CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

**3.1 Participants**

It was in 2008-2009 when the researcher began to question whether individualized vocabulary instruction combined with fluency would be effective for four, third grade, elementary-school students (three girls and one boy).  All four participants tested below the 20th percentile in September, 2008, on the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association).  At this level all four students qualified for reading lab services while enrolled in the third grade, general education classroom. See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1:

**Local, State and National Reading Scores/Percentiles**

Student Birth NWEA (Sept. & May %) Reading Level (Sept. & May) KS Read. Assess

A June ’99 15% 69% Early 2nd 5th Grade 93%

B Mar. ’00 19% 48% Early 2nd Late 3rd 88%

C Apr., 00 9% 39% Early 2nd 5th Grade 89%

D Dec., ’00 4% 20% Early 1st Late 2n 93% (KAMM)

These classrooms had been in session for seven months. During the course of this research one of the girls qualified for learning disabilities and began services, in late February.  She was still a part of this action research. All four students had been identified by the classroom teacher as students experiencing significant reading difficulties. Of the reading difficulties, fluency and comprehension ranked at the top of the concerns for all four students. Classroom-based instruction included modified curricular materials and the Houghton Mifflin Reading Basal. Beginning the action research the students were ranging from a 1.0 to a 2.5 reading level, according to the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program. Because of the success of this intervention, the same strategies were selected for use in this research project.

    Participants for this current (2009-2010) were ten third grade, elementary-school students (nine boys and one girl).  Two of the ten students were identified and placed in a complete, pull out special education program. The teaching day of these students was different, due to a different classroom setting. Even though the students continued receiving the intervention provided by the researcher, these two participants were discontinued from this research because of their pull out special education services that began soon after the research began. All eight participants (seven boys and one girl) tested below the 25th percentile in September, 2009, on the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association). See table 3.2

At the time of the research, five of the eight students were identified as learning disabilities; with one of these ESOL. These five participated in the regular classroom with inclusion services.  The other three students were not identified learning disabled.  Of the five not identified with learning disabilities, two qualified for reading lab services and two qualified for no outside services. See Table 3.2.

Table 3.2:

**Experiment Group Participants and their Services \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Student Inclusion\* Pull Out\* Reading Lab\* ELL\* Speech\*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A Yes No No Yes Yes

B Yes No No No No

C No No No/Yes No No

D Yes No No No No

E Yes No No No No

F No No No Yes No  
G No No No No No

H No No No Yes No

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\**Inclusion* refers to “ A paraprofessional assists students, on an individualized education plan, in the regular classroom”

*\*Pull Out* refers to “The student is pulled out for special education services during reading instruction, according to their individualized education plan”

*\*Reading Lab* refers to “The student receives 30 minutes of instruction in a small group setting but does not quality for inclusion or pull out services”

*\*ELL* refers to “The student receives 30 minutes of English Language Learner services”

*\*Speech* refers to “The student receives speech services through an individualized education plan”

The classrooms had been in session for nine weeks when the research began. All students had been noted, following evaluations using Houghtin Mifflin Reading Passages and NWEA as “students experiencing significant reading difficulty”. Of the reading difficulties, fluency and comprehension ranked at the top of the concerns for all eight students. Classroom-based instruction included modified curricular materials and the Houghton Mifflin Reading Basal. Beginning the project the students were ranging from a 1.0 to a 3.0 reading level, according to the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program’s Assessment.  As in the previous year, a paraprofessional was trained to work with these students one on one to and implement the strategies.  The classroom teacher, as well as a trained high school, community assistant and a trained college student were also participants guiding students with their individual practices and strategies.   The researcher met with the assistant(s) one on one to explain the procedure to them thoroughly. The researcher modeled the procedures for both assistants.

To offer a control group to this study, the researcher chose eight participants in the third grade that had similar scores on the NWEA in fall of 2009. This control group is in a third grade classroom of the same elementary school as the experiment group. The results of their individual growth or scores will be displayed as well to show if any differences exist between the reading interventions given in the experiment group. See Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

**Control Group Participants and their Services**

Student Inclusion\* Pull Out\* Reading Lab\* ELL\* Speech\*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1 No Yes No No No

2 No Yes No No No

3 No No Yes No No

4 No No No No No

5 No No Yes No No

6 No Yes No No Yes

7 No Yes No No Yes

8 No No No No No

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\**Inclusion* refers to “ A paraprofessional assists students, on an individualized education plan, in the regular classroom”

*\*Pull Out* refers to “The student is pulled out for special education services during reading instruction, according to their individualized education plan”

*\*Reading Lab* refers to “The student receives 30 minutes of instruction in a small group setting but does not quality for inclusion or pull out services”

*\*ELL* refers to “The student receives 30 minutes of English Language Learner services”

*\*Speech* refers to “The student receives speech services through an individualized education plan”

All participants attend school in a district located in a large metropolitan area in the mid west. As of the census of 2010, there were 1,868 people with 668 households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The racial makeup of the city was 94.44 % [White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_(U.S._Census)), 0.96% [African American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_American_(U.S._Census)), 1.23% [Native American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_(U.S._Census)), 0.32% [Asian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_(U.S._Census)), 0.91% from [other races](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_(United_States_Census)), and 3.10% from two or more races. [Hispanic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_(U.S._Census)) or [Latino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latino_(U.S._Census)) makes up 2.62% of the population.  This district houses four elementary schools, through grades five; two middle schools through grades eight; and currently one traditional high school and one alternative high school.  Pray-Woodman Elementary School consists of eight classrooms each of grades two through five. The student population for the years 2006-2007 was 698.  Of these 698 students, 18 are African-American (2.58%); 33 are Hispanic (4.73%); 81 are Other (11.60%) and 566 are White (81.09%) (KSDE 2006-2007).  The minority population of the school is higher than that of the community itself. Since the beginning of NCLB Pray-Woodman has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

**3.2 Instruments**

As in the 2008-2009 research, the instruments used remained the same for the 2009-2010. To measure the effects of fluency instruction combined with individual vocabulary instruction, the articles from the Power Reading Program were implemented. For teaching vocabulary using the research-based method in this research, the teacher used a spiral notebook for each child, to help individualize each student's vocabulary.  Each student made note of their mispronounced words from their first reading.  The students predicted these meanings and discussed with the teacher.  From teacher-student discussion and guidance, students created pictures or symbols of the meanings of unknown words and recorded them in their notebooks to discuss, prior to rereading each day.  Daily, the student and the teacher reread the missed vocabulary words, defined them and then used them in context in sentences.  The teacher read the sentence aloud within the week's passage, to the student, that used the mispronounced vocabulary word and the student redefined what the word meant within the context of the passage.  Much one on one dialogue took place daily with the teacher and the student. Because this is a replicated study from a previous year, the research-based plans were the same for the 2009-2010 year.

**3.3 Methodology**

Students were given a Power Reading passage.  Students read the passage out loud.  While reading, the teacher marked words on a separate copy of the same passage.  The teacher marked words mispronounced, words added and words deleted.  The teacher also marked in incorrect prosody the student may use in his/her reading.  While the student read, the teacher timed this first read, known as a “first read”.  This time was labeled and recorded.  A bar graph makes for a nice visual for students to see their progress, but is not required.  Following the passage, the student noted words he/she did not know the meanings into his/her journal.  Students repeated each of these words orally to the teacher before and after the reading of the passage.  The teacher gave the student a sentence, using the word in context to help the student decipher the meaning of the word.  The student listened to the word again in the passage and created the meaning of the word in their journal with a picture/symbol.  Students repeated each of these words orally to the teacher before and after the reading of the passage.

The following day the teacher and student began their time together discussing the meaning of the mispronounced word from the first day’s reading.  Students reviewed the picture/symbol they created in their journals.  If the word had a prefix or suffix, the word was dissected and the base word and the affix defined separately and then taught together as one word.  Students read the vocabulary mispronounced or misunderstood.  Students reread the same passage to the teacher using the Power Reading passage.

For the third day the teacher assisted students in creating sentences for the vocabulary words in journals, attempting to use the word in context.  Students read the vocabulary mispronounced or misunderstood orally. Students received individual instruction on any missed end marks.  Students reread the passage out loud..

The teacher repeated this procedure for a fourth day. On the fifth day the student reread and reviewed missed vocabulary with the teacher.  On this day the teacher timed the student as he/she read the passage out loud.  The student marked the final read on the bar graph with a red marker or the teacher recorded the time it took for the student to read the passage.  A comprehension quiz was given following the reading.  If students were noted with accommodations for state assessments, the researcher used accommodations for this research.  The student completed a comprehension quiz on the passage following the second, timed read. The first read, second read and comprehension results were recorded.