Paraprofessional practice in ESOL programmes

Part 1: Description and evaluation of paraprofessional practices in supporting initial reading programmes (2007)

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Acronyms

AFL	Assessment for Learning
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
asTTle	Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning
AUSAD	Analysis and Use of Student Achievement Data
CAP	Concepts about Print
Dip TESSOL	Diploma in Teaching English in Schools to Speakers of Other Languages
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ELA	English Language Assistant
ELL	English Language Learner
ERO	Education Review Office
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESOL/AF	ESOL Assessment Form
JOST	Junior Oral Screening Test
LEA	Language Experience Approach
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PATs	Progressive Achievement Tests
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRETOS	Proofreading Tests of Spelling
PROBE	Prose Reading Observation, Behaviour and Evaluation of Comprehension
RFP	Request for Proposal
SENCO	Special Needs Coordinator
SRA	Science Research Associates
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading
STAR	Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading
TEAM	Total Educational Advice and Management
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TORCH	Test of Reading Comprehension

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Chapter One Introduction

This document reports on the first part of a two year study on the practices of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) paraprofessionals working with ELL (English Language Learner) migrant students in initial reading programmes. Since the late 1990s, the New Zealand Ministry of Education has increasingly been involved in developing comprehensive language support programmes in schools for migrant students. The current research is part of these developments and was commissioned by the Ministry of Education in order to build an evidence base from which to determine how best to address the professional development needs of paraprofessionals in their work with ESOL students, particularly in initial reading programmes. Initial reading programmes refer to reading programmes in schools aimed at improving the English language reading proficiency of ELL students. They are targeted to those students who attract ESOL funding because their scores fall at or below 112 points on the Ministry of Education ESOL Assessment Form. While structured reading programmes are a feature for all students in New Zealand schools in Years 1-4, the picture is not so consistent for students after year four.

Evidence suggests that in New Zealand more than in other western jurisdictions (but on a par with the United States), having a home language different from the school language is a significant risk factor for achieving lower levels of literacy as well as for lower school achievement in general (Wylie, Thompson & Lythe, 2001; OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), 2001). Drawing on information presented in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2001), Franken and McComish (2003, p.15) state: 'The PISA study found that minority language students in New Zealand are more than twice as likely as majority language students to be in the bottom quarter of performance in reading literacy'. Importantly, the 2003 PISA study (OECD, 2006) observed that well established language support programmes were a significant predictor of migrant student's academic achievement:

> …it appears that in some countries with relatively small achievement gaps between immigrant and native students, or smaller gaps for second generation students compared to first generation students, long-standing language support programmes exist with relatively clearly defined goals and standards. These countries include Australia, Canada and Sweden. In a few countries where immigrant students perform at significantly lower levels, language support tends to be less systematic. (OECD, 2006, p.5)

As part of a wider response to these findings the Ministry of Education has allocated special funding for resourcing ESOL provision in New Zealand schools. One of the targets for this

funding is the employment of teacher aides/language assistants, referred to in the RFP (Request for Proposal) as 'paraprofessionals' because they are not trained (professional) teachers (Ministry of Education, 2007). Paraprofessionals are employed in a number of jurisdictions to support the work of trained teachers in classrooms across the compulsory school sector. In New Zealand the Ministry of Education (2006) defines paraprofessionals as: 'Teacher aides and education, behaviour and communication support workers' and in turn defines teacher aides as 'People who help educators support students and young people who have special education needs, also known as kaiawhina and paraprofessionals.'

Those paraprofessionals employed to work with ELL students in New Zealand primary schools may be from a variety of employment and educational backgrounds and might be bilingual, multilingual or English speaking only. Equally, they may be employed to support the work of teachers in a variety of ways. Ministry suggestions for the ways in which paraprofessionals can be deployed in ESOL work are as follows:

Read to and with a small group of students, with supportive activities and discussion;
work through the Self-Pacing Boxes programme with individuals or small group;
develop key oral and written vocabulary in a specific curriculum, topic or concept area, through discussion and using visual support materials with a group;
support first language translation and interpretation to aid learning;
be available in a class to support NESB students in carrying out specific learning tasks set by the class teacher;
prepare and organise materials and learning support resources under teacher direction;
supervise learning centres established by the teacher.

(Ministry of Education, 2006)

In this research, an in-depth description of practices was obtained through interviews with classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, as well as observations of the paraprofessionals working with ELL students in schools across the Auckland region.

Chapter Two Approach to Research

Background

At the beginning of 2007, AUT (Auckland University of Technology) was contracted by the Ministry of Education to investigate paraprofessional practice in ESOL programmes in primary, intermediate and secondary schools in a regional study across the Auckland isthmus. The first part of that study required that the team evaluate the practices of paraprofessionals involved in initial reading programmes for English Language Learner (ELL) students.

The brief was to:

> … gather data on the practices in a purposive sample of schools which employ paraprofessionals who are supporting new learners of English in initial reading programmes. It will briefly summarise approaches and practices in Years 1-4, and provide detailed information on approaches and practice beyond Year 4 of schooling. It will then make comparisons between the practices and choices of instructional materials in different contexts. (Ministry of Education, 2007)

Part B of the project will involve describing and evaluating paraprofessional practice as paraprofessionals move through the Ministry-sponsored English Language Assistants (ELA) Programme.

Part A, which this report describes, was a qualitative study, aiming to occupy a 'watching space'. That is, the researchers observed and recorded what happened in selected schools and classrooms without attempting to modify the environment in any way (Nunan, 1992), although unavoidably the presence of a researcher in the room with students and paraprofessionals was in itself intrusive to some degree (Labov's [1972] observer's paradox). Observations were supplemented by interviews with teachers and paraprofessionals which served the purpose of contextualising and informing the observations. The focus was on the practices and working context of the paraprofessionals in their daily work in initial reading programmes with ELL students.

The research team received formal AUT ethics approval on 25 June, 2007. The approval number was 07/44. The ethics documentation presented to participants consisted of an initial introductory letter to principals, a participation information sheet and a consent form. Copies of this documentation are in Appendix One of the report.

Data gathering

The data for the project was gathered through interviews and observations. This was augmented by ERO (Education Review Office) reports for all the schools involved as well as ESOL verification reports obtained through the Ministry of Education.

For Years 1-4, four teachers with responsibility for paraprofessionals working in ESOL and ESOL reading in particular, were interviewed to discuss the organisation and practices of ESOL paraprofessionals in their school. The Ministry was of the opinion that considerable information existed at this level and a more comprehensive study as implemented at higher levels in the school system was not required. Other information about Years 1-4 paraprofessional practices in ESOL initial reading programmes was gained from ESOL verification reports.

For Years 5-13, data was gathered through forty-eight observations of paraprofessionals working in the classroom and twenty-four interviews with the same paraprofessionals and the teachers who direct their work. The interviews and observations were equally divided between primary (Years 5-6), intermediate (Years 7-8) and secondary (Years 9-13) schools. That is, there were sixteen observations of paraprofessionals working in each sector and eight interviews with the paraprofessionals and their associated teachers.

The researchers concentrated on one sector each, so that one researcher worked solely in primary schools, one focussed on intermediate schools and one focussed on secondary schools. Two of the schools in the primary section of the study are currently Years 1-8 as they are new and will incorporate Years 7-8 until numbers grow. In these schools, although the ESOL classes group Years 5-8 in terms of English proficiency, the paraprofessional work with Years 5-6 students was all that was incorporated into the research.

All data was recorded as handwritten notes and later written into electronic data files. There was no electronic recording of data during the observations or interviews.

Research tools

The questionnaire for Years 1-4 consisted of eleven questions examining the practices of ESOL paraprofessionals in their work in initial reading programmes with ELL students. The questionnaire for Years 5-13 was slightly less detailed in its questioning but also consisted of eleven questions. The observation prompt provided eight questions researchers needed to respond to in carrying out their observations. These tools were largely developed by Ministry of Education staff with some small modifications made by the researchers. The research tools are in Appendix Two of this report.

Analysis

A fine grained analysis of the data was achieved through the coding of themes from interview and observation notes. The analysis was gradual, incremental and initially tentative so that premature explanation and conclusions were avoided. Researchers also reported on several issues which they felt were salient and had arisen during interviews and observations but which were not elicited through the research tools. One example was that of teaching space for paraprofessionals and ELLs which seemed worth reporting on as it impacted on the quality of learning and teaching. At the request of Ministry, analysis and reporting of findings was carried out on a sectoral basis rather than being aggregated across all sectors. That is, data for Years 5-6, 7-8 and 9-13 were all analysed and reported separately.

Limitations of the study

This report has been able to capture and analyse a significant series of snapshots of the practices of ESOL paraprofessionals in their work in initial reading and other ESOL programmes with students across the school system in the Auckland region in 2007. This is the focus of the study. While some broader insights have occasionally been offered, it is important to understand that the research has not sought to provide a definitive record of all the reading and literacy-focussed activity for all ELL students in schools. Nor has it sought to record all reading resources available to these students. Moreover, the report has not captured the practices of ESOL and other teachers in any systematic way. The focus throughout has been the practices of paraprofessionals. Additionally, because the research brief was concerned with a *description* of practices as viewed through the eyes of experienced ESOL teachers and teacher educators, the research team were specifically not required to carry out a literature review for this research. The team did refer to the literature on paraprofessionals as

their research proceeded, however, and this will be captured in the report on Part B of the research.

Organisation of the report

This report has been organised on the basis of the school sectors which were researched. There is a chapter for each sector: Years 1-4, Years 5-6, Years 7-8 and Years 9-13. As far as possible there is a consistency of themes analysed and reported on over each of the sectors. However, the different sectors presented different issues and different emphases became apparent. The researchers have addressed these and so each chapter is not identical to the others in internal organisation. Moreover, the chapter on Years 1-4 is considerably different because of the more limited scope of the research in this area (see above). Wherever individual results have been reported for schools, the order of the schools has been changed so that correlations cannot be made between factors analysed and the schools themselves. An overriding feature in the reporting of the research has been to protect the identity of the individual schools and research participants.

Chapter Three Years 1 to 4

School characteristics

In the Years 1-4 section of the study, four ESOL teachers or teachers with responsibility for ESOL, were interviewed. The teachers were from a small cross-section of schools: one was decile one, two were decile three and one was decile seven. One school was on the North Shore, one was in West Auckland and two were in South Auckland.

Twenty-five verification reports were also examined and these analysed ESOL provision in primary schools in Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington. The verification reports included three of the schools interviewed for Years 1-4. The reports were produced between early 2006 and mid 2007.

Characteristics of paraprofessional sessions with ELL students

In each of the four schools interviewed, paraprofessionals worked with students in different ways. The following table explains the types of groupings, the lesson foci and the kind of materials paraprofessionals were working with.

School	Characteristics of paraprofessional sessions with students
One	Paraprofessionals used Self-Pacing Boxes with small withdrawal groups (usually three ELLs) for thirty minutes every day on alternate weeks (about five weeks a term). This was followed in alternate weeks by the paraprofessional 'reading to' with appropriate books from the library.
Two	A paraprofessional worked with the ESOL teacher in topic-focussed ESOL withdrawal classes several times per week (about forty minutes per class). The paraprofessional also heard students read in ten minute sessions several times per week (not only ELLs but all ELLs are included).
Three	Paraprofessionals only did oral work with Years 1-2 in withdrawal situations. With Years 3-4 they used Self-Pacing Boxes. They also helped with PM readers and computer work. Bilingual tutors worked with the same home language students to frontload reading content and context.
Four	Paraprofessionals were in mainstream classes in the morning assisting with the reading and writing programme. In the afternoons, paraprofessionals withdrew groups of students for topic-based work e.g. body parts.

Table 1: Characteristics of paraprofessional sessions with students (Years 1-4)

Teachers in three of these schools explained that topic/needs-based classes were not always strictly literacy focussed but could also turn into 'hands on' sessions – e.g. making jelly, going on nearby field trips.

Not all verification reports specified paraprofessional activities in relation to Years 1-4 nor in relation to initial reading programmes, particularly. Where broad comments were made it was assumed that this covered whole school provision and was therefore taken to pertain to Years 1-4 as well. Fourteen schools reported that paraprofessionals worked with ELLs both in in-class support and withdrawal situations. The characteristics of withdrawal ranged from one-to-one withdrawal for instructional reading to topic and needs-based small group work to further withdrawal within an ESOL (withdrawal) class. In several schools where the emphasis was on mainstream support, the schools mentioned that they considered withdrawal to be a last resort measure only to be used in extreme cases. Mainstream class support-only for ELL students by paraprofessionals was employed by six schools and withdrawal-only, by paraprofessionals, was the case in five schools. In withdrawal-only situations, paraprofessionals worked in various roles to support English vocabulary and oral development and/or reading.

Materials available for use by paraprofessionals for initial reading

It was evident from an examination of the verification reports that a wide range of reading and other literacy material was available in most schools for Years 1-4 ELLs. Generally, reports did not indicate the materials that paraprofessionals specifically used with students although where they did these included Rainbow Reading, Self-Pacing Boxes, Jolly Phonics, Talk to Learn, Bannatyne Programme, bilingual dictionaries as well as a range of other resources. Of the four schools interviewed each had a wide variety of commercial and teacher-generated resources for use by paraprofessionals.

Materials	**School 1**	**School 2**	**School 3** N.B. This school almost certainly uses a wider range of materials for Years one-to-one reading but this was not ascertained in the interview and the materials below pertain to topic-focussed ESOL classes.	**School 4**
Rainbow Reading	x			x
PM Readers	x	x	x	x

Momentum series	x	x		
Gilt Edge	x	x		
Ready to Read		x		
Journals	x	x		x
Self-Pacing Boxes	Not with Years 1-4	x	Previously, but rarely now	x
Jolly Phonics	x			x
Sunshine series (and CDs)	x	x		x
Vivid English (CDs)				x
Wildcats	x			
Wide range of teacher generated materials			x	

Table 2: Materials available for use by paraprofessionals for initial reading (Years 1-4)

Learners selected for paraprofessional support

In each of the interviewed schools, students selected for ESOL support were all diagnosed as achieving under the cohort level (that is scoring less than 112 points which is the benchmark at which ESOL funding ceases) on the Ministry ESOL Assessment Form (ESOL/AF). In one school, teachers had found it difficult to ascertain the level of the cohort because so many students in the school were from Pacific families where the home language was not English. In this school, the students had been scored too highly and not enough of the students were receiving ESOL support. The situation had recently been rectified through training from Ministry verifiers. In another of the four schools, the ELL ESOL-funded group was boosted by five international fee paying students. In all four schools, the ESOL-funded students clustered in Years 1-4 because funding allows twelve terms of funding for New Zealand-born students whose parents do not speak English as their first language (commencing after their first six months at school). One school noted that they differentiated and increased provision for students scoring under seventy points. In each of the schools, individual reading assistance

was given to all ESOL-funded students but other high needs students also receive one-to-one reading assistance (presumably through another funding stream).

Diagnostic testing to establish starting points in reading

Each of the four interviewed schools differed to some extent in the types of diagnostic testing they carried out to establish achievement levels in reading for ELL Years 1-4 students. The individual school practices are noted in the table below.

School	Diagnostic practices
1	Used the same diagnostic practices as in mainstream. These were: the School Entry Assessment, PM Benchmarks (2 years), MEI (Manurewa Enhancement Initiative) Assessment as part of this, six year nets and teachers' running records. Basic sight words were tested within class, story writing samples were collected each term – these were moderated across the school. There is a lot of communication among teachers and there was washback from assessment into teaching. Sight word games, alphabet games and English exemplars over the four skills were all used in assessment. PROBE and STAR are utilised for Years 3-6.
2	Running records, School Entry Assessment Data, Junior Oral Screening Test (JOST), Alphabet Test, First 100 high frequency words (decoding only) were all utilised. ESOL teacher checked regularly with classroom teacher as to how the students were performing. Paraprofessionals do JOST testing.
3	Alphabet identification, word identification (high frequency words) (Janiee van Hees), Ministry assessment (ESOL/AF) used for guide as to what to cover. Teacher discussed students' progress with experienced paraprofessional. Emphasis on oracy moving to literacy for Years 1-4.
4	Benchmark kit, Starting Reading, Prose Reading Observation, Behaviour and Evaluation of Comprehension (PROBE) in Years 3 and 4, and Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading (STAR) – all administered by teachers. New entrants checked by Deputy Principal. Looking at concepts of print, alphabet, word recognition and six year observation survey.

Table 3: Diagnostic testing to establish starting points in reading (Years 1-4)

Verification reports explained diagnostic practices in some detail, however it was not always clear if assessments were for all students or ESOL-funded students only. All the diagnostic tests noted in the table below were administered to ELLs.

School	ESOL/AF	School Entry Assessment (SEA)	JOST	Six year observational survey	PM Benchmarks	PROBE	PATs	STAR	asTTle (Reading)	English Language exemplars	Other
1	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x		In the process of introducing these	Records of oral language
2	x	Modified version		X	x		x	x	x	x	Christchurch model of running records
3	x	Modified version	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	School wide spelling test
4	x				x		listening	Years 3-6			Marie Clay assessments. Also use MEI benchmarks and standardised testing.
5	x	x		x	some	x	x			x	School running records
6	x		x		x	x			x	x	Record of Oral Language
7	x			x					x	x	PRETOS, graphophonic tests, spelling tests, Peters spelling dictation

8	x	x		x		Senior school		Year 3	Years 4-6	School writing exemplars referenced to national exemplars	Seen text running records in junior school.
9	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	Schonell spelling test (year 3 and up).
10	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			Vocabulary checklists
11	x	x		x	x	x		x		x	
12	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	
13	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	TORCH
14	x			x	x	x	x	x		Internal written exemplars	New entrant assessment after 4–8 weeks. CAP (Concepts About Print). Record of oral language
15	x	x		x			x	x			Record of oral language, running records on seen texts, wedge graphs, Peters spelling test, Burt test, Salford reading test.

16	x		x	x						x	Burt test, running records, written and oral language assessments
17	x	School's own version		x	x	x	x	x		x	Five and a half year check. Peters spelling test.
18	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Schonell spelling test
19	x			x	x	x	x			x	Internal new etrant assessment
20	x	x		x	x		x	x		x	
21	x	x		x		x		x	x	School's version	Schonell spelling. Sails running records.
22	x	x		x	x	x		x	writing	x	Record of oral language
23	x	x		x		x	x			x	Running records
24	x	x		x		x	x			x	
25	x			x	x	x	Listening and reading	Years 3 - 8	x	x	AUSAD new entrant assessment (apart from oral language component)

Table 4: Diagnostic and assessment tools for ELL students (Years 1-4)

While diagnostic testing at this level did vary there was considerable consistency across the schools in the tests used. All schools used the Ministry of Education ESOL Assessment Form as it is the primary mechanism for ascertaining which students are in need of funded support and which are not. Predictably, all schools used the six year observational survey which is recommended for all New Zealand school students and is a requirement for reading recovery if this is thought necessary for a student. Other popular diagnostic methods were the School Entry Assessment, PM Benchmarks, PROBE (Prose Reading Observation, Behaviour and Evaluation of Comprehension) and the National English Language Exemplars (with several schools working with modified versions). Slightly less popular (utilised by about fourteen schools) were the PATs (Progressive Achievement Tests) and STAR (Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading). The Peters and Schonell spelling tests were used in three schools respectively and the Burt word recognition test in two schools. Several schools mentioned spelling tests without specifying which ones they were using.

Testing for proficiency in first language

The four interviewed schools were asked about whether and how they tested for first language proficiency when students entered school. The first school replied that it did not do this and had no test for first language proficiency. The interviewee felt that some students were entering year one with very strong first language proficiency particularly in Pacific languages but that there was no awareness in the school of the need for a strong first language, nor to maintain one. Another two schools also did not test for first language proficiency. One school, however, did identify literacy levels in the first language as well as proficiency across other language skill areas through the bilingual paraprofessionals if this was possible (if the students shared the same language as a bilingual tutor). Testing for first language proficiency was not mentioned in any of the verification reports.

Period of paraprofessional assistance for reading

In the interviewed schools, teachers made the point that wherever possible students got assistance through withdrawal or in-class support as long as they fell below the level of the cohort. In one school, students reaching 100 on the ESOL/AF were considered closely as to when they might be able to exit the support programme. In accordance with Ministry guidelines, New Zealand-born students with a home language different from English were offered twelve terms of assistance after the first six months at school. New migrant students were eligible for up to twenty terms of ESOL support.

Paraprofessional training

Of the four schools interviewed, there was a range of reported experience and training among the paraprofessionals. One school was considering upskilling its paraprofessionals as it was changing its support programme for ESOL-funded students from one where paraprofessionals provided only in-class support to them teaching withdrawal groups utilising Self-Pacing Boxes and other reading resources. The interviewee explained that their paraprofessionals had attended Jannie van Hees' three day professional development programme held at the school and they had attended various one day courses for paraprofessionals as well as the one year general paraprofessional certificate course delivered through Manukau Institute of Technology. In another school, the key ESOL paraprofessional was very experienced and had attended a number of professional development programmes, including those related to ESOL support over her thirteen years in the position.

The paraprofessionals in another of the interviewed schools were both university graduates from their own countries and, as bilinguals, had completed the Ministry of Education bilingual tutor training. Both had also had training for teaching with Self-Pacing Boxes and had completed the ELA course. The interviewed teacher noted that the school was generally open to and supportive of staff updating their professional knowledge and this included paraprofessionals.

In the remaining school, the point was made that the previous ESOL teacher had taken quite a lot of responsibility for the professional development of ESOL paraprofessionals but since her departure in the previous year paraprofessionals had not done any professional development courses related to their ESOL work. One of the interviewees was disappointed that although paraprofessionals were encouraged to plan (in the ELA course, for example) they tended not to be paid for planning time and this seemed inequitable. In addition, the refresher course for ELAs was considered to be expensive for schools and this could prove to be prohibitive.

The verification reports of twenty-five schools identified considerable variety in respect of paraprofessional training. When discussing the professional development of paraprofessionals they did not specify the years/levels paraprofessionals were working at so the following description pertains to Years 1-6, rather than 1-4 specifically. The majority of reports mentioned some kind of training for paraprofessionals and this ranged from in-school professional development by external consultants or ESOL teachers to paraprofessionals

taking part in external professional development courses e.g. ELA training. In seven schools, ESOL training for paraprofessionals was either not mentioned or had not happened. In these cases it seemed that paraprofessionals were working in very circumscribed roles under the close direction of classroom teachers.

Summary

In a number of schools, paraprofessionals appeared to work in both withdrawal and mainstream contexts. It may be that paraprofessionals are utilised more in mainstream classes at the Years 1-4 level than at other levels of the education system although this was difficult to ascertain definitively as the verification reports did not differentiate their reporting between Years 1-4 and 5-6. The strong, organised reading programmes and focus on literacy in Years 1-4 along with the small group work in mainstream classes possibly promotes a more systematic integration of paraprofessional support for students.

A varied but consistent range of assessments were utilised across schools for the assessment of English language proficiency and reading, in particular. However, apart from the ESOL/AF there seemed to be limited ESOL-specific assessment.

All schools also appeared to carry a wide range of teaching and learning resources available for initial ESOL reading programmes. However, in general, these seemed to parallel what was available for mainstream students and were not necessarily differentiated for ELLs, nor were they explicitly identified for ESOL paraprofessional work with ELL students.

In many schools there seemed to be a strong awareness of the need for paraprofessional development of ESOL support skills and strategies. In some instances, however, the development of paraprofessionals depended on the enthusiasm and energy of an individual teacher. When these people had left the school, knowledge about how to use specific resources (e.g. Self-Pacing Boxes) was lost as was any impetus for actively organising paraprofessional development.

Chapter Four Years 5 and 6

School characteristics

In the Years 5-6 section of the study, paraprofessionals in eight primary or Years 1-8 schools were observed and interviewed with their supervising teachers. A cross-section of Auckland schools was captured in this sample in terms of geographical spread and decile rating. Two schools were located in West Auckland, four were in South Auckland and two were on the North Shore. Considerable effort was put into recruiting in the Central Auckland and East Auckland areas but this proved unsuccessful for a number of reasons. Either the schools were too busy, ERO visits were about to happen or the schools did not have paraprofessionals working with Years 5-6 ELL students. Two schools were decile ten, one was decile eight, one was decile seven, one was decile four, two were decile three and one was decile one.

Background to the teachers in the study

Teachers associated with ESOL paraprofessionals in Years 5-6 were a mix of specialist ESOL (trained) teachers (three), SENCOs (Special Needs Coordinators) (two), primary trained teachers working as ESOL teachers but not university qualified in the area (two) and a senior primary teacher with responsibility for reading in the school.

Some teachers saw it as their role to plan with and direct paraprofessional activity closely while others appeared to defer quite considerably to paraprofessionals who had been working in the field for a number of years, even to the extent of seeing the paraprofessionals as 'the ESOL experts' in the school. In four schools, paraprofessionals taught without being observed by their supervising teachers. Of these, three paraprofessionals were responsible for their own planning.

Background to the paraprofessionals in the study

Of the eight Years 5-6 paraprofessionals in the study all were female. Two spoke English as an additional language, the remaining six women could be characterised as either Pakeha or Maori, English as first language speakers. The group varied in their experience as paraprofessionals generally, in respect to experience with ESOL specifically and in terms of their training. The experience of participants working as paraprofessionals in the group varied

from one year to fourteen years. Six of the paraprofessionals began their work in schools as mother helpers and gradually moved into the paraprofessional paid role. Previous occupations ranged from high school secretary to accounts clerk to mental health worker. One paraprofessional had a university degree (in this case from an overseas university), one had completed university papers on child development and one paraprofessional had qualifications in early childhood education. All but one of the paraprofessionals had completed training as a paraprofessional within the New Zealand education system. In addition, one paraprofessional had completed bilingual tutor training, one was about to complete the Pasifika bilingual tutors' course and two were participating in the English Language Assistants (ELA) training at the time of the research. Several of the paraprofessionals have also worked as paraprofessionals with special needs students and have undertaken some training in these areas e.g. deaf education and autism.

Some paraprofessionals, particularly those new to ESOL, were enthusiastic about receiving more training. Those who had been working in the area for a number of years felt that they had done quite a lot of courses and were perhaps well enough equipped for what they had to do. A few teachers and paraprofessionals said that training was often very costly for schools already working within considerable financial restraints.

Types of sessions observed

While the research team was requested by Ministry to describe the practices of paraprofessionals in initial reading programmes with ELL students, this was not necessarily a straightforward thing to do. In primary schools, arrangements for paraprofessionals working with ELL students vary considerably. In some primary schools, paraprofessionals do not instruct in reading with Years 5-6 ELL students. There may be no clearly articulated, developmental reading programme for students at this level. Classroom teachers may be responsible for all the reading students do or the reading programme for ELL students may be carried out by a dedicated ESOL teacher rather than the paraprofessional. In some schools, ESOL withdrawal sessions have a broad literacy focus and in others, paraprofessionals and ESOL teachers emphasise the acquisition of vocabulary through topic-focussed lessons.

The sessions observed as part of the Years 5-6 research were all withdrawal sessions and varied from one-to-one or small group instructional reading to topic-based courses with a broader emphasis on literacy or vocabulary and wider English language acquisition. In the one-to-one reading sessions, the ELL students were often part of a broader group identified

for their below-cohort reading level rather than for their English language proficiency specifically. A practice in several schools was that of reading withdrawal from ESOL withdrawal, where students are taken in a small group from their ESOL class to do further specialised or levelled work.

Below is a table of the groupings of sessions observed in the primary sector:

Observation	**Session type**
1	Paraprofessional with group of six students, topic focussed. The group engaged in a paraprofessional-led shared reading of one book related to the topic.
2	Paraprofessional with students, one-to-one, four minute reading for ELLs and other students reading below cohort.
3	One paraprofessional and four ELL students engaged in paraprofessional-led shared reading of one book followed by related card game.
4	One paraprofessional and five students engaged in paraprofessional-led shared reading of one book followed by related worksheet tasks.
5	One paraprofessional and two students with Self-Pacing Boxes. ESOL teacher present in room.
6	One paraprofessional and two students with Self-Pacing Boxes as part of rotational reading-related activities. ESOL teacher working on another reading activity with other students in the same room.
7	One paraprofessional with two students working independently and with paraprofessional on Rainbow Reading and CDs.
8	One paraprofessional with two students working independently and with paraprofessional on Rainbow Reading and CDs.
9	One paraprofessional with three students working on phonics and general reading skills with Bannatyne workbook. Also one-to-one reading (PM Reader) with one child at the end of the session.
10	One paraprofessional with one and later two students working on word card games and Bannatyne workbook.
11	ESOL teacher and paraprofessional with ten students in withdrawal ESOL class – topic and oral focussed class followed by paraprofessional withdrawal of three lower proficiency students for worksheet based activities.
12	One paraprofessional engaged in four minute withdrawal reading with individual students, both ELLs and others below cohort.
13	Paraprofessional in small group (one or two students) withdrawal instructional reading within a larger withdrawal ESOL class.
14	Paraprofessional in small group (one or two students) withdrawal instructional reading within a larger withdrawal ESOL class.
15	Paraprofessional supporting ESOL teacher (helping individual students and small groups) in ESOL withdrawal class in shared reading, then literacy related activities.

16	Paraprofessional supporting ESOL teacher (helping individual students and small groups) in ESOL withdrawal class in shared reading, then literacy related activities.

Table 5: Observed session types (Years 5-6)

Paraprofessional tutoring spaces

The spaces paraprofessionals taught in varied from small withdrawal rooms to large well equipped dedicated ESOL classrooms (see Table 6). Optimal spaces for paraprofessionals working with ELL students in withdrawal situations were dedicated ESOL withdrawal rooms that had easy access to materials and no other teachers, paraprofessionals or students (or passersby) as these added to noise levels and distracted students. An ESOL classroom with rotational activities that were not too noisy or distracting during reading instruction also worked well.

The researchers saw several situations that were not ideal for students nor the paraprofessionals working with them. In one case the withdrawal room also housed the printer and other students wandered in and out during the ESOL session to collect work from the printer. In another situation, having an ESOL classroom in a wide corridor with dividers had obvious distractions when other classes were moving around. Another situation involved withdrawal reading within a dedicated ESOL class i.e. the paraprofessional and students sat towards the back of the class. In this case the noise from the other students in the ESOL class was distracting given that the paraprofessional was trying to hear sometimes quite shy and reticent students read. Situations where two paraprofessionals were sharing the same (smallish) withdrawal room to work with students with different needs was also distracting for everyone involved.

Teaching space	**Number of Observations**
Paraprofessional withdrawal group within dedicated ESOL classroom.	4
Dedicated withdrawal room with one paraprofessional.	8
Dedicated withdrawal room with more than one paraprofessional working with different groups of students.	2
ESOL classroom divided off from corridor because of space problems in a rapidly expanding school.	2

Table 6: Paraprofessional tutoring spaces (Years 5-6)

Timing and frequency of sessions

Because the types of sessions observed varied between topic-focussed classes and individualised reading there was considerable variation in the timing and frequency of sessions across schools. Table 7 below describes the timing and frequency of sessions that the paraprofessional was working with.

School	Timing and frequency of sessions
1	One and a quarter to one and a half hours, four times per week in ESOL class with a strong literacy focus. The paraprofessional only present one day per week. No specific withdrawal initial reading programme for Years 5-6 ELL students.
2	Forty minutes, four times a week, ESOL withdrawal class. Paraprofessional present every session for one-to-one and small group instructional reading on a rotational basis.
3	Fifteen minutes, three times per week for instructional reading or other literacy-focussed activity with paraprofessional for ELL and other students reading below cohort. Forty-five minute sessions three times per week for ESOL withdrawal group with ESOL teacher and paraprofessional.
4	Thirty minute small group sessions four times per week. Can be a mix of one-to-one and small group work depending on who has needs.
5	Forty-five minutes, four times a week for instructional reading – small group of two to four.
6	Forty minutes three times per week – twenty minute rotational literacy focussed activities.
7	One hour, two times a week for literacy focussed withdrawal in small group.
8	Twenty – thirty minute sessions daily with paraprofessional and small ELL group. Four minute reading per day with almost all ELL students but also others reading below cohort.

Table 7: Timing and frequency of sessions (Years 5-6)

Students identified as ELL and below cohort in Years 5-6 were receiving paraprofessional instruction two to five times per week in sessions that ranged from four minutes (four minute reading) to an hour and a half. Some students were receiving withdrawal for both ESOL topic-focussed classes as well as separate one-to-one instructional reading for all students below cohort. Where students had both types of withdrawal exclusively with a paraprofessional this raised the question of the amount of time high needs students were spending in instruction with minimally trained and in some cases unsupervised paraprofessionals.

While some schools had very well organised mechanisms for getting students to the right place at the right time, arrangements seemed more tenuous in other schools. During several of the interviews with teachers and paraprofessionals, students arrived for their session only to be told that it was not happening that day and to return to their classes. In other cases students had to wait for ten to fifteen minutes for their 'turn' in instructional reading. In one case several students waited with nothing specific to do. In another session students were sent looking for other students and the class started at least ten minutes late.

Resources

Generally, the schools appeared to be well resourced with a wide variety of reading and other literacy-focussed materials. It was more difficult to ascertain the amount of ESOL-specific materials used with students. The following table describes the resources available in each school as reported by the teachers and paraprofessionals. It should be noted that additional resources were possibly available in schools. It may be that the people we spoke to were not aware of other resources or did not directly use them with ELL students.

Resources available in schools	**School 1**	**School 2**	**School 3**	**School 4**	**School 5**	**School 6**	**School 7**	**School 8**
Teacher/student made resources	x	x	x			x	x	x
Rainbow Readers	x	x			x	x	x – not currently used with Years 5-6 ELL students however.	x
Wildcat Series	x						x – ordering more	
Sunshine texts and CDs	x	x						x
Journals	x	x	x				x	x
Jolly Phonics	x			x				
PM Readers	x	x	x	x		x – on computer		
Gilt Edge Series		x						
Momentum		x						
Vivid		x						
Self -Pacing Boxes			x - but only used within a topic-focussed class (not on a regular basis)			x	x – paraprofessional hardly uses them as she has not had the training	x – not used regularly, someone did the course a while ago

Other computer based programmes (e.g. Oxford Reading Programme) including websites	x	x	x					
Bannatyne materials			x	x				
Other				Literacy for Learning		Learning Media (books and tapes sets)	Thomas Nelson Readers	Links books Interaction series

Table 8: Resources available in schools (Years 5-6)

Several of the schools discussed using the bilingual and/or learner dictionaries with students but because dictionaries were not specifically asked about in every interview they have not been captured as a resource category in Table 8 above. Commercial card and other games were also used or available in several of the schools visited, these have not been specifically captured for the same reasons.

Resources used in observations

The table below outlines the resources used by paraprofessionals in the observation sessions in primary schools.

Observation	Resource
1	Jigsaw text copied onto A3 paper and student/teacher generated bicultural posters.
2	Jigsaw text copied onto A3 paper and student/teacher generated bicultural posters.
3	Instructional reading with a number of different readers (including Rainbow Readers) depending on the students' reading level.
4	Instructional reading with Rainbow Readers and reading from commercial students' play (School Journal).
5	Bannatyne card games, instructional reading with a variety of readers.
6	Teacher generated materials and commercially produced worksheets.
7	Bannatyne Workbook (Galleon) and Galaxy Reader.
8	Bannatyne card game focussing on consonants and another on matching words and pictures. Also commercial card game and Bannatyne Workbook (Galleon).
9	Rainbow Readers and CDs, paraprofessional questioning from workbook.
10	Rainbow Readers and CDs, paraprofessional questioning from workbook.
11	Self-Pacing Boxes.

12	Self-Pacing Boxes.
13	School Journal and related teacher-made card game.
14	Wildcats – Cougar series and associated worksheet.
15	'Take off' reader – series not identified.
16	Instructional reading - a number of different readers depending on students's proficiency level.

Table 9: Resources used in observations (Years 5-6)

Some key resources and how they were used

Self-Pacing Boxes

The two observed instances of using Self-Pacing Boxes with Years 5-6 students were in the same school. The ESOL teacher in this school thought the Self-Pacing Boxes were particularly effective for lower English proficiency students although the writing could be difficult for students at this level. In the sessions the paraprofessional worked in a twenty minute rotational block with two students. At the same time other students worked on another reading activity with the ESOL teacher in the dedicated ESOL room. In both observations, the bilingual paraprofessional worked with students from her own language group. These were very successful learning sessions where the students had plenty of time for production in English, explanation from the paraprofessional in their home language and student-generated writing was integrated into the session. A couple of students who were relative beginners in English were quietly competitive in their quest to suggest suitably interesting sentences for writing.

Several primary school participants could not remember if their schools had Self-Pacing Boxes or not. Comments included 'they might be on a shelf somewhere' and 'they're too expensive'. In other schools they were known to be in resource rooms but were not used because the person who had had the training had left. One participant who used the Self-Pacing Boxes suggested updating the graphics to suit the expectations of today's 'multimedia savvy' students. She also noted that the font is not a high frequency font and that this could be changed to something the students are more used to. Another comment was that teachers and paraprofessionals had used Self-Pacing Boxes previously but they did not use them regularly anymore or only used them on an intermittent basis within topic-focussed sessions. Several teachers felt that the Self-Pacing Boxes method could be too repetitive and boring for students despite the paraprofessional's best efforts.

Rainbow Readers

Rainbow Readers were used in four of the schools. In all but one of these, they appeared to be used as one of a raft of reading resources for students in instructional/individual/four minute reading sessions and in topic-focused ESOL classes.

One school constructed most of their ESOL reading programme around the Rainbow Readers and related materials. In these observations, two students would join the paraprofessional in a withdrawal class. The students set up and listened to their CDs while reading along with the book, then each would take a turn to read the book to the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional would take a running record while the child was reading and then ask comprehension questions from the commercial teacher's book. The cluster of materials in the programme worked well for the students. They appeared to enjoy their autonomy in reading along with the CD and the teacher's materials were a helpful scaffold for the questioning work the paraprofessional did with the students.

Bannatyne materials

Bannatyne materials were used in three observations. In two observations, the Galleon workbook was used and in one of these a related phonic card game was played. A Bannatyne phonic card game was used in another separate observation as well. The students seemed very engaged with the materials on one level and enjoyed the colour coding of phonemes that the workbook required as preparatory work for reading the text. However, the combination of a strong emphasis on phonics along with a relatively high proportion of low frequency vocabulary left the students word bound and even phoneme bound in their reading. The materials have been tailored to the New Zealand market in some respects e.g. they incorporate words from the New Zealand lexicon like 'flax' and 'godwits'. However, much of the text is inauthentic and devised to utilize the phonemes which are being focused on. Some of the text sounded more like 1950s America than contemporary New Zealand e.g. "Con lobs his flash rod" and "Pal stops dashing and sits still".

Other readers

A wide array of other readers were observed being used by paraprofessionals with students. These included Journals, PM readers, Wild Cat series and others. The best instances of instructional reading included those where clear records of the child's reading were readily available to the paraprofessional and the child; the reader was appropriately levelled for the child; the child had a reasonable turn at reading themselves and felt some sense of

accomplishment in having successfully read and understood the text; and correctly answered at least some of the questions asked by the paraprofessional. In some of the one-to-one instructional reading sessions, paraprofessionals did not seem to know what students had read and what they had not so that valuable time was spent negotiating over which books should be read. Another issue with readers was that they were sometimes poorly levelled for students. In several instances students were given a book to read which was considerably above their proficiency level. In these instances, the paraprofessional would often read the book to the child, take turns reading the book with the child or stop the child reading the book after a only a small proportion of text had been read.

While many of the books read with paraprofessionals seemed to have quite general themes that a variety of students could relate to, some seemed to be culturally inappropriate. The students may have been able to read the book but just seemed genuinely confused by the content e.g. toilet humour.

The place of language structures in teaching

In the Years 5-6 observations there was minimal formal focus on form. Within the paraprofessional teaching sessions there was one instance of noticing the past tense 'ed', several instances of noticing sentence boundaries marked by the full stop and capital letters and one instance of differentiating the plural and possessive 's'. The overwhelming emphasis in teaching was on phonetics and vocabulary learning.

The nature and quality of paraprofessionals' interaction with students

Most of the paraprofessionals appeared to have a genuine interest in and engagement with the students and their progress. Generally their manner was warm and supportive. A number of the paraprofessionals in the primary sector consistently gave positive and steady feedback to students. Some of the best feedback was when paraprofessionals were very specific with their comments to students, for example, 'I liked it when you…'. In most of the observations the students were comfortable asking paraprofessionals questions, seeking clarification and speaking openly about their situations. Where students seemed not to have backing at home to do the required work (e.g. having someone sign and attest that they had read their book), paraprofessionals managed these situations in non-judgemental ways that supported the students to take responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Paraprofessionals were at their best with ELL students when they were working in small groups of four or fewer. In these situations they found it easier to focus on the learning needs of all the students. In larger groups, students' contributions were regularly missed and questions left unanswered. In general, paraprofessionals found it difficult to teach these larger groups.

In some paraprofessional interactions with students there was a propensity of 'doing for' students. The paraprofessional, for example, might read to the child instead of listening to the child read and complete worksheets or other tasks for students who could not complete the tasks by themselves or with the assistance of peers. In these instances the paraprofessional took away the opportunity for students to see themselves as successful and independent learners. In the sessions where this happened it was because material had been poorly levelled either by the paraprofessional or the ESOL teacher and the paraprofessional saw themselves as 'helping' the child. 'Doing for' was more likely to occur in larger groups (more than four or five) where students were not at the same English proficiency level and materials were not multi-levelled.

In two cases where paraprofessionals were working without regular teacher supervision, some of the students designated as ESOL seemed to have other undiagnosed learning difficulties. In these situations also, educationally unsound decisions could be made around which students should receive extra reading support.

In just a few observations paraprofessionals appeared to be not fully focussed on their work with students, distracted or just disinterested in whether the students managed tasks properly or not. This tended to be where there was no ESOL teacher/teacher present. The situation was compounded by inaccurate or no feedback to students. For example, in one case where students had done the opposite to what had been asked for, rather than taking the time to explain to students where they had gone wrong and giving them the opportunity to correct their work, the paraprofessional gave non-specific positive feedback. In another observation, the paraprofessional did not know how to spell a word a child was persistently asking about and so ignored the child rather than promising to come back with an answer at another time.

In conversations with paraprofessionals it became evident that some could benefit from a wider knowledge of and perspective on cultures other than New Zealand Pakeha culture. In particular, more information and strategies for working with students and families from Asian and Middle Eastern (particularly Muslim) backgrounds would be helpful. In one observation there was a marked difference in the amount and quality of feedback a child of one ethnicity received from the paraprofessional compared to a child from another ethnicity.

Questioning

Some of the questioning performed by paraprofessionals in relation to the texts students were reading was skilled, conducive to higher levels of thinking and pushed the students to look inside and outside the text for answers. Questioning was most effective when paraprofessionals were working one-to-one or in very small groups (two or three) of students. In these contexts all the paraprofessionals seemed to be able to focus on the particular students and their understandings of the text. With this focussed attention students were engaged and eager to get their answers 'right'. In two observations paraprofessionals directed their questions specifically at very quiet girls and this was appreciated by the girls who then had the space to contribute to the lesson.

In bigger groups some paraprofessionals seemed not to be able to focus on everyone in the group so easily and some students simply did not participate while others were loud and dominated the group.

In several instances paraprofessionals focussed almost exclusively on asking students for the 'meaning' of words and did not lead the students into considering wider comprehension of the

text itself or how the text related to the wider world. The only questions focussing on form related to full stops and capital letters.

The use of commercial teacher support materials for questioning was only observed in one instance. The commercial materials offered the paraprofessional a valuable mechanism for working with the students in this observation.

Students and their responses to withdrawal with paraprofessionals and teachers

Paraprofessionals and teachers reported a mix of student's reactions to withdrawal for ESOL tuition either with an ESOL teacher and/or paraprofessional. Some students obviously flourished in the smaller ESOL groups where their needs could be focussed on more carefully. Many students in observations were animated, engaged, excited, enthusiastic and very 'learning ready'. In several schools, withdrawal time was specifically timetabled during the literacy activities for the mainstream class and this seemed to work well for students.

Reportedly, however, some students did not enjoy the extra attention and time taken from their normal classroom activities, especially in Years 5-6. In addition, withdrawal times sometimes clashed with activities the students considered to be enjoyable and which engaged them in the wider life of the school e.g. school trips, choir practice, practise for the school drama production, school sports and other activities. On the whole these activities were prioritised over ESOL withdrawal and students were encouraged to attend and meet their obligations in these areas.

Home languages and cultures

A feature of about a third of the observations was that same home language students were translating for each other in class. In most instances this was actively encouraged by teachers and paraprofessionals although there was some uneasiness if the translating 'turn' went on for some time or further clarification by the students was needed. Sometimes it was obvious to the researcher (because of knowing something of the language being spoken) that students were 'on task' i.e. either translating instructions or clarifying what needed to be done, but were chastised for not being on task or told to speak in English. On several occasions, also, the teacher or paraprofessional apologised to the researcher for the students speaking in their home language. In some observations students offered cultural contributions that were not

recognised or picked up on by paraprofessionals because they did not have enough understanding of students' home cultures.

Several paraprofessionals said that they made an effort to incorporate some comparative cultural work into their sessions and/or deliberately chose materials that reflected students' cultures. Some school libraries were reported to be collecting books in students' home languages. The 'bilingual, bicultural child posters' from the ELA training explicitly incorporated home languages and home cultures which the students seemed to enjoy. Certainly the posters themselves were complicated and time consuming for the students and required a great deal of planning on the part of supervising teachers and paraprofessionals. Despite this, teachers, paraprofessionals and students were proud of the results. The exercise seemed to raise paraprofessional awareness of the diversity of cultures the students came from as well as the level of home language proficiency some students had.

Planning and organisation

There was considerable variety in the reporting structures for paraprofessionals, the degree of autonomy they had in their work and the amount of liaison with classroom teachers that took place. In three schools, paraprofessionals planned virtually independently both of classroom teachers and their line managers. In the other schools, there was either a close and ongoing working relationship between the paraprofessional and the ESOL teacher or the paraprofessional's work was closely directed by an ESOL or reading teacher.

In some observations instructional reading was quite haphazard as to the books that were chosen and whether a record of learning was maintained. In other schools record keeping was assiduous and the students had clear records of what they had read, as well as related vocabulary to learn.

In the primary schools in this research, classroom teachers had little input into ESOL withdrawal work. Any input that they did have was on an ad hoc basis over morning tea or lunch. The feeling by paraprofessionals and teachers in the interviews seemed to be that classroom teachers were relieved to have the ELL students taken off their hands and 'trusted the paraprofessional/ESOL teacher to do the right thing'. This attitude was similar where there was a dedicated ESOL teacher directing paraprofessional work and where the paraprofessional was working on their own. Many of the teachers and paraprofessionals spoken to felt that mainstream teachers needed more training and guidance in how

paraprofessionals could be utilised and how teachers could work and liaise with them in order to improve student's learning. This issue has also been identified in other commentaries relating to paraprofessionals (Giangreco, 2003).

In one school, the ESOL teacher reported specifically not following the curriculum in ESOL topic-focussed classes because the mainstream teachers complained if things were covered before they had covered them, or the topics were addressed differently than the mainstream teachers would have liked. For this ESOL teacher and the paraprofessional she worked with, she hoped that they were reinforcing key concepts that the students would need in mainstream work rather than directly repeating material.

In some schools there seemed to be a high degree of trust vested in the paraprofessional because of their personalities (seemingly empathetic and child-focussed) and/or experience working with ELL and other students. Comments such as 'X has tons of strategies' and 'X is an excellent teacher' were not uncommon. This kind of attitude led to little monitoring of and in a few cases no teacher oversight of what paraprofessionals were doing with students. Where there was minimal supervision of paraprofessionals by trained teachers, the arrangement worked on the negative principle that if something was wrong the paraprofessional could be trusted to say something or seek help.

The following table reports on planning and organisation between paraprofessionals and their teachers in each of the schools:

School	**Planning and organisation**
1	Paraprofessional was closely directed by ESOL teacher. ESOL teacher had all mainstream teacher planning in Years 5-6 syndicate so that ESOL work can synchronise with the mainstream curriculum. Students took books home each week for reading and recorded progress on a specific card.
2	Paraprofessional reported to SENCO and notified her if there was a problem. Paraprofessional did own planning for withdrawal ESOL class. There was some attempt to cover topics the students were learning in their mainstream class. Classroom teachers established the reading level for instructional reading and there was ongoing liaison between teachers and the paraprofessional on students' progress. Progress was recorded in students' notebooks.
3	Paraprofessional reported to ESOL teacher. Very directed paraprofessional work with Self-Pacing Boxes. A record of students' progress was kept in their exercise books.
4	Paraprofessional reported to SENCO and planned her own literacy focussed withdrawal ESOL classes. Classroom teachers did not liaise with the paraprofessional.

5	Paraprofessional reported to teacher responsible for reading. Teacher did all assessments and directed the instructional reading programme. Very directed paraprofessional work.
6	Paraprofessional worked closely with ESOL teacher in ESOL withdrawal sessions and was fully aware of/and contributed to planning. In instructional reading, reading ages were shared with paraprofessional by classroom teachers. Readers supplied by classroom teachers. Students kept a record of their reading in notebooks.
7	Paraprofessional and ESOL teacher together one day a week and planning was shared with paraprofessional.
8	ESOL teacher did not direct paraprofessional work which relied mainly on following commercial programme. There was informal liaison between classroom teachers and paraprofessional. Paraprofessional planned a week in advance. Gave students books to take home independent of classroom teachers.

Table 10: Planning and organisation between paraprofessionals and their teachers (Years 5-6)

Assessment

The information on assessment at Years 5-6 was given incidentally and no direct questions were asked. There was consequently no data for two schools and for the schools where there was some discussion of assessment, it is likely that a far greater range of assessments were utilised than those recorded in the table. All schools had to administer the ESOL/AF in order to receive ESOL funding for students. Ministry verifiers recommended that these forms were completed by classroom teachers as they have the best idea of the cohort level. However, in two of the schools below, the ESOL teacher completed these assessments.

School	**Assessment**
1	The ESOL teacher did all assessments for literacy and reported back to mainstream teachers. Assessment for Learning (AFL) programme was in the school. PROBE was also used.
2	Students were grouped according to English proficiency levels. ESOL teacher administered the Ministry of Education assessments (ESOL/AF) – also PAT and PROBE.
3	Reading assessments for all students were carried out by the classroom teacher. ESOL teacher worked with paraprofessional to complete ESOL/AF.
4	PROBEs for all students – the ESOL teacher made the point that these were not appropriate for ESOL as they incorporated too much culturally specific information and a lot of material ELLs had never met. Running records on all students Years 5-6. Classroom teachers administered the ESOL/AF.
5	Deputy Principal was a reading specialist and assessed all ELLs with running records, then assigned reading levels. She tested at each stage also to see when students were ready to progress to the next level.

6	No data
7	No data
8	Senior teacher gave the paraprofessional the reading level of the student and the paraprofessional started reading at a level below.

Table 11: Assessment tools (Years 5-6)

Other explicit/intensive reading assistance for ELL students

Most of the schools in the primary sample had a strong all-school focus on literacy and reading, specifically. In about half the schools all organised reading for students, including ELL students happened in class and ESOL withdrawal had a broader literacy and topic focus. In the other schools, most organised reading happened within the ESOL withdrawal class, although in one school this was explicitly shared between the mainstream classroom (selection of graded readers) and ESOL (Rainbow Readers and Self-Pacing Boxes). Several schools had general individual and small group withdrawal for instructional reading for all students reading below cohort and most ELL students were included in these sessions. In several schools the ESOL teacher and paraprofessional were not sure whether the mainstream teachers provided a formal reading programme for students or not.

A number of the participants reported that students could be working on computer assisted reading programmes in their mainstream classrooms and that they would also attend library with their mainstream classes. In one school an organised peer reading group targeted all students who had been in New Zealand schools for two or more years and were still reading below cohort. Students went to the staffroom after lunch one day a week to do 'reading mileage' with peers. Research participants in several schools noted that support from the Enhanced Funding for Learning might enable assistance for students once their ESOL funding has ceased but that there was unlikely to be any crossover in funding at the same time for the same child.

Attitudes towards the Reading Support Programme

With only one exception, teachers and paraprofessionals held positive attitudes to the general topic-focussed ESOL and initial reading ESOL withdrawal sessions. Both groups commented on how confident the students became in smaller groups; they reportedly talked more openly and wrote more than in their mainstream class. One teacher said that she thought it was a relief for students to come to the 'ESOL' or 'language group'. However, the point was made

that some students were missing out on other important areas of the curriculum by attending ESOL withdrawal e.g. fitness.

A number of teachers made very positive comments about the paraprofessionals' interactions with students, noting, for example, how patient they were. Moreover, in cases where paraprofessionals were less ESOL-experienced and working alongside ESOL teachers, the paraprofessionals reported that they felt that they were learning ESOL teaching skills from the teacher. One paraprofessional said that she preferred working with an ESOL teacher in ESOL withdrawal because in mainstream classes teachers often had not planned for how she should interact and work with students.

In the school where participants felt more could be done to improve the ESOL programme, they observed that a fulltime dedicated ESOL teacher would improve the organisation of withdrawal programmes and liaison with mainstream teachers. It would also mean that ELL students would have the opportunity to work with a trained teacher in an area that required highly specialised skills of educators.

Chapter Five Years 7 and 8

School characteristics

The eight intermediate schools involved in the study of paraprofessionals working with Years 7 and 8 ESOL funded students varied in both their geographical area and in their school decile rating. Three schools were located in West Auckland, two were in South Auckland, two were in East Auckland and one school was on the North Shore. Three schools were rated decile six, two schools decile three and one each had deciles of one, eight, and nine.

Background to the teachers in the study

All the teachers in the study were New Zealand trained primary teachers, some with degree qualifications. One teacher had a Masters degree in English and two had Bachelors degrees. Two teachers had a Graduate Diploma in ESOL, three were in the process of completing a Dip TESSOL (Diploma in Teaching English in Schools to Speakers of Other Languages), two others had ESOL-relevant qualifications and one teacher had no ESOL qualification. Their length of service in either the primary or intermediate sector varied from one teacher with three years teaching experience while three others had been teaching for over fifteen years. Of the eight teachers interviewed, one was working with a mainstream class and seven were working in ESOL units within the schools. Those in the ESOL units all had more than two years experience of working with ELL students and a number of the staff interviewed had undertaken further programmes in language and reading support such as, Oracy and Literacy, Self-Pacing Boxes, Rainbow Reading, and ESOL Strategies. Two teachers mentioned they had had ESOL training and support from TEAM (Total Educational Advice and Management) Solutions and three others said they were part of an ESOL cluster group.

Background to the paraprofessionals in the study

The paraprofessionals who supported initial reading programmes with ESOL learners came from a number of different countries with a range of language backgrounds. They were a diverse group with varying levels of qualifications who brought a range of teaching and learning experiences to their work. All eight of the paraprofessionals were women. Five of them were bilingual or multilingual with English as an additional language. Two were from

Korea the others from Malaysia, Iraq, and Fiji. Of the three paraprofessionals who had English as their first language one was born and raised in South Africa and was bilingual and two were born and raised in New Zealand and were monolingual. The paraprofessionals' qualifications varied from no formal qualifications to five of them being university graduates from their country of origin with Bachelors degrees in either: English Literature, French and Philosophy, or Psychology. The teaching and learning background they brought to the programmes was both wide and varied. Two of them came to their work in the intermediate schools with experience in working with students, either in early childhood or in child psychology. One, a trained teacher, had had extensive experience in the primary sector in her country of origin before beginning paraprofessional work in New Zealand.

The paraprofessionals' length of service in the schools where they were working ranged from a new paraprofessional who had been giving reading support in the ESOL unit for just six months to another paraprofessional who was very experienced and had been supporting ELL students' reading for more than six years. With the exception of two of the paraprofessionals, all were employed in their schools part time. All of the paraprofessionals in the study indicated a deep commitment to supporting their local school and the reading programmes that were run for the ELL students.

As well as the variation in country of origin, qualifications and experience the paraprofessionals had developed their ESOL support skills and knowledge of ELL students in a number of ways. One had a language teaching diploma from UNITEC, another, at the time of the study, was finishing an Applied Certificate in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) course. Three had completed certificate level courses in Education and two had completed the ELA professional development programme. Nearly all of the paraprofessionals had had some training in using ESOL resources either formally on short in-service courses, or in sessions organized by the ESOL teacher within the school they were working. Seven of the paraprofessionals were familiar with Self-Pacing Boxes, four had been formally trained in their use and three had received training from the ESOL teacher in their school. In a number of schools the paraprofessional had been trained by the ESOL teachers in how to use the Rainbow Reading programme. As well, one of them had received detailed instruction on how to develop reading strategies with their ELL students using a think aloud process.

Types of sessions observed

A total of sixteen observations were undertaken in Years 7–8. In these, the support paraprofessionals' gave to the reading programmes varied considerably. The teaching space, the size of the student group, the amount of time spent in sessions, the materials used, as well as the approach was different according to each situation. Table 12 below shows the session types observed in the intermediate sector:

Observation	Session types
1	Paraprofessional in fulltime ESOL class with three groups of students used Self-Pacing Boxes during three fifteen minute reading-related rotations. Group sizes: three, four and three students. Followed by three students reading aloud one-to-one to paraprofessional for final fifteen minutes.
2	Paraprofessional in school hall with other paraprofessionals and students involved in using Self-Pacing Boxes. Paraprofessional in ESOL unit worked with a group of nine students on Rainbow Reading, listened to students read aloud and checked related reading activities.
3	Paraprofessional with withdrawal group in area adjacent to classroom with six students (three ESOL plus three others reading below cohort). Introduced Journal and related reading activities. Twenty minutes.
4	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit one-to-one using Self-Pacing Boxes for ten minutes, followed by listening to 'read aloud'.
5	Paraprofessional in the library with a group of five students, read aloud, checked reading-related activities, set up computer activities.
6	Paraprofessional in ESOL classroom with groups of students using Self-Pacing Boxes during two fifteen minute rotations. Group sizes of three and eight. Shared reading of one book with four students, helped students one-to-one with puzzle and read aloud.
7	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit with group of five students using Rainbow Reading for forty minutes.
8	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit one-to-one using Rainbow Reading, conferencing, reading aloud, checked work, for forty minutes.
9	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit supporting ESOL teacher introducing Journal story to group of eight students, provided vocabulary, supported worksheet activities for sixty minutes.
10	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit with group of eight students introduced procedural language. Followed by on-to-one checking of home reading and reading aloud.
11	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit with small group of two students using Self-Pacing Boxes for forty minutes.

12	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit with two students using Rainbow Reading. Introduced story, discussion, read aloud then set up follow up activity, for thirty minutes.
13	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit one-to-one on take home reading with six individual students during a forty-five minute session.
14	Paraprofessional with withdrawal group in area adjacent to classroom. Four students (three ELL) plus one other reading below cohort. Read aloud Journal and related reading activities for twenty minutes.
15	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit worked one-to-one, checked home reading and reading-related activity, listened to read aloud.
16	Paraprofessional in ESOL unit worked one-to-one, listened to reading aloud for twenty minutes.

Table 12: Observed session types (Years 7-8)

Paraprofessional tutoring spaces

Six of the paraprofessionals observed were working in designated ESOL units staffed by trained ESOL teacher(s). Most of the units were well organized with support material, equipment e.g. whiteboards, allocated space for listening and silent reading, as well as flexible workspaces for reading activities. ELL students were withdrawn from their mainstream classes for their initial reading support programme in the unit and the paraprofessionals worked with them in the unit alongside the ESOL teacher. One paraprofessional on one occasion withdrew her group of five students from the ESOL unit to work in the library where computers were available. The two paraprofessionals who were not working in ESOL units worked with large mainstream classes. One worked fulltime in a dedicated ESOL classroom of twenty-six ELL learners alongside the teacher. The reading activities were rotational and the large class created a busy, noisy environment for the learners. The other paraprofessional worked alone with ESOL students withdrawn from the mainstream class to a resource room adjacent to the classroom. This area was accessed by staff members and not a designated learning area, which meant it lacked the extra equipment and facilities in the other ESOL situations mentioned.

Timing and frequency of sessions

The length of time and frequency of reading support sessions are described in the table below. It is important to note that the data shows the amount of time and frequency the observed paraprofessional spent with ELL learners in initial reading support, not the amount of time students spent in reading.

School	Timing and frequency of sessions
1	Paraprofessional either had one-to-one or small groups of two or three students for forty-five minutes per day, five days a week in ESOL unit.
2	Paraprofessional had one-to-one twenty minutes with students three days a week.
3	Paraprofessional had group of four or more students for twenty minutes four times per week.
4	Paraprofessional worked with groups of up to six students twice a week for forty-five minutes or three times a week for thirty minutes.
5	Paraprofessional worked with students one-to-one forty minutes, twice a week.
6	Paraprofessional worked one-to-one or with two students for thirty minutes twice a week and also supported students in the classroom for two fifty minute sessions.
7	Paraprofessional worked with groups of up to nine students for sixty minutes four or five times a week. Supervised large cohort of students using Self-Pacing Boxes for thirty minutes, four times a week.
8	Paraprofessional worked with groups of students sixty minutes a day four days per week.

Table 13: Timing and frequency of initial reading sessions (Years 7-8)

The amount of contact the paraprofessionals had with ELL students in initial reading support varied from one hour twenty minutes to more than seven hours per week. Four paraprofessionals spent more than three hours a week working with the same students and four spent less than two hours a week. In the majority of the observed sessions students were on time and most of them settled quickly into work however, on one or two occasions the students arrived late, with excuses, or were slow to settle so the reading time was compromised.

Resources

In the initial interview the teachers and paraprofessionals working in the ESOL units and the ESOL classroom felt they were very well resourced. The following table shows the resources mentioned which included a commercial reading series with accompanying tapes, CDs, workbooks and worksheets, teacher prepared resources as well as other reading support materials.

Rainbow Readers	Theme books
PM Readers	Self-Pacing Boxes
Wildcat series	Junior Journals

Colour Wheel Books	Shared Books
Big Books	Teacher-made resources
Other graded readers	Commercial puzzles
Computer software	Bilingual dictionaries (both commercial and teacher-prepared)

Table 14: ESOL resources available in classes (Years 7-8)

Although the staff in the ESOL units and ESOL classroom indicated they were well resourced, the teacher of the mainstream class commented on the lack of resources available for the ELL students. She used School Journals with all her learners. The teacher prepared materials to accompany School Journals and noted that a good deal of the ones she used were earlier issues. This was because she felt that more recent publications were very highly illustrated with less extended text for her mainstream students to practise their reading on. She felt that although the texts (of the older Journals) were less current and topical, they gave students useful reading practice. The researcher noted, however, that the ELL students in the class were using the same material and this meant they were reading relatively dense texts on unfamiliar topics and the worksheets had a higher vocabulary load than was desirable for their reading level and experience.

During observations the researcher noted a range of materials being used by the paraprofessionals. The most used resource was Self-Pacing Boxes, utilised during six of the observations. Rainbow Readers were used five times and School Journals Part One or Two three times. Individual paraprofessionals also employed Red Rocket Readers and Nightingale Software Literacy One and other graded readers. As shown in Table 14**,** often more than one resource was used in a session. Five of the paraprofessionals frequently referred students to the bilingual dictionaries in the classroom to help support their reading work. In most situations the resources were systematically levelled and organized, clearly displayed and accessible for both the staff and learners to select from as needed.

Some key resources and how they were used

Self-Pacing Boxes

Each of the paraprofessionals observed using Self-Pacing Boxes used them differently. In one school the paraprofessional had trained other paraprofessionals how to use the resource, and they then had subsequently trained students who were competent readers in how to use the boxes. As a result this school had fully trained student buddies using the resource with ELL

students three times a week before school for thirty minutes. The role of the paraprofessional in this case was trainer, organiser and coordinator. During the Self-Pacing Boxes sessions, with up to 80 students, she monitored the groups to ensure that the pairs were using the resource according to the specified procedure and that the ELL students' written records were accurate, appropriate and up to date. In another school, the paraprofessional was using Self-Pacing Boxes for forty-five minutes twice a week, each time with two students. She systematically followed a procedure of blend, word matching, developing a story orally with visual support on the whiteboard, repeating the story, deleting the story, dictating the story, students writing the story, and finally reading the story aloud. This paraprofessional had great skill with the material and was able to use what the students contributed very effectively. She had also made supplementary visual material and worksheets to augment the resource. In other schools, the boxes were either used one-to-one or with small groups for twenty to thirty minutes at a time. One paraprofessional who had time constraints had adapted the way she used the resource. Because students moved through a range of reading activities every fifteen minutes in timetabled reading time she only focused on the blend and word match, making a sentence and having students repeat and then reorder the sentence with students having no written record or opportunities for writing development. This seemed to be a less effective method of using the resource. Another paraprofessional, when working with an emergent reader one-to-one, followed a similar oral pattern with no written record, but in this case she put a strong focus on pronunciation and checking the spelling and word meanings in a bilingual dictionary.

Rainbow Readers

The researcher observed the Rainbow Reading Programme being used on five occasions. Paraprofessionals were mainly working with groups of between four and nine students at Red and Orange level and Yellow and Green level while one paraprofessional was working with a student at Blue level. The role of most of the paraprofessionals at the start of the lesson was to check that all members of the group were settled and working on their correct task, e.g. taped listening, cloze, text sequencing, word search. The balance of the lesson time was spent working with individual students checking their work, listening to them read aloud and completing conferencing and running records. One paraprofessional spent the twenty minute lesson with two students at Yellow level. She introduced the new text using the pictures and a think aloud process to encourage student prediction. She clarified new vocabulary items in the students' first language and lead students to an understanding of the context. In all the

Rainbow Reading observed sessions the paraprofessionals' approach was very systematic and they appeared to be very familiar with the programme.

School Journals

Two paraprofessionals used School Journals. One was observed twice using Journal stories with small groups of ELL students. Working with the groups, she used worksheets which had been prepared by the teacher for the mainstream class members. There were questions that lead students into the text through personalizing and predicting the content. The students and the paraprofessional read the story aloud together and then the students answered the follow-up comprehension questions and completed word search activities. Another paraprofessional's role was to support the teacher introducing a new Journal story to one Thai and seven Korean students. She stood behind the semi-circle of eight students and helped them find words in the text. As they did so, she translated them into Korean. She also encouraged students to read aloud along with the teacher. When it came to the follow-up written work she gave instructions to the learners and directed the activity in Korean. This was beneficial for the Korean students but not helpful for the Thai student.

Other Readers

Four of the paraprofessionals were working one-to-one with students reading PM Readers, Red Rocket Readers, or other graded readers and take home books. In all cases, students selected a book from the ESOL resources to read in their own time, at home, during SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) or library time. On some occasions the student read the selected book to the paraprofessional before taking it home, others read the book themselves first and then read it aloud to the paraprofessional.

The reading aloud sessions were all approached in different ways. One paraprofessional was observed on two separate occasions using take home books with students and both times she followed a similar pattern. The student recorded the title in the workbook and then began reading aloud. The paraprofessional listened and instructed the student to use an electronic bilingual dictionary to check each new vocabulary item as it arose in the story. She asked questions about word meaning, and spelling, modelled pronunciation, praised and encouraged the student and checked if they had enjoyed the book. On one occasion there was no written follow-up but on the other occasion the student was instructed to take the book home to copy the story out in English and then write the story in their own language and draw a picture. Another paraprofessional using take home books with a reader who was a very recent arrival

also approached the text in a similar manner, modelling pronunciation, and asking questions about word meaning and grammar. She focused on grammar as the key to understanding the text and tried to direct the student to find the subject and the object in the sentence. As the story was difficult for the student both in the context and the language level, a good deal of the discussion took place in the student's home language with all the work being oral and no written follow-up.

Another paraprofessional working with students reading Red Rocket Readers and other graded readers used a wide range of questioning techniques which included focusing on checking word meaning and pronunciation as well as aspects of comprehension and to encourage students to personalize the story e.g. '*how would you feel if you won the race*?' She gave students useful strategies for guessing words in context as well as help on how to sound out new vocabulary. She praised students and they recorded their new vocabulary in their reading workbook as well as keeping a record of the titles they had read. In another situation, before the students read aloud to the paraprofessional, they had taken the books home and had an adult verify that they had heard the student read the text. This paraprofessional then checked the student's comprehension and encouraged them to personalize and think critically about the text. She encouraged and motivated the students as well as checking key pronunciation and word meanings and when she was satisfied that the learner understood the text thoroughly, signed the book off.

The nature and quality of paraprofessionals' interaction with students

Students were engaged in sessions with paraprofessionals to varying degrees. Some students were almost fully engaged during the entire session while others were easily distracted and not fully on task for a good part of the time. In one instance, lack of student engagement could be attributed to a student whose first language was English being in the group of ESOL funded students. This student had attention issues and was able to distract the other group members. When there was a considerable amount of successful student engagement it appeared to be linked to three main factors: the paraprofessionals' familiarity with the reading programme, their familiarity with the reading resources they were using, and their basic classroom skills. Where students were engaged in learning, the paraprofessionals demonstrated having some or all of the following classroom micro-skills: a wide range of questioning techniques using clear succinct language with an understanding of wait time after asking a question; the provision of visual support for the learners on the whiteboard or pin-

board; the ability to give specific constructive feedback to the learners, by providing a clear brief explanation for clarification, and/or effective praise and encouragement.

Where paraprofessionals were working on commercially prepared resources with accompanying teacher notes and worksheets e.g. Rainbow Reading, the level of student engagement was usually high. The students mainly appeared familiar with the procedure and most approached the reading sessions independently and applied themselves well. Those paraprofessionals who systematically followed the teacher guidelines were able to engage the students in a range of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading tasks.

Questioning

When listening to the students read aloud, paraprofessionals who followed the set questions of commercially prepared materials were able to encourage learners to predict and checked knowledge of language and comprehension or content. This enabled them to be confident in their wait time resulting in students either answering accurately or attempting a response. Two paraprofessionals were able to transfer these skills to other resources where there were fewer guidance notes for teachers. They did this effectively demonstrating an understanding of how to ask different types of questions at different stages of the reading. However, where a resource was used with no suitable questioning guidelines, many of the paraprofessionals were often only able to ask sentence level questions about word meaning, and pronunciation. e.g. '*What does ... word mean*?' or '*Do you know giggle?*' Or they pointed and said '*How do you say that word?'* Sometimes they asked Yes/No questions that required minimal answers from students not requiring them to really engage with the text, alternatively they asked complex questions that were difficult for students to interpret, e.g. *'What say you won the race, how would you feel?'* This resulted in no student attempt at response, or an inaccurate response that remained uncorrected.

Feedback

The range of specific, constructive feedback given to students also varied, both in the stage of the lesson it was given, and in levels of effectiveness. The researcher observed paraprofessionals giving written feedback on the whiteboard to support students with their reading on only two occasions. On these occasions the paraprofessionals, when introducing the text, either drew pictures to illustrate a new concept or new words or recorded new vocabulary and meanings in an allocated part of the board. Useful oral feedback was provided

by a few paraprofessionals when students were answering questions about the text. Two either prompted the students to look into the text for more details to elaborate on their answers, or challenged them to relate the new information to their existing knowledge and experience, which helped develop their critical thinking skills. Other paraprofessionals were less skilled at doing this and tended to accept students' answers which were often short and too general indicating the student had not understood the text fully. Of the eight paraprofessionals observed, four of them gave feedback using the students' first language when the student encountered difficulties with key vocabulary items or the text content. It appeared at these times, from the length of the utterances, that they were giving the student very detailed explanations in the first language rather than prompting or asking questions to check understanding. Another function of feedback was to give praise and encouragement which students seemed to expect and responded positively to. Some paraprofessionals gave both oral and written praise and encouragement while others just praised students orally. Written praise was recorded in the students' workbook when they had finished reading a book and were ready to move on to another text or in one case when the student was moving to a new level. In some situations no praise was given to students, while in one the paraprofessional praised the group after almost every attempt so that it did not encourage students to make an effort and think deeply. Although meant well, this was less effective.

Home languages and cultures

As mentioned earlier, six of the paraprofessionals were bilingual and on five occasions they were observed teaching ELL learners who had the same home language. Overall, the use of home languages to support students in the reading programme was similar in function but quite different in occasion. One bilingual paraprofessional was observed once translating a new vocabulary item into the students' home language. Other bilingual paraprofessionals used the home language much more frequently. The most common function for using the home language was vocabulary translation. This was followed by providing clarification when understanding of language, context or content was unclear. Where the context or content was difficult for students, the bilingual paraprofessionals were very quick to give extensive detailed explanation in the home language. As well, the researcher observed the home language used on other occasions to give group instructions. In one case this appeared to be disadvantageous for some in the group as not all the students had the same home language. Paraprofessionals used the home language to discipline students as well as to praise them. On two occasions, paraprofessionals marked the student's work and made written corrections in the workbook in the home language to help and encourage the student.

Planning and organisation

The teachers and the paraprofessionals in the study indicated they planned, organised and followed up the reading sessions with the ELL students in a number of different ways. Several teachers and paraprofessionals worked together regularly. One group met together at the start and the end of each term to look at the test results and to plan the reading support programme. They planned for a whole term working together as a group to carefully link reading support to topics in the mainstream English language programme. Once an overall plan was in place, the individual paraprofessionals planned for their own groups of ELL learners independently. Another two groups who met regularly did so weekly. There was an allocated planning time set aside when the teachers and the paraprofessionals looked at students' progress, discussed student needs and issues to be addressed the following week.

In four of the observed situations the teachers and paraprofessionals indicated that planning and organising the reading support was fluid as the paraprofessional was 'familiar with the systems' and the ways the teachers worked. In these instances, the paraprofessional had been given initial instruction on how to use Self-Pacing Boxes, Rainbow Reading or other resources, such as read aloud books, and they were expected to follow these procedures with the ELL students. In addition, the teachers and paraprofessionals said that when they were working together in the same room it was easy to discuss students' progress and issues casually during the lesson and in the breaks. In another instance, a teacher indicated there was no allocated time to work with the paraprofessional on planning or organising her reading times with ELL students resulting in the paraprofessional being given instructions as to what to do with the group in passing. This meant that the paraprofessional would not usually know what the students would be bringing to her session so, as she was unable to do any preparation, she was often reading unfamiliar texts and worksheets that the students knew more about than she did.

Assessment

During interviews some teachers and paraprofessionals mentioned the initial testing procedures that were used to place students in the reading programme as well as other tools used to measure student progress. In some cases, the role of the paraprofessional in the testing procedure was mentioned however in other cases it was not. As full data was not gathered

from all schools, the information is not definitive. Table 15 shows the range of tools and the procedures used for initial and ongoing testing of ELL learners in Years 7 and 8.

School	Assessment tools and procedures
1	Before the year started teacher and principal obtained relevant forms from contributing primary schools. All incoming students were tested using the ESOL Assessment Form. Those below cohort went to ESOL class. STAR test in Samoan tested some students for literacy. Running records completed every term.
2	Whole school did PROBE assessment at the start of term. asTTle reading completed twice a year plus ESOL staff administered teacher prepared test to measure vocabulary and comprehension.
3	Got all primary forms from contributing schools, administered PROBE assessment at several levels plus STAR testing. All testing done in weeks 1-3 of term by teachers and paraprofessionals and then placements made. Progress testing in June/July using Rainbow Reading summative testing.
4	At the start of term the teacher and paraprofessional together worked out reading level. Teachers tested language, comprehension and vocabulary and the bilingual paraprofessional administered diagnostic tests on phonics, alphabet, and sight words plus interpreted Korean school reports,
5	Class teachers used PROBE. ESOL unit teacher and paraprofessional decided on reading age using asTTle reading, STAR and Paul Nation's Vocabulary test.
6	PROBE assessment completed twice a year. Reading results recorded to see progress e.g. reading age at 7.10 moved to reading age 9.2 in six months. Learners asked to self assess using a cline e.g. *I can understand 1-100%* .
7	Tested twice a year with PROBE assessment where possible, if student struggled then went to Benchmark test at the level and Schonell testing.
8	PROBE assessment and teacher devised test administered at start of year. In the future will use PM Reader test and Benchmark test.

Table 15: Assessment tools and procedures used (Years 7-8)

Other explicit intensive reading

Teachers and paraprofessionals gave a range of replies when asked about other intensive reading assistance that was available to ELL students. The most frequent response given, by seven of the eight teachers, was that the ELL students were part of a language buddy system, where they were matched with another student in the class who could offer help with language, which in some cases involved reading support during class time. The researcher also understood that in three of the above situations, a buddy had been trained to work with the ELL student using Self-Pacing Boxes. In one instance, the buddy worked with a student three times a week for twenty minutes. Three teachers interviewed reported that the

mainstream class teachers' reading programmes included all class members and during reading time the ELL students worked at their own level, in one case ELL students worked with a paraprofessional in the classroom. As well, the teachers commented that ELL students took part in class SSR and went to the library with their mainstream class and that both the library and classrooms had suitable resources such as book boxes, tape and book packs or easy reading material for ELL students to read.

Attitudes towards the Reading Support Programme

All the paraprofessionals felt the reading support programmes were working well for students and most of them were pleased, and some impressed, with the progress the students in their groups were making. Two of the teachers and paraprofessionals commented that the ESOL students in their reading programme often wanted to keep coming to class after support had finished because they enjoyed the structure of the classes and the more individualized attention. Although commenting positively on the way the students were progressing, the teachers also mentioned a number of ways they felt that their programmes could be improved. Some wanted more allocated reading time however, in two schools there was resistance to this because of preventing ELL students participating in other school activities. Others wanted students to be able to take books home but this was discouraged because of past experience where books that were taken home were not returned. Several of the teachers expressed concerns relating to staffing and time. One teacher and paraprofessional wanted time to prepare more resources to accompany commercial readers. Several teachers wanted ELL students' reading to be heard more often and felt this would happen if there was a further staff member available. Two teachers commented that at the start of term, the ratio of students to staff was appropriate but as the term progressed the numbers increased to such an extent that reading support was compromised. Two teachers also mentioned that they would like more time to train the paraprofessionals and one teacher thought a training DVD of best reading practice would be useful for paraprofessionals as an introduction to giving effective reading support.

Chapter Six Secondary Years 9 to 13

School characteristics

The paraprofessionals who participated in the study worked in a wide range of secondary schools throughout the Auckland area. Three schools were located in South Auckland, three in West Auckland and one each in Central and East Auckland. Four schools on the North Shore were approached to be part of the study but for a range of reasons, this was not possible. Seven schools were co-educational and one was a single sex school. The schools ranged from decile one to decile nine. Two schools were decile five and there was one each of decile one, two, three, seven, and nine. All of the participating schools were state or integrated schools.

Background of the teachers in the study

The eight ESOL teachers working with the paraprofessionals were all women, English as first language speakers and trained teachers (two were primary trained). Four of the teachers had university level qualifications in English, Education, Special Education (Masters), and Chinese language and literature.

All of the teachers had some form of ESOL qualification or ESOL training. Three of the teachers had a Graduate Diploma in TESSOL, one, who had just completed the Graduate Diploma also had a Trinity College Certificate, and the other two teachers had completed the Graduate Diploma previously. One teacher was currently enrolled in a Diploma of TESSOL and another had completed ESOL training in her home country more than seven years previously. One teacher had a Postgraduate Certificate in Language Teaching to Adults. In addition, one teacher had attended an in-service course, run by Jannie van Hees, four years previously. Although one teacher said she had no formal ESOL qualifications, she had had training in a specific language teaching methodology when she taught English in Japan. Several teachers reported that they had attended a range of one day seminars and workshops relevant to teaching reading and writing and new learners of English.

Three teachers had previously been involved with special needs education and of these, one had taught at a school for the Blind. One teacher had become interested in the ESOL area through volunteer work with an international student exchange programme over fifteen years

previously, while another had worked with Chinese families in the area when a local Chinese radio station was established. Three of the ESOL teachers indicated that they had also taught previously in private language schools.

Background of the paraprofessionals in the study

In all the year 9-13 schools, the paraprofessionals participating in the research project were women. Three of the eight paraprofessionals had English as an additional language and had been in New Zealand between two and a half to thirteen years. The remaining five paraprofessionals had English as their first language.

Four of the eight paraprofessionals had completed university-level qualifications and had majored in a range of subjects including: Education, Sociology, Visual Arts, English Literature and Philosophy. One paraprofessional had studied at postgraduate level. Two paraprofessionals had completed their qualifications in their countries of origin. One paraprofessional had undertaken some university study but had not completed her degree, while another had completed a foundation course in Business Management and a Diploma in Business Management in New Zealand.

Three of the paraprofessionals had taught previously in their countries of origin, one at primary level, two at secondary level and one of these two had also taught at tertiary level. One paraprofessional had completed primary teacher training but had not worked as a primary teacher. One paraprofessional was enrolled in a Graduate Diploma in Teaching, and another was enrolled in a six month retraining course for teachers to gain teacher registration in New Zealand, at the time of the research.

Within the group, there was a range of previous experience and specific TESOL training and qualifications. One paraprofessional had a Diploma in Teaching English as an International Language from her country of origin. Two paraprofessionals had attended the Ministry of Education funded bilingual tutor workshops in both 2006 (two days) and 2007 (three days). One had a Certificate of Educational Support (Manukau Institute of Technology), one had attended a ten week ‘Introduction to TESOL’ evening course and another was enrolled in a TESOL Course at Manukau Institute of Technology. Two paraprofessionals reported having attended day courses and TEAM Solutions workshops. One paraprofessional indicated that she had not been given any training when she started as a paraprofessional. The length of time the paraprofessionals had been in their current roles ranged from five months to four Years.

Types of sessions observed

There was an extensive range of ways that the paraprofessionals worked with ELL students in secondary schools. The variety of complex timetabling arrangements in secondary schools (including six day timetables, and A and B weeks), the school-wide organisation of ELL provision, and the number and background of the ELL students in the secondary schools were just some of the factors that affected how schools utilised the paraprofessionals to support initial reading.

During the interviews, nearly all of the paraprofessionals indicated that they had worked with both small groups and one-to-one with individual students. However, only one paraprofessional was currently working only with individual students. Two paraprofessionals worked in classes where there was routinely more than one paraprofessional present, usually a bilingual tutor(s) and a teacher aide with English as a first language.

In four schools the paraprofessionals worked only with small groups of students in a withdrawal situation. In two of these schools, the paraprofessionals always worked with the same groups of students, while the other two paraprofessionals worked with different students. One of these paraprofessionals reported that she worked with specific students but there were sometimes different combinations of students on different days, as they were withdrawn from a range of mainstream classes and were sometimes needed for assessments and special lessons. In this particular situation, there had to be a certain amount of flexibility and there were some concerns raised over the continuity of the programme. The other paraprofessional withdrew students from the two ESOL classes, and the decision on the composition of the withdrawal groups was made by the teacher.

Three of the schools had assigned the paraprofessionals to work in-class with students with the ESOL teacher in the ESOL classroom or unit. These paraprofessionals worked closely with the classroom teacher. Within the class, the paraprofessionals supported individual students and worked with groups, sometimes in the class and sometimes in an adjacent withdrawal area, but only for part of the session e.g. during SSR.

Some school timetables for ESOL classes where there was paraprofessional support for the students had designated reading periods while other schools had a more integrated whole language approach. Of the sixteen observations, five of the sessions began with an established

routine of SSR. Ten of the sixteen observations involved the introduction of a new text to the ELL students, while only two sessions focussed on rereading a known text or follow up learning activities from a previously read text. The revision of previously covered vocabulary and the introduction of new vocabulary was the main focus in two observed sessions and coincidentally the paraprofessionals were both focussing on the vocabulary related to the parts of the body. In two other observed sessions the students were working independently with texts and work cards at a range of reading levels, from a commercial reading programme.

Observation	**Session type**
1	ESOL teacher and paraprofessional in class with twelve students. SSR followed by independent reading using SRA.
2	ESOL teacher and paraprofessional in class with nine students. During SSR the paraprofessional took one student to a withdrawal area adjacent to the classroom for reading. Followed by independent reading using the Momentum series.
3	ESOL teacher and two paraprofessionals with eight students. SSR, followed by blends, words, sentences with blend words. ESOL teacher and one paraprofessional. Teacher then withdrew a group of students. The paraprofessional involved with the research, stayed in the class with five students. Introduced a new Rainbow Reading text; listened to CD, shared reading.
4	ESOL teacher and paraprofessional in class with twelve students. SSR followed by class in two groups working in the classroom with two different texts. Shared reading for a specific task.
5	ESOL teacher and two paraprofessionals with class of nine students. Group vocabulary matching activity from previously read School Journal text, sequenced pictures, matched and sequenced text, read sentences.
6	ESOL teacher and two paraprofessionals with thirteen students. SSR followed by class in three groups, shared reciprocal reading with three different texts.
7	One paraprofessional with two students. Introduced a new topic, vocabulary focus, relevant worksheets.
8	One paraprofessional with group of four students. Oral interaction continued with topic vocabulary, worksheets, word bingo, and revision.
9	One paraprofessional with three students. Group reading with new text followed by worksheet - comprehension tasks.
10	One paraprofessional with three students. Text focussed activities - listened to previously read text (CD), sorted cut up sentences, read, copied to book, completed crossword, all students read sentences aloud.
11	One paraprofessional with one student in withdrawal area. Paraprofessional checked homework, introduced a new Ready to Read text, read through the book. Student copied text, cut text, sorted words into original sentence, read sentences. Paraprofessional introduced another Ready to Read text.

12	One paraprofessional with three students in separate classroom. Introduced new text (A4 12 point printed sheet), linked to previous reading topic. Some vocabulary pre taught. Read the text to/with students.
13	One paraprofessional with two students. Introduced new text, pre reading activities, shared reading.
14	One paraprofessional with two students in withdrawal classroom. Spelling test, introduced new text, Dolch 1B story. Read together followed by Dolch worksheets – cloze, matching, comprehension questions.
15	One paraprofessional with seven students. Introduced new text, with pre-reading vocabulary activities. Paraprofessional read text, students sequenced vocabulary words, shared reading, followed by comprehension word matching worksheet.
16	One ESOL teacher with eighteen students. One paraprofessional with one student in the same classroom one-to-one reading for the period.

Table 16: Observed session types (Years 9-13)

Paraprofessional tutoring spaces

The three paraprofessionals who supported students in-class, worked with an ESOL teacher in a core ESOL class. These paraprofessionals worked in the same physical space with the teacher most of the time. Only one of these three paraprofessionals was observed working one-to-one in an adjacent withdrawal area during SSR at the beginning of a lesson. These dedicated ESOL classrooms were well resourced with easy access to support material. When the teacher and the paraprofessional wanted to supplement the material being used in the lesson to reinforce a teaching point e.g. to find a picture of a ‘throne’ to explain a vocabulary item, the paraprofessional and teacher accessed two different picture dictionaries very quickly. The students who worked with the paraprofessional and ESOL teacher in a dedicated ESOL classroom had well established routines and behavioural expectations as well as access to resources they could use independently, and workbooks and material they had covered previously.

The three paraprofessionals who worked independently in dedicated withdrawal spaces, had established routines and access to some materials and equipment. One paraprofessional who worked with withdrawal groups did not appear to have one dedicated work space but collected the students she was to work with and moved to an unused classroom or an office withdrawal area. Another paraprofessional went to the student’s classroom and provided one-to-one reading support while the teacher taught the rest of the class.

Tutoring spaces	Number of observations
Paraprofessional worked with teacher in dedicated ESOL classroom.	5
Paraprofessional worked with teacher in dedicated ESOL classroom, and in a separate small withdrawal area for part of the time.	1
Paraprofessional worked with withdrawal group in small classroom/office with a whiteboard.	4
Paraprofessional with small withdrawal group in an office.	2
Paraprofessional worked one-to-one in a small withdrawal space adjacent to classroom.	1
Paraprofessional worked one-to-one in-class, at the front of the class while the class worked on another topic with the ESOL teacher.	1
Paraprofessional collected withdrawal group and moved to an empty ESOL classroom.	1
Paraprofessional collected withdrawal group and moved to office area, one or two students had to find extra chairs.	1

Table 17: Paraprofessional tutoring spaces (Years 9-13)

Timing and frequency of sessions

The sessions observed were typically fifty minute to one hour periods. In some circumstances, it was difficult to ascertain even an average of how many sessions per week were spent with each student on reading because of a range of extenuating factors. Distinct reading sessions were clearly identified in some schools but in others reading was more integrated into other classroom activities. The paraprofessionals that worked in-class had a number of students they targeted but when the students were working on independent reading programmes, the amount of time the paraprofessionals spent with each student varied according to what the student was actually doing during that reading period and how much help they needed for that stage. These particular paraprofessionals also responded to other ELL students (not just previously identified students) who initiated contact by asking whoever was available (the teacher or the paraprofessionals when there was more than one in the room) directly for help.

In one school where the reading was integrated, there were seven periods available for students to attend over a six day week, however, not all the students attended all the sessions. There were up to five students from different year levels in each session, but there was a pattern as to which students attended which sessions. These withdrawal sessions were additional to the ESOL class periods.

School	Timing and frequency of sessions
1	Daily one hour in the morning 50% reading 50% oral/ writing.
2	Reading three one hour periods a week. Approximately six a fortnight. Paraprofessional worked with about six previously identified students, mainly in-class support and some group reading.
3	Reading integrated, six sessions over six day week.
4	Some individual students had a different number of ESOL periods. The aim was to have each student in a reading period once a day.
5	Four hours a week withdrawal with two or three students.
6	Five one hour sessions per six day week, reading tutorial.
7	Four reading periods with eight or nine students.
8	Eight one-to-one sessions between two students per week. For one student this included one hour of social studies reading support and two hours of maths reading support.

Table 18: Timing and frequency of sessions (Years 9-13)

Resources

During the interviews, the paraprofessionals and teachers listed a range of resources available for use with ELL students including; the Picture Dictionary for New Learners of English, bi-lingual dictionaries, word lists, Ministry of Education publications and CDs, School Journals, Selections, Momentum series, Where to Start, Ready to Read, Rainbow Reading, Penguin, Macmillan and Heinemann readers, Wendy Simons series, SRA Reading Laboratory (Science Research Associates Inc), phonics books, Focus on English - Science and Maths units, PROBE and asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning), Self-Pacing Boxes, Fast Forward books/CDS and activity sheets, and Reading A-Z hard copies. One teacher indicated that in the following term, she would be using a new resource that had just been received from the Ministry of Education, *A Teaching Resource for Using the Picture Dictionary for New Learners of English*. Participants in two schools reported using computer software programmes, those mentioned were, Raz-Kids and phonics programmes. The list of resources mentioned in the interviews was not exhaustive, as the teachers and paraprofessionals recalled the resources from memory.

Teachers and paraprofessionals in general felt that there was a wide range of ESOL materials available in their schools, although one teacher identified a need for more texts at a lower level for beginning readers. The teachers at the schools using the commercial reading

programmes with multi levelled texts and work cards were aware of the financial commitment the school had made to these programmes.

Although all these resources were mentioned, by the teachers and paraprofessionals, as being available for use with the ELL students, a narrower range of resources was actually seen during the observations.

Resources used in observations

The resources used by paraprofessionals (and teachers when paraprofessionals were working in-class) during the observed sessions are listed in the table below.

Observation	Resources used
1	Traditional story from School Journal Part 1. 'Crow's Idea' Set of laminated words, Worksheets – word/definition matching and comprehension.
2	Title from 'Fast Forward' series, CD, book and associated photocopied worksheets. Cut up sentences from the text, crossword.
3	'Six Foolish Fishermen' traditional folk tale.
4	Photocopied School Journal text 'Catching the bus in Samoa'.
5	SSR titles. SRA Reading Laboratory and work cards.
6	Rainbow Reading Title 'The Anti-litterbug' and CD. Word flashcards.
7	SSR – range of titles. Heineman Year 5 Primary 6 title 'The Firework-Maker's Daughter'.
8	SSR – range of titles. Group reading 'A Strange Pet'.
9	Junior Journal 'Hinaki'. Word and definition cards, pictures and text to sequence.
10	Photocopied text downloaded from the internet. A4 sheet 12 point, no pictures.
11	Vocabulary worksheet resources, word cards in L1 and English, word Bingo cards, clock faces set.
12	Vocabulary worksheets from 'Beginning ESL – Secondary: Unit 2 Body and Health' Department of Education and Training Victoria 2003.
13	SSR titles. Momentum Series, independent individual reading.
14	Two titles from Ready to Read Series. 'My Best Teddy Bear' and 'Lunch Boxes'.
15	Photocopied text and worksheets from Dolch 1B.
16	Learning Media Title 'My Name is Lalofi' and paraprofessional generated worksheet.

Table 19: Resources used in observations (Years 9-13)

There was a wide range of texts used in the observed lessons. Three schools had established sustained silent reading (SSR) routines for the beginning of the lesson and as well as the range of reading material provided for the students the researcher observed that some students had their own reading material.

Two schools where students worked independently at their own level with the support of the paraprofessionals and the teacher were using SRA Reading Laboratory material, and books and work cards from the Momentum series respectively. School Journal and Ready to Read material was used by four paraprofessionals, one using it in a one-to-one situation and the others as the text for the withdrawal group. One paraprofessional chose a text with a CD and accompanying worksheets from Fast Forward, to focus on a particular theme for the reading group. Other material, including a printed A4 sheet was used with a small group and a simple reader with very repetitive chunks of language was used with an individual student. Two individual titles (series unknown) and books from the Heineman and Rainbow Reading series, were used in four paraprofessional sessions as texts for shared group reading. The paraprofessional using the Rainbow Reader title also used a CD of the story which the students listened to while they followed the text.

Some key resources and how they were used

Vocabulary worksheets

In two of the sixteen observations the paraprofessionals from two different schools worked mostly on vocabulary revision and learning during the period, without using a reading text. Both of the paraprofessionals were working with the vocabulary for the parts of the body. One paraprofessional was using material from the Department of Education and Training, Victoria (Australia), and the other appeared to be using resources that she had prepared. Both paraprofessionals incorporated home languages into their teaching. The worksheet from the Australian material required the students to look at a picture and write the home language translation next to a list of words, using their dictionary to help them. One of the students' was preliterate in their home language, so the paraprofessional asked him to spell the English word aloud, cover it and then write it down so that the student was not just copying the list of words.

The other paraprofessional revised the parts of the face and asked the students, who had a common home language, to draw their face and label the parts in their home language. Although the paraprofessional had English as an additional language and her home language

was different from the four students, she had prepared a list of words in the home language of each of her students. She had also prepared a set of word cards, for matching, in English and the student's home language. The students worked in pairs, matched the words and read them in their home language and English. The paraprofessional then asked the students to show her a part of their face/body. Each student had an opportunity to stand and complete this activity individually. The students then played some games of Bingo, with the words for the parts of the face in English on the Bingo boards. Thus the lesson was scaffolded in stages from home language to English.

Self -Pacing Boxes

One paraprofessional reported that she had used Self-Pacing Boxes previously in a one-to-one situation with very new learners of English. However, she reported that it had been six months since the school had had absolute beginners and whether Self-Pacing Boxes were used, depended on the cohort of students at the school at any one time. Another paraprofessional said she had used Self-Pacing Boxes before and they were good to work with. One teacher had looked into the option of Self- Pacing Boxes for the school but the cost of training was an issue. Another school had heard about Self-Pacing Boxes but had not seen them.

Introducing new texts

All the paraprofessionals who used a set text with the students, whether working one-to-one, in a small group, withdrawal or in-class, had to a greater or lesser degree introduced the text and included some, but not necessarily all, of the following pre-reading tasks. They asked questions about and discussed the title and picture on the front cover, looked at the pictures in the text, linked the text to previous reading topics or class work, foreshadowed follow up work or topic theme, pre-taught/discussed vocabulary items, elicited vocabulary, checked word meanings, and asked for predictions of what might be covered in the story. Flashcards were used as part of the pre teaching of vocabulary and introduction to the text, by some paraprofessionals working with small groups of students.

For two paraprofessionals, both working in-class with teachers, a clear purpose for the reading and follow-up activity was indicated as a lesson objective/aim on the whiteboard, e.g. use clues from the story to describe a character, or in a reciprocal reading session - predicting, clarifying, questioning, summarising - were written on the whiteboard to remind students of

the strategies they were going to be using. These were referred to by the paraprofessional during the lesson. Not so effectively, in another observed session the paraprofessional had written the title of the text on the whiteboard, as the aim of the lesson.

Two paraprofessionals, one working in-class and the other in a withdrawal situation, recorded on a cardboard chart, the vocabulary and parts of the interaction with the students, presumably as a record to be used in another lesson. Pre-prepared cut up sentence word cards, were sorted into order by one group of students as a learning task during a session, where they were doing follow up work from a text introduced in a previous session and listened to again (CD) in the observed session. After reading a Ready to Read title with the paraprofessional, a student copied the title and caption sentences onto long strips of card. After the student had read the sentences, they were cut up by the paraprofessional and the student was asked to sort the words into order and re read them to the paraprofessional.

Learning activities that involved some form of writing

As there was more than one stage to most of the observed lessons, the activities during the lesson have been listed here in table form but some activities or variations of a written activity occurred in different stages of several observed lessons e.g. recording SSR details was observed in more than one session and was only one part of the session.

Writing activities during lessons
No writing at all (two sessions).
Recorded details of SSR (more than one lesson).
Copied title and sentence captions.
Copied pre-cut sorted sentences into workbook/paper (more than one lesson).
Wrote the plural and then a full sentence – parts of the body, grammar focus.
Vocabulary – matched word and definition, (more than one lesson).
Labelled pictures/diagrams (two sessions).
Completed simple crosswords- words from the text.
Unscrambled words not related to the text and wrote them.
Students recorded new vocabulary as they read - teacher/paraprofessional directed and/or independently.
ESOL Teacher with paraprofessionals in-class. Elicited words starting with a targeted blend from students. Elicited sentences using the words from the students. Students copied the sentences from the whiteboard. Teacher and paraprofessional checked the sentences which, were to be used for dictation the following day.

Students answered comprehension questions (mostly literal questions) from a worksheet written by the paraprofessional).
Answered questions/ completed tasks from commercially published worksheet/ card material (more than one lesson).
Wrote the plural of words and then a true sentence – parts of the body - grammar focus.
Recorded information from the text to a grid for the purpose of writing a description of a character.
Paraprofessional checked written homework from previous session.
Paraprofessional recorded ideas/vocabulary/work from a shared reading group reading session on a cardboard sheet (more than one lesson).
Students generated questions about the text and wrote them in their work books. Students were provided with question words.

Table 20: Writing activities during lessons (Years 9-13)

As can be seen from the table above, most written work in the observed reading sessions involved recording, copying, answering comprehension questions, labelling diagrams and vocabulary related tasks. It should be noted that the aim of the research was to investigate the practices of paraprofessionals who supported new learners of English in initial reading programmes, rather than writing programmes. Presumably, independent and extended writing occurred in other sessions (and not necessarily with paraprofessionals). Only two of the learning tasks from the observed lessons indicate that the students were involved or soon to be involved in generating some of their own writing as a result of their reading. The students who recorded information onto a grid were aware that the aim of sorting, collating and recording the information was to write a description of the main character in the story. The students observed in the reciprocal group reading session generated and recorded their own questions with the assistance of the paraprofessional. It is possible that student generated writing was going to be a follow-up activity for other lessons.

The nature and quality of paraprofessionals' interaction with students

In general, student engagement in the learning seemed high. In one or two situations, there were students who appeared quieter than others; however they seemed to be involved and were perhaps not volunteering responses or initiating interaction because they were naturally shy or because of their cultural expectations of student-teacher interactions.

When paraprofessionals introduced new reading texts they used some of the following activities to generate student engagement with the text: they discussed the title of the book;

elicited information associated with the title and the picture(s); and used open ended questions involving prediction, interpretation and the sharing of previous knowledge and background

The paraprofessionals who worked in-class with ESOL teachers and supported students using a range of texts from a commercial reading programme worked within well established routines. The students knew the routines of the session and worked independently on a range of separate titles. The paraprofessionals who worked in-class with the teachers, knew which English language students they usually targeted and moved from one student to another as well as responding to students that indicated they needed assistance or had work to be checked. When the interactions were student initiated, such as requests for help with part of a text or a question the students did not understand, the paraprofessionals' interactions involved explanations and questioning aimed at helping students to understand the questions and guiding students to find the information themselves in the text. They used closed questions to ask about the meaning of words, more open questions to check the student's comprehension of both the text and the questions on the worksheets and provided explanations of words and chunks of language.

A paraprofessional working with a student, who had said he did not understand the story, read through the text with the student and 'unpacked the cultural content' needed to understand a text about pitching a tent. She developed the interaction to suit the needs of the individual student and used her knowledge of the student's background to encourage purposeful interaction with the text.

The researcher observed several sessions where paraprofessionals read aloud to the students and discussed the text with them. During one particular session with a small group of students, after the initial pre-teaching of some vocabulary items, the paraprofessional spent the rest of the session reading to/with the students. Nearly all the question forms used by the paraprofessional were questions about word meaning as the text had a high number of low frequency words. The students spent the rest of the session guessing the words, mostly incorrectly, as if they were words in isolation and their responses showed that they had very limited understanding of the text as a whole and were not able to use context clues because the text was too difficult for them.

The quality of student interactions with the paraprofessionals and their answers to questions during the session gave an indication of the level at which the students understood the

paraprofessional and engaged purposefully with the text. There was a range of ability and skill within the paraprofessionals to recognise that although a student response might not be accurate, the attempted response showed what and how the student was thinking, and how they might be processing the information for understanding. A few paraprofessionals had the ability, the confidence or felt it was important to try and interpret the student's response and use it to build on, to reinforce the student's attempts at using strategies and develop their literacy strategies further. This also involved having or taking the time to provide feedback that would help the student continue to develop effective reading strategies in the future.

Most paraprofessionals either chose not to or lacked the skills or confidence to pick up on the students' attempted responses to oral questions which although incorrect, showed how the student was thinking. A skilled paraprofessional could have worked with the incorrect response, seen it as an attempt to use a strategy, as a step in the right direction and helped the student by praising the attempt and then processing and guiding the student either to understand what had led to their misunderstanding or move them on so the student would be able to use the strategy more successfully next time.

Home languages and cultures

An awareness and knowledge of the students' backgrounds was demonstrated by some paraprofessionals in a range of ways including: the pre-planned use of home languages as a teaching mode to scaffold the learning of new vocabulary both generated by the students and written on worksheets; asking a student to explain to another student in a common language; referring to the student's culture to assist the student with understanding of a vocabulary chunk in the text; choosing culturally embedded reading material that the student might relate to and asking the students about their cultural knowledge and including it in the session.

In a situation where the paraprofessional was working with a student with the same home language, in a one-to-one setting, the paraprofessional used the home language extensively while reading with the student and questioning word meaning and comprehension. Some of the interactions seemed to involve translating or explaining meaning.

In other instances the paraprofessionals appeared less aware of the cultural and linguistic background of their students and how they could capitalise on this knowledge to draw the students in to more meaningful engagement with the text or discussion.

Planning and organisation

Three schools had dedicated in-class support and the paraprofessionals worked closely with the teachers on a daily basis. This provided opportunities for the paraprofessionals to work with the teachers on unit planning and in some cases to have an opportunity to observe literacy strategies being used. The paraprofessionals in this situation became familiar with the ways the teachers worked and knew where to provide support to the students in the class. They had an opportunity to develop an on-going professional working relationship.

In some situations, the organisation appeared to be more flexible than was indicated by the teacher and the paraprofessional in the interview. In one or two observations, there did not seem to be a plan for the choice of reading material used in the session and there was no indication whether any records of the material used were being kept.

The table below is a summary of the planning and organisation between the paraprofessionals and the teachers as discussed in the interviews.

School	Planning and organisation
1	Both the teacher and the paraprofessional had been at the school for a long time. The teacher and the paraprofessional 'touched base' and talked to each other often. The paraprofessional also discussed specific topics with other teachers.
2	The teacher provided the resources and checked there was enough work for the term. There were a lot of materials and there was an on-going interaction between the teacher and the paraprofessional. The teacher was available when and if needed and was considered very approachable by the paraprofessional.
3	The paraprofessional and the teacher worked in the same physical area so the contact was on-going. They caught up after the afternoon session. The teacher completed the main planning but they worked together and bounced ideas off each other.

4	The paraprofessional and the teacher had on-going discussions after every session. They worked in adjacent rooms and the door was open most of the time.
5	The teacher usually prepared the lesson and explained what would be done before the lesson. During the class they focussed on their own groups. After the class they discussed the lesson and shared feedback.
6	The teacher planned what was going to be covered e.g. grammar/ listening/speaking. If resources needed to be prepared, the paraprofessional was asked to do this. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional prepared resources e.g. comprehension worksheets, as they were needed to suit the level of the students and their interests.
7	The teacher selected books and told the paraprofessional what to work on. The teacher also gave instructions for preparation e.g. work cards. After class they discussed progress and future plans. There was a small allocation of time for planning.
8	Planning was directed by the teacher. Information was usually passed on directly before the lesson. If there was something special planned the teacher gave the paraprofessional more warning. There was on-going contact but this did not happen after each lesson. For the shared reciprocal reading programme the teacher gave the text to the paraprofessional to pre-read.

Table 21: Planning and organisation (Years 9-13)

Assessment

Some teachers and paraprofessionals reported on effectiveness of the assessments and tests used to place and monitor the progress of the students. In some interviews testing and monitoring was not mentioned. Three schools used a vocabulary assessment; from which two schools administered the Paul Nation vocabulary test. Running records were used as benchmarks in one school and although they were also considered an important tool for monitoring progress in a second school, it was felt there was not enough time to complete running records for each student.

The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability was used as a twice yearly check on student progress in another school. All year 9 and 10 students in one school completed the asTTle assessment at the beginning and end of the year and although asTTle is not for beginners, the school reported that some ELL students had gone up a level and one student progressed three levels.

The range of assessments and monitoring tools discussed in five interviews is summarised in Table 22.

School	Assessment tools and procedures
1	Used Paul Nation vocabulary test. There was not enough time for running records.
2	Used the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability twice a year to check progress.
3	Just started using Paul Nation test to see if students were improving. Used running records as benchmarks. Beginners first 300 sight words was used. There were two ESOL exams when the rest of the school was doing exams. Exams were an indication of student progress. It was difficult to have formal assessment when different students had different gaps. Some students were pre literate in their home language.
4	All Year 9 and Year 10 students did the asTTle test at the beginning and end of the year. The ELL students' results had improved; one student had increased three levels.
5	Used a test of high frequency words with the students at the beginning, middle and end of the year.

Table 22: Assessment tools (Years 9-13)

Other explicit intensive reading

Although in six schools there was some provision other than that provided by the ESOL department, for reading and learning support, in the form of a learning support programme, a reading recovery programme, or special education programme; the teachers and paraprofessionals indicated that it was not the norm for these programmes to extend to the ELL students. A reading support programme in one school targeted students based on the results of the Year 9 and 10 PAT results, but targeting ELL students was not the aim of the programme. Similarly in another school, a special education programme, Success Maker, a computer oriented tutoring programme for reading and spelling involved a few students who worked with the paraprofessional but they were selected on asTTle results not because of their ELL needs, specifically.

One school was involved in a school wide literacy programme with an emphasis on English and other curriculum subjects. Teachers of the core classes met and shared strategies. This was an optional programme but was too difficult for the ELL students receiving paraprofessional support.

Attitudes towards the Reading Support Programme

The table below is a summary of the comments made by both the teacher and the paraprofessional about the programme in their school. Some of the comments pertain to the ESOL programme as a whole while others are specifically about the work of the paraprofessional in supporting the students in the initial reading programme.

School	Paraprofessional and teacher attitudes towards the efficacy of the programme
1	The reception class had five hours English a week and this was considered not to be enough. The paraprofessional thought she was doing a good job. The paraprofessional thought one student needed a home tutor.
2	Some days were great. The programme was successful when the students were not misbehaving. Outside influences affected the behaviour of the students – morning sessions were better than afternoon sessions. The whole programme was eclectic and individualised for students' needs.
3	May need to review the programme. Had a different mix of students in the class with three students with a very low level of reading. The teacher believed the paraprofessional was vital, especially for shared reading. She thought that a reading programme could always be improved but that students did make progress.
4	The paraprofessional felt that the students got a really good basic foundation in English. The teacher tailored lessons to the level of the students and scaffolded for the different levels in the ESOL class.
5	The programme was run on a primary school model. The students developed confidence. There was pastoral care. The programme worked well. The paraprofessional support was necessary. The students would not progress as well without the paraprofessional.
6	The teacher believed the programme was working.
7	The teacher thought the programme was invaluable. The ESOL class and the paraprofessional group were the only places where the students could work at their level and feel comfortable. A sense of place and trust developed. Students had improved.
8	Teacher said 'I know it works'. The data showed improvement. Other staff commented on how students were improving. Some students who had moved on to the mainstream came back and acknowledged the assistance they had received. Sometimes students asked to be moved out of the programme as they believed they were coping.

Table 23: Paraprofessional and teacher attitudes towards the efficacy of the programme (Years 9-13)

Most comments were positive but some teachers and paraprofessionals could also see how the ESOL support could be improved. For example, there was a need for more English language

time for reception classes as five hours was not considered enough. One school was dealing with the difficulties related to the external influences on students' lives. It was recognised that some students were underachieving and developing behavioural problems as a result of not being able to experience success at school because they could not read. The teacher and the paraprofessional were becoming aware of the extent of the students' difficulties as a result of some bilingual testing and assessments. In another situation, the need for a home tutor for a student with learning difficulties was also raised. One teacher indicated the need for further readers and resources for lower level beginning readers. The constant need for reflection on the programme and how it was meeting the needs of current students was identified by one school which experienced a change in the mix of the student enrolments.

Several comments were made about the importance of providing a safe learning environment where the students have a sense of confidence and trust. It was felt by some of those interviewed that a skilled, empathetic paraprofessional working as part of a well-organised team contributed strongly to improving the learning experiences of ELL students.

Chapter Seven Conclusion

Introduction

In this description of ESOL paraprofessional practices in schools across the Auckland region, the research team has been most surprised by the range and diversity of settings, practices and materials utilised in supporting students in their initial reading and wider ESOL programmes. The observed range of levels of effectiveness of paraprofessionals across all school sectors also varied widely. Many paraprofessionals worked very effectively to promote successful learning with students, others worked well on some levels e.g. displaying empathy towards students and giving positive feedback, but were less skilled in other areas e.g. questioning and correctly levelling materials. However, some paraprofessionals were working in contexts beyond their skill and experience level. This tended to be where paraprofessionals were working in situations which exceeded the Ministry's guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2006) i.e. they were working largely autonomously without clear teacher direction or supervision.

Planning and Coordination

Planning and coordination between paraprofessionals and teachers also varied widely with some paraprofessionals being very closely directed by a teacher and, as suggested above, others being relatively free to plan sessions and to choose what resources to use. Certainly, the researchers felt that sessions were more effective and student learning optimised where there were clear routines and guidelines for students and paraprofessionals to follow. Planning was most effective where paraprofessionals were working in dedicated ESOL units with ESOL teachers who incorporated paraprofessionals explicitly into their planning and communicated this with the paraprofessionals. Although there were some successful instances of paraprofessionals working with ELL students in mainstream classes in secondary schools, it seemed that many mainstream teachers did not understand how to incorporate paraprofessionals into their classrooms. In many instances liaison between the paraprofessionals or the ESOL teacher and mainstream teachers appeared to be sporadic, relying on chance meetings in the staffroom or school grounds. Some participants raised the concern that paraprofessionals were only paid for their hours taught and not for any planning time. This tended to mitigate against regular planning sessions between teachers and paraprofessionals.

Complex timetabling and a related 'flexibility' as to which students at which time were getting paraprofessional support raised concerns about the continuity of learning for students and the possibility that some students were not getting their maximum time and benefit from the ESOL funding. This was more a concern in secondary schools than for Years 5-8. In the earlier years, issues around the timetabling of ESOL withdrawal tended to focus on what other important school activities students were missing out on e.g. fitness, school assembly, school productions and the like. Some of the least disruptive ESOL withdrawal situations seem to be when students were withdrawn for ESOL at the same time as the mainstream classes were covering a similar curriculum area. This situation was even more efficacious for the students when there was a clear school understanding about the delineation of responsibility between the classroom teacher and the ESOL teacher/paraprofessional as to who was providing take home books and the main reading programme for students.

In withdrawal situations, paraprofessional interactions with students at all levels seemed to be most successful when they were working with groups of four or fewer students, although some particularly successful sessions were observed in intermediate schools of paraprofessionals working with very large groups of students (with some trained as peer tutors). With smaller groups paraprofessionals tended to be responsive and able to focus on student learning needs as well as give appropriate and more equally distributed feedback. In larger groups, paraprofessionals had more difficulty with management of student behaviour and focussing on the needs of individual students. Training in group dynamics and management would be beneficial for many paraprofessionals. In small groups the researchers found that students were engaged and very keen to learn from paraprofessionals. Many enjoyed the extra attention and gained confidence in smaller withdrawal groups.

Appropriate teaching spaces for ELL students, particularly in withdrawal situations appeared to be more of a problem at the primary level but could also be challenging in secondary schools. Optimally groups should be withdrawn to quiet spaces that are not shared with other groups and where students and paraprofessionals can get quick and easy access to a wide range of suitable materials.

Language Support

The nature of paraprofessional questioning, because of its impact on student learning, is an area that deserves particular comment. While many paraprofessionals in the study were effective questioners, others consistently lost learning opportunities by not pushing students to

consider a range of issues in relation to texts. The research team observed a predominance of questioning in relation to the meaning and pronunciation of individual words but fewer predictive, endophoric and exophoric questions were generated in the observations. In addition, the team observed very little questioning in relation to language structure beyond eliciting the past tense form ‘ed’ and sentence boundaries marked by the initial capital letter and full stop.

Other areas that some paraprofessionals needed assistance with included: giving an appropriate range of feedback to students; accurately describing to students how language works, beyond the use of full stops and capital letters; providing visual support for literacy materials; selecting well levelled material for students; systematic record keeping (particularly at the secondary level); the effective glossing of new vocabulary and working with culturally and linguistically diverse groups of students. In situations where paraprofessionals worked on their own with students, the research team felt that there should be a programme for the regular observation of paraprofessional practice to give feedback on the above areas of practice.

The use of the home language in the classroom was present in many observed sessions. Many of the monolingual paraprofessionals (and teachers) pragmatically encouraged students of the same language group to translate instructions and explanations for each other, particularly when one might have only recently arrived in New Zealand. However, initial tolerance seemed to move into unease if the translation sessions extended beyond the very succinct. Some students were lightly chastised for speaking to their classmates in their home language even when the interaction appeared to be entirely on task.

In terms of paraprofessionals’ use of home languages, one researcher observed what she considered to be extended explanations by a paraprofessional in the home language beyond what was beneficial for the students. This did not leave or encourage many opportunities for student production of English. In another situation where a bilingual paraprofessional was teaching a mixed home language group, the paraprofessional provided lengthy explanations in her home language but only some of the students could benefit from this. Other bilingual paraprofessionals, however, were able to slip with ease between English and the home language, providing home language explanation and then moving back into English to ask for student input. In these situations paraprofessional use of home languages appeared to be very beneficial for student learning.

Literacy Materials

The range of literacy and specifically reading materials available in all but one school over the entire sample appeared to be plentiful. Many schools were actively engaged in buying new commercial materials, including resources like games and cards, with a view to improving and updating their programmes. In the primary and secondary sectors there was no predominance of one variety of materials being used and a number of commercial readers, some with accompanying worksheets and teacher workbooks were available e.g. Wildcat series, PM Readers, Rainbow Readers and journals. Where paraprofessionals were observed using a programme of commercial materials the texts were more likely to be well levelled for student proficiency levels. Moreover, in the instances where the supporting teacher materials were used these proved to be a positive scaffold for questioning and other language work with students. Self-Pacing Boxes were observed most frequently at the Years 7-8 level. Where they were observed they appeared to promote focussed learning for students. In situations where students were given mainstream materials to work with, the vocabulary load was usually too high, grammatical structures were too complex and the content could be culturally challenging for new arrivals to New Zealand.

The research team was asked to consider the links between initial reading programmes and the writing students were required to do. Researcher observation of the extent of writing by ELL students was limited to the fact that the researchers were supposed to be observing initial ESOL reading programmes. However, as has been noted in the report, many of the observations could more broadly have been characterised as literacy-based and could therefore reasonably be expected to include a writing component. Little independent, student-generated and extended writing was observed in sessions. At all levels student writing was characterised by record keeping, filling in of worksheets, word games and vocabulary recording. However, at the primary level and in Years 8-9 the Language Experience Approach (LEA)/student-generated writing component of the Self-Pacing Boxes process, where students were able to produce sentences describing their own experiences and thoughts at their own level of English, seemed very effective. It may be that most writing was done with ESOL or mainstream teachers (as opposed to paraprofessionals) as the skill level to give feedback on writing may be considered greater than that required for reading.

Paraprofessionals and career pathways

The paraprofessionals themselves were a diverse group of people, although exclusively women. The research team distinguished between two groups. One group were the New Zealand-born and largely monolingual paraprofessionals who were likely to have come to the work through mother help roles and had completed general courses for paraprofessionals and some specifically for ESOL. In the primary and intermediate sectors, no New Zealand-born paraprofessionals had completed university qualifications although several had taken university level papers. In the secondary sector, both New Zealand-born and migrant paraprofessionals tended to have university qualifications, including ESOL-specific qualifications. The overseas-born and largely multilingual paraprofessionals across the sectors were inclined to have tertiary qualifications from their own countries as well as, in some cases, extensive experience as teachers. Several of these paraprofessionals were very skilled educators. The research team felt it was important to recognise the different strengths that the two distinct groups had in supporting student learning. It may well be that some differentiation of training would be appropriate for these two groups. It also seemed that training should address varying levels of experience and skills with ELL students generally, as well as in particular areas e.g. helping with pronunciation and focussing on form.

The issue of career structuring and staircasing was raised a number of times by principals, teachers and paraprofessionals during the course of the research. Most participants believed there was a need for a more explicit career path for paraprofessionals. However, it should be noted that some paraprofessionals liked working in the role *because* it carried no career expectations or pressures and they simply enjoyed the interaction with students. Some ideas for improving the career pathways for paraprofessionals included a training progression through a series of graded steps (beyond the current two) which could count towards a component of formal teacher training. An alternative idea was that training could lead towards a specialised TESOL qualification for paraprofessionals who could work full time on a peripatetic basis between nearby schools.

A problem for several overseas-born paraprofessionals, particularly those with qualifications and teaching experience from their countries, was that they would like to become teachers in New Zealand. However these people found the requirements for registration and/or retraining overwhelming and expensive.

Areas for Further Investigation

As a result of this study, there are three areas that warrant further investigation. Firstly, it is important to understand more about how mainstream and ESOL teachers work with paraprofessionals. From the current research it seems that ESOL teachers are more skilled at integrating paraprofessionals into their work programme with students, whereas mainstream teachers need more training in this area. This is true where mainstream teachers are directing withdrawal work for paraprofessionals and also where paraprofessionals are engaged in in-class support.

Another area for investigation is resource selection for use by paraprofessionals with ELLs. There appears to be a propensity to utilise a number of mainstream resources with ELLs without differentiation of approach or support materials. A key factor in the ELA training is that ELLs require differentiated methodologies, resources and materials from mainstream students and it would be useful to investigate current practices more closely in this regard. This issue is also related to teacher skills in ESOL (are teachers themselves able to differentiate and prepare materials for ELLs?).

While Part B of this research will consider the effects on practice of the ELA training (up to four months after the completion of the course), there is a need to consider ways to embed and extend the training through networking, clusters, refresher courses and the like. An ongoing issue is gaining formal recognition for paraprofessional training and this also needs to be investigated.

Over the course of this study, the research team met with many dedicated and skilled paraprofessionals as well as those who were keen to develop their skills further. In addition it was clear that many students benefited considerably from the focussed attention paraprofessionals were able to provide, particularly when working in well-supervised and planned environments. With more explicit guidance for schools and teachers working with paraprofessionals as well as more comprehensive training for all ESOL paraprofessionals the use of paraprofessionals in schools could be made considerably more effective.

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Appendix One

Ethics documentation presented to schools

Letter to Principal

Faculty of Applied Humanities Office
Private Bag 92006
Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9659
F: +64 9 921 9631
www.aut.ac.nz

Tuesday, 7 April 2009

Dear Principal

The Ministry of Education has commissioned myself and two other researchers from Auckland University of Technology to undertake research examining paraprofessional practice in ESOL programmes across the school sector. The research will be divided into two parts. The first part (May–October 2007) will aim to provide a description and evaluation of ESOL paraprofessional (teacher-aide) practices in supporting initial reading programmes. The second part will run from about October 2007 throughout all of 2008 and will focus on evaluating the professional development programme for English Language Assistants. The overall purpose of both projects is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the range of ESOL paraprofessional practices and ensure that professional development programmes are designed to meet the needs of ESOL paraprofessionals.

We are writing to you to inform you of the **first part** of the research. This is entitled 'A description and evaluation of paraprofessional practices in supporting initial reading programmes'. This is a large research project which will involve us:

Interviewing several ESOL teachers of Years 1-4 to gain an overview of ESOL paraprofessional (teacher-aide) practices in supporting initial reading programmes in these Years. A good deal of information already exists on this sector and so our work will be aimed at providing a summary and update.

Interviewing one ESOL teacher and the teacher aide she/he works with in initial reading programmes (Years 5 -13) in 24 schools to find out what programmes people use and how they arrange their time and other resources.

Observing the same teacher aide in two separate teaching sessions.

All data collecting will be done by note taking. There will be no electronic recording and we will try to be as friendly and as unobtrusive as possible.

We will be aggregating the data we collect to provide an overall picture of practices across the school system. We will not be reporting on any individuals or their schools.

The Ministry is providing the payment of one Teacher Release Day for compensation of the school's involvement in the research if you and your staff decide to participate. Please note that participation in the research will be voluntary and will involve the consent of each individual.

The purpose in writing this letter is to ask you if I could arrange a meeting time with yourself or another senior staff member, an ESOL teacher and her/his teacher aide or other paraprofessional who works on initial reading programmes to explain the research to you so that you might have time to consider whether or not you and your staff are willing to be involved.

One of us will contact you in the next few days by phone and/or email to follow up this letter.

Ethics approval for this research has been gained from the AUT Ethics Committee and we will be following their procedures throughout the course of the research

In the meantime if you would like to clarify any points or discuss the research further please feel to contact me on (09) 921 9659.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Sharon Harvey
Faculty of Applied Humanities

sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz

Participant Information Sheet

DATE INFORMATION SHEET PRODUCED:

14 MAY 2007

PROJECT TITLE

A description and evaluation of ESOL paraprofessional (teacher aide) practices in supporting initial reading programmes.

AN INVITATION

We would like to invite you to participate in a research project for the Ministry of Education. The project aims to describe and evaluate how ESOL teacher aides support initial reading programmes across all sectors of the school system. The point of the research is to look at practices across the whole school sector. We do **not** want to concentrate on any one person, programme or school. Participation in this project is completely voluntary (it's your choice) and you can withdraw from the project at any time.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH?

The purpose of this research is to help the Ministry to understand how ESOL teacher aides support reading programmes in schools for ESOL-funded students. The research will help Ministry evaluate what sort of professional development programmes and resources are most useful for teacher aides who support reading in ESOL classes or groups. We intend to produce a research report for the Ministry of Education and a two page report sheet for everyone who participates in the research. We may also communicate key findings from the research to the wider education community through conference presentations and academic publications.

HOW WAS I CHOSEN FOR THIS INVITATION?

You were chosen for this research because you work in a school that was suggested by the Ministry of Education for the project. The Ministry have recommended a range of diverse schools in the Auckland region. You will either be:

1. An ESOL teacher of EAL (English as Additional Language) students in Years 1-4 and working regularly with a teacher aide (paraprofessional) in initial reading programmes.

2. An ESOL teacher of EAL (English as Additional Language) students in Years 5-13 and working regularly with a teacher aide (paraprofessional) in initial reading programmes.

3. A teacher aide (paraprofessional) working with EAL (English as Additional Language) students in Years 5-13 in initial reading programmes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THIS RESEARCH?

1. We would like to interview several Years 1-4 ESOL teachers in order to ask you about the way you organise your initial reading programmes for teacher aides. This interview will take between 30 minutes to one hour and will be held at your school at a time mutually agreed between us.

2. For Years 5-13 we would like to briefly interview the ESOL teacher and teacher aide together (about half an hour) to discuss how you organise the initial reading programme for your EAL students.

3. We would then like to observe teacher aides in a teaching situation with EAL students in initial reading programmes in two separate sessions. During these sessions we will take notes on the kinds of materials and teaching methods you use.

ARE THERE LIKELY TO BE ANY DISCOMFORTS AND RISKS?

We hope there is a low risk of you feeling uncomfortable but there is a chance that you will feel embarrassed about being interviewed or observed. We want to assure you that we are interested in gathering together a picture of **overall** practices across Auckland rather than focussing on you or your school in particular.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The benefits are that we will be able to present a comprehensive description and analysis of ESOL teacher aide practices in initial reading programmes across the Auckland region to the Ministry of Education. They intend to use this research to inform decisions about professional development programmes for ESOL teacher aides.

HOW WILL MY PRIVACY BE PROTECTED?

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality will be our priority. Your name and your school will not be identified in any research report based on the data we collect. The sample across Auckland is big enough that we will easily be able to report generally rather than specifically.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH?

Your time will be the main cost.

1. We will need to interview Years 1-4 teachers once for up to an hour.

2. We will need to interview ESOL teachers and their teacher aides (together) once for up to half an hour.

3. We will need to observe two 30 or 45 minute teaching sessions by ESOL teacher aides in initial reading programmes.

4. We may need to contact you briefly to clarify details from interviews but this will be kept to a minimum.

Your school will be paid the equivalent of a teacher release day to compensate for the time you have spent on the project with us.

WHAT OPPORTUNITY DO I HAVE TO CONSIDER THIS INVITATION?

We would like to give you a week to consider this invitation and then we will contact you (by email or phone) to see if you are interested in participating. In the case of '2' and '3' we need both the teacher and the teacher aide to consent in order to go ahead with the research in your school.
If you want to contact us to clarify anything our details are at the end of this sheet.

HOW DO I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH?

If you agree to participate in this research please phone or email us to indicate your willingness. Also, complete the consent form and we will pick it up when we come to interview you.

WILL I RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH?

We intend to compile a two page report sheet for you and your schools which we hope to be able to distribute by the end of this school year.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THIS RESEARCH?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Lead Researcher, Dr Sharon Harvey, sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz, 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 8044.

WHOM DO I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH?

Researcher Contact Details:

Dr Sharon Harvey Sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz, 921 9659, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology
Karen Stacey Karen.stacey@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 x6049, Centre for Refugee Education, Auckland University of Technology
Heather Richards heather.richards@aut.ac.nz 921 9999 x6046, School of Languages, Auckland University of Technology

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 1 May 2007, AUTEC Reference number 07/44.

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Interviews and Observations

Project title: A description and evaluation of ESOL paraprofessional (teacher aide) practices in supporting initial reading programmes

Researchers: Sharon Harvey, Karen Stacey and Heather Richards

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 15 May 2007.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and observations.
- ○ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including notes will be destroyed.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature:
.....
…
Participant's name:
.....
…
Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):
……..
……..
……..
……..
Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 1 May 2007 AUTEC Reference number 07/44

Appendix Two

Questionnaires and observation prompts

Indicative questions for teachers Years 1-4

1. What approach/es and resources do you get teacher aides to use for teaching beginning reading to new learners of English?

   Prompts:

   Resources: (e.g. Rainbow Reading programme, PM Readers, Self- Pacing Boxes, Jolly Phonics, Sunshine texts and CDs, Wildcats, Gilt Edge materials, Momentum Series, Selections Series e.g. Animal Rescue, Coping with Crises, ESOL Ready to Read, Journals others, Frog Pond, related texts, other Computer based materials

   Approaches: reading groups, reciprocal reading. LEA, peer tutoring, others?

   Follow up:

   How do you/they use these resources?

   Do you use any other approaches/resources to support initial reading for these learners? If so, what are these and how do you use them (see above for prompts)?

2. Have the teacher aides had any training in using any of these resources or in helping with reading/ ESOL? (If so, what?)

3. Which learners are selected for teacher aide support?

4. Which sorts of diagnostic processes, assessments/testing do you use to establish starting points in reading?

5. Do you identify which students are literate in first language and those that are not? If so, what sorts of diagnostic processes, assessments/testing do you use for this?

6. How long do these learners get teacher aide assistance for reading? (e.g. two terms, until they reach a specified level… etc)

7. How long (length of time) is each session?

8. How and when do you measure progress?

9. Is the reading programme for these students stand alone, or linked directly to other areas of language development- e.g. writing, speaking and listening? If so, how? (e.g. Self-Pacing Boxes encourages students to write and build on the reading texts)

10. What is the follow up for students in their other classes to the ESOL reading group work?

11. Do students get any other explicit/intensive reading instruction outside the ESOL group? If so, how?

Teacher aides (with their teachers) Years 5-13

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself, training and background?

2. What approaches/resources do you use to support new learners of English to begin reading in English?

3. Follow up: How do you use these resources?

4. How do you mostly work with students? i.e. 1:1 (teacher aide and student), working with a pair of students, working with a small group? How big are the groups?

5. Do you teach reading by itself, or linked to writing? (e.g. Self- Pacing Boxes encourages students to write and build on the reading texts)

6. On average, how many sessions per week would you spend with each student on reading and how long is each session?

7. Tell me about any preparation or follow up between you and the class teacher before and after the session.

8. What sort of guidance/support is given to the student about how to practise what they have done in the ESOL reading session? If this happens, does that come from you or the teacher?

9. can you tell me about any use of students's home languages in your sessions?

10. How do you feel the programme is working?

11. Is there any other form of explicit/intensive reading assistance for students?

Observation prompts

1. What resource/s is/are the teacher aide using?
2. How are resources being used?
3. What is the teacher aide asking students to do?
4. What is the student response?
5. How does the student engage with the process/task?
6. If there's more than one student in the group, what types of student: teacher aide and student: student interaction is there?
7. What kind of feedback is there from the teacher aide?
8. Are home languages used in the reading sessions? If so, how?