CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) replaced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.  The NCLB became a law in January, 2002. The purpose of NCLB is to close the gap in student learning.  With this act in place every child will eventually succeed in the classroom.  The goal is to reach 100 percent of the student population at “Proficient” or above on state mandated testing by 2012.  Of course, the results will not be immediate.

     Schools funded by the state government will be required to submit a detailed report of the results of student achievement.  Depending on the percentage requirement for that year (of students needing to reach “Proficient” or above) will result in a school earning AYP, or Academic Yearly Progress.  Hence the word “progress” in this title, to eventually see 100 percent of the student population scoring at the expected outcome.

     NCLB is based on four parts:  more parental choice, greater local control, stronger accountability and discovering what is successful for students’ learning, based on scientific research. Parents will be offered the freedom to choose their child’s school if the present school is not meeting the needs of their student.  Parents will be offered increased help for their child’s education, regardless of what may inhibit the student’s learning.  Under parental choice, parents will be offered the choice to send their child to a charter school and receive the same learning expectations for their child. With greater, local control; faith based and community efforts are an option.  The recently mandated Bully Prevention Program in schools is an effort to offering safer schools for students to attend.  Individual states are given the local control and flexibility to meet their state’s assessment needs.   Stronger accountability is the backbone to this program.  As stated above, with the implementation, schools will be quick to close the gap in student achievement.  Schools will be put “on stage” as their achievement results will be posted to the public in the form of a Building Report Card.

       Finally, what will glue NCLB all together is finding out what works in the classroom to achieve 100 percent of our student population performing in subject areas at a proficient or above level.  Competent teachers will be necessary to reach the expected outcomes in reading, math, science, social studies and writing.  These teachers will constantly be searching for research based strategies that will help EACH ONE of their students succeed.  With the implementation of these factors no child will be left behind.

       The elementary school participating in this research is a district located in a large metropolitan area in the mid west. The targeted areas for School Improvement for this school include (1) reading comprehension, (2) math problem solving and (3) writing (KSDE, 2006-2007).  The strategies implemented and assessments used are as follows:

* Reading comprehension strategies include graphic organizers and predict/infer, question, monitor/clarify, summarize, evaluate, phonics/decoding.  Reading Comprehension:  NWEA, State Reading Assessment and HM Leveled Reading Passages.
* Math problem solving strategies include six-step model to problem solving and "Problem Solving Strategies", a resource for teachers. Assessments for math include:  NWEA and State Math Assessments.
* Strategies used to teach writing include the writing process and graphic organizers.  To assess these areas Pray-Woodman uses the following.  The state writing assessment will be used in the area of writing.

     For this research project, the focus is on individualized vocabulary combined with fluency.  Does this focus help increase reading comprehension in students?  The term "reading comprehension" can be defined several ways.  Scholastic defines reading comprehension as: “the capacity of the mind to perceive and understand" (Scholastic, 2008).  A second definition of the term *reading comprehension* includes “the process of using prior knowledge and thinking processes to construct meanings from written text” (Pearson, 2008).  These definitions conclude that reading comprehension requires understanding, processing, thinking and prior knowledge.  Within each of these areas are many skills, concepts and applications for a learner. Because all students learn differently and all students learn at a different pace, educators are relying on the practice of differentiated instruction to help them achieve positive results with student learning.

**2.1 Differentiated Instruction**

Focusing on student achievement must also come with changes within the classroom in order to achieve success.  To think of the traditional classroom setting is no longer an option.  Teachers must rethink the structure of their classrooms, the management system of their classrooms and the expectations of themselves and the students within in their classroom.  In order to give students one on one or small group instruction educators will need to rethink how they teach.  There are times to teach and there are times to facilitate learning. If a child is in a regular education classroom and not working at grade level it offers a challenge to educators.  It's only common sense to work with each student at their individual level and pace, to continue them progressing.  This seems to propose a problem for educators.  If a percentage of students in the regular classroom are not working at the current grade level, how do we decrease the gap in student learning?  Differentiated Instruction is the answer to this equation.  Tomlinson (2008) indicates that "Differentiated instruction is student-aware teaching.  It is guided by the premise that schools should maximize student potential, not simply bring students to an externally established norm on a test.  To grow as much and as rapidly as possible, students must not only learn essential content, but also increasingly take charge of their own lives as learners" (¶. 3). When educators work with students to help them achieve gains in their deficient areas, educators must also be teaching students how to think for themselves and how to take the strategies they are using and apply them to their own, personal lifelong learning.  That is what all students should be taught to do in school - work to learn and learn to teach themselves how to think.  Educators are their facilitators that help them make this possible.  If struggling students are taught early on where their weaknesses are, they can be taught how to help themselves improve their learning.

     Hewson and Adrian (2008) state, "By focusing on individual student progress, we have put excellence within reach of us all" (¶. 24).  The key to student achievement, regardless of the subject matter, is just that - focusing on individual needs.  When educators begin to see their students as a physician sees his/her patients, individually, each a separate case, an individual in need of a variety of techniques to instruction, then the educator will gain individualize a student learning program, educators must find where each student is achieving at currently success with each student.  How does an educator explore individual student weaknesses?  When an educator has learned to read and interpret data, a variety of data, then the educator can find the learning holes and work towards achievement.  With these holes in student learning, teachers are required to form learning prescriptions for each skill he/she is not mastering. With Responsiveness-to-Intervention (RTI) educators are finding ways to reach all students, especially the students who are falling below standards. These models offer a variety of support options.

**2.2 Responsiveness-to-Intervention**

RTI, or Response to Intervention, is a model that uses scientifically sound practices to intervene with students who are experiencing academic difficulties (Stecker, 2007). Through RTI, three tiers of intervention exist. Through all three tiers progress monitoring tools are used to indicate levels of risk. In some tiers progress monitoring occurs more frequently.

Tier 1 serves as “preventative instruction conducted in general education classrooms” (Stecker, ¶4) and is usually implemented by the classroom teacher. Students in this tier of instruction are occasionally progress monitored, such as five to ten weeks, depending on the student and the skills being focused on. Progress monitoring is also a good tool to determine whether the type of instruction being implemented is effective. Tier 2 instruction is considered more intensive than Tier 1 instruction and can be implemented by the regular classroom teacher, trained paraprofessional, reading specialist and/or school psychologist (Stecker, 2007). Tier 2 is often presented in a small group format, such as four to six students. Skills and strategies not mastered within Tier 1 instruction are often implemented at the Tier 2 level. Progress monitoring is performed with these students more often than the Tier 1 group. Tier groups are fluid. If a teacher feels the student has progressed the student may return to the Tier 1 group. If the teacher feels students need even more intervention that Tier 2 allows, students are able to move to the Tier 3 intervention. Tier 3 requires instruction that is much more intensive and in yet a smaller group setting, such as two or three students and in some cases individual instruction. The intervention may also be implemented for a longer time period, focusing on one skill at a time. Students in this tier have previously shown poor performance and “academic unresponsiveness to high-quality instruction” (Stecker, ¶ 6). More often than not, students in Tier 3 are students in special education programs, with an individualized education plan. Tier 3 focuses on student need and is a highly intense form of instruction that focuses on individual, student goals.

In some school districts the RTI model has been adopted and fully implemented with some or all of the student population. Different states have adopted different models, with the same principles. If a district has not adopted a model for student intervention, it is still up to the classroom teacher to meet the goals of the students. In some cases support systems are available, such as in the case of an inclusion classroom and/or with the support of reading specialists and trained paraprofessionals. Even if these supports are available, they should not replace Tier Instruction Models. It is possible within a classroom to implement tiers of instruction even if the school has not adopted a model on its own. The results can be significant. Lyon, Fletcher, Torgesen, Shaywitz and Chhabra, 2004, state “Evidence from many successful schools and from multiple research studies shows that a multi-tiered approach involving high-quality classroom instruction alone and in combination with targeted, small group interventions can substantially reduce the proportion of students who struggle to read” (¶5). In the same article, Arllington states “The goal of all students reading on grade level will only be achieved with an expansion of expert tutoring, which has been repeatedly shown to be the best intervention” (¶ 5). For students requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction small group sizes and in some cases, one on one instruction must be implemented in order to achieve progress in student learning. As Torgesen (2010) states “Many older struggling readers are victims of poor early reading instruction. They were not taught or insufficiently taught the basic skills necessary for fluent reading and deep processing of text” (¶2). Effective instruction is a key factor to student reading success. Within that effective instruction a teacher knows his/her students’ strengths and weaknesses. The teacher then screens and diagnoses skills in which the student is struggling and focuses on those skills as individually and explicitly as possible.

**2.3 Fluency**

Within the past decade the focus on reading fluency has gained much attention.  Penner-Wilger (2008), state "Reading fluency is the ability to decode and comprehend text simultaneously.  Thus, reading fluency forms a bridge from decoding skills to comprehension" (¶. 25).  These two researchers offered 40 minutes of independent reading per day, over a six month period, to third through fifth graders.  It was discovered that independent reading did improve these grade levels fluency and reading achievement for higher skilled reading students but not for lower skilled readers.  Thus, fluency for lower skilled students must be taught explicitly in order to achieve gains in reading comprehension.  When a student's reading is not automatic, they must spend more time processing words individually by decoding the vocabulary, putting it into a sentence, combining that sentence with more sentences and finally at the end of a passage or book, understand what was read.  Until this becomes an automatic process, students are unable to comprehend effectively.  Penner-Wilger (2008) lists the three component skills of reading fluency as "accuracy of word decoding, automaticity of word recognition, and prosody of oral text reading" (¶. 3).  Automaticity is defined (¶. 4) as "the ability to quickly recognize words automatically, with little cognitive effort or attention".  For students with little exposure to quality literature, vocabulary becomes a struggle to decode and read with no effort.  It is further noted in Penner-Wilger's research that "When decoding is automatic, additional resources are available for comprehension and meta cognition" (¶. 10).

    Scwanenflugel, Kuhn, Morris and Bradley (2006) researched a program called Wide Reading, which incorporated three different fluency programs.  The Wide Reading approach required 20 minutes of scaffold oral reading each day using a variety of grade level texts.  Not only did the Wide Reading strategy increase fluency, it also increased reading prosody.  An increase of reading comprehension was noted as well (¶. 1).  "It appears that, as children become fluent and automatic readers, they use their freed attention resources to produce prosodic reading and improved comprehension" ( ¶. 3).  In Roundy & Roundy's research (2009) repeated reading was the strategy focused on for seventh grade struggling readers.  Following sessions, student scores on fluency, comprehension and self-esteem were so high that Roundy and Roundy implemented repeated readings with all their students.  As quoted "...the effects of repeated reading are so strong that it should be woven into the very fabric of daily literacy instruction" (¶. 24).  Another study that proved beneficial included the Renzulli Learning.  Field's (2007) researched offered the Renzulli Learning with 383 third through eighth grade students.  Renzulli Learning is defined as "an on-line educational profile and matching database geared to provide enrichment resources, creative productivity and high-end learning that matches student interests, learning styles and expression styles with a vast array of educational activities and resources designed to enrich the learning process" (¶. 1).  This sixteen week intervention was used with students for two to three hours per week.  "Renzulli Learning demonstrated significantly higher growth in reading comprehension and significantly higher growth in oral reading fluency" (¶. 3).  Differentiation of instruction was provided through this computer based program.

     Shaywitz and Shaywitz (2004) offer findings in differences of the brain of struggling readers and non-struggling readers. First off, they define fluency as "rapid, automatic reading that does not require attention or effort" (¶. 16).  They further explain that fluent reading develops as the reader builds brain connections that are able to represent words in text.  Once a child reads words over and over the student's brain has actually constructed an exact representation of the word.  As readers continue to read and apply new words over and over it's found that the brain begins to recognize the word(s) instantly and effortlessly.  Knowing this helps educators realize the importance of repeated readings among struggling readers to aid in their reading fluency.  Shaywitz and Shaywitz conducted a study on 144 second and third grade struggling readers.  They offered individual tutoring for 50 minutes daily that was systematic and explicit.  Significant gains in reading comprehension and fluency were noted.  The major findings indicated that "all children must be taught phonics, fluency, and vocabulary and comprehension strategies systematically, comprehensively and explicitly" (¶. 24).  The most impressive and validating quote taken from this study states "Good evidence now indicates that we can teach reading fluency by means of repeated oral reading with feedback and guidance.  Using these methods we can teach almost every child to read" (¶. 25).  That is exciting news for educators!

    Some studies showing increases in reading fluency did not show gains in reading comprehension.  For example, Dyad Reading, coupling a lead reader reading with a reader who needs assistance, a strategy used with 40 ELL students and compared with a control group of 40 students not paired, showed a significant increase in the area of reading fluency (Almaguer, 2005).  This same research using the dyad intervention, however, did not offer significant results in the area of reading comprehension.  Another intervention, QuickReads, researched by Elfrieda & Fisher (n.d.), with second through fourth grade students showed that reading fluency made a significant increase; however reading accuracy and comprehension remained the same after a nine-week time frame.  Osborn (2007) researched the usage of word walls and silent reading with a group of second graders.  These interventions were implemented for twelve weeks.  The research showed that word walls and silent reading alone do not significantly increase reading fluency or comprehension among second grade students.  Osborn stated "continued research into identifying effective teaching strategies for the development of other sub skills that contribute to reading fluency development are necessary as early as kindergarten to promote fluency in reading" (p 145).  In other words, these strategies should begin in kindergarten WITH an isolated fluency program.  Finally, Martens (1997) performed research on one, seven year old student, using the idea of repeated readings with miscue analysis.  In the end, repeated reading did help the student "improve fluency scores and recognize words more quickly and accurately"(¶. 32).  However, even though the student's fluency increased, the scores did not indicate "an equally steady, controlled and proficient understanding of the story the student was reading (¶. 33).

   Vaughn and Thompson (2004) suggest that "students who do not make progress learning to read will need supplemental instruction that allows them to practice and master foundational skills and concepts before they get too far behind their peers" (p. 129).  In order to achieve this time with the teacher, students are going to require an increase in instructional time and a smaller group, or one-on-one, for learning.  Systematic and explicit instruction is the most effective ways to achieve results.  To help increase fluency in grades two and three, Vaughn and Thompson suggest partner reading, choral reading, tape-assisted reading and fluency building at the word or phrase level.  These opportunities need to offer a good model and provide students with the opportunities to reread text.  Just as with the area of vocabulary when students need to have words taught with extended meanings in a systematic approach, students need to be given opportunities to explicitly instruct fluency.  Teachers need to model and teach the use of the vocabulary and provide multiple opportunities to apply the vocabulary (p. 132), as well as model reading aloud, teaching how our words should flow as we read.

     In one study of 91 ELL students, the researcher offered students 50 minutes of intense, daily instruction in the areas of phonological awareness, word attack, word reading and spelling.  The materials also contained an emphasis on fluency and comprehension (Huebner, 2009).  These 91 participants all scored below the 25th percentile in English reading.  This intervention group was compared to another group in overall reading achievement.  Following the eight month period of this study, results were significant.  The group with the intervention for 50 minutes each day significantly increased their overall reading comprehension.  Huebner reports that this research shows that "this strategy can help students perform at or above grade level and sustain high performance" (¶. 8).  Thus, small group reading intervention is an effective, research-based strategy that can address needs of low achieving students in the area of reading comprehension.

     Fluency is a probable indicator of student success in reading comprehension if it is focused on with other skills as well and used, ultimately to help students learn to think while they read.  Assessing a student one-on-one can offer more valuable knowledge about his/her reading abilities than other forms of testing (Davidson and Myhre, 2000). Throughout her research, Davidson (n.d.) defines reading fluency, describes how students acquire reading fluency skills, explains research-based interventions, and finally evaluates and presents Read Naturally, another effective scientifically-based reading fluency intervention.  Research has shown that Read Naturally and Power Reading are both powerful reading interventions for the area of reading fluency, which in turn is a bridge to reading comprehension success. Comparisons of the comprehension quiz after week one of instruction without individual vocabulary instruction was compared to the comprehension quiz after week two of the instruction with individual vocabulary instruction.  Read Naturally and Power Reading are programs designed specifically for fluency instruction to increase comprehension.  As stated by Davidson "Read Naturally can provide the tools to move the reader stalled at a slow word-by-word reading stage into comfortable fluent reading where attention can be focused on meaning.  After all, the goal of reading is to gain meaning from what is read.  Thus, Read Naturally and/or Power Reading can be a bridge to meaning and ultimately, to reading success" (¶. 26).  Because Read Naturally is sometimes utilized in the Reading Lab and Special Education Classrooms, the researcher chose to use the passages from Power Reading for this research.  Unlike Read Naturally, Power Reading does not incorporate a vocabulary section so the researcher added vocabulary to the program. Power Reading is part of Carbo's (2008) Reading Styles Program.  "Using strategies within this program have shown significant results in the areas of: effectiveness in improving student academic achievement; widespread replication with organizational capacity to continue gearing up; high-quality implementation assistance to schools; and comprehensiveness” (¶. 1).  The idea behind Read Natural and Power Reading is that students reread the passage several times until he/she is comfortable and showing significant fluency.  It's this fluency that allows gains in comprehension.  With Read Natural, students are given specific vocabulary to focus on.  With Power Reading no vocabulary is offered, however the comprehension questions are based on similar standards required by the Kansas State Assessments and National Reading Assessments and include comprehension questions dealing with cause/effect; problem/solution, chronological order, context clues, sequencing, inference, predictions and drawing conclusions, for example.

**2.4 Vocabulary**

Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman and Scammacca (2010), in their article *Evidence-Based Strategies for Reading Instruction of Older Students with Learning Disabilities* told of older students with learning disabilities tend to struggle more with the fluency component of reading due to the difficulties they encounter with identifying new and unfamiliar words. The same authors suggest that students who struggle with learning new words focus on learning skills of how to break apart difficult words into familiar units and use known meanings of smaller parts of the word to learn new vocabulary words. Once words can become more familiar to students, they can begin skills necessary in increasing their fluency.

As the researcher examined the facts of each of the learners who did not reach the 25th percentile, obvious factors came to play.  The first of these factors was fluency but the second factor was a lack of vocabulary. In a few of the students, decoding deficiencies were evident.  Liben and Liben (2004) discovered that many of the words students decoded, they still did not comprehend.  The authors went on to say "We were misleading ourselves in naming this a vocabulary problem.  If you don't know what a porch is, you do not have a vocabulary problem; you have a knowledge problem" (¶. 24).  As this points out, students should be allowed to think about the words they are reading in text, identify these words as they read them, record them and then be given time to learn them and apply them with repeated readings.  If educators limit themselves to only the "standard based" vocabulary required, or the vocabulary traditionally limited to text, then educators are assuming students are able to understand vocabulary as long as they can decode vocabulary.  Teaching students to record words they do not know the meanings of, **in addition** to a standard vocabulary list provided, individualizes student learning and empowers students to become their own teachers.  As educators begin to individualize student work and programs to achieve higher test results one factor must remain...working towards achieving life-long learners as well as standard-based test achievers.  As Tomlinson (2008) states "Certainly one of its [differentiated instruction] goals is increased student mastery of essential content and skills.  But few students will become dedicated learners because their standardized test scores increase.  Differentiation, fully understood, is concerned with developing not only content mastery but also student efficacy and ownership of learning" (¶. 30).

      Like Pransky (2009) states "Too often, we try to fit all underachieving culturally and linguistically diverse learners into familiar models that work well for most other students.  We think these models are based on 'best' ways of thinking, problem solving and using language" (¶. 3).  Pransky further indicates that no matter what their language development, they fall into two groups: "those from literacy-oriented communities and those from non-literacy-oriented communities" (¶. 5) where the literacy-oriented learners have parents that are typically well-educated and can offer their child a vast array of learning experiences and opportunities  whereas non-literacy-oriented learners parents have less formal education and generally have spent less time interacting with their child, which contribute to a lack of complex thinking and language skills.  Students from literacy-oriented communities were taught early to achieve at school, where as students from non-literacy communities come to school lacking the very skills their peers have already had access to since birth.  Students from non-literacy communities, as research shows, contain a huge vocabulary gap compared to their peers.  The demand for educators to increase test scores and continue to close the gap makes it challenging to also focus student learning on the actual learning process itself.  Educators must strive to "Coach students to focus on the processes of their own thinking" (¶. 29).  When students key in on vocabulary words they do not know the meaning of and/or cannot decode individually, then individual vocabulary instruction is available.

Repeated readings are not only effective for reading fluency but repeated readings will also assist learners in developing their vocabulary.  To teach fluency without teaching meanings of unknown words seems very isolated.  When the brain takes words, processes them and makes a permanent stamp to memory, the brain is better able to comprehend these words if they have pictorial reference.  It's obvious to say that when a student is reading text with new and different vocabulary within, shouldn't they be given many opportunities to reread the text to assist the brain in creating permanent vocabulary imprints?  Juel and Deffres ( 2004) offered explanation of struggling readers and the concept of "word poverty".  In their research they explained how linguistically advantaged students know approximately 20,000 words in first grade, compared to linguistically disadvantaged students who only know 5,000.  With repeated readings, students are going to be able to build their vocabulary base and keeps it in their brains permanently, thus increasing their overall reading comprehension.  Students must continue to be exposed to new vocabulary and repeatedly utilize the new vocabulary in order to make permanency in their brains.  To support this notion, Lubliner and Scott (2008) offer four basic principles of the nature of word learning.  Within chapter two these four principles are listed:  word learning is multidimensional, words come in different types of packages, word learning is incremental and students need to develop problem-solving strategies for figuring out unknown words.  As quoted under principle number three "As a word is encountered repeatedly over time, information about it builds up and the word moves up the continuum toward known.  Repeating a word supports students' understanding of its meaning as well as how it can be used in various contexts" (p. 10).  As principle number four states, students need to develop their own problem-solving strategies to figuring out unknown words.  As adults, we know that unknown words to not disappear once we discontinue school.  Students need to practice explicitly and learn how to apply the use of dictionaries and other resources, the use of context clues, the use of dissecting a word and recognizing the meanings of the base word with and without the affix.

**2.5 Vocabulary Combined with Fluency**

It goes without saying that past research shows fluency alone is not the best strategy when attempting to increase overall reading comprehension, the ultimate outcome of reading.  The question in this research focuses on the combining of vocabulary instruction to words students struggle along WITH working on students' reading fluency, at each learner's level.  As new readers are learning to read they are being given words repetitively every day.  By third grade, decoding is an assumed skill and often times it is not emphasized.  Non-fluent readers need continued support in decoding and vocabulary instruction to make their reading more fluent.  As stated by Curtis and Longo (2008, ¶. 1), "Providing vocabulary instruction is one of the most significant ways in which teachers can improve students' reading and listening comprehension".  For under achieving readers it is necessary to find skills that help them create their own personal, mental dictionaries.  Adding vocabulary to fluency instruction is the perfect time to do this.  Fluency instruction requires repetition, as does learning new vocabulary.  While learning vocabulary during repeated readings, students are able to apply their vocabulary skills, instead of only memorize by rote.  Herron (2008) states "Phonemes are not processed by the auditory system alone; they are articulated sounds" (¶. 7).    She continues to explain how pronunciation relates to reading.  "The sight of a word triggers its pronunciation, and it is this pronunciation that has been stored in memory for convenient access along with the meaning of the word" (¶. 8).  Herron refers to this idea as *speech memory.*  In the 2008-2009 school year, research showed that a variety of vocabulary strategies, such as context clues, affixes, journaling, multiple meanings, and identifying base words all significantly increased student vocabulary and its correct usage.  Learning the vocabulary words correctly, including them into a student's speech memory and then reading the same vocabulary words within a passage, help students to read more fluently and thus, hopefully increase comprehension.

     As Watkins (2000) states "Without fluent decoding, there is little opportunity for the child to understand the passage" (¶. 5).  She continues to state later in her research "The National Reading Panel did find clear evidence that practices encouraging repeated oral reading produce positive effects on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension" (¶. 13).  Coupling that with Hastrouck and Tindal (2006) who state "fluency is only one of the essential skills involved in reading" (¶. 8), this research will focus on the fact that it is necessary students learn to decode words they are having a difficult time pronouncing and learn the meanings of those same words.  It is logical to say that if a student cannot pronounce a word clearly he/she most likely does not understand the word's definition; thus lose out on comprehension of the text. As Davidson (n.d.) states "Good readers can decode text and comprehend meaning all at the same time.  When decoding is automatic, readers can focus on the meaning of what they are reading-which is, after all, the goal of learning"(¶. 4).  Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman and Scammacca (2010) state “This much is certain: for students identified as having LD, wide reading or repeated reading by itself should never substitute for systematic, explicit instruction in word study and comprehension strategy use. Indeed, fluency instruction and practice may be most effective when combined with instruction on word-level reading skills and comprehension” (¶16). Throughout the remainder of this paper the term "vocabulary" will refer to decoding and defining words accurately.

As students begin to apply these skills, they are not only acquiring the necessary skills needed to reach a score on an achievement test, they are also acquiring lifelong learning!  The fact that students need to realize that in order to fully comprehend text they need to reread text, is a life skill itself.  Focusing on students as individuals does put excellence in our reach. Following successful results in the 2008-2009 school year, the researcher examined the question a second time “Does individualized vocabulary instruction combined with fluency instruction help to increase comprehension results in bottom quartile, third grade students?”