one. She said, "Reading is all about meaning. It does not refer to an understanding of specific words. Rather it is about getting the main ideas or gist of the text" (TI L1, p. 6). In my observations, she never provided word-to-word translations when students had difficulties understanding the text. As long as students were able to do tasks successfully, she did not seem to be concerned about whether they understood the text thoroughly. For example, when the class worked on the word learning program *Spywatch*, she did not focus on students' understanding of the whole text as long as they were able to solve word quizzes. When students' understanding of the text mattered to completing tasks, she provided quick sentence-level translations. In addition, when reading storybooks to the students, Lyn typically asked a few questions after reading each page to evaluate students' understanding of the text. As long as students were able to answer her questions, she did not focus on understanding every sentence in the text.

Lyn stated that children are wonderfully good at guessing meaning from contexts even though they are unable to read all words in a text. When students had difficulties understanding the text, she directed their attention to the key words of sentences and helped them gain a global understanding of the text. She also explained verbally to her students that it is important to keep reading a text even when they encounter unfamiliar words and to try to guess meanings from context. Lyn also tried to provide as much contextual support as possible in order to help students construct meaning from context. Whenever she presented the target vocabulary and sentences, they were always with pictures. The pictures were also interesting enough to draw students' attention.

The top-down processing of reading was salient in Lyn's teaching practice. Before and while reading text, Lyn related students' background knowledge and experiences meaningfully to the content of a book. One day when reading the electronic book *This Summer* (Jr.Naver, n.d.), she asked the class what they were going to do during summer vacation. While reading it, she kept asking questions that linked the text with the students' own experiences: "Why is he called a fish?", "What do your grandparents call you? Do you have a nickname?", and "What is your favorite ice-cream flavor?" (FN L4 July 7, 2006). Consistent with her top-down view of reading, Lyn rarely provided the students with text-specific knowledge such as key vocabulary before reading.

Although Lyn considered that meaning was paramount in learning to read, she recognized the importance of reading aloud especially for second language learners. After going over sentences and texts, she typically followed with choral reading. As a post-reading activity, students read aloud key sentences or a text as a whole class, in small groups, or individually. Lyn explained that reading aloud helps L2 learners develop a sense of spelling and sound correspondences as well as improve their pronunciation (TI L4 October 13, 2006).

Use of Storybooks. Lyn considered high-interest storybooks as the best reading material to start with. She believed reading should be something children can enjoy and said, "Reading material should be interesting, meaningful, and authentic enough to motivate children to read it even though they don't know all vocabulary in it" (TI L1, p. 9). In accordance with her holistic view of reading, she thought that even though the level of a storybook is beyond students' reading abilities, children are able to guess the

meaning well with the help of illustrations and a predictable story grammar. She further mentioned that kids are excited about reading storybooks that are a little beyond their current level because those books challenge them in a reasonable manner. Lyn's preference for storybooks can be related to her beliefs about second language learning as well. Unlike the approach taken in the national curriculum, she maintained that second language learning is different from first language learning and that reading does not have to be delayed until children develop some degree of oral language skills in their second language. She strongly advocated that children are cognitively capable of reading in a second language when they are literate in a first language and have literary experiences. She also stated that even young L2 learners learn to read naturally through extensive exposure to meaningful texts such as storybooks.

Lyn recalled that her interests in the use of storybooks dated back to one memorable year when she taught English to a grade 1 class on her own initiative. At the beginning of that year, she said she had no idea of how to teach English. Later she decided to read simple books such as *From Head to Toe* (Carle, 1997) and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1994), and the children loved these books. Their positive responses led her to think that children are naturally drawn to stories and that they are capable of reading in English when provided with something interesting and meaningful to read.

Lyn's rationale for using storybooks finds much support in the current L2 reading literature (Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Ghosn, 2002). In his review of nine studies that investigated the effects of book-flood programs on students' acquisition of a second language, Elley (1991) indicates that children who were exposed to an extensive range of high-interest illustrated storybooks were consistently found to learn the target language quickly compared to children who followed structured, audiolingual programs. Elley and Mangubhai (1983) too explicate how a program based on high-interest illustrated books benefits second language learners. They argue that good storybooks provide increased exposure to L2, strong intrinsic motivation for children to learn a second language, an emphasis on meaning rather than form, and meaningful contexts to learn to read naturally.

For Lyn, storybooks also provided a motivating medium for integrating language across the curriculum as well as encouraging children to learn more about the topic of a unit. Lyn noted:

> Most of the time I read storybooks at the warm up stage and then kids, they look so excited about the topic. Then it becomes much easier to build interaction around on it. It is really a good source of motivating input for the topic (TI L3, p. 5).

One day when she worked on the theme 'Jobs', she read the story *Willy the Dreamer* (Browne, 1998) and *What I Want to Be* from the website *Kizclub* and built interaction around them (FN L3 June 27, 2006). On another day, she read the Korean folktale *Green Frog* for the theme 'Making a Request.' Her ideas of cross-curricular teaching with storybooks came from another memorable year with a grade 3 class when she tried to combine fine art and English using storybooks. She taught some basic vocabulary using the paintings of Vincent van Gogh such as *The Starry Night* and *The Vase with 14 Sunflowers*. In conjunction with these paintings, she read to her students the book *Camille and the Sunflowers* (Anholt, 1994). In another year she combined science and English using a picture storybook *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1994). She taught the days of week, food, fruits, and the life cycle of a butterfly.

Although Lyn was passionate about reading storybooks and cross-curricular teaching, her teaching practice was confined by many challenges. First of all, as an English specialist teacher, Lyn had difficulties implementing cross-curricular teaching; that is, she did not have much flexibility in scheduling whereas cross-curricular teaching normally requires a block of time. For this reason, I rarely observed integrated lessons across the curriculum although she reported to have done so in the past. Lyn was also faced with the challenge that it was often hard to find books of appropriate text difficulty level with cognitively challenging content to motivate children to read. Lyn expressed an interesting dilemma in selecting books as follows:

> If I choose books linguistically appropriate for my students, I find they are often cognitively inappropriate for them. Grade 6 kids, they tend to think they are much grown up now and think some books are childish. Somehow I prefer to use cognitively appropriate books. Well, they might be a bit difficult. But I think they

> will be able to read and understand it if they are interested and motivated to read it (TI L1, p. 13).

One of the stories Lyn used, *This Summer* (Jr.Naver, n.d.) provides a good example of Lyn's dilemma in selecting text. She chose this story because it had interesting cultural content (e.g., marshmallows and BBQ) to attract students' attention. Since the summer vacation was approaching, the story also related to students' interests (TI L3 July 14, 2006). Students' responses to this story were overall positive, but the text seemed to be difficult for some students given that more than half of the students did not answer Lyn's questions about the text; each page of the story had two or three sentences, and the length of each sentence varied from three to 21 words (FN L4 July 7, 2006).

Lyn faced quite limited time for storybook reading due to the curriculum mandate. Even though her lessons indicated lots of restructuring of the textbook, she often found it uncomfortable to ignore the national textbook. The textbook as a sort of teacher-proof material came with a specific time schedule and instructional guidelines, and she felt she was obliged to follow it. Lyn managed to deal with these constraints by choosing books that matched the topics in the textbook. Whenever she read storybooks for her students, they were never unrelated to the textbook topics. She also stated that in order to facilitate the use of high-interest storybooks, teachers need to be informed of a list of storybooks for a variety of topics in the textbook. When asked about her own criteria for choosing storybooks, Lyn mentioned that good ones should have connections with curriculum topics in addition to high-quality illustrations and repetitive sentences. What was interesting about her criteria was that she preferred to use electronic storybooks with taped reading aloud by a native speaker of English. It was simply because as a non-native speaker, Lyn did not feel confident about her pronunciation. She also thought that electronic books were easier to present in a class of 32 students.

Use of Popular Music for Literacy Teaching. The most striking and interesting feature of Lyn's classroom was her use of popular songs. Lyn's students were consistently observed listening to and singing popular songs, and she used them for a variety of instructional purposes. She usually began her English lesson with singing a pop song to get her students ready for a lesson. The songs they learned were also meaningfully connected to the lessons, and they were repeated over the year for "a good,

pleasant repetition of the key expressions and words" (TI L3, p. 13). One day when the students were working on the 12 months of the year, they were singing *'I Just Called to Say I Love You'* by Stevie Wonder that they learned at the previous lesson. Lyn then provided the students with a worksheet which had the words of the song, leaving blank the names of months, weekdays, and holidays. Lyn also asked them to circle the words that related to the four seasons. In this way the class was learning and practicing the key words of the unit 'When Is Your Birthday?' (FN L1 April 21, 2006). The next English lesson began with another pop song *'Love'* by Natalie Cole, and the words of the song were presented on the TV screen with the beginning letters of each line highlighted (FN L2 April 26, 2006). Lyn wanted the students to learn how oral language is connected to print when listening to the song. Sometimes pop songs were used to help the students to learn and practice grammar. In one of my observations, the students circled all the past tense verbs in the words of the song *'You Needed Me'* by Anne Murray while listening to it (FN L6 September 20, 2006). Her main reason for using pop songs was consistent with her philosophy about successful second language learning. Lyn noted that the lyrics of pop songs could be used as good reading materials in that students learn to read while having fun. Considering her students' needs, she wanted her students to enjoy English learning and to differentiate her English lessons from those at private language institutes. She noted:

> Kids in our school are very stressed out because of heavy learning load at private institutes. I believe pop songs make them to learn English in a joyful way rather than feeling pressure on it. They feel tired of memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules at private language institutes. They often say that they like my English class much better. Pop songs also make pleasant repetition possible. Kids enjoy listening to them over and over again. They don't consider they're learning. Rather they think they are having fun (TI L2, p. 4).

Pop songs also helped Lyn involve students with different abilities. She stated that music could involve every kid in the lesson regardless of their abilities and that even low-achieving students acquire English in an easy and fun way while listening to pop songs. Indeed, when asked what they think of learning through pop songs, some students reported that it was one of their favorite activities in English lessons. When asked why

they liked it, most of them stated that they just liked music and songs. Some students also articulated how pop songs helped their English learning. For example, one student reported that it was a good way to improve both listening and reading skills to follow along with the printed lyrics while singing songs. Another student mentioned that it helped him memorize words and phrases easily. Interestingly, a few students reported that they did not feel it difficult to learn unknown words through pop songs. As observed in Lyn's classroom, some literacy educators and foreign language teachers have attempted to use songs, chants, and popular music in their classes and report their positive impacts on students' learning. Douville (2001) argue that "for teachers searching for effective strategies that motivate students, reading songs presents rich instructional possibilities" (p. 188). Barry and Pellissier (1995) also describe different goals that may be achieved through using the lyrics of pop songs in foreign language classrooms: creating a positive mood; improving listening and reading comprehension; correcting common pronunciation problem; increasing accuracy; building vocabulary; providing opportunities to speak; and creating awareness of themes and issues that are valued by the target culture. Lyn's teaching practice provides a good example of how pop songs motivate students to learn English as well as how they can be used for a variety of purposes in a foreign language classroom.

Implicit Teaching of Phonics Skills. I rarely observed explicit teaching of decoding and spelling skills in Lyn's classroom. Lyn took the position that students would be able to learn how to decode and spell naturally through repeated exposure to meaningful text. She argued:

> Even I myself have difficulties spelling words sometimes. I think it is natural to misspell words, and kids will be able to acquire spelling skills naturally through extensive reading of a variety of texts. I often tell them to read more books than memorizing spellings. Also, when a teacher emphasizes spelling correctly, kids may feel stressed (TI L1, p. 12).

In an interview with me, Lyn said that phonics instruction is too analytical, and students would feel bored with learning those micro skills (TI L3 July 14, 2006). In Lyn's classroom, spelling words and other word recognition skills were practiced using a variety of word games, including word search, word chain, scrambled words, bingo, and

crossword puzzles. The word learning program, *Spywatch* was one of the interesting practices in her classroom. It was developed by BBC education to help learners practice a variety of word recognition skills including rhyming, alphabetical ordering, and detecting word similarities. In this program children follow a trail of clues to catch a spy, and they get clues from word quizzes. For instance, one day the class worked on finding out the parts of words. When it came to the word *scarecrow*, all students chorused *crow* and got a clue about one suspect, a farmer called Rankin (FN L2 April 26, 2006). While working on this word program, all students appeared engaged. Lyn explained that "spywatch helps kids look at words more carefully and analytically while having fun. That also provides kids with meaningful purpose to work on those word quizzes. It is a very interesting program" (TI L2, p. 12). Lyn wanted her students to develop sight vocabulary and to learn to spell in a motivating way. Accordingly, encountering spelling errors, Lyn did not correct students' errors explicitly. Instead, she pronounced the word very slowly and clearly in order to help students notice what spelling or sound they missed and what they misspelled.

In Lyn's class, teaching of skills centered on students' incidental learning of word recognition skills using a variety of word practice games. Her instructional strategies were appropriate for the students to some extent, given their negative attitude toward English learning. When I had opportunities to talk with some students, they were excited about learning words through *Spywatch.* It motivated them to solve word quizzes because they were curious to know who would be the spy. Further, some students were observed having already developed some degree of phonological awareness and knowledge of spelling-sound relations because of their prior English learning experiences as well as L1 reading experience. For example, one spring day when the students were working on the holiday words such as *Children's Day* (May 5th) and *Valentine's Day*, I talked with a group of students about these words. As I asked a student whether there were unfamiliar words, he pointed to the word *Memorial Day*. I asked him to read the word *Memorial* and he read it correctly. I then asked him how he was able to read it, and he pointed to the corresponding syllables as he read; me-mo-ri-al. Another student read the word *Buddha* as /bʌda/, reflecting that the letter *u* sounds /ʌ/ in many cases. Although a few other

students did not read words correctly such as *New Year's Day* and *Independence Day*, they were able to point to the corresponding graphosyllabic units as they read these words. They were able to recognize how letters match up to sounds in the pronunciation of words as well as to identify separate syllables.

Teaching of Grammar. When necessary, Lyn taught grammar explicitly to her students. Although having questions and concerns with the traditional language teaching that overemphasized grammar, she judged that students would learn more efficiently when armed with grammatical knowledge. Specifically, she considered that an explicit grammar lesson is necessary when grammar matters to understanding of a text, and the target grammatical items are specified in the curriculum (TI L4 October 13, 2006). She taught regular past tense verbs and irregular ones when they mattered to students' interaction around what they experienced during summer vacation. Lyn helped the students notice grammatical features through focused exposure to language input. For instance, she asked the students to circle the past tense verbs in a dialog script (FN L5 September 6, 2006) or in the words of the song *'You Needed Me'* (FN L6 September 20, 2006). When teaching grammar, Lyn sometimes explained grammatical rules and principles explicitly and followed with examples to consolidate learning. When it came to the comparative forms, she explained the structure clearly and followed with some example sentences (FN L6 September 20, 2006). She thought that explicit teaching of grammar would especially benefit children who had had limited previous learning experience with English.

Writing. At the beginning of the year, Lyn's students were writing or copying at the word level in a variety of tasks such as dictation and categorizing words. When working on writing at the sentence level, they were provided model sentences to copy such as *My birthday is in (month)* (FN L2 April 26, 2006). During the second half of the year Lyn's students worked more on sentence-building tasks. They were first provided scrambled sentences and asked to write them in the right order. The students in Lyn's class were engaged in copying and controlled writing for the most part. Nevertheless, she wanted her students to do these simple writing tasks in a more enjoyable way. Mini-book making was one way to make copying and controlled writing more interesting in her classroom. When Lyn showed the Korean folktale cartoon, *The Green Frog*, students had

their own copy leaving blank the key sentences. They colored the characters, filled in the speech bubbles, and wrote their name on the front cover (FN L8 October 25, 2006). Lyn explained, "Kids don't like writing things on their notebook, but they love to do so in this kind of mini-book. They feel it is kind of product they made on their own. They feel so proud of it" (TI L5, p. 8).

Summary. Lyn held a holistic, meaning-focused, and top-down view of reading. She emphasized gaining a global understanding of a text over an understanding of every word and sentence and used top-down strategies such as activating students' background knowledge as a pre-reading activity. Lyn thought that children were capable of learning to read naturally when provided interesting and meaningful material and that reading should be enjoyed. Thus, storybooks and the lyrics of pop songs were frequently used in her class, which resulted in the students' positive responses to her lessons. Lyn's attempts to use storybooks were however met by several challenges such as limited repertoire of storybooks for a variety of topics. She also found it challenging to locate books that had not only appropriate text difficulty level but also were cognitively interesting. Lyn considered that acquisition of word recognition skills occurs naturally through meaningful engagement with print. Explicit teaching of phonics skills was therefore rarely observed in her classroom, and the students practiced word recognition skills through a variety of word games. When grammar mattered to students' understanding of language input, Lyn taught grammar explicitly. Writing was practiced in relation to reading, but the nature of students' writing remained copying and controlled writing for the most part.

Growing as a Teacher: Teacher as a Learner

Lyn's teaching practice was an expression of her learning from a variety of sources, including self-initiated professional development, observation of students' responses, web surfing, sharing expertise with colleagues, and conflicting thoughts.

Self-initiated professional development. Lyn's ongoing desire to learn was an important part of her growing as a teacher. She had taken more than 500 hours of English teacher education programs on a voluntary basis. As mentioned earlier, she had completed her master's degree, and her desire to learn more motivated her to start her PhD in English Education in the year of 2006. Regarding the values of professional

development, Lyn noted that theories helped her think over the rationale for her teaching practice. She recalled that at the beginning of her career she was only interested in doing a variety of activities that interest and motivate kids to learn. As she came to know more about theory and have more teaching experiences, she became more aware of the underlying reasons and values behind what she did. For instance, Lyn's attempts to combine English and fine art emerged from her personal interest in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh, and her teaching through the paintings was furthered by students' positive responses. It was her graduate coursework that later helped her understand how content-based teaching could increase amount of exposure to the target language and provide meaningful purpose to learn a second language (TI L1 April 21, 2006). Theoretical knowledge she gained about reading helped her better understand what reading is and how students learn to read as well. Lyn valued staying current about research on second language acquisition and throughout the interviews with me, she continually cited the recent books or articles she had read or was reading.

Observation of Children's Responses. Lyn learned much from reflecting upon her teaching practice in relation to students' responses. When she felt a need to change her practice, she thought about alternative ways. She stated:

> As a teacher, I think we teachers change the way we teach every time. We need to keep our eye on students' responses to lesson we do. Kids often feel bored when they work on merely copying words. Then I thought over how I can make it more interesting and came up with the ideas of speech bubbles and mini-book making (TI L3, p. 23).

Although her identity as a specialist limited some aspects of her teaching, it allowed her to be in an advantaged position to reflect on her practice in connection with students' responses. As she was doing the same lesson with different classes, it happened naturally to her to think over what works with her students and what does not work with them. In addition, it was easier for her to put her thoughts into practice and check what she thought was right.

Web Surfing for Teaching Ideas. Web searching was one of the most influential sources for Lyn's teaching practice. Lyn visited the website called *Indi School* on a regular basis for teaching ideas and materials. It is a virtual teachers' community where

many of the teachers share teaching ideas and materials. She downloaded a variety of teaching materials including worksheets, electronic storybooks, flash files, and power point files. She found it confining to think over teaching ideas alone and searched the web for fresh teaching ideas. The Internet also allowed her to access lots of picture files from which she was able to provide visual contexts for students' learning of new words and sentences. The word learning program *Spywatch* was the one she encountered while searching for teaching materials on the web. As an experienced teacher, Lyn however clarified that "it is hard to find a teaching resource that perfectly fits into your students' abilities and needs. So you have to adapt it to use" (TI L3, p. 3).

Sharing Expertise with Colleagues. Lyn recognized the importance of reflective practice on one's professional growth. She was however explicit that reflecting on one's practice did not come naturally in the midst of everyday life. Sharing her expertise with others provided valuable opportunities to reflect upon her practice in this regard. Lyn had chances to give workshops to her colleagues as well as to teach a course at the postsecondary level. The year I observed her, she also worked as a consultant in the area of English education for the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education. Part of her responsibility as a consultant was to observe novice or inexperienced English teachers and give advice for the improvement of their teaching practice. Lyn stated that in order to communicate well with other teachers about teaching, she had to reflect upon her practices and clarify why she did what she did. While teachers may not find it easy to bring their practice to the surface and examine it reflectively, Lyn was better able to use her teaching practice reflectively by sharing her expertise with others (TI L5 November 1, 2006). Similarly, Lyn considered participating in my research as a valuable learning opportunity and welcomed my research in her English classroom. She recalled that she learned much about her teaching practice when she participated in another research project several years ago.

Learning Style and Experience. Lyn's experience as an English learner had shaped her teaching practices. For instance, her consistent use of pop songs was from her positive English learning experiences. Lyn recalled:

> I loved to sing pop songs when I was a secondary school student. I still remember every song I used to sing in those days. I remember the expressions in those songs.

> I think listening to pop songs really helped me improve my listening and pronunciation skills (TI L2, p. 1).

One may argue that if teachers are repeating the way they were taught, there may not be improvements in education. Nevertheless, teachers' own learning experiences may be a lens through which they are able to understand how learners feel and learn. Lyn's memory of how she became motivated to learn English influenced her thinking about how to differentiate her lessons from those at private institutes.

Teachers' personal interests and styles may also influence their teaching practice as well. Lyn said that her love of art motivated her to combine art with English teaching. She noted that she had learned to paint and that it is good to make the best of her own strengths and talents in her teaching.

Conflicts and Growing. Teachers' expertise is not static. It is constantly growing through conflicting thoughts and practices. In an interview with me, Lyn agreed that she changed her management strategies during the second semester, which was against her overall philosophy about learning and teaching; although she was not in favor of rewards, she frequently used them in order to encourage students' participation. At the time we talked about her conflicting thoughts on rewards as well as addressing students' disruptive behavior, she was not sure where she wanted to go and said that she needed to think more about it (TI L4 October 13, 2006). Here, it seems worth considering that teachers' expertise may grow in the process of thinking hard over their conflicting thoughts, building practical arguments, and refining their thinking.

Kay: The Sociable Caring Teacher

Personal Background

Kay had been teaching for 12 years mostly grades three, four, and six. She had completed an education degree with a major in Elementary Education and a minor in Korean Language Arts. Kay had also completed a master's degree in English Education, and her thesis was about integrated approaches such as a theme-based and a storybook-based to elementary English education. Although she had a master's in English education, she had never served as an English specialist, but as a homeroom teacher. The year I observed her, Kay was responsible for teaching nine subjects to her homeroom grade 4

students, including Korean language arts, math, moral education, social studies, science, physical education, fine arts, practical arts, and English.

In the first interview with me, Kay considered herself as a mid-career teacher in the sense that she was an experienced teacher but still had a long way to go. She was invited to work as a consultant in the year of 2006, and she was happy that she had something to share with other teachers. She nevertheless felt that there were still many moments when she needed to learn more and grow continuously as a teacher. Kay was a very sociable person, and as a teacher, she was pleased to build good relationships with other teachers and students. When I visited her personal blog, I noticed that she still had connections with many of her former students, and they left many messages for her. It was also typical that she had calls from teachers at different schools during the interviews with me. She believed that her positive relationship with students is the key to building a productive place to learn and that connections with other teachers could provide her with numerous opportunities to learn (TI K5 November 3, 2006). While working with her during my interviews and observations, I often thought that she was the type of a person who defines one's identity and development through relationships with others.

Kay's Students and Her Philosophy about Learning and Teaching

Kay's school is located in a middle-to-low socioeconomic urban community in Seoul, Korea. It is a large school which serves about 2,000 students in 56 classes. Kay's classroom was on the third floor of a four-story concrete building, and she had 39 students. Kay reported that her class was diverse in their prior English learning experiences and English reading abilities. While one half of the students started their English learning in kindergarten, about 10 students began when they were in the third grade. One half of the students were occasionally reading children's newspapers or storybooks in English at home, whereas the other half were not. Thus, at the beginning of the year a few students were already reading a storybook with simple, high-frequency vocabulary, whereas a few students were not able to identify the English alphabet letters. She reported that it is challenging to adapt instruction to varying levels of abilities in a class of 39 students. For this reason, she was quite interested in having all children with different abilities work together in small groups rather than providing one-on-one teaching.

Cooperating Groups. Kay considered that children learn much from their peers when cooperating in small groups. Children in her class had frequent opportunities to work together, and Kay varied her instructional strategies to facilitate small group work. She formed small groups intentionally, typically matching strong students with weak ones. By doing so, she wanted to keep one group from excelling too much as well as to maximize students' learning in groups. Kay also explicitly set up rules so that every member of a group had to contribute. When all members contributed to completing tasks, she acknowledged their efforts by giving an extra point in a competition to win a prize. For instance, one day the students worked in groups of four to six and took turns reading aloud the number words, from one to twelve. When all members of a group participated in reading aloud well, Kay acknowledged their effort by giving them two points in a stimulating competition to win a prize (FN K3 May 29, 2006). In this way she encouraged more participation from the students. There were also times when the grouping of students did not work well because of the dynamics of students' relationships. Kay then shifted group membership regularly in order to make sure that a positive, productive community of learners was in place.

Kay was clear about the purpose of small group work. When the students worked in groups of four to six, the types of instructional tasks were typically challenging, and children were encouraged to cooperate on those tasks. They were also observed working in groups when they were likely to have anxieties about their performance. According to Kay, children tend to have a high level of anxiety when reading aloud to the class because of their poor English pronunciation. She thus rarely asked individuals to read aloud to the whole class, and students felt secure and more confident to read in small groups (TI K3 July 7, 2006). In a class with 39 students working together, it was challenging to check how each of them was doing on instructional activities. There were benefits of observing students working in groups even though individual work provided her with information about each student. For instance, she was better able to observe students reading aloud or expressing themselves in small groups since they often felt shy doing so in front of the whole class. In Kay's classroom, small group work was also used as a means to make simple repetition or language practice more enjoyable and motivating. Whereas too much repetition may be boring, the students in her classroom were repeating

merrily simple sentences in a game-like group competition, and Kay rewarded a group's excellent performance with stamps by their group number. Indeed, stimulating group competition and rewards engaged all students in simple repetition drills (FN K4 July 3, 2006).

Masterful Classroom Management. Kay's students sat in groups of four to six singing a *Quiet Song* merrily, and all were looking eagerly at their teacher's fingers. As Kay counted down on her fingers, they turned down the volume. When everyone was looking at her and the volume turned down to the zero level, Kay greeted her students with a big smile, and her students greeted her back (FN K3 May 29, 2006).

My enduring image of Kay's classroom was that students were attentive and on task most of the time. As in all well-managed classrooms, there were clear expectations and rules to make her classroom a productive place to learn (e.g., 'Use quiet voice when working in groups', 'Listen carefully to others during sharing time'). She also taught students to manage their own routines: what is to be done when they arrive early in the morning, who is to lead the groups, and who is to write a daily group journal on a particular day. There were also clear signals Kay used to maintain students' interests as well as to minimize their disruptive behavior. She used such signals as counting back from 10 to draw her students' attention, putting a tick by their group numbers on the blackboard to praise positive actions, and singing songs to get the class ready for a lesson. These routines and signals were discussed and established with students at the beginning of the year, and they were used consistently throughout the year.

Ownership of Learning. Kay relinquished control of instructional activities to the students as they were considered able to do them on their own. She judged that children participate more when they are given responsibility for their learning as well as an active role to play in lessons. On one spring day, the class was working on a blending task. Throughout the lesson of the day students took active roles such as presenting onsets and rimes, reading aloud, and evaluating other students' performances. For instance, as one group presented the letter *c* and rime *ane,* another group read it aloud all together. While the group was reading aloud *cane*, the rest of the class listened carefully to their reading. Kay then provided oral reading of the word *cane* by a native speaker of English and allowed time for the class to decide whether their peers' oral reading was good enough to

get a point. The class then expressed their opinions by raising their hands. Because more than two thirds of the students raised their hands, the group which read aloud *cane* got a point, and it was recorded on the board. In this way all members of the class had a role to play, and they were all involved in the lesson. Providing students with an active role facilitated more interaction among them as well. Frequent talk among students was heard, and what I heard was mostly task-oriented such as 'What would be more difficult to read?', 'Did they do it right? What do you think?', and 'How do you read it?' (FN K2 May 24, 2006).

Feeling of accomplishment. Kay stated that both process and product are equally important in students' learning. She considered her students' active engagement as evidence that a lesson was going well, but she also wanted them to feel accomplished with what they did or could do as a result of their learning (TI K1 April 24, 2006). Thus, the students often ended lessons with some product with which they could feel accomplished. For example, her students' learning of the English Alphabet resulted in mini-alphabet books of their own, and their learning of animal words yielded mini picture dictionaries of animal vocabulary. Other activities such as making a mini-book or a poster were also frequently observed in her classroom. Underlying this teaching practice was also the idea that children love to draw, color, and write things. Further, she noted that when students' products of learning are posted all over the classroom, those works may act as reinforcement of their learning by reminding them of what they learned (TI K4 October 18, 2006).

Kay wanted to ensure that students had accomplished the objectives of a lesson. While she appreciated students' active participation, she was explicit that how much children enjoyed a lesson was somewhat different from how much they actually learned. Spelling tests were one of her teaching practices that reflected her desire to check students' accomplishment in this regard. Despite her students' somewhat negative attitudes toward spelling tests, she continued the tests in order to check students' learning of words and spellings. Kay's thoughts on students' achievement were, to some extent, affected by the new educational policy in the city. She noted:

> I think my philosophy about education has changed over time. These days paper and pencil tests came back again to our schools, and this has influenced my

> thinking about teaching. I personally value the process of learning but also want my kids to be successful on tests. I want to help them with the tests although being against my personal beliefs about learning. I want them to feel accomplished. I used to think that the important thing is process. Now I think that quality process is truly appreciated when it comes with quality product (TI K1, pp. 4-5).

Kay was not in favor of paper and pencil tests, but she wanted to take a policy change in a positive way. For Kay, the best way to help her students as a teacher was not to disregard tests but rather to help them succeed on them.

Encouragement and Rewards. Kay maintained that all students are capable of learning and have a strong desire to be successful in their school life. Her classroom was filled with a great deal of encouragement and rewards for students' improvement. When students made an effort and progressed, she recognized it by praising them and giving rewards. I have heard her frequently saying, "You did a great job" and "Well done." In addition, all students in her classroom had a little record book called "마음의 은행(Bank of Your Mind)" where they got reward stamps marked. Kay used a variety of stamps to acknowledge students' progress and efforts, and stamps were typically engraved with a few words that praised students' specific behaviors. For example, when students volunteered to answer the teacher's questions, they were given a stamp which said "발표를 잘했어요! (Good answer!)." There was also a special prize for those who filled the record book with stamps. In this way, Kay encouraged children to do their best in school life. Parents were able to know how their child was doing in school by taking a look at the record book as well. Kay reported that when she had an annual meeting with parents at the beginning of the year, she explained about the record book and asked them to look at it daily and to praise the progress their child made (TI K2 June 12, 2006).

Kay thought that in order to encourage struggling learners, it is important for them to experience success in the process of learning. She was also explicit that when abilities are overemphasized, learners may lose their interest in English learning. Kay explained her frequent use of a bingo game as follows:

> I use a bingo game very often in my English classes and in other subject areas. Children never get bored of playing a bingo game because it's all different every

> time they play it. Winning the game doesn't really rely on kids' abilities. I think that's what kids like about the game. It really engages all kids with different abilities. Kids also enjoy writing words for a bingo game (TI K3, p. 12).

Kay wanted struggling learners to enjoy success in a game like *Bingo* where abilities do not matter much in order to sustain their motivation to learn English.

Scaffolding. Kay made an effort to provide instructional support for her students on an as-needed basis even though one-on-one teaching was rarely observed in her class of 39 students. While students were working on tasks, Kay moved around and monitored how individuals were doing. When they were having difficulties, she often redirected students' attention. For example, when the class was struggling with matching parts of words, Kay pronounced the first part of a word clearly, sounded it out, and asked what the complete word would be and what sounds and letters would follow (FN K8 November 3, 2006). On another day when the students had difficulties naming the imaginary animals they created, Kay provided instructional support by questioning. When students were struggling with breaking words into syllables and making up another word, she asked, pointing to the new words they made: "how do you read it?", "does this sound right?", "can you read these strings of consonants?", and "what letter or sound do you need to read it?"(FN K5 September 15, 2006). In many cases, Kay's questions provided just enough support to enable students to complete tasks. Research on exemplary reading classrooms confirms that effective literacy teachers are skillful at scaffolding their students' learning (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). They monitor students' learning carefully and provide just enough information to facilitate learning. In exemplary reading classrooms, scaffolding also often takes the form of questioning.

Kay's Literacy Teaching Practices

My observations of Kay's classroom revealed a variety of literacy materials, and her instruction was balanced in terms of types of activities. This section provides a description of Kay's literacy teaching practices in the following areas: print-rich environment, repeated exposure to print and rehearsing, integration of the four language skills, teaching of phonics skills, cross-curricular teaching, use of storybooks, and writing. The descriptions of Kay's practice begin with a look at her typical 40 minute lesson.

A Typical 40 Minute Lesson. Taking a look at the day of September 22, 2006 provides a concrete idea of what happens in Kay's classroom. It was right after lunch break, and the class was making notes about what to prepare for the next day. After finishing the notes, the class clapped their hands a couple of times as Kay directed. She took a few minutes to talk about what students were expected to do for their homework. Students then began to sing the *'Quiet Song'* as usual and turned down the volume as Kay counted down on her fingers.

Kay showed the book *Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson and asked, "Do you remember this book we read last time?" The class all shouted "Yes." Kay then asked the class to read aloud the title of the book, and most of the students read it. She told that she would check some words in the book with a *Hangman* game. Kay walked to the whiteboard, drew a five-dotted line, and encouraged the class to guess what letters would be there. Students talked to each other in groups and a few students raised their hands. When one student shouted the letter *A*, Kay replied, "I'm sorry. No *A*." A few other students shouted the letters *C*, *T*, *I*, but they were not covered. As another student shouted the letter *E,* Kay said "Yes, I have one E." She wrote the letter *E* in the last dot and drew a circle referring to the head of a man. Another girl then raised her hand and said the letter *I*. Kay replied, 'I'm sorry.' Here, she reminded the class that the word was from the book. Most of the students wondered about either *gruffalo* or *mouse*, two main characters in the book, and shouted "Aha." Students then quickly figured out the spellings of the word and completed the word *mouse*. The class had a few more rounds and went over words such as *fox*, *gruffalo*, *owl*, and *snake*.

Kay followed with reading the book *Gruffalo* to students along with the pages which were scanned and displayed on the projection TV screen. Kay gave students a specific task to work on while listening to her reading of the book. Students were asked to clap their hands when they heard any animal words. She also asked for a volunteer who could check which group was not participating. Kay then began to read the book, "A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark wood...." While reading aloud, Kay often used facial expressions and gestures to convey meanings of some words. For instance, when it came to the word *jaw*, she touched her jaw.

Kay then gave A4 size papers to the students and demonstrated how to fold the paper in order to make a mini-book. When finished, there was a total of six pages in the mini book, and each page showed one or two sentences from the book, leaving blank the animal words and simple key words. For instance, the first page had two sentences: *A ____ took a stroll through the deep dark wood. A _____ saw the _____*. Kay first encouraged students to title their mini-books with the names of imaginary animals they created in the previous lesson. The class also drew and colored their own imaginary animals on the title page, which took about 10 minutes. Kay then went over the sentences on each page as a class and asked students to fill in the blanks either with animal words as they appeared in the book *Gruffalo* or with any animal words they liked. Here, she encouraged the class to make their own version of the storybook. She encouraged them to use picture dictionaries of animal vocabulary they made or an English-Korean dictionary when needed. She also allowed students to fill in the blanks with Korean words if they had difficulties doing it solely in English. Kay then moved around the classroom to help students complete their own story and asked them to help each other.

Print-rich Environment. The positive, print-rich environment of Kay's classroom was evident from the moment I arrived for the first visit. Nearly every object in the classroom was labeled in English, and classroom rules in English were posted on the right side of the front wall. On the upper left side of the blackboard were posted the English Alphabet letters in sequence. On the right side of the board was posted the timetable in both Korean and English. An English newspaper article from *The Kids' Herald* was posted on the right side wall of the room. Students' work was posted all over the classroom, and some of them were in English (e.g., Alphabet Trains, Family Newsletters). Some students' birthdays were noted on the backboard, saying '*Happy Birthday in May.*' In Kay's classroom, students had access to English-Korean dictionaries and books as well. In one corner of the room was a shelf with English alphabet books and storybooks. Some students had their own dictionaries in their personal storage boxes. The print-rich environment in Kay's class is congruent with the research on exemplary reading classrooms. Research confirms that literacy-rich environment with accessible materials (e.g., signs and labels, in-class library, word lists, displaying students work)

was typical of exemplary reading classrooms (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Morrow & Asbury, 2003; Pressley, Rankin, Yokoi, 1996).

The print-rich environment was meaningfully connected to students' learning of English in Kay's class. For instance, Kay used the English alphabet letters on the board for her teaching of the letter of the day, and the English alphabet train on the wall was extended to include the letter of the day and related words as a result of their learning. On the storage boxes were placed the mini-picture dictionaries students made on topic vocabulary such as weather, animals, and colors. Some words from students' content-based English learning were also posted with pictures on the backboard, and examples included *fossil*, *dinosaur*, *a single-seed leaf*, *a double-seed leaf*, and etc. Kay mentioned that all of these students' works were posted to reinforce their learning of English words as well as to make them feel proud (TI K2 June 12, 2006). Unlike Lyn's English classroom where more than 150 students were sharing, Kay and the students enjoyed the ownership of the classroom environment. The physical environment of the classroom was an important means to celebrate and reinforce their learning of English.

Repeated Exposure to Print and Rehearsing. Kay suggested that the amount of exposure to the target language and rehearsing mattered a great deal in an EFL context, so she exposed her students repeatedly to the things they learned. What was particularly interesting about her classroom was the daily English passwords posted on the wall next to the backdoor. They were typically the key expressions from the English textbook such as *What did you do yesterday?* and *Is this a cap?* Students in her class were asked to read aloud the daily password posted to gain access to the classroom once they left and wanted to come back in. Kay also set up her computer connected to the projection TV to display the English letter of the day and related words during recess times (TI K2 June 12, 2006). In this manner, Kay's students were repeatedly exposed to the letter and related words they learned throughout the day.

Kay recognized the importance of authentic, meaningful input for successful L2 learning. She thought, however, that drills and practice are also valuable in learning a foreign language especially if they are done in a pleasant way. Kay's students were often engaged in repetition drills and rehearsed things they learned in a game-like way. For example, when students were repeating the key sentences, *What time is it?* and *It's time*

for lunch, they were asked to stress different words in turns, which was called an *Intonation Race*. Students became more excited about this repetition drill when Kay checked how long it took each group to finish. When I first observed students doing this activity, I was frustrated because I thought the intonation practice did not make sense at all. However, Kay later explained that the *Intonation Race* was not for intonation practice but for doing repetition drills in a motivating way (FN K4 July 3, 2006). Sometimes Kay borrowed her teaching ideas from famous TV shows in order to engage students in rehearsing in a motivating way. One spring day when students worked on phonemic segmentation practice, she used the idea of a TV quiz show called *Golden Bell* and excited her students to keep listening for the beginning consonants of words and writing the corresponding letters on their erasable whiteboards; in the TV quiz show, participants were asked to answer 50 questions correctly to ring a golden bell and write down answers on erasable boards. The students never felt bored while engaged in this quiz show-like phonemic segmentation practice even though they were provided about 32 segmentation practices (FN K1 May 6, 2006).

As rehearsing mattered to her, Kay's lessons were not characterized by lots of planning and materials although the patterns of her lessons were varied throughout the year. She preferred to use one or two key activities repeatedly in a lesson and was very creative in making the most of limited resources available. In this respect, one summer day illustrates her way of making the best of a single activity. On July 3, 2006 Kay's students were playing a *Bingo* game with number words *one* to *ten*. For the first round, Kay called a number word and the students crossed out that number. She then released control of the activity by asking students to call number words. Students used a bean bag to take turns in saying number words. For instance, one student threw the bean bag to another student saying a number word, and the next student who got the bag called another number word and then threw it to another student. Here, bean bag throwing was used as a way to interest students in this rather familiar game as well as to provide students with opportunities to practice the number words. For the next round, Kay asked questions about the story she read right before playing a bingo game. When she asked "what time does she go to school?", the students crossed out the number word that answered her question. In this way, Kay was able to check students' understanding of the

story (FN K4 July 3, 2006). Indeed, Kay only used a single game for a lesson but varied how to play it depending on her purpose.

Integration of the Four Language Skills. Kay identified herself neither as a whole language teacher nor as a phonics teacher. She refused to be labeled by the theoretical terms of teaching reading and believed that children can benefit from various approaches to reading instruction. She was indeed the type of teacher who did not want to be pigeon-hold as a teacher with a particular theoretical orientation. However, when it came to the relationship between oral language and reading, she took a firm stand that grade four children are cognitively prepared to read and write in English and that four language skills should be integrated right from the beginning. She stated:

> Four language skills are taught separately in the current textbooks, and this is not natural at all. We like to talk about what we read. We also make notes while listening. Four language skills are all integrated in every aspect of our life. It is kind of ridiculous to totally separate those skills. Listening for the first period of the unit, speaking for the second…It doesn't make sense at all. Also, the textbook asks kids to read the English alphabet in grade four but to write them in grade five. I think kids learn better when four language skills are taught in an integrative way like a natural language learning…If four language skills are integrated in the textbook, teachers may be able to design and do more meaningful activities (TI K1, pp. 8-9).

In accordance with her view of L2 learning, Kay's teaching practice indicated lots of restructuring of the content of the national textbook and integrated the four language skills in one lesson. Whereas grade four students were only expected to read the English Alphabet in the national curriculum, her lessons went beyond the curriculum, and her students were reading and writing many words and sentences throughout the year.

Teaching of Phonics. Many of Kay's students were able to identify the English alphabet letters at the beginning of the year, but the grade four English curriculum merely asked them to identify the letters and to say the corresponding letter names. Kay thought that knowing the graphic forms and names of the letters was not enough for students to develop as readers. She wanted her students to attend to the sounds of the letters as well

as their spelling-sound correspondences. When asked about the value of phonics instruction in Korean elementary classrooms, she stated:

> I don't normally think about the negative aspects and try to think positive aspects more. That's my style. I think there are more pros about phonics instruction than cons in our classroom context. Well, from my teaching experience I know that kids love to be able to read things for themselves. They are also excited about reading and writing something in a foreign language. They are often curious about their names in English and want to write them in English. I think that overall, phonics instruction can help them read and write in English independently and ease the overall process of their English learning (TI K5, p. 17).

Stahl, Duffy-Hester, and Stahl (1998) suggest that good phonics instruction should develop the alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, and thorough familiarity with letters. These components were evident in Kay's classroom, and her teaching of skills was, to some extent, a reflection of her students' developing awareness of English letters and sounds. At the beginning of the year, Kay's students were learning the sounds, names, and graphic forms of the English alphabet letters. Nearly every morning in April, Kay arranged about 10 to 15 minutes of mini-lessons for teaching of the letter of the day. During mini-lessons, Kay presented the letter of the day on the blackboard and sounded it out. She then presented the words beginning with that letter along with pictures on the TV screen and read those words as a class. When learning the letter *b*, Kay presented the words such as *box*, *bat*, *banana*, *bus*, *button*, *baseball*, *baby*, and *bag,* with the letter *b* highlighted. Students then followed with copying and coloring the letter and associated words in their mini-alphabet books (TI K2 June 12, 2006).

By May, Kay's students were working on phonemic segmentation and blending. In order to reinforce their learning of the alphabet letter sounds, they listened carefully for the beginning consonants of words and wrote down the corresponding letters (FN K1 May 6, 2006). On another day they were blending beginning consonants and rimes with a *long a* and a *short a* and reading them aloud through common spelling patterns such as *at*, *ate*, *ap*, *ape*, *ad*, *ade*, *am*, *ame*, *an*, *ane* (FN K2 May 24, 2006).

In September, Kay's students were observed working on syllable recognition. They named imaginary animals in English they created in their integrated science and

English lesson. As they created imaginary animals of their own using some features from other animals, they made up the names using parts of those animal words. In order to make new words, they had to identify syllables of different animal words, break words into syllables, and combine them. They also had to read words by analogy in order to read aloud the words they made up. Examples of the names students made up included *Alliphant*, *Scorpider*, *Fishgator*, *Gordile*, and *Lio(n)horse* (FN K5 September 15, 2007). Later in the year, Kay's students were learning long and short vowels using phonics stories such as *Zac the Rat*, *Peg the Hen*, *Jake's Tale*, *Pete's Sheep*, etc (FN K7 October 20, 2006).

Kay's practice revealed an important consideration when teaching Korean learners to read words in English; that is, students in her class displayed the difficulties Korean speakers have in recognizing syllables in English words. When students worked on syllable recognition in November, many of the students were grappling with breaking words into syllables and blending them to create new words. Whereas some students were doing well on this task, other students did not understand where to break words. They simply created compound words or put parts of words or words together with spaces between them such as *dragonfish*, *crabs scor tail*, and *lion snake frog pig*. Students' difficulties with syllable recognition may be attributed to the differences in visual forms of syllables in the two languages. The nature of the Korean writing system, Hangul, is alphabetic just as English in that it maps letters onto phonemes. However, an important feature of Hangul is that it is nonlinear unlike English; the composition of letters is shaped into square-like syllable blocks. Thus, the Hangul syllable blocks are separated with a clear syllable boundary for a Hangul word. The Korean language also has simpler syllabic structures compared with English; Korean syllables can be in the form of CV, CVC, and CVCC structures. Because English is linear, Korean learners may have difficulties with segmenting words into syllables. In the interview, Kay noted that she used the syllable recognition task to help learners process multisyllabic words alphabetically as well as to read words by analogy to familiar words (TI K4 October 18, 2006). Like she noted, research indicates that the strategy of reading-by-analogy can be strengthened by having students divide words into syllabic and sub-syllabic units such as onsets and rimes (Ehri & McCormick, 2004, Goswami, 1986; Treiman, 1985).

Considering that Korean learners of English are expected to have difficulties in recognizing syllables, explicit instruction in syllabification may need to be done before having them segment words into syllabic units.

Among the teacher participants of my study, Kay was the one who committed to planned phonics instruction consistently throughout the year. She nevertheless found it challenging to do so due to some constraints. First of all, she reported that since she did not have a systematic knowledge of phonics instruction, she was often unsure of what component of phonics instruction should be taught first or later and how it should be taught. She then had to rely upon her own reasoning about where her students were and what would work for them. Neither was she confident about her knowledge of spelling-sound relationships in English. She did not feel comfortable particularly with teaching the vowel spelling system. Although she knew that phonics instruction could not be identified with pronunciation instruction, she often felt her pronunciation was not clear enough to teach the sounds of the English letters (TI K5 November 3, 2006). There were limited resources available for phonics instruction, so she had to either make teaching materials on her own or search the Internet until she found good ones for her students.

Cross-curricular teaching. Kay was aware that the amount of exposure to the target language mattered to successful L2 learning, so she was quite interested in teaching other subject areas through English in order to maximize students' exposure to English. She also thought that content-based English instruction could provide meaningful, authentic purposes for her students to learn English (TI K1 April 24, 2006). The year I observed her, Kay was doing action research on content-based English instruction and taught other subject areas through English such as fine art, social studies, and science. One science lesson provides a concrete example of how she combined science and English. On September 15, 2006, students were working on creating and naming imaginary animals of their own. From previous lessons in science, they had already learned the characteristics of different animals. They had also learned animal words in English and made a picture dictionary with animal vocabulary. Kay's students first thought about what animal they wanted to create and drew what they imagined in their science workbook. In creating imaginary animals, students were encouraged to use different features from different animals. After the students finished drawing, Kay asked

them to name their imaginary animals in English. In order to do so, students were encouraged to blend the syllables from different animal words. In this way, Kay was able to integrate science and English, and skills instruction was also linked to cross-curricular teaching (FN K5 September 15, 2006).

Kay was clear about what and when to combine in planning content-based English instruction. She first considered whether the topics across the curriculum involve simple English vocabulary for students to learn. Throughout the year Kay's students worked on the following themes through English: 'weather' and 'money and consumption' from social studies, 'colors' from fine art, 'measuring' from mathematics, and 'how fossils are formed', 'plants', and 'animals' from science (TI K5 November 5, 2006). The themes such as 'colors', 'animals', and 'plants' provided a group of simple vocabulary for beginning English learners to work on. Further, some of the themes were also meaningfully related to basic communicative expressions of the English curriculum. For instance, when working on the theme 'money and consumption', students exchanged the expressions of buying and selling products. Kay also considered whether there were manipulative activities to engage students easily. Manipulative activities such as coloring, drawing, and measuring could engage students well in content-based English lessons even though they did not understand the contents in English. In addition, these activities themselves generated interactions among students in their groups. Being concerned with the difficulties her students might have, Kay also planned and implemented content-based English lessons when they were familiar with the contents.

Students' responses to content-based teaching were diverse. Although Kay varied instructional strategies to make content-based instruction understandable, some of the students reported that they felt somewhat frustrated because they could not understand some of technical vocabulary in the area of science. They also mentioned that they would prefer to learn science in Korean. Conversely, other students stated that they enjoyed learning science through English because it was something new they had never experienced.

Use of Storybooks. Kay used different types of storybooks for different instructional purposes. Storybooks were sometimes used as a means to motivate the students to learn about the thematic units. When students were working on creating

imaginary animals, Kay read the book, *Gruffalo* (Donaldson, 1999) to encourage them to think of their own imaginary animals (FN K5 September 15, 2006). She also read storybooks to provide her students with additional language input. In one of the interviews with me, she stated "I think it is always good to provide additional interesting material in relation to the target communicative functions. By doing so, kids will extend their knowledge to more various situations" (TI K3, p. 9). She thought that the national textbook was very limited in providing a variety of situations in which language is used and that storybooks provide students with more contextual, authentic language input. For instance, when students were learning the expressions *What time is it?* and *It's time for lunch*, Kay read to her students the electronic storybook, *My Day* (Kizclub, n.d.). The book did not have an interesting plot but reflected well the daily schedule of a student such as times to get up, to go to school, to eat lunch, and to ride the bus home. Students were then able to extend their learning of the target expressions to varied situations (FN K4 July 3, 2006). Kay's use of storybooks was linked to her teaching of phonics skills as well. She used highly decodable texts such as *Peg the Hen* to teach long and short vowels and spelling patterns (FN K7 October 20, 2006). Another interesting thing about Kay's use of storybooks was that when there was an English storybook familiar to the students in Korean, she read it to the students even though the text difficulty level was higher than students' abilities to read in English. For example, she read the book, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein after the students read the same story in a Korean Language Arts lesson (TI K3 July 7, 2006).

Consistent with her balanced view of reading instruction, Kay's use of storybooks embraced both high-interest storybooks and highly decodable texts. Similarly, her teaching practice focused on word recognition as well as on constructing meaning. As she read storybooks, Kay helped the students understand texts in a variety of ways, including top-down and bottom-up instructional strategies. She typically began with discussions about the title and pictures. In doing so, she directed students' attention to the specific objects in the picture and linked them to the key words and the main characters of a story. She sometimes introduced the key sentences before reading a book and informed the students of what to focus on while listening to a story. She occasionally encouraged the students to guess what would happen in a story. While reading each page of the book,

Kay asked a few questions to check students' understanding of a text. She then followed with post-reading activities such as recalling, choral reading of the key sentences, word practices, and mini-book making.

Like Lyn, Kay preferred electronic storybooks that included taped oral reading by a native speaker of English. However, she also pointed out that that many of the electronic books were not interesting because they did not have an engaging plot and quality illustrations. Kay then noted "when a storybook is not interesting, I contemplate how I could make it more interesting with fun activities. It is good to use interesting books, but it is also important to think over what to do with books in my classroom" (TI K3, p. 9). Kay experienced the same challenges as Lyn in her attempt to use storybooks in her English classroom (e.g., limited instructional time). She also found it difficult to locate and buy good quality storybooks due to limited financial support. Reading quality storybooks to students definitely required teachers' personal commitments.

Writing. Consistent with her view of integrating the four language skills, Kay considered reading and writing as intricately linked. Kay's students were thus frequently observed practicing writing in relation to reading activities; even though writing was not a component of the grade four English curriculum. Although the nature of writing tasks remained copying words and sentences, students enjoyed copying words by making alphabet books, picture dictionaries, and mini-storybooks. They also practiced words and spellings while playing language games such as *Bingo* and *Hangman.* Although it was not favored by the students, they also practiced spellings through regular spelling tests. Kay pronounced words clearly and slowly, sounded out each letter, and encouraged the students to listen for the sounds and write them. As mentioned earlier in this section, when asked about the rationale for the spelling test, Kay stated that it was important for teachers to reinforce what students learned in an EFL context because they do not have immediate needs to write in a second language and their exposure to the target language is limited (TI K5 November 3, 2006).

Summary. A print-rich environment was evident in Kay's classroom, and she meaningfully linked students' learning of English to the print displayed in the classroom. Kay emphasized the importance of repeated exposure to print and rehearsing in a foreign language context. The students rehearsed aspects of language they learned in a variety of

ways, including the daily English password, letter of the day displayed on the TV screen, and game-like repetition drills. Like Lyn, Kay advocated that L2 reading instruction should not be delayed until students develop some degree of oral proficiency in their L2. She strongly argued that the four language skills should be integrated from the beginning. Kay was also interested in content-based teaching as a means to increase students' exposure to the target language as well as to provide meaningful reasons to learn English. As a homeroom teacher, Kay was in a better position to implement cross-curricular lessons compared to Lyn. Kay also varied instructional strategies to make content-based teaching understandable, but her students' responses were somewhat diverse. Kay tried to be balanced in her approach to reading instruction whereas Lyn held the holistic, top-down view of reading. Thus, she used not only high-interest storybooks but also highly decodable texts. When reading books, she helped the students construct meaning using both top-down and bottom-up strategies. Interestingly, both Lyn and Kay preferred to use electronic storybooks with a taped oral reading by a native speaker of English. Kay's practice mirrored that of Lyn in several respects: repetition in a pleasant way, integration of the four language skills, interest in cross-curricular teaching, and use of storybooks. What differentiated Kay's teaching practice from that of the other participants of my study was her consistent, planned teaching of phonics skills throughout the year. Kay recognized the importance of teaching decoding skills for her grade four students who were beginning to grow as readers in English. Her practice was a reflection on her students' abilities, and she helped the students grow as alphabetic readers of print in a systematic way.

Growing as a Teacher: Relationships and Sharing

The main sources of Kay's teaching ideas include extensive professional development, sharing expertise with others, observing students, web surfing, and media.

Extensive Professional Development. Kay has been active in a variety of professional activities. She had been a member of the Seoul Elementary School English Teachers Association (SESETA) since 1997. As a core member of the association, she led numerous teacher workshops, which also allowed her to make connections with leading teachers in the area of English education. Kay appreciated her relationship with these leading teachers because talking to them always inspired her to develop as a teacher.

She had also taken many courses in her master's degree as well as in various professional development opportunities. This extensive professional development provided her with a sound foundation upon which to build her teaching practice. For instance, a teacher workshop at the University of Hawaii had influenced her thoughts on the importance of extensive reading and the amount of exposure to the target language. She also reported that the internship program she took in Edmonton Public Schools helped her understand the notion of balanced literacy (TI K5 November 3, 2006).

Sharing Expertise with Others. Reflecting upon her professional growth, Kay recalled that her best learning about teaching came from her experience of helping other colleagues as a teacher educator as well as a consultant. The year I observed her, like Lyn, Kay was also working as a consultant in the area of English education for the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education. She too reported that working with other teachers provided her with valuable opportunities to look back on her teaching practices as well as to refine her thoughts on her practice. When preparing for her lecture on teacher education programs, she summarized what she had done, thought about the rationales for her teaching practice, clarified what was good about those practices, and clarified the underlying purposes of instructional activities she did (personal communication, July 11, 2007). In doing so, it was clear that she was engaged in reflective practice which characterizes effective teachers' professional growth (Day, 2001). While working as a consultant, she was also pleased to help new teachers and watch them develop. Seeing their growth as a teacher was a source of great inspiration for her to continuously grow as a teacher.

Observing Students. Observing where her students were was an important element of Kay's teaching practice. When she felt theory did not inform her of what to do, she relied upon her own insights into where her students were and what worked better to meet their needs. She noted:

> Sometimes I find that theory does not help in actual practice. Well, they may have provided kind of foundation to build on. So, phonics instruction I did was, to some extent, based on what I learned through graduate courses and other teacher workshops. But the knowledge I gained was simply not enough. I didn't know about the systematic teaching steps as theories suggested when teaching phonics.

> Then I had to think about what should come first and what should come later considering where my students were (TI K3, p. 5).

Despite professional development, teachers may still find it hard to make connections between theory and practice. For Kay, there were times when she felt she did not have comprehensive knowledge of what research says about effective reading instruction. There were also times when she felt theories did not fit well with her students' needs and abilities. Kay reported that at those times she first thought where her students were, searched for appropriate tasks and materials, observed how they worked on tasks she gave, and tailored her instruction to their needs and abilities.

Web Surfing. Kay searched the World Wide Web for different purposes. As an EFL teacher, she found English texts and vocabulary available on the web very useful for designing her content-based English lessons. For instance, when she was about to teach science through English, she needed to know basic, simple science vocabulary in English and searched for elementary science texts on the web. Kay also searched the Internet for teaching ideas and materials especially when she was about to do what she had never done before. When she first started phonics instruction, the Internet allowed her to locate a variety of teaching ideas and materials, and the website *Starfall* was the one she often visited and used in her classroom. Lots of pictures and multimedia available on the Internet also provided useful resources to be used in her language classroom. Pictures were used to convey meanings of words, and digital audio clips of words from on-line dictionaries were useful in presenting native English speakers' pronunciations. Electronic storybooks were also used with her class of 39 students.

Media. One thing unique about Kay's practice was that she gained her teaching ideas from a variety of sources. She sometimes borrowed her teaching ideas from the famous TV shows. Examples include the *Golden Bell* quiz for phonemic segmentation practice and *Intonation Race* for repetition drills. She also used commercial advertising fliers for teaching English vocabulary. She knew how to make the best of what surrounded the students. Students' familiarity and interests in TV shows facilitated their engagement in instructional activities and minimized time for explanation of task procedures.

Donna: The Organized Teacher

Personal Background

Donna had a unique background compared to other teachers in public elementary schools in Korea. She originally had a grade seven to twelve English teacher certificate but applied for teaching in elementary schools; this was possible because the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education recruited teachers with secondary school teaching certificates because of the lack of teachers in elementary schools in 1999. She had worked mostly as an English specialist throughout her teaching career. She had six years of teaching experience and had been teaching English to grades four, five, and six. The year I observed, Donna was responsible for teaching grade five and six students as an English specialist. She was about to work on her thesis after completing the coursework for her master's degree in English education. Donna had also taken a large number of teacher education programs by Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in order to obtain a grade one to six teaching certificate. She took about a 240-hour education program in elementary English education and an additional 500-hour program in other elementary school subject areas.

Donna reported that she began her teaching with concerns because she did not have an elementary school teaching certificate at the time she started. She had enjoyed working with the children as well as her colleagues in elementary school, but she still felt the tension between her different identities as a teacher. She thought that she had to work more as a homeroom teacher in order to adapt herself better into elementary school teaching. She, however, preferred to work as an English specialist. Being a specialist teacher allowed her to focus on her area of interest, and she did not have to be pressed with duties of a homeroom teacher such as parent-school connections and student personal services (TI D1 April 27, 2006).

Donna was well-recognized in the district for her fluent English skills and had led teacher workshops about classroom English. She nevertheless considered herself a beginning teacher and felt that she needed to learn more. In the interviews with me, she often asked questions about how the other two participants were doing in their classrooms. She was also a reserved and organized person in her responses so that she

wanted to have interview questions in advance and tried to be concise during our interviews.

Donna's Students and Her Philosophy about Learning and Teaching

The school is located in a low socioeconomic urban community and serves about 950 students in 30 classes. Donna had her own English classroom on the third floor of the four-story concrete building, and students went to the room for English lessons. She was teaching five classes of grade six as well as five classes of grade five, so I asked her to choose one class for my research. Donna chose a grade six class of 30 students, and she mentioned that it was a typical class at the school.

Donna reported that as it was her first year at the school, she did not know much about the community but students tended to have fewer prior learning experiences with English compared to students in the city. According to her, none of the students had begun English learning before entering the school, and most of the students had started to learn English when they were in grade three, the first year of formal English education in elementary school. Most never read storybooks in English. With regards to her students' abilities to read in English, Donna reported that while a few high achieving students were reading very simple storybooks, a few students were not able to identify the English alphabet letters.

Looking around Donna's classroom, student work was not displayed but there was some evidence that clearly showed it was an English classroom. On the backboard were posted the English alphabet letters, a few wall charts illustrating simple action verbs and colors, and the pages of the storybook *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. On the right side of the blackboard was posted the English calendar. On one corner of the room was placed a big projection TV connected to the computer with Internet connection.

Clear Expectations. My first impression of Donna's classroom was that students behaved and participated well during a lesson (FN D1 May 8, 2006). Donna's expectations for appropriate student behavior were visible and clear. Displayed on the front wall of the classroom were classroom expectations in English that said '*We raise our hand to speak*', '*We listen to our teacher and classmates while they are speaking*', '*We are kind and respect each other*', etc. What was interesting about Donna's class was that some visible management strategies such as rewards and punishment were rarely

seen. There were a few times when she asked for her students' attention by beating the table with her stick, but overall the class was on task and behaved orderly. When asked about her strategies to manage a class, Donna reported that students knew that unless they were attentive, they would be asked questions about the lesson (TI D3 July 20, 2006). In fact, Donna was frequently observed asking questions to those who were inattentive, and this strategy worked well because many of the students did not want to lose face in front of their classmates.

Routines and Structures. There was a sense of well-established routines and structures in Donna's lessons, and the pattern of arranging activities and materials was quite similar in my observations. For example, Donna typically began her lesson with greetings and routine questions such as '*How are you?*', '*What day is it?*', and '*What's the date today?*' She then followed with a review of the previous lesson in which she asked the students to say the key expressions. The review was typically followed by going over the new words and sentences of the unit as a class. The class then either listened to or read a dialog and followed with repetition drills. Donna wrapped up a lesson with writing practice such as dictation and sentence-building. When going over new words and sentences, Donna also used the same format of worksheets across units throughout the first semester. The worksheet included the key sentences and words of the unit with translations on the front side. On the back side were either dictation tasks or sentence-building tasks and additional topic vocabulary for a unit. There was definitely a benefit to establish routines and structure in her lessons. Donna stated that the established routines helped students pay attention quickly to what they were about to do. For instance, when she said, '*Hello, everyone*', it was not just a greeting but also a sign that an English lesson was going to begin. By using the same format of worksheets, she did not have to spend much time explaining what and how they were going to work on them (TI D3 July 20, 2006). As a specialist teacher who worked with the students for only 80 minutes a week, it was important for Donna to establish predictable and routine structures in her lessons to manage classes effectively. Those predictable routines also helped students have clear expectations of what they were to do.

Constant Monitoring of Students. One of the salient features about Donna's classroom was that she constantly checked whether the students were able to do things

she wanted to accomplish with in her lessons. Because of her desire to ensure that all students were learning something, Donna was frequently observed asking students to raise their hands whether they could read aloud the target words and did given tasks correctly such as dictation and sentence building. Indeed, she used a variety of ways to monitor how students were doing in her classroom. Her attempts to monitor students often took the form of asking all individuals to take turns in reading aloud the target words and sentences. At other times, Donna asked the students to raise the corresponding word/sentence cards as she directed. Later in the year when the sentences were getting longer, she numbered the sentences and asked students to say the corresponding numbers when she said them. In this way, Donna was able to check whether each of the students was able to read aloud or identify words and sentences. Her constant efforts to monitor how students were doing were consistent with her view of effective second language teaching. In the first interview with me, she stated:

> I think effective teaching could be characterized by whether students accomplished the planned objectives or not. For instance, when the lesson went well and was effective, many students would raise their hands to answer the teacher's questions about the lesson. That means that they mastered basic vocabulary and key expressions of the lesson (TI D1, p. 5).

Although it might be necessary to check how individuals were doing, my informal conversations with a few students indicated that they were worried about their individual performance in front of the whole class. Donna was not unaware of students' anxieties about their performance in front of the whole class. She, however, wanted to ensure that everybody had an opportunity to practice things (e.g., oral reading of key vocabulary) and to answer her questions on their own (TI D5 November 9, 2006).

Modeling and Explanation. Donna's practice relied mostly on teacher-directed instruction. She stated that contents and activities should be organized clearly by a teacher's predetermined agenda in order for effective learning to occur (TI D1 April 27, 2006). Teacher-modeling and deductive explanations were dominant in her classroom interactions, and talk among students was rare. Donna also recognized that teachers' abilities and knowledge mattered to effective instruction. From her perspective, good teachers should be knowledgeable about the subject matter and able to explain things

clearly. Her view of effective teaching was to some extent influenced by her frustration with Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis which stated that acquisition occurs in a condition which comprehensible input is provided. She noted:

> I used to believe that it is important to provide learners with more comprehensible input. So I had tried to use English as much as possible in my classroom. But from my experience I wonder whether they are getting something just by listening to input. I'm quite suspicious about that. It just goes so fast without noticing. So now I think that in a foreign language context, merely providing input is not helpful at all. We need to let them know the basic structures and what to focus clearly (TI D1, p. 7).

Donna's idea that mere exposure to language input is not sufficient for foreign language learning can be connected to the discussions about input enhancement in the second language acquisition literature. Some researchers argue that sheer exposure to input does not lead learners to high levels of accuracy and that in order to acquire features of a second language, those features must be noticed by a learner (Gascoigne, 2006; Sharwood Smith, 1993; White, Spada, Lightbown & Ranta, 1991). However, they do not support an exclusive focus on modeling and deductive explanation of certain structures. Instead, they suggest the benefits of certain techniques to enhance input such as explicit discussion of target forms, corrective feedback, and textual enhancement (e.g., boldface type or color coding) in addition to rich and varied comprehensible input.

Grouping. Students were rarely observed working in small groups in Donna's classroom. They worked either as a class or individually, so talk among students was rarely observed. Her ways of working with students were apparent in the seat arrangement. For example, students sat in lines facing the front or the center of the classroom most of the time. Even though they sat in groups occasionally, most of their work was individual in nature. Donna reported that she tried to have students work in groups for the first few years of her teaching, but did not find that small group work was beneficial to students' learning. Donna expressed her position about working in small groups as follows:

> Other teachers may be good at managing small group work. But for me, when I had students work in groups, I found only one or two students were in charge of

> everything, and the rest of them were doing almost nothing. But when I had them work individually, they really paid attention to doing tasks. I don't think I have succeeded in having them work in small groups. I personally feel it difficult to implement small group activities successfully. (TI D1, p. 6).

It is clear that Donna's past teaching experience influenced her view of small group work. She thought that very few students participated in small group activities when left working too much on their own and that they should not be given too much responsibility for their learning. From Donna's perspective, there were more benefits from having students work individually (TI D3 July 20, 2006). First of all, she was better able to check how individuals were doing when working alone. She reported that she was frustrated with students' individual performances even though the students as a class were seemingly doing well on certain instructional activities (e.g., oral reading). In addition, when working alone, students are responsible for their learning and pay more attention to completing tasks on their own. Donna also mentioned that as a learner, she personally had learned more when working alone.

Donna wanted to change her ways of working with students (TI D3 July 20, 2006). Reflecting upon her teaching experience, she surmised that the reason one or two students dominated group work was because she provided mostly worksheets to work on in groups, and the nature of worksheets required individual seatwork rather than cooperation among group members. She wondered how to facilitate small group work as well as about the types of tasks suitable for small group work. She also wondered how the other participating teachers were doing to facilitate group work in their classrooms.

Donna's Literacy Teaching Practices

This section provides descriptions of six categories captured in Donna's literacy teaching practices. Her EFL reading classroom can be characterized by oral language and print connection; emphasis on students' abilities to read aloud; part-to-whole approach to reading; use of students' L1; use of storybooks; and grammar instruction. I begin the section with a look at her typical 40 minute lesson.

A Typical 40-Minute Lesson. The day of May 8, 2006 provides a concrete example of how 30 grade six students work in Donna's English classroom. The students arrived at the classroom in twos and threes and sat in their chairs. They sat in lines facing

either the front or the center. When the class looked ready, Donna greeted the students, "Good morning, everyone. How are you?" The class all chorused slowly, "I'm fine. Thank you. How about you?" Donna replied, "Very well. Thanks." She then asked raising her hand, "What's the date today?" When a few students raised their hands to answer her question, Donna asked a student for an answer. When the boy said, "It's Monday", she clarified, "What day is it today? It's Monday. What's the DATE today?" As the boy murmured "April…", a few students shouted "May", and the class all chorused "It's May 8th." Donna then followed with a little discussion about Parents' Day.

Donna clapped her hands three times asking for students' attention and followed with a review of the previous lesson. As she said, "*Ready? Go*," pointing to the word cards on the board, the students read aloud the names of the 12 months. They then read them aloud again in the order as Donna directed. The class then followed with reading aloud the ordinal numbers, first to 31st. When the students misread the ordinal number *fifth* as *five*, Donna pronounced the word *fifth* slowly pointing to her lips and tongue and asked the class to read it after her. Whenever students had difficulties pronouncing numbers (e.g., 20th and 30th), she pronounced them clearly. Donna then asked a few questions about holidays in Korean such as "*When is Children's Day?*" and "*When is Parents' Day?*" A few students volunteered to answer.

Donna played the textbook CD-ROM, and turned on the TV screen. She gave students two questions to think about before listening to the dialog between two students and a teacher: *"When is Joon's birthday?"* and *"When is Jinho's birthday?"* After listening, she asked when Joon's birthday was and a few students raised their hands. When a student said, "June first", she wrote it on the blackboard next to the name 준 *(Joon)*. Donna then went over another question about the dialog and followed with another dialog and questions about it.

Donna gave students worksheets which included key sentences and the new words from unit four. She first read aloud the word *concert* a couple of times and the class read after her. She asked students to think of any similar Korean sounds for the beginning consonant of the word *concert*. She then wrote the Korean letter ㅋ next to the letter *C* on the board. In this way, the class went over a list of nine words, including *date*, *last*, *lucky*, *when*, *why*, *pardon*, *month*, *birthday*, and *yours*. When going over these words,

Donna did not focus on meanings because translations were provided below the words on the sheet. Donna then moved to reading aloud the key sentences. She read them word by word first and the class read after her. She then read the sentences with the whole class. Donna went over a total of four sentences, including *When is your birthday?*, *My birthday is May 10th*, *When is yours?*, and *What is the date today?* After working as a class, Donna called the names of a few students and asked them to read aloud particular sentences. She praised their performances saying '*Very good.*'

The class listened to the same dialog as they did earlier in the lesson and repeated after the CD-ROM. When students had difficulties repeating sentences, Donna stopped the CD-ROM and said them clearly counting the numbers of words on her fingers. She then asked students to repeat the sentences after her word by word.

The class followed with singing the song of the unit, '*12 months*' which included the names of the 12 months of the year. While students were singing, Donna gave students another handout that included information about how to change cardinal numbers to ordinal numbers, ordinal numbers from first to 31st, and the names of the 12 months. Donna first explained how to change cardinal numbers to ordinal numbers and went over the exceptions such as *first*, *second*, and *third*. She occasionally demonstrated how to pronounce phonemes that are not in Korean such as /f/ and /θ/. The class then read aloud ordinals numbers, first to 31st, along with the word *May*. The class then moved to reading aloud the names of the 12 months and put them in sequence by numbering them. When students were done, Donna called the names of particular students and asked them to say the name of a month and corresponding number like '*March, number three.*'

Donna presented some words of the unit on the TV screen. The class read aloud about 15 words in isolation such as *is*, *when*, *first*, *third*, *birthday*, *month*, *December*, *March*, *August*, and etc. About one half of the students were then asked to take turns in reading aloud those words.

Donna followed with dictation tasks leaving ordinal numbers blank. The dictation tasks were on the backside of the worksheet she gave earlier in the lesson. She checked the answers as a class and wrote them on the board. Donna then presented the model sentence, *My birthday is* <u>*March 18th*</u>. and asked students to write when their birthday is. While students were working on this sentence writing, she moved around the classroom

and checked how they were doing. She then clarified that the names of the 12 months should begin with capital letters. Donna wrapped up the lesson with brief conversations about some students' birthdays (FN D1 May 8, 2006).

Oral Language and Print. The positive role of reading in the process of L2 learning was recognized in Donna's classroom. She was explicit that input through oral language only is limited in a foreign language context where contact with English speakers was scarce, and print is another important source of language input (TI D1 April 27, 2006). She thus tried to expose her students to print as much as possible, and the total amount of time she spent on teaching reading exceeded the national curriculum mandate. Nonetheless, her reading instruction was bounded by the national curriculum and textbook, so most of the reading materials used in her class were written dialogs. Every time the class listened to a dialog, she followed with a written dialog and practiced key expressions as a class. Sometimes Donna went over a dialog turn by turn and asked students to find corresponding sentences on the board (FN D7 October 23, 2006). In this manner she used written dialogs to help students notice how oral language is mapped onto print. Donna also thought that written dialogs can be used to help students process oral language in a more efficient way. She stated:

> When a dialog is presented in written forms, I think students may be able to check what they missed while listening to it. When listening, it goes so fast, and it's easy to miss something. Also, students can look up the dialog as often as they want and memorize it. It helps them keep practicing and memorize it. So, it helps them develop speaking skills as well (TI D2, p. 15).

Donna took a stand that students are able to process oral language better with the help of print, and print can help students become an independent learner. The dominance of written dialogs as reading materials is also connected to Donna's emphasis on oral reading over meaning in her classroom.

Reading Aloud. Donna considered that students' ability to read aloud was the most important skill to be taught in grade six English. Students in her class often read aloud new words and key sentences in a drill-like way. For instance, Donna first modeled oral reading of words and sentences, and the students followed with choral reading. This process was typically repeated a few times until students' oral reading sounded good

enough, and she occasionally asked the students to spell words. Donna then followed with asking individuals to take turns in reading aloud words and sentences and checked how many of the students were able to read them on their own. When many had difficulties reading independently, Donna repeated the process of her model reading and students' choral reading a few more times. When asked about her rationale for this drill-like reading aloud practice, Donna mentioned that when reading text, one should be able to read it aloud first before constructing meaning, and that once students are able to do so, they are more likely to become interested in reading for meaning (TI D1 April 27, 2006). She also thought that reading aloud helps students build connections between oral language and print, practice words and sentences effectively, and improve their pronunciation. According to Donna, students learn words more effectively by reading them aloud instead of merely looking at them because they can use multiple channels for the learning of words (TI D2 June 21, 2006). Donna also emphasized that students' abilities to read aloud are especially important at the beginning of their reading development as follows:

> When they reach up to an advanced level of reading and need to focus on the contents, reading aloud may interfere with their reading process. But they are still at the beginning of learning to read, and it is just five to six words in a sentence. I think they need to attend to how oral language and print are related at this point of their reading development" (TI D2, p. 4).

Because Donna used mainly written dialogs as reading material, she assumed that students already understood the meanings of sentences thanks to the video context of a dialog. She thus focused more on their abilities to read aloud written dialogs rather than on meaning.

Despite Donna's instructional focus on reading aloud, some students reported somewhat negative attitudes toward reading aloud to the whole class. Although Donna asked the students to do round robin reading for insights into individual students' reading abilities, they felt quite nervous about their performance. Graves and Fitzgerald (2003) point out that oral reading in front of classmates should be reserved for learners whose L2 reading fluency is well developed. They further argue that for L2 learners who do not yet read fluently, oral reading in front of peers could be a difficult and even painful

experience. Optiz and Rasinski (1998) too maintain that round robin reading can be a source of anxiety and embarrassment for students and that learners lose an opportunity to correct themselves because their mistakes are often corrected by others. As Donna noted, students may need to be provided with an opportunity to read on their own. Teachers may also need to attend to how individual students read for some insight into their reading abilities. However, observation of students' oral reading does not necessarily need to be in the form of round robin reading. Students' responses in Donna's class indicate that young L2 readers can enjoy oral reading better either in pairs or small groups. Teachers may be able to observe how individuals read in those settings as well.

Part-to-Whole Approach to Reading. In Donna's classroom, whenever students had difficulties reading sentences, they were encouraged to read each word first and then move onto whole sentences. Her teaching practice seemed to be based on an idea that parts are easier to learn. In the first interview with me, she identified her orientation to reading instruction as a bottom-up approach and considered the process of L2 reading development to be very structured. She stated that "at the beginning of reading development, I think learners need to have knowledge of the basic sentence structures. As they acquire more vocabulary, their reading proficiency will then grow" (TI D2, p. 4).

Donna's part-to-whole approach to reading was apparent in her teaching practice. First of all, new words or key words of a unit were presented as a word list without context. Similarly, when reading a storybook, she first read it to the students without showing illustrations (FN D4 July 10, 2006). It was interesting that in many cases Donna purposefully did not provide any contextual clues with target words. Even though she was aware that contextual support would help learners construct meaning, she wanted the students to pay more careful attention to sounds and spellings of words. She stressed that picture contexts often kept learners from attending to the various features of language input other than meaning (TI D3 July 20, 2006). In addition, identifying words with pictures did not indicate that students knew those words. For Donna, students should be able to identify and read aloud words without context when they master those words. As Donna argued, some researchers similarly pointed out that because of the powerful contributions of illustrations, picture contexts may be overused (Samuels, 1970) and that "it is important for children to look at words in isolation at times so that they can examine

the patterns in words without the distractions of context" (Stahl, Duffy-Hester & Stahl, 1998, p. 342). Indeed, building sight vocabulary is critical to the development of proficient L2 reading. However, given beginning L2 readers' limited proficiency, it may also be necessary to provide contextual support to ensure L2 learners' successful learning experience. Beginning readers are able to read words in context that they are unable to read in isolation (Archer & Bryant, 2001; Goodman, 1965). Attractive illustrations or pictures are also a primary means to invite beginning readers into the world of reading. Instead of focusing solely on a single way to read words, it may then be necessary for teachers to think of when learners should be given an opportunity to examine words in isolation without picture contexts as well as what words should be used for close examination of spelling-sound relations and orthographic patterns. Considering that beginning L2 readers face huge challenges in beginning to read due to their limited knowledge of vocabulary, reading words in isolation may need to be reserved for familiar words.

Donna guided her students in understanding text based on her bottom-up view of reading. Preteaching of key words was frequently observed in her class. She often provided the students with a list of key vocabulary before listening to a dialog or reading text. She thought that in order to understand text, it is beneficial for learners to learn first every word in it. Before reading a text and listening to a dialog, Donna briefly explained what the story was about and guided students on what to focus while reading by pre-questioning. She then checked the answers to these questions after reading. Her part-to-whole approach to reading was also apparent in her ways of reading aloud sentences with the students. After listening to a dialog, the students in Donna's class followed with identifying the key sentences and reading them aloud. In doing so, Donna was frequently observed breaking sentences into words, reading them aloud word-by-word, and then moving to whole sentence reading. Students were observed reading after her word-by-word as well. When asked about the rationale for her part-to-whole reading aloud, Donna stated:

> Kids tend to process language as chunks so that they are often not aware of what words comprise a sentence. They lack abilities to isolate words from a sentence. If I read aloud a sentence word by word, kids would be able to identify words more

> easily. They would also be able to see how oral language is mapped onto print (TI D2, p. 12).

Summarizing Donna's practice and her rationale, one may find that there is a sense of coherence in her teaching practice and that she had a clear and consistent rationale for her practice. In other words, her practices such as reading aloud and part to whole reading all related to her ideas that beginning L2 readers need to know how oral language is mapped onto print and that part-to-whole reading aloud helps them to build connections between oral language and print. Thus, reading in Donna's classroom, to some extent, played only a secondary role to oral language.

Use of L1. Learners' first language was regarded as a useful resource to build on for their English learning in Donna's classroom. Use of Korean language was frequently observed when teaching spelling and sound relations as well as conveying meaning. Donna considered that students need to learn phonics skills in order to develop their abilities to read independently (TI D1 April 27, 2006). What was interesting about Donna's practice was that she encouraged the students to match the sounds of English spellings with equivalent or similar sounds in Korean. When going over the new words of a unit, Donna thus typically encouraged the students to think of any similar sound in Korean for the beginning consonant of each word. She then wrote Korean letters next to the corresponding English letters on the board. For instance, she wrote the Korean letter ㄷ next to the letter *d* when reading *dollar*. This unique way of teaching spelling-sound relations was observed consistently during the first semester. With regards to her rationale for this practice, Donna mentioned:

> As kids have very limited exposure to input, it is hard for them to catch the spelling and sound relations. They need a clear explanation to understand it. I thought that kids would read beginning letters easily by relating it to Korean letters (TI D2, p. 7).

Donna's unique way to teach sounds and spellings was definitely based on the idea that learners' first language could be a springboard to understand the target language. She also reported that as phonics was not well represented in the national textbook, it was hard to find extra time for phonics instruction. Thus, relating English spellings and sounds to those of Korean was an efficient way to teach phonics skills. Donna was,

however, explicit that there are many other ways to teach spelling and sound relations such as presenting words with the same spelling pattern together, but she simply did not have enough knowledge to do so. As a matter of fact, there are limitations in teaching English spelling-sound correspondences by way of the Korean language because some English phonemes are not represented by the Korean writing system. For instance, Korean does not have consonants such as /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, and /dʒ/. I rarely observed Donna teaching something other than beginning consonants, and her teaching of consonants was also limited to the phonemes such as /d/, /n/, /m/, /b/, /p/, /t/, and /h/.

Students' first language was used as an efficient way to convey meaning in Donna's classroom. Translations were provided below the key words and sentences in the worksheets she used for every unit during the first semester. Korean language was also used as a quick way to review the previous lesson as well as to elicit students' utterances in the target language. At the beginning of each lesson, Donna typically said the key expressions from the previous lesson in Korean, and asked the students to say them in English. Donna stated that translation can benefit learners who are inattentive or struggling with constructing meaning from contexts (TI D2 June 21, 2006).

Use of Storybooks. Donna agreed that storybooks are good for use in L2 reading classrooms, but reading of high-interest storybooks was rarely observed in her English classroom. She was worried that learners would feel embarrassed when given a challenging text to read. In fact, there was one occasion when Donna read a storybook in her class. She used an electronic storybook *What I want to be* which was retrieved from Kizclub, the popular English learning resource website in Korea (FN D4 July 10, 2006). Reflecting upon the lesson, Donna reported that she was frustrated with students' poor understanding of the text even though the text difficulty level was not high (TI D3 July 20, 2006). It was clear that her students' level of English abilities kept her from using storybooks. Another thing that kept her from using storybooks was that she did not feel comfortable telling stories or reading books to her students because she felt special skills such as acting out the scenes were needed. Further, Donna felt it difficult to read a book to a class of 30 to 40 students in Korea. She mentioned that "in North American classrooms it might be okay to have all kids together on the rug and read a book to them

because they have fewer kids" (TI D3, p. 9). Like the other two participating teachers, Donna too pointed out that she had a tight academic schedule, so it was difficult to find extra time for reading storybooks.

Teaching of Grammar. Teaching of grammatical features and other metalinguistic features was regularly observed in Donna's classroom. One day, the class was learning to ask and answer questions about what they did during summer vacation. Donna first gave students handouts about the past tense, explained regular past tense verbs, and provided example verbs such as *played, visited, finished,* and *looked.* Donna then followed with a practice which asked the students to say corresponding past tense verbs when she said present tense verbs. Later she extended students' learning of the past tense to include irregular past tense verbs such as *went, ate, had, came, bought* and followed with the same practice (FN D5 September 4, 2006). In my observations of Donna's classroom, the students were also observed learning other metalinguistic features such as comparative form, cardinal to ordinal numbers, and punctuations. As for her mini-grammar lesson, Donna preferred to teach in a deductive and explicit way. She typically provided the students with a handout that included grammatical explanations and example words or sentences. She first explained grammatical rules and followed with examples and practice. Donna stressed that it is challenging for second language learners to acquire grammar naturally especially when they have limited exposure to the target language. She also judged that deductive teaching of grammar is more efficient in an EFL context. It should be noted, however, that her teaching practice was not shaped solely by grammar instruction as seen in traditional grammar classrooms. She taught grammar when she felt children are likely to be confused about it as well as when grammar mattered to their understanding of language input (TI D4 October 19, 2006).

Writing. Consistent with her idea of oral language and print connections, writing was practiced mostly in dictation tasks at the beginning of the year. Students listened to dialogs and filled in the blanks with the key words of a unit. Stahl, Duffy-Hester, and Stahl (1998) also note that writing words from dictation is a valuable way of practicing letter-sound correspondences. In my observations, students were not doing authentic writing but working on controlled writing at a sentence level most of the time. They were typically provided model sentences to follow in their writing such as *My birthday is*

March 18th. Students also practiced writing in sentence-building tasks. Donna provided them with a list of constituent words and encouraged them to build a sentence on their own. She then moved around and helped the students with basic punctuation (e.g., 'One should begin a sentence with a capital letter' and 'When ending a sentence, one needs either a period or a question mark'). With regards to Donna's view of writing, she supported a comprehension-first approach in her English classrooms, and she thought that students were not ready for real writing yet. She thought that productive language skills should follow receptive skills and that beginning L2 learners need to focus more on listening and reading rather than on speaking and writing (TI D5 November 9, 2006).

Summary. Donna's practice centered on a part-to-whole approach to reading based on the idea that parts are easier to learn. Preteaching of vocabulary with translation was frequently used as a pre-reading activity. Instead of providing picture contexts and discussions about them, she guided the students on understanding text by verbally explaining what the story would be about. Prequestioning was also used to inform the students of what to focus on while reading or listening, and she checked answers after reading. Donna then typically followed with identifying the key sentences and reading them aloud. In doing so, she was frequently observed breaking sentences into words, reading them aloud word by word, and then proceeding to whole sentence reading. Donna's teaching practice was in sharp contrast to that of Lyn. Lyn held the holistic, top-down view of reading, and a global understanding of a text was important in her classroom. In contrast, Donna held the bottom-up view of reading and emphasized students' ability to read aloud over meaning. Like Lyn and Kay, Donna recognized the positive role of print in second language learning. However, the emphasis was on understanding how oral language is mapped onto print. Written dialogs were mainly used as reading material, and reading played a secondary role to oral language. Her view of oral language and print were also connected to the teaching of the alphabetic principles. Like Kay, Donna considered that young L2 learners can benefit from explicit teaching of spelling-sound relations. She encouraged the students to match the sounds of English spellings with equivalent or similar sounds in Korean. However, she was rarely observed teaching something other than beginning consonants, and her instruction was also limited to certain sounds that are found in both Korean and English. Although Lyn and Donna

had differing approaches to reading instruction, Donna's teaching of grammar was similar to Lyn's practice. Like Lyn, Donna taught grammar explicitly when students were confused about it as well as when grammar mattered to their understanding of language input.

Growing as a Teacher: Learning from Experience

Donna learned a great deal about teaching from her own learning experience, teaching experience, and teachers' virtual community.

Apprenticeship of Observation. Despite her extensive professional development, what had influenced Donna's practice most were her memories of how she was taught. She often quoted what she heard from the teachers in her secondary school as the source of her teaching ideas. Examples included '*One should memorize everything he or she learned in order to become fluent in a second language*,' '*Practice makes perfect*,' and '*One should be able to read aloud text before reading for meaning.*' In Donna's classroom, these old sayings about L2 learning had influenced her teaching practices such as drill-like reading aloud and repetition drills of dialogs. To put it simply, Donna replicated the strategies she experienced as a student. Lortie (1975) argues that the time spent as a student may provide teachers with images of teaching that are difficult to overcome. Grossman (1990) too notes that teachers' experiences as a student might influence their knowledge about students' understanding and their repertoire of instructional strategies.

Observing Students. Donna reported that when she started teaching, her practices were guided by the national curriculum as well as the teacher education program by MOE. As directed in the curriculum, she focused more on oral communication skills than on reading in her early years of teaching. However, as she gained more teaching experience and observed students, her practices began to be guided more by her observations of how students learn English (TI D2 June 21, 2006). In particular, she had increasingly become aware that knowledge of print can help learners process oral language better, and that they need to be exposed more to print. Her teaching experience also enabled her to understand better what confuses learners and how she could help them in that case. For instance, although she typically did not provide contextual support when presenting words or sentences, there was one occasion when she did so. When the students worked

on comparative form, she provided pictures of two contrasting animals or people in order to help them understand it (FN D6 September 25, 2006). In an interview with me, she reported that from her experiences of teaching grade six students, she came to know that they were quite confused about comparative form and helped them understand it better (TI D4 October 19, 2006).

Teachers' Virtual Community. Throughout my observations of her classroom, I found that Donna's practice centered on worksheets (e.g., reading and writing worksheets, dictation sheets, topic vocabulary worksheets, grammar handouts, etc). When asked for the sources of her ideas of those sheets, she reported that she downloaded those worksheets mostly from the teachers' virtual community, *Indi School* and made a few changes for her students. She visited the community website on a regular basis for teaching ideas and worksheets, and it was operated by in-service teachers. Donna also reported that there were lots of materials posted there by other teachers, and all of them were classified according to grade levels, subject matter, and units. Although she was aware that teaching materials from other teachers were not always appropriate for her students, the website allowed her to quickly find something to add to so as not to spend too much time creating her own (TI D4 October 19, 2006).

CHAPTER FIVE
INTERPRETATION

The purpose of my research was to explore three teachers' knowledge and practices in English as a foreign language (EFL) reading classrooms in Korea and to identify the professional experiences they judge to have shaped their practice. The practices of the teacher participants, Lyn, Kay, and Donna as well as their rationales for practice are described in Chapter Four. This chapter provides interpretive accounts of the three teacher participants' knowledge and practices in two broad thematic areas: a balanced approach to second language (L2) reading instruction and L2 reading teachers' professional growth. Each section provides a discussion about the themes that emerged from my analyses of the three cases. In the first section, balanced L2 reading instruction, discussions center on how the findings of my study relate to what is known about effective reading instruction as well as effective teaching in general. Consistent with the view of teaching as a complex, context-embedded endeavor, special attention was given to conceptualizing what effective reading instruction might be like in Korean EFL classroom contexts rather than to evaluating the teacher participants' practices. The second section, L2 reading teachers' professional growth discusses the development of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in EFL reading classrooms and implications for teacher education.

A Balanced Approach to L2 Reading Instruction

Following years of disagreement and debate about how to best teach reading, research to date appears to endorse a balanced approach to reading instruction that incorporates varying amounts of explicit phonics instruction together with an emphasis on reading authentic texts for meaning as students go through the process of reading acquisition (Pressley, 2002; Shanahan & Neuman, 1997; Stahl, 1997; Strickland, 1998). A balanced approach to teaching reading is in line with research on exemplary teaching of literacy in that explicit skills instruction was well integrated with authentic reading and writing activities in those classrooms (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Pressley, Rankin & Yokoi, 1996; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). As for second

language learners, research indicates that L2 learners also benefit from a balanced approach that combines explicit instruction of breaking the code with opportunities to engage with meaningful text (Cummins, 2003; Fitzgerald & Noblit, 2000). At the heart of balanced reading instruction lies the notion that there is no best method for teaching reading and that instruction should be balanced so as to be sensitive to the needs and interests of students. Thus, what exactly balanced reading instruction is may vary for a specific group of learners. This section provides a discussion about how the participants' practices relate to what is known about effective reading instruction as well as what needs to be considered in appropriating balanced reading instruction in Korean EFL classrooms. In doing so, although the purpose of my research was not to evaluate teachers' knowledge and practices, it was somewhat inevitable to incorporate my observations of how the students learned in the participating classrooms and to examine their practices from the perspectives of the students. The following themes were identified as significant aspects in conceptualizing balanced L2 reading instruction in Korean EFL classrooms: (1) the four language skills are integrated in balanced L2 reading classrooms; (2) balanced L2 reading instruction embraces both planned and opportunistic teaching of phonics, but phonics does not dominate instruction; (3) children need to be exposed to different types of texts in balanced L2 reading classrooms; (4) balanced instruction enables children to experience reading in a variety of ways; (5) balanced L2 reading instruction involves content area connections in order to address learners' cognitive and language needs; and (6) traditional ways of teaching have a place in balanced L2 reading classrooms. These six themes emerged from cross-case analyses of the three teachers as I strived for the meanings of the findings in my study. The themes were identified as a way to understand all three teachers' knowledge and practices within a meaningful framework, and they suggest some elements of balanced L2 reading instruction based on the findings of my study. It does not mean, however, that they were reflected in the practices of all participants. Although each theme related to at least two teachers, some do not involve all three teachers. Each theme discusses not only their research-based practices but also their wonders and struggles.

Theme 1: The Four Language Skills are Integrated in Balanced L2 Reading Classrooms

One important theme in the practices of the teacher participants was the recognition of positive roles of reading in L2 acquisition as well as the integration of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). They had their own rationales for the integration of the four language skills developed from their teaching experiences.

Rationales for the integration of the four skills. Reading research confirms that well-developed oral-aural competence provides a sound foundation to build on in the process of learning to read (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001; Goswami, 2001). L2 readers thus face added challenges in learning to read due to their lack of exposure to the target language and oral language constraints (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003; Brown & Haynes, 1985; Grabe, 1991; Verhoeven, 1990). It is evident that L2 reading acquisition in the absence of well-developed language proficiency is very different from the typical L1 reading context, in which phonological awareness, lexical knowledge, and sense of grammar is generally much better developed (Brown & Haynes, 1985). When translating L2 readers' oral language constraints into teaching reading, it is important to provide L2 learners with the instructional support they need. However, it is not the case that reading instruction should be delayed totally until L2 learners reach a certain level of L2 proficiency. There is ample evidence that young second language learners are able to learn to read right from the beginning. First of all, the positive results obtained in dual language programs confirm that young children can develop L1 and L2 reading simultaneously when provided with opportunities to use both of the languages and instructional support (Cummins, 2003; Krashen, 2003; Reyes, 2006). Fitzgerald and Noblit (2000) similarly document how new immigrant students were able to learn to read successfully in her ethnically diverse first grade classroom even though they were barely able to speak English at the time they arrived. Research also confirms that some literacy skills such as concepts of print and the alphabetic principle can be transferred from L1 to L2 (Tabors & Snow, 2004). Geva (2006) too indicates that L2 children can learn to read and spell words and achieve similar accuracy to that of L1 children even when their

second language proficiency is still developing. In sum, young L2 learners are capable of learning to read in their second language especially if they are already literate in L1.

The teacher participants of my study, Lyn, Kay, and Donna pointed out that there is no reason to delay reading instruction until children develop some degree of oral language proficiency. They all supported the integration of the four language skills right from the beginning in order for successful L2 learning to occur. In the interviews with me, it was clear that working with children enabled the teachers to be aware that children are capable of learning to read in their second language even when their L2 proficiency is limited.

From her positive experience of teaching English to grade one students using illustrated storybooks, Lyn came to think that grade one students are able to learn to read in English and enjoy reading when provided with something interesting and meaningful to read. She stressed that some comprehension strategies children developed through reading books in Korean (e.g., guess meaning using picture context) could be transferred to second language reading.

Based on her observation of grade four students, Kay questioned why teachers were expected to keep children away from print even when they had desires to read and write in a second language. She noted that students were already surrounded by English print and curious to read English words; many of consumer products and companies in Korea are displayed in both Korean and English (e.g., Samsung, Hyundai). Kay was particularly against the separation of reading and writing in the current national curriculum and textbook; the textbook asked children to read the English alphabet letters in grade four but to write them in grade five. Students in her class typically made their own alphabet books as a result of learning the English alphabet letters. They enjoyed drawing, coloring, and writing letters and related words, and in this manner, they developed thorough familiarity with the letters they learned. Treiman (1998) states that writing has an important role to play in learning to read in that spelling encourages children to think about the sounds of words and to link the sounds to letters. According to Treiman, children's spellings provide information about their knowledge of phonological awareness and orthography, so writing should be coordinated with reading.

Donna recognized the positive role of print in processing oral language. Based on her six years of teaching experience, she felt a need to provide students with key vocabulary and sentences before listening to a dialog and written dialogs after listening. Her view of oral language and print was that students are better able to process oral language with the help of print; because oral language passes by rapidly, L2 learners have more control over written language. She also thought that in this way, students would be better able to see how oral language is mapped onto print as well as to practice dialogs whenever they wanted to do so.

The teachers all agreed that the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) should be integrated so as to be mutually supportive in the process of second language acquisition. Thus, their lessons indicated lots of restructuring of the national curriculum, and the four language skills were integrated in a lesson. Integration of the four language skills represents the learning context that would facilitate learning to read. Flippo (1998) investigated the contexts and practices that would facilitate learning to read on which the reading experts could agree. One of the contexts and practices identified in her study was to enable learners to use every opportunity to bring the four language skills together so that each feeds from and into the other.

Reshaping the Curriculum. While it is taken for granted that the four language skills are integrated in L1 reading classrooms, there is often strict control of written language in L2 reading classrooms with much attention to learners' limited L2 proficiency. A look at the current elementary English curriculum in Korea reveals the idea of controlling written language for young L2 learners: English alphabet letters for grade four, words for grade five, sentences for grade six. In this regard, the teacher participants called into question the notion of communicative language teaching reflected in the national English curriculum in Korea. Lyn and Kay argued that although the idea of communicative language teaching is to surround learners with authentic language uses and situations, the curriculum ignores written communication through which most foreign language learners are exposed to the target language. The strict control of written language has its roots in a L2 teaching methodology, the Audiolingual method. Rivers (1968) describes typical audio-lingual programs as follows: "the students must never be allowed to read alone a script which he has not learned orally first, or else heard a number

of times" (p. 220). Thus, listening and speaking are considered to be primary skills in audio-lingual classrooms, and written language was seen to be a secondary representation of spoken language (Grittner, 1990). Written dialogs as reading material are also typical of audio-lingual classrooms. As Lyn and Kay pointed out, the curriculum attempts to adopt the functional view of language and communicative language teaching, but reading instruction falls back into the structural view of language and the ideas from the audio-lingual method. Arguing against the structural view of reading instruction, Lyn noted that if children are asked to read only what they had learned orally, there would be nothing to read for meaning, and they would not become motivated to read at all. She also pointed out that reading is not a source of undesirable difficulty but could be a source of comprehensible language input when materials are carefully selected.

Proponents of whole language particularly indicate that in second language learning, both written and oral language can be developed simultaneously, and that the four language modes—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—are mutually supportive and cannot be separated (Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Rigg, 1991). Given L2 learners' limited exposure to the target language, it may be optimistic that beginning L2 readers learn to read easily just by being immersed in print. Nevertheless, the strict control of written language in the current curriculum is likely to reduce reading to a boring event and does not reflect the way children learn a second language. Focusing solely on oral language and delaying written language also limits choices and ways teachers find to support students' second language learning (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). Reading and writing as well as listening and speaking should be integral parts of balanced L2 reading classrooms so that each feeds from and into the other.

Theme 2: Balanced L2 Reading Instruction Embraces Both Planned and Opportunistic Teaching of Phonics, but Phonics does not Dominate Instruction

The teaching of phonics was varied in the participating classrooms due to the teachers' views of reading, the needs of students, and their knowledge of phonics instruction. A closer look at their practices sheds some light on how to appropriate phonics instruction in Korean EFL classrooms.

Planned Teaching of Phonics for L2 Learners. Efficient, automatic word recognition is essential for both L1 and L2 children to read the text with ease and speed

(Adams, 1990, 1994; Carrell & Grabe, 2002; Ehri, 1998; Grabe, 1991). Verhoeven (1990) identifies three different ways of reading words: phonemic mapping, recognition of orthographic patterns, and direct recognition of words. Verhoeven points out that due to their lack of exposure to the target language, young L2 readers are considered to have limited phonological awareness and lexical knowledge, thus having difficulties with all of these word recognition processes. Studies have shown that L2 learners benefit from explicit phonics instruction because it addresses their perceived phonological weakness and limited orthographic knowledge (Lenters, 2004; Perez Canado, 2006; Shen, 2003; Stuart, 1999, 2004). Moreover, cross-linguistic research suggests that "the acquisition of the basic strategy of phonological decoding takes considerably longer in English than in many other orthographies" (Landerl, 2006, p. 513). Explicit teaching of phonics skills may help Korean learners of English to develop strategies to cope with the opacity of an English writing system. Among the teacher participants of my study, Kay's practice provides an excellent window into how students grew as alphabetic readers of print in a beginning EFL classroom.

Teaching of decoding skills was a significant aspect of Kay's teaching practice because her students were just beginning to read in their second language, English. Her teaching of decoding skills was a systematic reflection of her students' abilities. According to the five phases of word learning by Ehri and McCormick (2004), many of the grade four students in Kay's class were in the pre-alphabetic phase at the beginning of the year and could be identified as logographic readers. Kay reported that they had trouble reading words without any context clues such as pictures, and letters in a word exerted little influence on their reading. Ehri and McCormick suggest that explicit instruction in letter recognition and phonemic awareness help learners move from the pre-alphabetic to the partial-alphabetic phase of word learning in which learners begin to use partial letter-sound relations (e.g., initial or final letters) in reading words. In order to help the students understand that letters represents sounds, Kay began the year with explicit instruction in the sounds of the English alphabet letters and strengthened the students' familiarity with graphic forms of letters through alphabet book-making. She then proceeded to explicit instruction in phonemic awareness through which the students were encouraged to listen for the beginning consonants of words and select the

corresponding letters. In this manner, she helped learners understand how words are composed of sounds as well as how the sounds they detect in spoken words are mapped on to letters. It is important to note that Kay encouraged the students to use the alphabet letters as a conceptual category in segmenting beginning consonants. Hohn and Ehri (1983) similarly demonstrated that the effects of phonemic awareness training were stronger when letters were used. Later in the year, Kay made attempts to help the students move from the partial-alphabetic to the full alphabetic phase of word learning which involves working knowledge of the major spelling-sound correspondences including vowels (Ehri & McCormick, 2004). She taught the vowel spelling system through common spelling patterns (e.g., *at, ate, an, ane*) as well as phonics stories such as *Zac the Rat*. She also provided the students with blending exercises in order to encourage them to apply their emerging awareness of beginning consonants and the vowel spelling patterns. Throughout the year, Kay made an effort to help learners move along the path of becoming an alphabetic reader of English print, and students in her class were making progress in their abilities to read English words. In particular, when I had a chance to observe a group of six students in early November, most of them were able to read unfamiliar and nonsense words such as *nat*, *nate*, and *rake*. They were also able to articulate which sound each letter represent (FN K8 November 3, 2006).

Donna's class provides an interesting example of why the development of alphabetic knowledge should not be left to self-discovery or chance for second language learners. Donna was frustrated that despite three years of formal English learning in school, many of her grade six students still had difficulties reading words in isolation. She interpreted this as a sign that young L2 learners do not pay careful attention to letters in a word unless they are directed to do so. For this reason, Donna purposefully did not provide picture contexts when presenting the key words of the unit. In order to help the students process words alphabetically, she also encouraged them to link the beginning consonants they detect in English words with equivalent or similar sounds in Korean; even though this unique way of teaching sounds and spellings was limited because some English phonemes are not represented by Korean. Throughout the year Donna continued to help learners see how oral language is mapped onto print by identifying sentence cards after listening to a dialog and providing dictation tasks.

One of the common misconceptions about phonics instruction is that it is boring, too analytic because it teaches rules and use worksheets (Stahl, Duffy-Hester & Stahl, 1998). Kay's teaching practice shows that phonics instruction does not have to be boring and need not use worksheets. When students were working on phonemic segmentation practice, they enjoyed this rather analytic activity in the form of a TV quiz show. They were also excited about blending practice through a small group competition game. Although Lyn did not teach decoding and spelling skills explicitly, she did plan ways to help learners acquire word recognition skills and spelling skills through a variety of word games such as word chain, scrambles words, crossword puzzles, and the word learning program *Spywatch*. Dictation tasks through the use of pop songs also helped learners see how oral language is mapped onto print in her classroom. Given her students' negative attitude toward English learning due to their heavy prior learning experiences, Lyn particularly wanted her students to develop sight vocabulary and to learn to spell in a motivating way. In addition, explicit instruction in spelling-sound relations did not have priority in her class because many of the students had already developed some degree of alphabetic knowledge as described in Chapter Four.

Proponents of whole language worry that phonics instruction will lead children to sound out words too much, with not enough attention paid to meaning (Weaver, 1994). Interestingly, when I talked to a group of students in Kay's class, some of them knew exactly what phonics was for (FN K8 November 3, 2006). One student reported that phonics helped her remember words better because it helped link letters with sounds. I was also struck by another grade four student who articulated, "I heard that we can read about 60 % of regular English words with the help of phonics, so we should learn it".

In sum, given their limited exposure to the target language, the chances of acquiring decoding skills naturally may be slight for second language learners as Donna noted. When their attention is directed to letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns, young L2 learners are more likely to process words alphabetically and develop sight vocabulary with ease. If the process of breaking the code is laborious, they may lose interest and motivation to read in a second language. From the case of Kay's teaching practice, it is also clear that well-thought out phonics instruction challenges students appropriately as well as in a motivating way.

It is certain, however, that reading words in isolation and explicit teaching of decoding skills should not dominate instruction. Research indicates that although contributing to the development of word recognition skill, phonics instruction does not directly translate into better reading comprehension skills (Stuart, 2004). Studies have also shown that children should be encouraged to apply decoding strategies in conjunction with other contextual clues (Cunningham, 1990) and that phonics instruction with authentic reading results in better student achievement than phonics only or reading only approaches (Hatcher, Hulme & Ellis, 1994). The following subsection furthers the discussion about the notion of teaching phonics in the context of authentic reading.

Opportunistic Teaching of Phonics. Research on exemplary teaching of literacy demonstrates that effective teachers teach the phonics skills students need in the context of authentic reading and writing (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Pressley, Rankin & Yokoi, 1996; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). In particular, the idea of teaching phonics in context is well documented in the works of Dahl, Scharer, Lawson, and Grogan (1999, 2001). They observed eight first-grade classrooms where there was coexistence of phonics instruction and holistic approaches over an entire school year. The most significant finding of their study was that opportunistic teaching of phonics was prevalent in those classrooms. Teachers often provided on-the-spot instruction designed to match each student's development during reading and writing conferences. They also kept track of the skill progress of individual children and taught mini-lessons that address each student's particular area of difficulty. The underlying principles of opportunistic teaching are that teachers match instruction to the developmental needs of children and that phonics knowledge is important not for its own sake but in its application (Dahl, Scharer, Lawson & Grogan, 2001). Relating this body of research to my study, however, I rarely observed the teacher participants teaching phonics skills in the context of reading and writing. Although Kay was committed to a balanced approach, she typically arranged 10 to 15 minute mini-lessons every morning for the teaching of the alphabetic principle because phonics was not reflected in the national English textbook. Thus, teaching of skills was not well integrated with reading on many occasions. When encountering students' spelling errors, Lyn pronounced the word very slowly and clearly in order to help them notice what spelling or sound they

missed. If the students failed to notice, however, she typically spelled words for them in many cases.

The notion of teaching phonics in context has potential in Korean EFL classroom contexts. Because the teachers reported that it was the curriculum mandates and time constraints that often limited their teaching of phonics, use of teachable moments in teaching phonics may address not only the time constraints they had but also students' developmental needs. In fact, my observations of the participating classrooms indicated that there were some instructional moments the teachers could use to scaffold students' learning to decode and spell. For example, although students in Lyn's class had developed some degree of phonics knowledge, their knowledge was still limited as seen in examples of students' misspellings. When I observed how a group of students were doing on a word chain task, a few students circled the word, *Rondon* instead of the word, *London*. In the follow-up dictation task, these students were consistently using the word *Rondon* in filling in the blank (FN L4 July 7, 2004). This spelling error indicates that Korean speakers have difficulty distinguishing /l/ and /r/ sounds in English because Korean does not have these two sounds. Neither does Korean have the two English "th" sounds as in *this* and *think*, nor does it have the /f/ and /v/ sounds. When students' difficulties with spelling consistently relate to the differences in the phonemes of two languages, teachers could provide on-the-spot instruction on these phonemes-graphemes. Research also confirms that although L2 learners can transfer phonological awareness developed in their L1 to L2, phonological elements specific to the second language presents additional challenges to beginning L2 readers (Durgunoğlu, Nagy & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993; Wade-Woolley & Geva, 2000). L2 learners thus need instruction on sound-spelling correspondences that do not occur in their first language. Differences in the structure of English and Korean were also linked to students' difficulties recognizing English syllables. As described in Chapter Four, students in Kay's class had difficulties with syllable recognition in English words because of the differences in visual forms of syllables of English and Korean. In this case, teachers may guide students explicitly on English syllabification. My observation also indicated that some grade six students in Lyn and Donna's class were confused about similarly spelled words such as *musician/magician, basketball/baseball*, which means that they used partial letters and

sounds to identify these words. I similarly observed a student in Lyn's class reading *New Year's Day* as *New Yesterday*. In these cases, teachers could help students attend to the letters and sounds that differentiate similarly spelled words. Ehri and McCormick (2004) note that "the spellings make visible the difficulties that students are having with the graphophonic system" (p. 375). When teachers carefully observe how students spell and read, they could be better able to match instruction to the developmental needs of students.

From the interviews, it was clear that the teachers had not been informed of the notion of teaching phonics in context. Neither had they been informed of how students' performances of reading and spelling carry important information about their development. Opportunistic teaching of phonics indeed requires teachers to observe carefully students' reading and writing as well as to have a rich repertoire of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies. It is certain that teachers need support in order to become a better observer of students and to match instruction to the needs of students.

Despite its potential in EFL classrooms, strict reliance on teachable moments may not cover enough of what students need to learn. Pearson and Raphael (2003) suggest the need for teachers to operate flexibly between two extremes: the predetermined curriculum of skill instruction and the curriculum unveiled as teachable moments occur. As observed in Kay's classroom, when students are beginning to read in a second language, explicit instruction in letters and phonemic awareness may be necessary in order to help learners become alphabetic readers of print. Since students have developed a limited working knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences as seen in Lyn's class, instruction may rest more on opportunistic teaching of phonics in the context of reading and writing in order to scaffold students' learning. Teachers may also provide planned mini-lessons on phonics that addresses the particular area of difficulty most students have (e.g., grapheme-phoneme elements specific to the second language).

Theme 3: Children Need to be Exposed to Different Types of Texts in Balanced L2 Reading Classrooms

The main types of texts used in the participating classrooms are discussed in relation to students' needs: use of high-interest storybooks and other types of texts such

as the lyrics of pop songs and phonics stories.

High-Interest Storybooks. The use of storybooks in L2 instruction provides a motivating, meaningful context for language learning as well as a valuable communication resource (Cho & Seo, 2001; Elley &Mangubhai, 1983; Ghosn, 2002; Redmond, 1994). Attractive illustrations in a book can be used as a means by which beginning readers are invited into authentic reading, and books also provide learners with important input for vocabulary growth (Elley, 1991). Although the use of storybooks was more frequently observed in one classroom than the others, the teacher participants of my study used storybooks at times either to provide a motivating medium for a topic to be learned or to extend students' learning of communicative functions in different situations. As foreign language teachers, one of their primary concerns was to motivate students to learn English, and each expressed interest in reading a high-interest storybook because of its motivating power. Taking a closer look at their use of storybooks however reveals the difficulties they had in selecting appropriate books for beginning L2 readers and the challenges they met in Korean EFL classroom contexts.

Selecting appropriate books is important in order to ensure beginning L2 readers have enjoyable, rewarding, and successful reading experiences (Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003). Redmond (1994) suggests the following criteria for the evaluation of a text to be used in elementary foreign language classrooms: interest level; difficulty of vocabulary; cultural authenticity; the variety of topics that can be incorporated with the elementary curriculum; the use of repeated language patterns; and an uncomplicated story line. García and Bauer (2004) similarly noted that the following features of a text provide L2 learners with the scaffolding they need: the repetitive and predictable structure, language rich in imagery, and culturally familiar texts. Some of these criteria were also recognized by the participants of my study.

When selecting a book, its relevance to the curriculum topics was particularly important for the teachers because there was limited time allocated for teaching English (80 minutes a week) and the national textbook mandated the specific content to be covered. In Lyn's class, the books such as *Willy the Dreamer* (Browne, 1998) and *What I Want to Be* were incorporated into the thematic lesson 'Jobs'. Kay built interaction by asking and saying what time it is around the electronic story *My Day*.

Selecting interesting stories was also important. Both Lyn and Kay reported that interesting stories engage students and motivate them to read more in English. Overall, the students in both classes reported positive responses to the books used. While being read the book *Gruffalo,* students in Kay's class were excited about discovering what would happen as a quick-witted mouse encountered a host of predators (Donaldson, 1999). Kay reported that she passed the book round during the recess times because many of the students wanted to read it again (TI K4 October 18, 2006). Lyn's students also loved the story line carried in a word learning program, *Spywatch,* and they were intrigued by figuring out who the spy would be. Students' positive reactions to *Spywatch* were evident in the case of a student who reported to have searched the web for *Spywatch* to find out what would happen next. Both of these stories had an engaging storyline for children.

Knowing that difficult texts cannot be interesting, the teachers chose books with repetitive sentences and quality illustrations. In the illustrated book, *Willy the Dreamer* (Browne, 1998) which Lyn used, the first few pages of the book establish a pattern that is found throughout the remainder of the book. It begins: *Willy dreams. Sometimes Willy dreams that he's a movie star or a singer, a sumo wrestler, or a ballet dancer... Willy dreams*. The book continues this pattern, with illustrations to match in each case, for a painter, an explorer, a famous writer, a scuba driver, etc. The electronic book, *What I Want to Be* used by Lyn and Donna also had a repetitive sentence pattern with matching visuals: *I want to be a doctor when I grow up so I can care for sick people.* Another electronic book, *My Day* in Kay's class also worked through the repetitive sentence pattern: *What time is it? It's seven o'clock. It's time to get up.*

The criteria mentioned guided the teachers in their selection of appropriate books. The practices of the teacher participants, however, also revealed a dilemma in choosing books for beginning L2 readers. In particular, Lyn mentioned that when she chose books only by text difficulty level, her grade six students tended to think the books were childish or appropriate for the lower grades students. Books for beginning readers usually have matching illustrations to scaffold specific word identification and use familiar words, rhyme, and repetition to foster predictable reading (Hiebert, 1998; Purcell-Gates & Duke, 2004). It is important to note that many of the books available are often targeted for

beginning L1 readers, so the contents of these books may not be interesting for L2 students when they begin to learn a second language in the intermediate or upper grades of elementary school. As an example, the illustrated book, *Willy the Dreamer* (Browne, 1998) in Lyn's class was relevant to the curriculum topic 'Jobs' and was easy to understand with the help of repetitive sentence patterns and matching illustrations. However, grade six students in her class did not express much interest in this rather simple storybook. They were much more excited about the *Spywatch* even though the texts in it were somewhat difficult to understand. The mismatch between students' abilities and interest level was observed in Kay's class as well. The book *Gruffalo* (Donaldson, 1999) engaged most of the students when Kay began to read it. It was observed, however, that about a quarter of the students gradually lost their attention as time went on. Although the book had the repetitive sentences and rhyming words, it was about 30 pages long and had some unfamiliar words such as *prickle*, *knobbly knees*, and *a poisonous wart.*

An interesting storyline certainly engages young L2 readers. However, comprehensible texts also matter a great deal in maintaining their interests and attention (Paris & Carpenter, 2004). Research shows that inferring word meaning from context is an uncertain process for beginning readers (Schwanenflugel, Stahl & McFalls, 1997), so teachers need to choose books that match students' abilities. Thus, one possible answer to the teachers' dilemma would be that beginning L2 readers should be encouraged to read highly engaging texts if they are at a reasonable level of difficulty. When a storybook is highly engaging, students would be motivated to read it and make an effort to comprehend the texts as seen in the case of a grade six student who searched the web for *Spywatch.*

Consideration of book selection should also extend beyond the characteristics of a book itself because students are better able to understand texts with instructional support. Teachers could think about the features of a text that might challenge a reader (e.g., vocabulary load) as well as those that support a reader (e.g., illustrations and predictable structures) (Hoffman, Roser & Sailors, 2004). They then could help learners work on challenging texts by providing adequate preparation and guidance on constructing meaning. There is indeed a variety of ways to scaffold students' reading experiences

using a set of pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities (Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003), and some of them were observed in the participating classrooms as described in Chapter Four. It is also interesting to note that one of the teacher participants, Kay read a book familiar to the students in their first language, *The Giving Tree* (Silverstein, 1992). García and Bauer (2004) maintain that "listening to a parallel or similar version of the text in the native language also helps to scaffold the students' comprehension of the English text" (p. 191). Although difficult to find, there may also be highly engaging texts that are also comprehensible to beginning L2 readers. The teacher participants reported that their use of storybooks was constrained by their limited repertoire of available books. When teachers are given more opportunities to share a list of available books and teaching ideas, they would then be able to make more sophisticated choices about appropriate books for beginning L2 readers in a range of topics.

Examining the practices of the teacher participants adds another unique and interesting aspect of selecting and reading storybooks to L2 readers; that is, they preferred to use electronic storybooks with taped oral reading by a native speaker of English. The electronic books used in the participating classrooms such as *What I want to Be* and *My Day* included some multimedia additions such as visual representation and oral reading of the text. The three teachers all perceived the advantages of using these electronic books as follows: they provide oral reading of a text by a native speaker of English with corresponding words highlighted; more readable formats when displayed on the big screen; and easy accessibility for students' independent reading. As the teachers noted, certain features of electronic texts can be effectively used for EFL students' learning to read. Electronic books allow readers to have the text read to them so as to help them practice what they have learned without constant teacher support (National Reading Panel, 2000; Kamil, Kim & Lane, 2004). As the corresponding words were highlighted in the electronic texts as being read, electronic books may also lead to increased attention to the spelling and sound of words (Davidson, Elcock & Noyes, 1996). Despite these benefits, the electronic stories used in the participating classrooms did not carry quality illustrations and interesting storylines in many cases because they were created by the local English teaching resource website (e.g., www.kizclub.com) and were available to

any Internet users for free. Although being aware of the drawbacks of these electronic stories, the teacher participants of my study relied upon them as an easy, practical way to read books because of their limited collection of quality storybooks and their lack of confidence in their own English pronunciations.

In effective L1 reading classrooms, students spend much time reading high quality children's literature, and there is typically an in-class library with books classified according to level. There is also a large, uninterrupted block of instructional time for reading in different genres for different purposes (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Pressley, Rankin & Yokoi, 1996). Although the teacher participants were supportive of reading high-interest storybooks, their use of storybooks was, to some extent, quite limited in terms of amount of time devoted and the number of times I observed their use. Given the contextual constraints mentioned, use of storybooks in EFL reading classrooms cannot be simply compared to that of L1 reading classrooms in North American classroom contexts. It may be difficult for EFL teachers to find large block of instructional time for L2 reading instruction, to provide a large collection of books, and to encourage students to choose and read personally interesting books. The teachers in my study nevertheless did not simply accept the texts in the national textbook as appropriate and made an effort to introduce more meaningful, interesting material to their students. They also had clear ideas about appropriate books for beginning L2 readers. More support for teachers (e.g., information about quality books and financial support) is needed.

Other Types of Texts for Beginning L2 Readers. Each participant's practice revealed a unique and interesting aspect of text selection in addition to the use of storybooks. In Lyn's classroom, the lyrics of popular songs were used as a source of reading materials reflecting her belief that reading should be something students can enjoy. Students' positive responses to this practice indicate how songs can be effectively used to motivate students to learn English as well as to allow them to practice what they learned in a pleasant way. Through pop songs, students practiced the key expressions and words of the unit, built the connections between oral language and print, and reinforced their learning of grammar. Lyn's varied uses of pop songs were in line with some literacy educators' attempts to use songs as a means to support students' learning to read as well

as to motivate them to read (Douville, 2001; Barry & Pellissier, 1995). Although Lyn did not use children's songs because she considered them to be somewhat childish for grade six students, children's songs present rich instructional possibilities in grades three and four classrooms. Smith (2000) illustrates how children's songs can be used as effective means to support students' learning in the areas of letter names and sounds, phonemic awareness, print conventions, and word identification. Songs with rhyming words may encourage L2 children to examine the spelling patterns, and ABC songs may also help them develop familiarity with the English alphabet letters.

Donna's practice centered much more on written dialogs as reading materials. She thought that although not including something interesting and new to read, written dialogs may enable learners to understand easily how oral language is mapped onto print when the curriculum focuses on oral communication.

Kay's practices show varied uses of texts for different purposes. She used highly decodable phonics stories in order to encourage her students to apply their emerging awareness of spelling and sound relations to reading a text. Research indicates that children tend to pay little attention to the words in highly predictable books because they can read the story with minimal print cues (Johnston, 2000), which means that they should also have opportunities to use the letter cues in reading words through decodable texts (Stahl & Stahl, 2004). It should be noted, however, that just as phonics does not dominate instruction, neither should the use of decodable texts. Some students in Kay's class reported that they were frustrated when they could not find some of the regular but low frequency words such as *zac in the Zac the Rat* and *peg in Peg the Hen* in a bilingual dictionary. Students did not enjoy these somewhat incomprehensible texts as much as they did reading high-interest books. Another interesting aspect of Kay's class was that she shared with the students interesting articles from the English newspaper for children, *Kid's Herald*, in order to boost students' learning of vocabulary. For Kay, reading newspaper articles enabled students to acquire some vocabulary easily because they meaningfully related to students' lives (e.g., term exams and vacations) as well as to their interests in specific topics or events (e.g., events for Children's Day on May 5th).

Although the selection of texts varied in each classroom, all participants had clear purposes for the reading materials they used, and their ways of using texts were

consistent with an understanding of how to direct learners' attention to the skills they wanted to accomplish. Their varied uses of reading materials indicate that L2 teachers need the flexibility to choose a variety of texts which address students' needs and interests. Research confirms that a single type of text cannot address the strategies and skills young readers need to learn (Hiebert, 1998; Pearson & Raphael, 2003). Hiebert (1998) argues that "seeing many different texts was precisely the way in which successful early readers learned to associate oral and written language, to understand the functions and forms of written language, and to distinguish the language of books from typical speech" (p. 213). Of importance would be teachers' flexible but thoughtful decisions about texts in relation to where students are and what they need at the time.

Theme 4: Balanced Reading Instruction Enables Children to Experience Reading in a Variety of Ways

Teachers' grouping strategies is an important part of instruction which shapes the kinds of experiences students have in a classroom. This sub-section takes a closer look at the grouping practices of the teacher participants and the following grouping strategies are discussed in light of students' needs: whole-class instruction, small group instruction, and individual work.

Whole-Class Instruction. Whole-class grouping is a popular, common format classrooms (Reutzel, 2003), and the typical grouping pattern in the participating classrooms was also teacher-directed, undifferentiated whole-class instruction. Although one may associate whole-class instruction with somewhat negative images such as learners' inactivity and a boring atmosphere, whole-class instruction has its place in beginning L2 reading classrooms.

Reutzel (2003) maintains that "whole-class instruction can be used effectively to address the general developmental needs of children" (p. 244) and to provide explicit, systematic skills and strategy instruction. Kay also used teacher-directed whole-class instruction to address the general needs of her grade four students, becoming alphabetic readers of print. Her explicit teaching of letters was beneficial to all students with different abilities. Weaker students learned to identify the English alphabet letters. Stronger students came to understand better the sounds of letters and developed thorough familiarity with the letters even though they were already able to identify the letters.

Whole-class instruction also provides a good place for guided reading as well as shared discussion about text (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1998; Flood, Lapp, Flood & Nagel, 1992; Reutzel, 2003). Through whole-class instruction, the three teachers in my study guided students on what to attend to before and while reading text. As pre-reading activities, Lyn helped the students to relate their prior knowledge and experiences to the content of a text. Kay led the students to name things in the pictures, to read aloud the title of the book, and to predict what the text would be about. Donna also explicitly taught the key words of a text by presenting a word list and informed students what the text was about as well as what to focus on while reading through pre-questioning. After preparing learners for reading the text, all three teachers provided model reading of the text and followed with exchanging questions and answers about the text as a class. In this manner, the teachers used whole-class instruction as a space to provide explicit guidance on how to construct meaning out of a text as well as what reading is about. They also engaged students in shared discussions about a text, giving students opportunities to put their ideas from a text into language as well as to hear the ideas of others.

Researchers agree that whole-class instruction needs to be a regular part of reading classrooms (Berghoff & Egawa, 1991; Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1998; Flood, Lapp, Flood & Nagel, 1992; Reutzel, 2003). However, when whole-class learning dominates instruction, there is often limited room for students' active participation and limited focus on students as individuals (Beghoff & Egawa, 1991). My observations of the participating classrooms also indicate that whole-class instruction did not allow sufficient time for weaker students to answer comprehension questions and to complete given tasks on their own. It was often a few good students who answered most of teachers' questions and dominated classroom interaction. Once a few good students answered the questions, teachers quickly proceeded to the next step, so weaker students did not have an opportunity to think of the given questions on their own. For example, when students in Lyn's class worked on scrambled words and sentences displayed on the screen, a few students quickly figured out the original words and sentences and shouted them. At those times, it was questionable what other students who were silent were making of this activity. In the interviews, all three teachers pointed out that one of the main problems in their classrooms was wide variation in students' English abilities as a

result of differing amounts of prior English learning experiences. They also agreed that relying solely on whole-class instruction could not address the needs of students with different abilities. Nevertheless, whole-class instruction continued to be a dominant organizational format in the participating classrooms; even though the amount of time devoted to whole-class instruction varied in each. The teachers had some underlying reasons why whole-class instruction dominated their practices.

The case of Donna presents a possibility that whole-class instruction may be driven by teachers' philosophy about teaching and learning and their roles in the classroom. Donna expressed her view of an effective teacher as the one who is knowledgeable about subject matter and able to organize what to teach clearly as well as to explain things clearly. Au and Raphael (1998) identified the following variations in teachers' roles in terms of the amount of teacher control and student activity: explicit instructing, modeling, scaffolding, facilitating, and participating. Based on her view of an effective teacher, Donna considered modeling and clear explanation to be important aspects of teaching, and whole-class instruction was a good place to do so. From the interviews, it seemed that her view of an effective teacher had been shaped, to some extent, by her past experience as a student in schooling when traditional values such as Confucianism had much influence in classrooms. Research on the learning culture indicates that many Korean classrooms reflect traditional educational values, originated from Confucianism, such as the authority of a teacher as knowledge giver, the teacher's strong control, appreciation of students' working hard, students as knowledge receivers, and the emphasis on whole-group activities (Han, 2005; Ho, Peng & Chan, 2001; Kwon, 2003; Park, 2002). Donna's unfamiliarity with working in small groups and her preference for whole-class instruction could be attributed to her past learning experiences shaped by these traditional educational values. However, these cultural influences were not obvious in Lyn and Kay's views of effective teaching even though whole-class instruction was dominant in their classrooms as well. They recognized teachers' roles as facilitator and appreciated students' active participation. Further, Donna's whole-class dominated practice was influenced not only by the traditional educational values but also by her personal learning style and her observation of how students learn a second

language as described in Chapter Four. The teachers' decision to use whole-class instruction cannot be understood simply by considerations of the cultural influences.

Classroom management may also influence teachers' decision to use whole-class instruction. Research indicates that many teachers in American elementary classrooms chose whole-class instruction for management reasons (e.g., ease of planning) (Moody, Vaughn & Schumm, 1997; Schumm, Moody & Vaughn, 2000). From the interviews and observations, it was clear that the participant teachers in my study also chose whole-class instruction in order to minimize the complexity of classroom management. They thus tended to rely on whole-class instruction when they had little control over students' behaviors. For instance, when Lyn changed the seating arrangement from small groups to whole class at the beginning of the second semester, she reported that she had to do so because students were very noisy in small groups due to school events at that time of the year (e.g., school festival). Kay also experienced the challenges of managing the class around the same time of the year and relied more on whole-class instruction and individual seat work. It should be noted that as English specialists, both Lyn and Donna did not have enough time to deal with management issues and tended to rely more on teacher-led whole-class instruction and follow-up individual seatwork.

Small Group Instruction. Small group instruction is a critical part of accommodating the needs of students as individuals. However, the practices of Kay and Lyn reveal a unique pattern that they both used small groups not to address the differences in students' interests and abilities but to provide reinforcement and practice. For instance, Kay used small groups for blending and reading aloud practice. Lyn also formed small groups mostly when the class worked on language games as a reinforcement of learning. Accordingly, students worked on the same material in small groups, and I rarely observed learning centers which are typically used to address differences in students' interests. Further, the teachers were rarely observed providing guided mini-lessons for a particular group of students to address their particular needs. It is worth noting that the practices of Lyn and Kay clearly showed appreciation of students' interests. Lyn tried to reflect children's pop culture in her instruction. Kay also used the ideas of TV game shows for the students' interests. However, their practice centered more on the interests of students as a group rather than as individuals.

The unique grouping pattern above could be related to two common threads of the teachers' concerns in foreign language classrooms: teachers' limited access to reading material and the importance of reinforcement and practice as well as students' motivation. In order to provide students with opportunities to choose and read texts of their interests as observed in Literature Circles, teachers need to introduce briefly a selection of books, to prepare a few copies of each book, to organize small groups according to students' interests in the books, and to guide each group on reading the selected books (Optiz, 1998b; Reutzel, 2003). Thus, the reason for the absence of various learning centers in the participating classrooms could be attributed to the teachers' limited access to a variety of reading materials and the contextual constraints (e.g., time, curriculum mandates, and limited financial support) as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Both Lyn and Kay regarded reinforcement and practice as an important aspect of foreign language learning, and use of competitive small groups and prizes was common in their classrooms as a means to do so in a motivating way. Lyn and Kay appreciated the values of presenting intrinsically motivating and reasonably challenging materials for individuals. However, given students' limited exposure to the target language and their lack of motivation in a foreign language context, they considered adding the components of competition and prizes could lead to students' overall enjoyment of English lessons and better memory of language by appealing to their extrinsic motivation. Research on motivation and exemplary teachers clearly favors intrinsic orientations especially for long-term effects (Dörnyei, 1998; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block & Morrow, 2001). However, in descriptive studies of foreign language classrooms, activities appealing to students' extrinsic motivation such as competition, games, and prizes comprise an important part of L2 teachers' instructional strategies (Mitchell & Martin, 1997; Nikolov, 1999). In addition, Crooks and Schmidt (1991) suggest that attention to input is a necessary condition for language learning and that students' attention to target language items (e.g., key vocabulary) may be affected by rewards in addition to other factors such as interest, goals, and intentions. Students' enjoyment of activities and rewards may not be always associated with increased attention to input. Nevertheless, in a foreign learning context, teachers may make more use of games, small

group competition and prizes in order to engage students and motivate them to learn an L2.

Although the grouping practices of the teachers did not address the differences in students' interests, Kay's practice shows how she used cooperating small groups in order to address the academic, social, and emotional needs of young L2 learners. Being aware of students' varying levels of abilities, Kay used mixed-ability grouping rather than ability grouping and encouraged students to work cooperatively on challenging tasks (e.g., onset and rime blending, making combination words). For Kay, mixed-ability grouping certainly had benefits. Weaker students felt more secure when working with others on challenging tasks and were able to complete given tasks with the help of peers. Stronger students were also motivated to learn and refined their knowledge by helping others. In line with research on grouping (Eder, 1983; Slavin, 1991), Kay recognized the negative consequences of labeling students as the high, middle, and low ones and encouraged students with different abilities to work together. When Kay encouraged students to generate, perform, and evaluate blending tasks as described in Chapter Four, she also used small groups as a means to ensure students' active participation and to release control of learning to students.

The practices of Lyn and Donna provide some insights into what influences the use of small grouping strategies. Planning for small groups is not a simple, easy matter. It involves teachers' thoughtful decisions about why groups will be formed, what materials will be used, how groups will be formed, and how group work will be done and assessed (Flood, Lapp, Flood & Nagel, 1992). As English specialists, both Lyn and Donna taught more than 100 students and were at a disadvantage with respect to ensuring the successful functioning of small groups. They did not have enough time to understand each student better as well as to match the information of students to grouping choices. Neither did they have enough time to set expectations of how group work will be done with the students. Although Lyn appreciated students' cooperative learning experiences, considerations of group composition was not obvious in her classroom. In Donna's classroom, students sat in rows mostly facing the front, and seat arrangement was fixed throughout the year. It is noteworthy that Donna's grouping practice was also influenced by her past frustrating experience about small group work as described in Chapter Four.

As seen in her reflection on the past experience about grouping, teachers may need to go to great lengths to think about appropriate group composition and appropriate instructional materials and tasks, and it certainly takes time for teachers to develop expertise in grouping.

Individual Work. Every lesson in the participating classrooms involved some individual work. Looking into the nature of individual work, one-on-one instruction was however rarely observed in the classrooms even though the teachers provided one-on-one support while checking how students worked on individual seatwork. The teacher participants considered that it was almost impossible to offer individualized instruction in a class of more than 30 students. Students thus worked mainly on individual seatwork using a variety of worksheets and tasks. Individual seatwork and practice provide students with opportunities to think of instructional tasks on their own as well as to reflect on their reading of texts (Berghoff & Egawa, 1991). In Kay's classroom, individual work such as phonemic segmentation practice allowed students to pay careful attention to the spellings and sounds of words without the interruption of other students. Students also liked mini-book making activities because these books were expressions of their learning as well as something they could feel proud of. In the classrooms of Lyn and Donna, individual seatwork allowed students to check their comprehension of text by completing or sorting sentences as a post-reading activity. In this manner, both Lyn and Donna were also able to check each student's understanding of text.

To summarize, research shows that exemplary teachers used varied structures to meet students' needs such as whole-group, small group, and individual instruction as well as individual seatwork (Morrow & Ausbury, 2003; Pressley, Rankin, Yokoi, 1996). Similar to the findings of research on exemplary teaching, researchers have referred to the use of flexible groups as effective organization for reading instruction (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1998; Flood, Lapp, Flood & Nagel, 1992; Optiz, 1998a; Reutzel, 2003). The teacher participants of my study similarly used a combination of whole-class and small group instruction as well as individual seatwork. However, whole-class instruction continued to be the dominant grouping format in their practice, and use of small group was limited in addressing the needs of students with different interests and abilities. Flood, Lapp, Flood and Nagel (1992) note that "the most appropriate grouping pattern for

each instructional experience can only be determined by analyzing student strengths and needs and matching this information with the choices available to the teacher and student" (p. 610). However, the use of varied grouping strategies to meet students' needs is not a simple and easy matter as seen in the participating classrooms. It may take much time for some teachers to practice a variety of grouping strategies and to celebrate success along the way.

Theme 5: Balanced L2 Reading Instruction Involves Content Area Connections in Order to Address Learners' Cognitive and Language Needs

Content-based teaching fulfills a number of conditions that have been posited as necessary for successful L2 learning (Snow, 2001); it provides an increased amount of exposure to the target language, real purposes to learn an L2, and authentic, meaningful language use. Integrating language across the curriculum also characterized exemplary L1 reading classrooms (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Pressley, Rankin & Yokoi, 1996). The teacher participants, Kay and Lyn were keenly interested in teaching English through content or topics from other subject areas such as science, fine arts, and social studies. Kay reported that she committed to two to three integrated lessons a month in the year I observed her. Lyn stated that she had done content-based teaching in her previous years as a homeroom teacher. Their interest in content-based teaching certainly related to their main concerns in their EFL classrooms.

Being concerned that the amount of students' exposure to the target language is limited in a foreign language context, both Lyn and Kay judged that they were able to expose students to more input by teaching academic subjects through English even though there was limited time allocated for teaching English. Underlying their interest in content-based teaching was also the idea that learning content through English provides EFL learners with real purposes to listen, speak, read, and write in an L2 whereas interacting with their Korean peers in English about the weather and names only created use of language for its own sake. Lyn's interest in content-based teaching also emerged from her dissatisfaction with the current national textbook. She was concerned that second language learning materials and the textbook often were not intellectually interesting for L2 learners, with much attention to their limited proficiency of the target language. In line with the principles of whole language (Lim & Watson, 1993; Watson,

1989), Lyn also thought that L2 learners acquire a language as they study intellectually interesting content, which in turn leads to students' increased motivation to learn an L2.

Despite its promising aspects in EFL classroom contexts, content-based teaching poses many challenges to second language teachers (Stoller, 2004). One of the challenges is that the content area of study often involves language that is difficult for beginning L2 readers to understand. It thus requires teachers to find creative ways to make content-based teaching understandable. As described in Chapter Four, Kay's practice shows some instructional strategies in this regard. By introducing content with which students were familiar and that involved simple vocabulary, Kay tried to build on students' background knowledge in implementing content-based instruction. Redmond (1994) similarly notes that "the language specialist must select themes very carefully, for the learner has limited or no language experience in L2" (p. 430). Hands-on activities were also used as a means to invite her students to learn content through English in Kay's class. Her idea of using hands-on activities suggests that beginning L2 readers can be engaged in content-based lessons through listening, speaking, reading, and writing about measuring in math, cooking in practical arts, and coloring in fine arts. Similar to the practices of Kay, Lyn introduced familiar topics such as animals and colors from science and fine arts when she taught English to first grade students. She also used storybooks as a primary means to invite students to learn content through English.

Both Lyn and Kay met the reality of the contexts where they worked in implementing content-based teaching. For her integrated science and English lessons, Kay could not find materials at hand and had to search the Internet for appropriate information texts for the students. She also reported that teaching science through English required her to become familiar with science terminology in English. For Lyn, her limited flexibility in time scheduling as an English specialist also made it difficult to implement integrated thematic lessons. For these reasons, their enthusiasm for content-based teaching was not easily translated into actual teaching practices.

Although being difficult to find, some information books may provide a useful source of materials for teaching content to young EFL learners. Ivey (2002) suggests that easy-to-read information books are accessible to struggling learners, but at the same time address their intellectual needs. These easy-to-read information books include picture

books with high-interest, content-rich nonfiction on a range of science-related books. One example is the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1994) that Lyn used for teaching the life cycle of a butterfly. Informing L2 teachers of these easy-to-read information books will likely make it easier for them to implement content-based teaching and to make instruction understandable for their students.

Integrating language across the curriculum has the potential to add valuable dimensions to the notion of balanced reading instruction: that is, balance of narratives and information texts and balance of learners' cognitive and language needs. It also fulfills the conditions for successful L2 learning. However, it is not an easy, simple matter for teachers to implement in EFL contexts. Despite her instructional strategies to make content-based teaching understandable, some students in Kay's class reported frustrated experiences with content-based teaching; whereas some students reported positive responses to learning content through English. It is however important to note that the teacher participants have endeavored to implement content-based instruction on their own initiative and tried to find creative ways to make instruction understandable. Although their enthusiasm for content-based teaching met a few challenges, it was also clear that they made efforts to improve their practice and were making progress; Lyn and Kay reported that they were collaborating on developing instructional materials for content-based teaching (personal communication, August 4, 2007). When provided support (e.g., information about easy-to-read information books and instructional models), teachers will practice content-based teaching more, and their efforts to implement content-based teaching will offer learners meaningful, intellectually challenging L2 learning experiences as well as an increased exposure to the target language.

Theme 6: Traditional Ways of Teaching Have a Place in Balanced L2 Reading Classrooms

Two traditional ways of teaching were frequently observed in the practices of the teacher participants in my study: L1 translation and repetition.

L1 Translation. In EFL reading classrooms, learners and teachers often share the same L1, so two languages are present in an instructional context. Translation is thus a unique aspect of classroom interactions in L2 reading classrooms. Using the first language is, however, controversial in second language classrooms because it reminds L2

researchers and teachers of the grammar-translation method which has been blamed for L2 learners' lack of communication skills and low interest (Macaro, 2005). It also cuts down on the amount of exposure to the target language L2 learners need (Turnbull, 2001). Macaro (2000) argues that for these reasons, many L2 teachers tend to regard use of L1 as unfortunate and regrettable but necessary. The teacher participants in my study similarly felt pressure about using the target language as much as possible and reported uneasiness about using the first language; even though use of L1 took a significant amount of time in their reading classrooms. In this regard, some researchers argue that it is not a healthy outcome of a pedagogical debate when many teachers report feeling guilty about resorting to the L1 (Macaro, 2005) and that the pressure from an anti-L1 attitude implied in most of L2 teaching methods (e.g., The Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching) prevents L2 teachers from finding ways in which the L1 can be used positively in the classroom (Cook, 2001). A look at the participating classrooms reveals some insights into how the first language can be used positively in L2 reading classrooms.

The teacher participants of my study used L1 translation for similar functions although the relative amounts of L1 and L2 uses varied in each. The main role of L1 was to convey meanings of unknown words and phrases. Specifically, when it came to words which had neither a direct referent nor an associated concrete image, the teachers relied on L1 translations to convey meaning. For example, Lyn provided L1 translations for phrases such as *discover ways to cure diseases* and *protect people from danger*; whereas she used picture contexts in conveying meanings of words such as *scientist* and *police officer*. In Kay's classroom, many of the target words were concrete words referring to numbers, fruits, animals, and colors, so she relied on pictures in conveying meanings of words. However, when it came to the key expressions of the unit such as *What time is it?* and *Whose pencil is this?*, she provided L1 translations in order to help learners grasp the exact meanings of sentences. Whereas Lyn and Kay did not relate all meanings to L1, Donna provided the L1 translations for nearly every key word and sentence of each unit in the textbook. Her rationale for this practice was that she could convey meaning more directly and possibly more successfully through the L1 and that inattentive or struggling learners may benefit from direct L1-L2 connections. Researchers agree that L1 can act as

an efficient vehicle for conveying meanings of unknown words especially when it takes too much instructional time to explain words only through the L2 (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2005). It seems reasonable for teachers to provide direct L1 translations instead of taking up too much time explaining words and phrases. Further, given their limited L2 proficiency, some beginning L2 readers may get frustrated when they cannot understand the teacher's L2 input and have difficulties inferring meaning from context. As Donna noted, L1 translation may help low-proficiency students grasp the exact meanings of unknown words and phrases.

Use of L1 is a natural process that allows L2 learners to develop L2 vocabulary with ease and independence both in and outside the classroom. Research indicates that L1 enables learners to help each other with meanings of unknown words (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) and that many L2 learners find the use of bilingual dictionaries beneficial (Gunderson, 2004; Schmitt, 1997). In fact, students in the participating classrooms in my study were frequently observed asking their classmates or teacher for meanings of unknown words while working on instructional activities. When I had opportunities to interact with some students, even grade four students reported that when encountering unknown words, they looked them up in the electronic bilingual dictionaries offered by the local website portals (e.g., Yahoo Korea and Naver). L2 reading research confirms that one of the biggest differences between L1 readers and L2 readers is their vocabulary knowledge (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003). Developing vocabulary is thus a critical aspect of L2 reading development, and learners' first language plays an important role in this process. L2 learners are able to read L2 texts independently with the help of a bilingual dictionary and to increase their lexical knowledge outside the classroom. Use of L1 also provides scaffolding for L2 learners to help each other with definitions of unknown words. Simply put, using the first language allows L2 learners to approach L2 vocabulary learning with a conceptual base already developed in their L1.

Using the first language may help L2 learners lighten the cognitive load of processing L2 texts as well as allow them to participate more in interactions around a text. One of the interesting instances I observed was that when Kay asked the students to say anything they could remember about the book, *Gruffalo* (Donaldson, 1999), one of the students raised his hand and asked whether he could respond in Korean. He definitely had

a thought about the book but wanted to use Korean in order to better express himself. As observed in Kay's classroom, discussion about the text is limited in L2 reading classrooms when learners are deprived of using the first language. García and Bauer (2004) suggest:

> Summarizing the text in the native language prior to reading the text and allowing students to use their native language to respond to English text or to ask questions increase the students' opportunity to understand the text and to participate in the book reading (p. 191).

Many of the learners are still at the beginning of their L2 development in elementary EFL reading classrooms. Their language of thought about L2 texts is more likely to be their first language so that they should be encouraged to discuss English texts in their L1. Kern (1994) also shows that L2 learners use their L1 as the language of thought during a reading comprehension task in order to: reduce working memory constraints; avoid losing track of the meaning of the text; consolidate meaning in long term memory; convert the input into more familiar terms; and clarify the syntactic roles of certain lexical items.

In the Grammar-Translation method, an important goal was for learners to be able to translate from one language into another as a mental exercise (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Learners are expected to approach L2 texts through laborious detective work in the Grammar-Translation dominated classrooms, which is devoid of motivating experiences. It should be also noted that relating all meanings to L1 may be detrimental to the development of learners' ability to infer meaning from context (Macaro, 2005; Prince, 1996). Cook (2001) however points out that "translation as a teaching technique is a different matter from translation as a goal of language teaching" (p. 417). When teachers use translation wisely as a teaching technique, L2 learners are better able to grasp the meanings of vocabulary items, to develop L2 vocabulary with ease and independence, and to participate better in interactions around the text. Instead of merely rejecting L1 translation, it may be more productive for teachers to think of when it is appropriate to use translation as a means to convey meaning as well as to facilitate students' understanding of the text. It would also be valuable for L2 teachers to think of how to

guide students on when it is appropriate to use a bilingual dictionary and when it is appropriate to make efforts to guess meanings from context (Macaro, 2005).

Repetition. Repetition has traditionally been associated with the language drills of the audio-lingual methods of L2 teaching as a means to memorize sentence patterns and to shape good habits of language use (Grittner, 1990; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The teacher participants in my study used repetition extensively as a post-listening and a post-reading activity, frequently asking students to repeat or read aloud after them. From the interviews, however, it was clear that their rationale for this extensive use of repetition resided not in grammatical habit formation as assumed in the audiolingual method but in automatic word recognition and oral language and print mapping as well as communication repertoire building.

Repetitive reading aloud of written dialogs and vocabulary items comprised a significant part of instruction in Donna's practice. The presentation of key vocabulary and sentences from listening and reading texts was typically followed by her model reading and repeated choral reading by the students. Donna thought that repeated oral reading could help learners notice the connections between oral language and print and allow them to practice vocabulary and sentences effectively. Repeated oral reading of key words and sentences was also observed in the practices of Lyn and Kay as a means to familiarize students with novel language items. The teachers' rationale for repetitive reading aloud finds support in the reading literature. Repeated reading is considered to be effective in the development of fluent reading which is characterized by accurate decoding, automatic word recognition, and the appropriate use of stress, pitch, and suitable phrasing (Kuhn, 2003). As the participants of my study indicated, repeated oral reading provides students with the time and repetition necessary to develop automatic word recognition even though it does not improve reading comprehension (Kuhn, 2003; Optiz & Rasinski, 1998).

Use of repetition in the participating classrooms also reflected the teachers' assumptions about how L2 learners develop productive language skills for communicative interchanges. In the interviews, all three teachers stated that repetition or repeated oral reading could contribute not just to developing automatic word recognition but also to improving L2 learners' pronunciation and speaking fluency, and that in this

manner, input through listening and reading could feed into learners' communicative repertoire. In their view of L2 learning, some amount of repetition was necessary for learners to assimilate key vocabulary and sentences as well as to use them later for communicative exchanges. In the second language acquisition literature, however, the role of repetition in the development of learners' productive skills is controversial. Wong and VanPattern (2003) argue that practice through mechanical drill does not translate into students' ability to express themselves in real communication and that drills are neither necessary nor useful. In contrast, some researchers maintain that imitated chunks of unanalyzed language are available for learner use and represent an important part of learner productions in the early stages of L2 learning (Mitchell & Martin, 1997; Myles, Mitchell & Hooper, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1979). Conflating these two contrasting views, it is assumed that repetition could be a useful teaching and learning strategy if it is combined with a focus on meaning as well as with opportunities for meaningful language use. While repetition was associated with correct habit formation and intolerance of errors in the audio-lingual method (Grittner, 1990), it could also be considered in a novel way, in terms of language automaticity and increased exposure (Duff, 2000). It was these ideas that motivated the teachers to use repetition or repeated reading aloud. They attempted to help learners assimilate key vocabulary and sentences through repetition, which they thought would be available for use during communicative interchanges. Although Donna's practice, to some extent, showed her concern with accurate reading, the practices of Lyn and Kay centered not on accurate repetition but on playful and pleasant repetition. It should also be noted that in accordance with the notion of communicative language teaching reflected in the national curriculum, the teacher participants also provided learners with opportunities for meaningful language use such as survey and information-gap tasks.

Although traditionally associated with the language drills, repetition could be viewed as a means of enabling learners to develop automaticity in the target language (Duff, 2000). Repeated oral reading certainly has a place in the beginning L2 reading classroom in that it contributes to building automatic word recognition and reading fluency. Imitated chunks of language through repetition may also represent an important part of learner production in the early stages of L2 development; even though learners

may ultimately need to develop an implicit linguistic system for a creative control of language (Wong & VanPattern, 2003). However, emphasis on accurate reading and correcting errors certainly does not find support in either the reading or L2 acquisition literature. Focusing too much on repetition may eliminate young L2 learners' motivation.

Summary

My research began with inquiries about how teachers implement L2 reading instruction in Korean EFL reading classrooms, how different approaches to reading work for beginning L2 learners, and what balanced reading instruction might look like in beginning L2 reading classrooms. My initial understanding of balanced L2 reading instruction involved merely combining two major approaches to reading, phonics and whole language but at the same time adapting each approach to the needs of Korean learners of English. The findings of my research indicate that practicing balanced L2 reading instruction is a complex endeavor because students' needs are complex as they learn to read. Balancing reading instruction indeed requires complex articulation of differing amounts of skills instruction together with an emphasis on reading engaging and motivating texts for meaning at different stages of L2 reading development. Instructional priority in Kay's grade four class was different from that of Lyn's grade six classroom. Kay implemented planned phonics instruction to help students become alphabetic learners of print in English. In contrast, explicit teaching of phonics did not have priority in Lyn's class because many students had already developed some degree of alphabetic knowledge. The question of whether to focus on planned explicit instruction or on use of teachable moments may depend on teachers' instructional priorities for particular groups of learners. Selection of appropriate texts also involved teachers' careful thoughts about predictability of texts, decodability, and interest level for a particular group of learners.

My research reveals that there are many layers and dimensions in interpreting teaching and that the notion of balanced L2 reading instruction is also likely to be a multidimensional combination of various aspects of L2 instruction in addition to different approaches to teaching reading: four modes of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), use of flexible grouping strategies, content area connections for both learners' language and cognitive needs, use of L1 versus L2, and practice versus meaningful language use. Instructional balance in any of these areas alone is complex because

students' needs are varied as they go through the process of L2 reading development. In the actual practice of teaching beginning L2 readers, the teacher participants in my study faced all of these challenges. They were in touch with the complexity of their classroom, and practicing balanced L2 reading instruction could not be separated from this complexity.

The term 'balanced instruction' has been conceptualized in different ways, and earlier characterization of balanced reading instruction embraced the common image of balancing scales among diverse instructional methods (Fitzgerald & Noblit, 2000). One example is Cunningham and colleagues' four-blocks reading program where instructional time was fairly divided between the four major historical approaches to reading instruction (Cunningham & Hall, 1998). Research on exemplary teachers increased our understanding of balanced reading instruction in that integration of skills instruction and authentic reading was not based on equal focus of different methods but on the needs of students (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampton, 1998). Fitzgerald and Noblit (2000) similarly conceptualized balanced instruction as epistemological rather than methodological, which implies the meaning of balance should reside in a consideration of what students' needs are and the instructional method to address their needs. Duffy and Hoffman (2002) also argue that "effective teachers do not measure out equal portions of skills-based and holistic instruction, nor do they allocate instructional time according to a static formula deemed to be "balanced."...they vary instruction depending on what their students need" (p. 384). The teacher participants in my study were not yet practicing this notion of balanced instruction although their practices revealed a multidimensional combination of the various aspects of instruction. From the interviews and observations, it was clear however that they were making efforts to improve their practice and were progressing. Certainly, implementing balanced reading instruction requires a great deal of professional expertise, and "the development of such expertise takes a great deal of time and actual immersion in the practice of the profession" (Day, 2001, p. 220). The next section further discusses how different sources of experience contributed to the development of teacher knowledge in EFL reading classrooms and how second language teachers can be better prepared for balanced L2 reading instruction.

L2 Reading Teachers' Professional Growth

The notion of balanced reading instruction indicates that effective reading instruction lies in the hands of teachers (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; 2002). It is the teachers who orchestrate a variety of methods, instructional strategies, and materials according to the needs of students. Of importance then is the issue of what influences the development of teachers' expertise in balanced instruction and how teachers might be better prepared for implementing it. The sources of experience which influenced each teacher's practice were described in Chapter Four. This section discusses how the following main sources of influence had an impact on the development of teacher knowledge about L2 reading instruction and what kind of support teachers need: (1) professional development; (2) epistemology of practice; and (3) teaching context. In doing so, each source of influence is discussed in relation to the notion of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge suggested by Shulman (1987) and Grossman (1990). Pedagogical content knowledge embraces conceptions of purposes for teaching subject matter, knowledge of students' characteristics and their understanding, knowledge of curriculum material, and knowledge of instructional strategies.

Professional Development

My research focused on a special group of teachers who have been active in professional development, so all teachers in my study had an extensive amount of professional development experiences. The kinds of professional development they took also varied considerably, including taking graduate courses and other teacher education courses, attending or leading teacher workshops, attending academic conferences, reading academic journals and books, having a membership in professional associations, forming support groups, and searching the Internet for teaching ideas. These varied experiences of professional development influenced the practices of the three teachers and their development of professional expertise.

One important aspect of pedagogical content knowledge is teachers' conceptions of the purposes for teaching subject matter. For the teacher participants in my study, theoretical understandings gained from graduate courses influenced their conceptions of what reading is, what skills students are expected to learn, and what are the proper procedures to guide students on reading texts. Lyn's meaning-focused and holistic view

of reading was enhanced while taking a course which focused on whole language; although her learning experience and style also influenced her view of reading. Kay's orientation toward balanced reading instruction was influenced by a range of professional development experiences including graduate coursework and teacher workshops as well as the internship program provided by Edmonton Public Schools. From the language they used during the interviews, it was clear that all participants had a good understanding of both bottom-up and top-down processes of reading and provided students with instructional support through pre-, during-, and post-reading activities. Although theory cannot address the full complexity of a classroom, it has value in guiding teachers' practices (Norris, 2000; Ornstein, 1991). The participants' conceptions of reading instruction enhanced through professional development provided a sound foundation to build on in practice and in fact shaped much of their practice as described in Chapter Four.

Theoretical understandings gained from professional development also provide the rationale for the teachers' practices (Tse, 2003). Theories help teachers understand the underlying values of certain instructional materials and activities in terms of students' characteristics and understanding. Lyn's selection of texts such as storybooks was initially driven by her intuitive sense of their motivating power for elementary school students. Taking a graduate course about whole language enabled her to understand better that beginning readers are able to guess meaning from picture contexts and to develop vocabulary through reading, and that interesting storylines appeal to students' intrinsic motivation to read. She was also better able to articulate the features of storybooks to scaffold students' learning and book selection criteria. For Kay, professional development enabled her to understand how beginning readers could benefit from instructional tasks such as phoneme segmentation. In this manner, theories helped the teachers enhance their knowledge of instructional materials and activities.

Influence from graduate coursework was also evident in the teachers' attempts to take on the challenge of experimenting with new methods rather than just following the national textbook. In particular, graduate coursework informed Lyn and Kay of current theories of second language teaching and inspired them to try out content-based teaching.

Their experimentation with content-based teaching also led to their collaboration on material development.

Unlike the other two participants, influences from professional development were less obvious in Donna's practices. In her case, theories did not directly translate into teaching practice due in part to her educational background. Donna initially had a secondary English teacher certification and reported that the courses she had taken did not help much in her practice. For instance, she did not find some reading skills such as skimming and scanning helpful for elementary school students. She thus, too some extent, depended on her own experiences as a student as described in Chapter Four. Donna also reported the gap between theories and the realities of classrooms she experienced. She particularly questioned the applicability of Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Communicative Language Teaching into foreign language classrooms. Based on her teaching experience, she wondered whether students could benefit from merely listening to input. She also wondered in what ways she could facilitate interactions among students in English when they already shared their first language to communicate. The case of Donna shows that the process of integrating theories into one's teaching practice is neither simple nor straightforward. The theories were mediated by Donna's own interpretation of how students learn a second language, which will be described in detail in the next sub-section.

The findings of my research show that the teachers were involved not just in formally sanctioned learning opportunities but also in informal, self-directed professional development such as visiting teachers' virtual community and forming informal social professional networks. They were using this informal, self-directed professional development mainly to expand their instructional repertoire. They searched the Internet or visited the teachers' virtual community when they felt a need to look for alternative instructional materials and activities to enhance students' learning. Teachers' virtual community was typically the place where they located or posted information about high-interest storybooks, word puzzles and chains, language games, and a variety of worksheets. Posts in the bulletin boards also included information about instructional purposes, the desired target level of students, and teaching tips. In this manner, the teachers' virtual community was creating a space where teachers could share and expand

their practical knowledge of instructional materials and strategies developed from experience. The Internet was also an important avenue for teachers to compensate for their limited knowledge of curriculum material and instructional strategies. Although Kay considered teaching of phonics skills to be necessary for the grade four students, she found it challenging to do so because of her limited knowledge of instructional materials and strategies. Her inquiry into how to help students become alphabetic readers of print encouraged her to search the web for ideas about appropriate materials and strategies for students. Johnson (2006) argues that new technologies are redrawing the boundaries of professional development so as to include computer-mediated communication tools such as online bulletin boards, chat rooms, and blogs. Johnson further states that if teacher knowledge developed from experience is to be valued and represented in the educational community, these informal professional developments should also be considered as legitimate sites of teacher learning.

Reflecting upon their professional development and practices, the teachers in my study reported that there are still areas of teaching reading that they needed to know more about such as knowledge of phonology, knowledge of instructional strategies for phonics instruction, and knowledge of high-interest storybooks. Reflecting upon her teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics, Kay noted that she had difficulties teaching the relationship between vowel sounds and spellings. Because of her limited understanding of phonology and orthography, she found it challenging to decide which words to present together in order to teach the vowel and spelling relations. Although teaching of phonics was not an instructional priority in her grade six classroom, Lyn's limited knowledge of phonics influenced her ways of dealing with students' misspellings. Donna also mentioned that her unique way of teaching spelling and sound relations could be attributed to her limited knowledge of instructional materials and strategies for phonics instruction. As stated earlier in this chapter, use of storybooks in the participating classrooms was also constrained by the teachers' limited knowledge of available high-interest storybooks.

Moats (1994) notes that teachers with a good knowledge base of spoken and written language structure are better able to pick the best examples for teaching decoding and spelling as well as to interpret and respond to students' spelling errors. Moats also

points out that teachers do not acquire sufficient knowledge of phonology and orthography naturally through their own reading experience. Research also indicates that teachers' knowledge of children's literature and English phonology was strongly related to their classroom practice (McCutchen et al, 2002). In order to help teachers implement balanced reading instruction, graduate programs and other teacher education programs should help teachers develop reading-related content knowledge (e.g., knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence) and curricular knowledge (e.g., knowledge of storybooks).

It does not necessarily mean however that the best way to develop teacher knowledge is simply to enroll in advanced courses in phonology, morphology, and reading instruction. Teachers may also develop pedagogical content knowledge through teaching experience. Their careful observation of students' misspellings may help enhance their knowledge of the spelling difficulties experienced by students. Observing students' responses to particular books may also enable teachers to develop their curricular knowledge. It is also possible that teachers could develop their knowledge of storybooks and instructional strategies for students' misspelling through an informal, virtual teachers' community.

Epistemology of Practice

Schön's (1983) epistemology of practice refers to the kind of knowing and knowledge teachers acquire from their reflective practice. Reflection could happen in the midst of teaching practice (reflection-in-action) or outside the practice (reflection-on-action). If reflection aims at improving one's practice for students' learning, observing students is a critical aspect of teachers' reflective thinking. Observing students implies that teachers attend to what students are learning rather than to what they are teaching so as to reflect on their practices from the perspectives of students (Rodgers, 2002). The teacher participants in my study were all attentive to students' responses to instruction and made subsequent changes in practice. Their observations, however, had different framings.

In Donna's case, observation of students' responses centered on their knowing the target language items rather than the appearance of learning (e.g., engagement). She looked into how students as a group answered her questions and then called on particular students to answer her questions to check whether they were understanding texts. She

also constantly monitored whether students were able to read aloud the target words and sentences by asking individuals to perform. When she judged that most of the students had difficulties with given instructional tasks, she then looked for alternative ways to get them to understand and perform well. Donna's reflection in action was indeed framed by her search for the evidence of students' knowing.

Donna's framing was shaped by her reflection-on-action in that her constant monitoring of students' knowing was influenced by her reflection on her own past experience. In her previous years of teaching, she came to realize that 'having fun' or 'being on task' could not be considered as a sign that students were learning what she wanted them to learn. For instance, students enjoyed language games but often focused more on group competition rather than on the language they were expected to use. She also realized that "understanding in context" could not be transferred automatically to "understanding out of context." Students were able to read words in picture contexts but had difficulties reading them in isolation. They also understood a dialog so well through the video context but easily forgot what they heard. Through these experiences, Donna began to question the exclusive focus on meaning and oral communication and increasingly became aware of the role of oral language and print connections and practice (e.g., repeated oral reading). Her teaching experience greatly influenced her conception of what it means to learn a second language and how teachers know what students are learning in classrooms.

Lyn's observation of students was rooted in her concerns about students' motivation to learn English. Considering her students' negative attitudes toward English learning due to their intense private learning, the affective aspects of learning such as motivation and anxiety were important themes in her thinking about teaching. Her reflection-in-action was then framed by the questions of whether students expressed interest in materials as well as whether they enjoyed her lessons, which in turn resulted in her rich repertoire of interesting language activities. Her observation of students' responses to the books read also helped build her repertoire of books appropriate for grade six students.

Kay's reflective practice centered on her experimentation with rather new methods in her teaching repertoire such as phonics instruction and content-based teaching.

As stated in Chapter Four, observation of students' responses was an important matter for Kay in order to compensate for her limited content knowledge and experience in these areas. In implementing phonics instruction and content-based teaching, she was thus particularly attentive to students' "bodily expression of mental condition" such as puzzlement and boredom as Dewey (1933) suggested. Kay then decided what to do next and varied her instructional strategies. Huberman (1995) maintains that "although conceptual knowledge or understanding is essential, it is not sufficient...It is still possible to understand and yet not to be able to do" (p. 357). Although professional development inspired Kay to try out phonics instruction as well as content-based teaching, she was certainly learning from her own experimentation with these methods. Kay was able to understand what she needed to know (e.g., knowledge of English vowels) and what she needed to figure out (e.g., how to better integrate teaching of phonics with meaningful engagement with print) while taking on the challenge of trying out new methods.

How students work together in small groups was also an important theme in Kay's observations. She carefully observed how the relationship among students as well as students' characteristics affected their working as a group and made decisions about group membership. She also paid careful attention to what facilitates students' working in small groups and what instructional tasks are better for small group work, which resulted in her grouping strategies. Kay indeed learned a great deal about grouping from her own teaching experiences.

Observation by the teachers was a critical aspect of their reflective practices and related to their enhanced knowledge of students, curricular materials, and instructional strategies and activities. Their ways of framing observations were however influenced by their past teaching experiences and concerns in their classroom context and limited their level of reflection to some extent. Their reflection tended to center on particular aspects of learning and teaching. For instance, Donna's reflection centered on the cognitive aspects of learning, but her consideration of the affective, social aspects of learning was not evident in her reflective practice. Lyn's preoccupation with a positive and relaxing learning environment interfered with her thinking hard about addressing students' disruptive behavior which was critical to creating a productive learning environment.

The interviews with the teachers suggest that although being critical to the development of teacher knowledge, reflection on one's practice may not come about in depth in the midst of teaching practice. Teachers may need a supportive community of reflection where they share their reflection on practice with others, listen to other possible ways of framing and solving problems, and think about how their observation and reflection might be confined by their past experiences, desires, concerns, and interests. In a professional community, teachers could also discuss the struggle they had with new instructional materials and strategies. It is important to note that both Lyn and Kay reported that their best learning about teaching came from the experiences of sharing their expertise with colleagues. Rodgers (2002) suggests that "in the context of a supportive and disciplined community of reflection, teachers can formulate explanations for what they see that come from their own knowledge of teaching, learning, subject matter, from each other, and from research" (pp. 250-251). Putnam and Borko (2000) similarly note that when teachers are engaged in a professional discourse community, community members can draw upon and incorporate each others' expertise to create new insights into teaching and learning.

Teaching Context

How L2 teachers teach and how they develop expertise in teaching are constructed in the broader social context where they are situated (Crooks, 1997; Johnston, 1997; Sharkey, 2004). The findings of my study suggest a need to look beyond the classroom for an understanding of what influenced the way the teacher participants taught. Two major influences from the teaching context were evident in the practices of the three teachers as well as in their professional development: the national textbook and the governments' English-only policy.

The Korean government has taken a strong lead in implementing English education in elementary schools. The national English curriculum promulgated by the government provides detailed guidelines about what and how to teach and specifies the amount of instructional time per year (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 1997). There is also a single textbook for each grade approved by the government. This centralized feature of English education certainly had an impact on the practices of the teacher participants in my study. In particular, the presence of the

textbook often left little room for diversification of instructional methods and limited the choices teachers made about instructional materials. Although being aware that the single national textbook could not address the diverse needs of students, the teacher participants still regarded the textbook as something they could not ignore. It was something they had to follow to ensure that the educational experiences students had were based on the national curriculum. The teachers were also concerned that for many parents, the textbook was an indicator of what their children would be doing in school and a useful reference in preparing their children for schooling. It is noteworthy that when Kay taught phonics to the students through morning mini-lessons, she had a few calls from parents asking whether it would be an entry in students' report card. For these reasons, the teachers' trying out various instructional methods was often secondary to covering the textbook, which in turn resulted in limited time available for taking their own initiatives. The time pressure then posed additional challenges in implementing various approaches to teaching reading. Although Kay was committed to phonics instruction, she had to arrange extra time, so it was mostly done through morning mini-lessons. Limited instructional time also confined the teachers' attempts to use high-interest storybooks. It is noteworthy that while the government provided students with textbooks, there was little financial support for teachers to purchase additional instructional material.

At the time when English was introduced as a regular subject in Korean elementary schools, many of elementary teachers were not prepared to teach this new subject. Initial in-service teacher education programs thus focused on helping teachers understand the second language pedagogy (e.g., Communicative Language Teaching) that grounded the national curriculum and textbook to ensure that they were able to use the textbook appropriately in practice (MOE, 1996). To some extent, the textbook may provide explicit directions to follow for teachers with little experience and knowledge. However, when the single textbook is prescribed rather than provided as one of the options to be used, it leaves little room for teachers to make choices about instructional materials and strategies according to the needs of students. As the teacher participants pointed out, a single national textbook is limited in addressing the needs of students in different regions. From the interviews, it was apparent that although the teacher participants strictly followed the textbook during their early years of teaching, they move

beyond the textbook and diversified their lessons for students' needs as they gained more experience in teaching English. Research indicates that effective teaching rests on teachers who decide what to do in light of students' needs, and that any educational reform is doomed to fail or to be poorly implemented if it does not draw upon teacher expertise (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999). More attention needs to be paid to how to provide support to teachers who attempt to diversify instructional methods and materials according to the needs of students rather than on perfecting and distributing the single textbook.

From the interviews, another influence from the social, educational context came into play in the practices of the three teachers. When the teachers felt uneasy about using the first language and attempted to use English as much as possible, their perception of effective L2 teaching practice was certainly influenced by the government's English-only policy (MOE, 2000); the government announced the plan that recommended teachers implement on English-only class at least once a week. What is of particular interest here is how the government's English-only policy created an educational context in which teachers' target language proficiency is emphasized over other domains of teacher knowledge. For instance, when Donna wanted to know more about phonics instruction and checked teacher education programs offered by Seoul Education Training Institute, a branch of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE), she found that most of the courses focused on developing teachers' own English proficiency (e.g., cinema English, English conversations). From the interviews, it was clear that all three teachers depended mainly on personal networks and the Internet to expand their knowledge of instructional materials and strategies. Certainly, a good command of the target language is required of L2 teachers. Korean elementary school teachers may need continuous support to improve their proficiency of English because many of them perceive their proficiency to be lower than desired (Butler, 2004). However, target language proficiency is only one aspect of a knowledge base for L2 teachers. An overemphasis on one aspect of teacher knowledge may deprive teachers of opportunities to develop other crucial aspects of teacher knowledge such as knowledge of instructional materials and pedagogical skills.

Summary

The teacher participants in my study were taking leading roles in elementary English education given that they provided teacher workshops and worked as consultants. At the time English was introduced as a required subject, like many other elementary school teachers, they were not prepared to teach this new subject, and their professional identity as a teacher was rendered vulnerable. The extensive amount of professional development they had taken indicates that they had been trying hard to overcome the challenges they faced in teaching a new subject. Through professional development, they expanded and refined their knowledge of the purposes for teaching reading, knowledge of students' learning to read, knowledge of curricular materials, and knowledge of instructional strategies. They also moved beyond the textbook, tried out various methods and instructional materials and strategies, carefully observed students' responses to instruction, and made subsequent changes in their practices. These attempts to improve practice will have consequences in the development of their expertise as well as in students' learning experiences. It was clear, however, that some contextual factors limited their trying out various approaches to teaching reading. Teacher education programs and support for teachers were often shaped by the government's educational policy and did not offer various options for teacher learning. My research suggests that in order for teachers to develop expertise in balancing L2 reading instruction, they need varied support for continuous learning, including formal and informal learning opportunities to develop knowledge of phonology, instructional strategies for phonics instruction and whole language; support of teachers' community where they could share practical knowledge about teaching reading and reflection on practice; financial support for teachers' experimentation with various instructional methods and materials.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conclusion and Implications

The notion of balanced reading instruction puts forward the idea that there is no single approach or method that works for all contexts, and no single method works best in a particular context. It is however far more complex and challenging to balance instruction according to students' knowledge, skills, and interests than one could imagine. Students' needs are complex, and teaching is a complex endeavor involving multiple dimensions of instruction. Further, teaching and learning do not occur in an ideal space but are constructed in a broader social, educational context.

My research suggests that when transferred to teaching second language (L2) reading in Korea, our understanding of balanced reading instruction should be broadened to include the uniqueness of an L2 teaching context. Some issues and questions unique to L2 reading were identified in my study. They included how to integrate the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) meaningfully; how to provide phonics instruction for students' difficulties that could be attributed to the differences between English and Korean (e.g., syllable recognition, misspelling due to the differences in phonemes); and how to make the most of students' first language. More research on how Korean learners of English proceed in their reading development will certainly deepen our understanding of what students' needs are and how we could better address them.

Balanced reading instruction also involves questions about how to create an instructional balance in various dimensions of instruction. The questions identified in my study were whether to focus on planned explicit instruction or use of teachable moments in teaching phonics as well as what to consider in selecting texts (i.e., predictability of text, decodability, and interest level) as students go through different stages of reading development. My research also identified creating balance in other areas such as grouping of students, practice versus meaningful use of language, and learners' cognitive and language needs. The teacher participants faced these questions as they endeavored to improve reading instruction. The practice of each teacher also revealed valuable insights into creating balance in the areas above. The question of what exactly balanced reading

instruction is requires careful considerations of students, teachers, and teaching contexts. More descriptive research on L2 reading classrooms would enhance an understanding of how teachers implement balanced reading instruction for particular group of learners in particular contexts.

A balanced approach to reading instruction does not refer merely to measuring out equal portions of different approaches while teaching reading. It can be neither separated from the multilayered, contextual nature of teaching nor formalized as a particular program to be followed by teachers in different contexts. The essence of balanced reading instruction rather lies in its continuously emergent nature as teachers try to adapt instruction to the needs of students through a cycle of observation, practice, and reflection. As we listen to more teachers and explore their knowledge developed through this reflective practice, our understanding of balanced reading instruction or any kind of eclecticism in teaching will be deepened and enlarged.

If effective teaching has to be defined for particular students in a particular context, teacher education programs then should also be varied rather than promote a particular approach or method. In other words, teachers have diverse needs as they attempt to adapt instruction to the various needs of students. When teacher education programs are varied, teachers may be encouraged to experiment with different methods and materials and gain valuable insights into what works better for particular students.

Despite their extensive professional development, the teacher participants in my study had varying needs to improve their practices of teaching L2 reading. They wanted to learn more about phonology, high-interest storybooks for young L2 learners, instructional strategies for phonics instruction, and better ways to facilitate small group work. It should be pointed out that the current in-service programs in Korea focus too much on promoting Communicative Language Teaching and developing teachers' proficiency of the target language. Teacher education programs should be varied in order for teachers to address the diverse needs of students. More attention is needed for alternative L2 teaching methods, including whole language, phonics, and content-based teaching. Simply offering education courses is, however, not a solution for the development of professional teachers. To do justice to the knowledge teachers develop from experience, there should also be support for teachers' communities where they

could share ideas about instructional materials and strategies as well as their reflections on practice. Teachers' discourse community may take the form of an informal teacher network or could be a part of a teacher education program. Finally, policymakers in Korea should be reminded that investment in teachers is more important than investment in textbooks. Teachers should be given financial support for various instructional materials for use with students.

Reflections on the Research Process

As I reflect on the process of conducting classroom research as well as analyzing and interpreting data, I cannot help thinking about the challenges of doing qualitative research. One of the challenges was that I felt overwhelmed by the complexity of looking into a classroom setting; there was indeed so much going on. I knew that the essence of qualitative research lies in its openness, exploring new ways of looking and understanding. I decided not to have a structured observation framework because I wanted to be open in my classroom observation. As soon as I began my classroom observation, however, I realized it was also easy to feel lost in where to direct my attention and where to place my investigation as trapped in the complexity of a real setting. I then had to think more deeply about how I would go about a classroom observation. What features would I attend to when I listened to teacher talk and students' talk? What features would I attend to when I looked at instructional materials? What does it mean to observe how students are working in classrooms? How would I know whether students are engaged? How would I know what students are getting? Which student or group would I focus on and talk to when they were working individually or in groups? These questions certainly helped me refine my ways of observing, but I was also worried whether I was limiting myself as an observer. As I had gone through the process of conducting classroom research, it remained challenging to think about how we could stay focused but at the same time be ready for what we did not expect to see. It was certainly a challenging task to observe what happens in a classroom within a qualitative research paradigm.

I was also reminded of the complexity of teaching in interpreting data. My research was to focus on something specific, teaching reading in English as a foreign

language in Korean elementary classrooms. I also had a specific theoretical framework when I began my research: a balanced approach to teaching reading. Making sense of the field notes and transcribed interviews, however, required me to broaden the scope of my inquiry into various dimensions of teaching in addition to different approaches to teaching reading. I was confronted with the questions not just about teaching reading, but also about teaching and teaching a second language when interpreting the data. Why is teacher modeling and explanation dominant in a certain classroom? Why is whole-class instruction dominant in the participating classrooms? Is this because of the learning culture in Korea or teachers' personal styles? What other else could this be attributed to? Does repeated reading contribute to developing students' speaking fluency? How does teachers' identity as a non-native English speaker influence their instructional practices? My inquiry into reading instruction indeed could not be separated from inquiry into teaching and second language instruction. Everything was interrelated in actual teaching practice. Broadening the scope of my inquiry was also driven by the need to discuss the data in a way that would not imply partial interpretation. I, however, reminded myself that I could not answer all questions with a single study and needed to stay focused on my interpretation of the data. Some questions then carried more weight than others.

I also found it a challenging and daunting task to explore teacher knowledge. My research attempted to move beyond mere descriptions of what was happening in classrooms and to understand teachers' knowledge that guides their practices. As I interviewed the teacher participants in my study, I thus worked together with them to explore why they were doing what they were doing and what influenced the way they taught. As I listened to teachers' interpretations of their practices, I increasingly became aware that multiple perspectives were intermingled in their knowledge about teaching reading. Their conceptions of reading instruction intermingled with conceptions of educational purposes and values, conceptions of teachers' roles and students' roles, conceptions of second language learning, and conceptions of their students' needs. Just as teaching was so complex and multilayered, so was teacher knowledge. For instance, while Lyn's preference for high-interest storybooks and emphasis on meaning was certainly guided by the principles of whole language, her choice of instructional materials and grouping practice did not reflect the idea of students' ownership and responsibility

for learning, another important principle of whole language. Her choice of instructional materials had more to do with her conception of teachers' roles, emphasizing teachers' ability to choose appropriate material for students. While working with the teachers in the interviews, I also realized that multiple sources had influenced their practice, so it was often difficult to identify specific influences on specific action. Investigating teachers' knowledge underlying their practice was indeed a time-consuming task requiring constant elaboration on various aspects of teaching. As such, although I had five interviews with each participant teacher, I often felt that was not enough. I am fully aware that my interpretation is bounded by the extent to which teachers were able to articulate their reasons for practice as well as the extent to which I was able to help them refine those reasons.

My study drew upon research on exemplary teaching of L1 literacy as a guide to be used to make sense of the data. On the one hand, this theoretical underpinning provided an important tool by which I could connect the findings of my study to what is known about effective reading instruction. I was then able to explain how my research could contribute to enhancing understanding of reading instruction. On the other hand, however, I had to think hard about what it means to understand teaching from teachers' perspectives and to learn from their experiences. Am I evaluating their practices rather then understanding them by comparing the findings with what is known about effective instruction? But could we as researchers talk about improving education for students without thinking about certain educational values and effectiveness? What then does it mean to understand teaching from teachers' own perspectives? Thinking about these questions required me to rethink the relationship between theory and practice and the purpose of research on teacher knowledge. I do not have definitive answers to the questions yet, but I know that as a researcher I cannot escape from theory but certainly can make good use of it. Theory could be used not as a criterion to evaluate but as a tool to make a sound, reasonable interpretation of the data. Researching teachers' knowledge also means a full appreciation of their doubts, wonders, and struggles. Identifying the best practices (or research-based practices) as seen from research on exemplary teaching may be encouraging and exciting for educators. It is however certain that we could learn much from dialogue about doubts and challenges. Researching teachers' knowledge means to

learn how they think in practice and how they develop knowledge about teaching. Without an understanding of these issues, how can we talk about changes in education and improving teaching?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

First Interview

- How long have you been a teacher? How long have you been teaching reading in English?
- Have you had in-service workshops or taken graduate courses in the area of teaching English reading? How is it that you came to be interested in teaching reading in English?
- What would be the ideal role of teachers in your view? What typifies, in you view, a good teacher?
- What typifies, in your view, a good student?
- What indicates to you that a lesson is going well? What indicates to you that a lesson is going poorly? Do you hold any particular philosophy about students and learning?
- How do you define reading? What does it involve? What is important for students to learn to read in English?
- Could you describe a typical reading lesson in your classroom? Could you describe the way you teach reading in English?
- What is the important goal of reading instruction in your classrooms? How would you describe your approach to teaching reading in English?
- Describe the student who is a good reader in your class. Describe the student who is a poor reader in your class. What does a poor reader consider difficult about reading in English? Describe the typical student in your class. What does he or she like about reading in English? What does he or she not like about reading in English?
- What types of reading materials should be used and are you using? Are there particular types of materials you like to use?

From Second to Fifth Interviews

- Could you please describe briefly what you planned and implemented for the lesson? Objectives? Instructional Strategies? Materials? Grouping?
- Please take a look at the list of the observed practices I made. Is there anything missing? Tell me what is significant and what is not significant from your perspective.
- Please tell me about the reasons for the observed practices. Are there any reasons for such instructional strategies, types of reading activities, materials, and grouping? Under what conditions do you do so? Have you tried something different? What happened?
- How did you learn to teach it that way? What have influenced the way you teach it?

Appendix B: A Sample Model of the Teachers' Knowledge and Practices

Donna's Knowledge and Practices

Philosophy

This section states your personal philosophy about learning in general, foreign language learning, and reading instruction.

- Good teachers accept the differences in kids' abilities and adjust their expectations and objectives to kids. They are thus students-oriented rather than objective-oriented.
- Good teachers should have sound knowledge of subject matters and learners.
- Students should not be given too much responsibility in doing instructional activities; very few students actually participate in small group activities when left working too much on their own.
- Effective teaching can be characterized by students' achievement of objectives.
- Input does not automatically turn into intake so that kids learn foreign language better when informed of what to focus.
- Kids tend to process language as chunks, but 6th graders are cognitively capable of processing input analytically and thus benefit from explicit teaching of structures and other metalinguistic information.
- Input through oral language only is subject to be minimal, and print is an important source of input in an EFL context.
- Written language not only fosters oral language development but also enables foreign language learners to do self-directed or independent learning.
- Without knowing the written form of words and sentences, learners will probably forget it. Print also helps increase accuracy in speaking.
- It is hard for kids to acquire grammatical knowledge naturally in an EFL context where exposure to the target language is scarce. Explicit and deductive teaching of grammar thus can help them understand concepts easily and clearly.
- Learning to read is a process which involves learning sets of skills. Learners need to be equipped with knowledge of basic sentence structures at the beginning, and their reading proficiency grows as they acquire more vocabulary.
- At the beginning stage of learning to read in foreign language, learners' attention should be directed to how oral language and print are connected.
- Parts are easier to learn so that kids feel more comfortable reading a sentence after they learn all words in it.
- Sight method is an easy way to learn words. However, students can learn to decode words better when provided explicit teaching of spelling and sound relations. They are also developmentally ready to think of the sounds of spelling analytically.
- 6th graders are excited about exploring spelling and sound relations in reading words.
- Students' ability to read aloud is considered to be the most important reading skill to learn in grade 6. Once they are able to read aloud texts, they are more likely to

become interested in reading for meaning. They are excited about reading aloud something in foreign language.
- Reading aloud improves learners' pronunciation and speaking skills. It helps learners transfer receptive skills to productive skills.
- Spelling words becomes painful for 6th graders when they do not know spelling and sound relations. In that case they have to depend on rote learning of spellings.
- Translation works effective for struggling learners.

Areas of Reading Emphasized
- Reading aloud
- Part to whole approach to reading
- Oral language and reading (print) connection
- Phonics (focused on beginning letters & consonants)
- Spelling
- Translation
- Grammar & punctuation

Observed Reading Activities
- Reading aloud (e.g., guided reading, choral reading, asking individual students read aloud to the class)
- Part to whole sentence reading; reading aloud sentences word by word first and then as a whole
- Spelling out words
- Topic vocabulary (Odd one out, not frequent)
- Sight method (not frequent)
- Thinking of the Korean equivalents of beginning sounds of words (as a way to help kids understand the sounds of beginning letters)
- Matching oral language with print (checking the written form of key expressions from dialogs)
- Dictation
- Explicit and deductive teaching of grammar (e.g., past tense, comparative form)
- Sentence making or building (using sentences already familiar to kids orally)
- Sentence recognition (e.g., sentence card ordering, identifying numbered sentences)
- Electronic storybook reading ('What do you want to be?)
- Preteaching of vocabulary
- Contextualized sentence reading; sentence slides with contextual pictures (not frequent, only for comparative form)
- Translations as a primary means to convey meaning

Writing
- Model sentence and writing
- Sentence making (building)
- Copying

- Dictation

Materials

- Written dialog as reading material
- Grammar handouts (e.g., past tense, comparative form)
- Electronic storybook
- Key words and sentences worksheet
- Words and sentence slides with no visual context
- Sentence cards
- Sentence slides with picture context (comparative form)

Teaching Strategies

- Parts are easier to learn and pronounce. Encourage learners to read a sentence word by word first and then as a whole. This will also help learners notice the individual words in a sentence and match them with oral language.
- Don't provide contextual support right from the beginning. Kids may not pay their full attention to language input itself to construct meaning.
- Ask individual students read aloud or say answers in order to alert them to the lesson as well as to check how they are doing on tasks.
- Make the best of students' knowledge of the first language. (e.g., thinking of the Korean equivalents of English letter sounds)
- Begin every lesson with a review of the previous lesson. Repetition and reinforcement is important in foreign language learning.
- Begin lessons with some of daily expressions (e.g., How are you? What's the date today?) in order to get students ready for the class and help them acquire basic daily expressions.
- Allow students to identify sentences by numbers instead of reading them aloud. This is an easy and quick way to check if students can identity a sentence as a whole although they can't read all words confidently.
- Use the same pattern of worksheet for every lesson, allowing students to expect what will happen and to feel comfortable and confident about what to learn. However, it is also necessary to challenge students by something new occasionally.
- Explain things explicitly and deductively when students are considered or likely to be confused about language input.

Groupings

- Whole class and individual work dominated (asking individuals to say answers or read aloud to the class frequently observed)
- Small group work rarely observed

Room Arrangement

- Students sat in lines facing the front or the center.
- English classroom expectations displayed on the right side of the front wall

- Alphabet letters and wall charts on the backboard
- 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' on the lower side of the backboard
- Calendar in English on the right side of the blackboard

Student Engagement & Classroom Atmosphere

- Well-managed class
- Most of the students on task most of the time; however, students seem to be neither active nor excited.
- Most of the time spent on instructional activities.
- Little interaction between the teacher and students as well as among students
- Teachers' interaction style: deductive explanation & modeling/demonstrating dominated

Professional Development Experiences

- Bed in English education (English specialist)
- Coursework completed in Med program
- Teacher education program by Seoul Education Training Institute

Sources of Teaching Ideas

- How she was taught (previous English learning experiences in schooling)
- Web search (teachers' community web site)
- Teacher education programs