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## **Integrated reading and writing: A case of Korean English language learners**

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### **Abstract**

This study reports Korean English language learners' perceived needs concerning their learning of reading and writing and how the integrated reading and writing instruction impacts their reading comprehension and summary-writing abilities. The study also delineates teacher's challenges faced during the instruction. A total of 93 students in a middle school in Korea participated in a needs survey, and 69 students at three proficiency levels received the integrated instruction. The study found that students desired extra help on their writing to gain balanced English competence; also they wanted to learn reading and writing together. After the intervention, students at intermediate and advanced levels showed significant improvement on the integrated reading and writing test; however, no improvement was found at the beginning level regarding both experimental and control groups. Yet, the scores on multiple-choice reading test at all levels failed to significantly improve.

**Keywords:** integrated reading and writing, English language learners, middle school students, perceived needs, teacher challenges

English classes and English tests at all levels in Korea have focused on reading comprehension. The socio-historical context of Korea has a considerable impact on this situation. The importance of reading in English classrooms in Korea has remained strong for several reasons. Song (2000) points out some of the following: (a) reading is a major input in the English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) context where the chance for communicating in English is infrequent, (b) reading is a practical way to teach English due to the lack of proficient or native-speaking teachers, and (c) reading comprehension has remained a primary part of college entrance exams.

Writing in English, however, is also emerging as an important English skill in many EFL countries. South Korea is changing English testing system by adding a writing section to the existing tests or by creating an independent writing test. Examples of such that have changed include the National English Ability Test (NEAT); Test of English Proficiency writing test, i-TEPS, developed by Seoul National University; TOEIC writing test; and the Test of English Writing for Global Communication (TOEWC). TOEWC, which began in Korea in 2013, is for test takers of all ages. It tests English learners' English-writing ability based on reading passages. As writing is taking on greater weight in the testing system, the emphasis of foreign language instruction and assessment has changed, introducing challenges for teachers and students alike.

The saliency of standardized writing tests and the increasing emphasis on writing in addition to reading call for empirical studies on instruction so as to discover methods that can improve reading and writing skills simultaneously. The type of empirical studies, which is lacking in many EFL contexts, could enhance our practical understanding of the benefits and effectiveness of the integrated reading and writing instruction. The present study first examines Korean English language learners' (ELLs) perceived needs regarding the integrated reading and writing instruction. Then it explores the teacher's challenges as well as student achievements after they go through a three-week intervention of integrated reading and writing instruction that requires students to read, paraphrase, summarize, and reflect on a given story.

The research questions for this study are:

- (a) What are the perceived needs of Korean ELLs regarding reading and writing?
- (b) What is the effect of the integrated reading and writing instruction on reading and writing abilities of students at three different proficiency levels?
- (c) What challenges does the teacher face while teaching reading and writing together?

This study examines these questions from the perspective of the age group that transitions from childhood to adulthood in an EFL context. The study also demonstrates the processes and outcomes of the integrated reading and writing instruction in the classrooms, including student learning and teacher's instruction. The findings of this exploratory study offer insights that could be helpful to other foreign language contexts and that can enrich a deeper understanding of integrated reading and writing instruction. The article first reviews the literature about reading and writing relationship to clarify the discussion points for the future study, as well as to elicit more instructional practices of the reading and writing instruction. The article then presents our case study, in which we conduct the needs survey and the intervention. The article concludes with a discussion of the findings and implications.

## **Reading and Writing Relationships**

The close relationship between reading and writing has been widely reported. Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000, pp. 40–42) elaborated four types of shared knowledge that readers and writers use: “metaknowledge” (knowing about the functions and goals of reading and writing), “domain knowledge” (world knowledge and prior knowledge about substance and content), “knowledge about universal attributes” (knowing about letter recognition and grammar or rules for sentence construction), and “procedural knowledge and skill to negotiate reading and writing” (predicting, questioning, recalling, and trying to find analogies). Several second language (L2) studies—a relatively small number compared to first language (L1) research—have reported a close connection between reading and writing in a second or foreign language. Carrell and Connor (1991) examined reading and writing relationships in English as a second language with 33 international undergraduate and graduate students. The study considered the effects of genre (descriptive and persuasive), educational level (undergraduate and graduate), measure (multiple-choice, recall reading, holistic, and qualitative writing), and second language proficiency. The study found that although all the different measures failed to yield consistent results, there was a

significant correlation between reading and writing in a second language. Flahive and Bailey (1993) explored the reading and writing relationship in adult second language learners and found a significant correlation between the reading comprehension test scores and holistic scores of an argumentative essay. With respect to the relationship between reading experience and writing ability, Janopoulos (1986) studied the relationship between pleasure reading and writing proficiency in the college students and found that “heavy” L2 readers were proficient writers (p. 766). Esmaeili (2002) found that English as a second language (ESL) college students performed better at both reading and writing tasks when both tasks were thematically related. The thematic connection affected students’ reading and writing.

Despite the similarities and correlations between reading and writing skills, these two skills are, in many aspects, different and thus should be taught together. As Shanahan (1988) remarked, “reading and writing do not overlap sufficiently to permit complete reading and writing development through an instructional emphasis on one or the other” (p. 637). Language curriculum should be structured to explicitly draw out the underlying skills and processes to enhance students’ ability to achieve both. In Ferris and Snyder (1986), native English speaking students in sixth grade who received writing instruction did not significantly improve their reading comprehension and reading vocabulary while improving their writing. Hedgcock and Atkinson (1993) found significant relationships between writing proficiency and various reading habits for native English speaking students; the relationship was found to a lesser degree for ESL students. That is, extensive reading in L1 or L2 had little impact on ESL students’ writing proficiency. This result sheds light on the complex nature of L2 learning and the transferability of L1 and L2 research. It suggests the need to consider L2 learners’ needs, experiences, and their learning contexts.

### **Reading and Writing and Instruction**

Although research has identified the close relationship between reading skill and writing skill, it is still not often clear, from the instructional perspective, how both skills can be enhanced together. Previous research has considered the influence of learning one skill on learning the other (e.g., whether reading instruction influences writing ability) or the influence of L1 ability on L2 learning (e.g., whether reading and writing abilities in L1 affect those in L2). That is, many researchers have examined if teaching one skill could benefit students’ learning another skill and if students’ language proficiency in one language could contribute to their learning of reading and writing in another language. According to Krashen’s (1993) reading input hypothesis, large amounts of reading should lead to gains in writing ability. Nevertheless, rather than putting more weight on one or the other skill (e.g., extensive reading or creative use of language), some researchers emphasize both skills and value their interaction. Shanahan and Lomax (1986) examined three theoretical models: the interactive model (reading influences writing and writing influences reading), the reading-to-writing model (reading knowledge influences writing but not the other way around), and the writing-to-reading model (writing influences reading but reading does not influence writing). They drew a conclusion that the interactive model explained the data better than the reading-to-writing model and the writing-to-reading model. Based on the extensive analysis of research on reading and writing, Grabe (2001) emphasized that reading and writing should be taught together. Similarly, Shanahan’s (1988)

emphasis on the instruction of the two skills was to teach both reading and writing to help students develop a clear understanding of literacy. Although both L1 and L2 studies have presented a convincing argument for the development of literacy skills in the context of integrated reading and writing connections (e.g., Hirvela, 2004; Shanahan, 1997), the literature clearly lacks empirical studies that examine actual foreign language classrooms and materials as well as student performance and teacher practices regarding the integrated reading and writing instruction.

A recent empirical study, Writing Intensive Reading Comprehension (WIRC), integrated reading and writing to help students improve both skills. The purpose of the WIRC project funded by the U.S. Department of Education was to help struggling readers improve reading comprehension and writing performance by providing them integrated reading and writing instruction and collaborative, theme-based learning workshops (Collins & Madigan, 2009). Thinksheets were used for the WIRC intervention. The thinksheet is a type of worksheet. WIRC's thinksheet evolved from the earliest version of "think-sheet" developed by Englert and Raphael (1989), which was intended to guide students through the writing processes and to be used as a learning tool for use during teacher's modeling and peer interactions (p. 125). The thinksheet developed for WIRC consists of three sections: a) ideas—answering questions to identify and explore ideas while reading, b) organization—organizing ideas by using a graphic organizer, and c) extended writing—writing based on the understanding of reading. The WIRC team believes that writing during reading can contribute to comprehension and help students build background knowledge because comprehension and expression happen together and co-constructively. Their thinksheet helps students be engaged in reading and writing simultaneously. In this sense, the thinksheet is intended to be used interactively and discursively with students. Furthermore, students become aware of the writing process. In an interview with a Spanish-English bilingual student, a student used the metaphor of a "puzzle" to explain the process of putting information together to write an extended text (Brutt-Griffler & Collins, 2007, p. 170). During and after the study, the low-performing students and bilingual students significantly improved their reading performance (Collins & Madigan, 2009). This finding is meaningful in many ways. First, it means that writing can be used as an effective learning tool for both reading and writing. Second, by demonstrating the improvement of low-performing students in their reading and writing in the classrooms where the intervention was implemented, this longitudinal project challenged the prevalent perception of writing-to-learn cognitive theory that writing as a mode of learning is more beneficial for high-performing students than for low-performing students (Brutt-Griffler & Collins, 2007). WIRC demonstrated that the thinksheet and the teaching approach had positive impacts on the learning of bilingual students and low-performing students in the United States. It is worth modifying the worksheet and approach so as to examine whether the same or different results are exhibited among ELLs at different proficiency levels in the EFL context.

To teach L2 reading and writing together, a promising instructional strategy can be teaching students how to summarize. Summarizing is an important academic writing skill as it is frequently used as a means of comprehension, such as learning strategy and testing methodology (Havola, 1987). Grabe (2001, 2003) pointed out that reading and writing relations suggest that summary writing is a major skill for the literacy development. Nevertheless, research on summary writing in relation to reading and writing relationships (e.g., reading to write, writing to learn, and writing from multiple source texts) has not received sufficient attention. Summarizing

involves a number of skills such as discriminating main ideas from details, eliminating less important details, condensing, rewording, and reorganizing the original text. Managing these skills in L2 is more challenging for EFL students not only because EFL summarizers need lexical and syntactic knowledge of L2 to comprehend the given text so as to write a summary but also because in their academic contexts they have few chances to summarize written texts in L2. Keck (2006) analyzed 79 native English speaking (L1) and 74 non-native English-speaking (L2) writers' use of paraphrasing within a summary task and developed a taxonomy of paraphrase types: Near copy, Minimal revision, Moderate revision, and Substantial revision. Keck found that most near copies were composed by L2 writers, while most moderate and substantial revisions were composed by L1 writers. Keck's study and other similar studies (e.g., Pecorari, 2003; Shi, 2004) suggested that non-native English-speaking students have a lack of awareness or language proficiency for acceptable paraphrasing. Likewise, EFL writers' language proficiency can affect their summary writing. Baba (2009) investigated the impact of the lexical proficiency of 68 Japanese EFL students on their summary writing in English; the study found that what contributed to the construct of summary writing were the ability to write definitions, which requires semantic knowledge, and the ability to productively use words, as well as the L2 writer's metalinguistic knowledge. The findings suggest that students need to improve lexical, semantic, syntactic knowledge, as well as to raise the self-awareness for the plagiarism. Accordingly, teachers should address paraphrasing in terms of skills and knowledge when teaching summarization.

## Methods

This section describes our research site, survey instrument, intervention, and pretest and posttest.

### *Site*

Yosung Middle School (pseudonym) is an average performing school in South Korea; 86% of its students scored "above average" on the English section of the national academic performance test (School Info, 2012). Yosung Middle School sets English education as one of its major academic tasks. In addition to the regular curriculum, all students in grades 7 and 8 are required to write a weekly book report in English, a summary of a few pages of a self-chosen book. Although the book report is not required of 9<sup>th</sup> graders, they receive additional credit for writing a weekly book report. In short, the school places a significant value on reading and writing. According to an English teacher at the school, no strict or specific guidelines on how to write the report are provided. Hence, students take the easiest way about the task, selecting very young children's books and copying (i.e., plagiarizing) original sentences.

### *Needs Survey*

*Participants.* A needs survey was conducted to determine participating students' perceptions and learning practices toward English reading and writing before implementing the intervention. A total of 93 students (male [37], female [56]; Grade 7 [34], Grade 8 [27], Grade 9 [32]) from Yosung Middle School participated in the needs survey. A questionnaire asking about English-language learning, focusing on reading and writing, was developed for a larger research project.

The first part contained bio-data (age, gender, grade level, and English proficiency). The second part consisted of a series of statements regarding their practices and perceptions about overall English language skills and reading and writing skills. The short answer and open-ended questions were designed for respondents to expand on their selections for the 5-point Likert-scale items. The questionnaire was administered near the end of the 2010-2011 academic year. According to Jordan (1997), needs should include “necessities, demands, wants, likes, lacks, deficiencies, goals, purposes, and objectives” (p. 22). Similarly, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classify needs into necessities, lacks, and wants. Necessities are elements that the learner needs to have to attain the target situation. Lacks are elements that the learner is missing, the absence of which keeps the learner from attaining the target proficiency. Wants are elements that the learner desires, which can conflict with the necessities as perceived by teachers, schools, or policy makers. The current survey was designed to obtain the students’ perceived necessities, lacks, and wants in addition to their current learning practice (See Appendix A for sample survey questions).

### *Integrated Reading and Writing Instruction*

*Students and teachers.* One native English speaking teacher, Kaylee (pseudonym), taught three different levels—beginning, intermediate, and advanced. We communicated with Kaylee through interview before, during, and after the intervention. Any students who wanted to participate in the program were allowed to be enrolled and were assigned to a proficiency group. A total of 53 students (male: 21, female: 32) received the integrated reading and writing instruction for three weeks. The students were assigned to their proficiency group based on their English exam scores in the spring semester and the results of an oral interview with the English-speaking teacher. Although the exam scores cannot be converted to some international English tests such as TOEIC or TOEFL, the proficiency levels can represent those of average Korean middle school students as the students at Yosung Middle School performed average or above average on the national academic performance test. Since students were grouped based on their English proficiency, the classes consisted of various age groups. For comparison purposes, an additional 16 students from a low-proficiency class who did not receive the intervention but received regular reading instruction by a Korean-English bilingual teacher completed the pretest and posttest.

*Materials.* One long narrative was selected for the intervention. The story “Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man” (Adler, 2003) was taken from an American textbook that is adopted in American public schools for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. In our study with Korean ELLs, the teachers selected this out of four stories of similar length and difficulty we provided as options. In selecting the story, the English teachers in the school, including Kaylee, considered the English proficiency level of the participating students and their interest in sports. Kaylee and the other English teachers at the school (who teach English during regular semesters) considered the reading text appropriate for all levels regarding the number of new vocabulary words and the language structure. All levels of students used the same reading texts and worksheets. Because integrating reading and writing was new to the students at all levels, a relatively easy reading text was selected (cf., the same text is read in Grade 4 in the U.S.). Additional readings, such as the full version of Lou Gehrig’s farewell speech and a news article about Lou Gehrig, were provided to advanced students as they progressed relatively quickly. Also, we intended to examine how similarly or differently students

at different proficiency levels would learn by the integrated reading and writing with the same material. This way we could identify what challenges teachers might face and how teachers could vary their instruction and approaches depending on a student's proficiency level. We did not, however, mean to compare the outcomes of the three groups but to see whether each group improved (or failed to improve) after the intervention. Before the intervention commenced, teaching materials, including the orientation materials about paraphrasing, questioning, and summarizing, answer keys to the student worksheets, and synonym lists, were provided Kaylee. Although Kaylee was told to modify the materials however she saw fit, the materials were only modified minimally. Instead, Kaylee managed her classes slightly differently as she responded to students' questions and needs.

The intervention used a set of worksheets—a “thinksheet” and a “questionsheet.” The thinksheet used for WIRC was modified to best suit ELL students, and an additional worksheet called a questionsheet was created for this study (See Appendices B and C for the sample questionsheet and thinksheet, and see also Cho (2014) for teaching suggestions when using the questionsheet and thinksheet). The thinksheet consists of three steps: Step 1, ideas and details; Step 2, organization and reflection brainstorming; and Step 3, extended writing. The first step asks students to read a chunk of the story, identify one or two important ideas, and paraphrase the main ideas. The second step asks students to select the most important ideas from Step 1 as well as to reflect on the selected ideas. The final step asks students to write a summary and reflection. That is, the thinksheet covers a wide range of reading and writing skills: comprehending the story, identifying and paraphrasing the main ideas, organizing ideas, summarizing the story, and writing a reflection. It encourages students to constantly revisit the reading and the previous steps in the thinksheet. In this regard, the thinksheets and questionsheets are intended to bridge reading and writing processes. Furthermore, the questionsheet provides students with space to work cooperatively on their questions about vocabulary, grammar, and the story, and accordingly, it promotes peer cooperation and interaction as well as learning. Drawing on the cognitive process theory of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 377), the worksheets serve as a cognitive model while students read and write by helping each other achieve both “process goals” (e.g., procedural instructions of writing) and “content goals” (e.g., what to say to audience).

The thinksheet and questionsheet were designed so as to allow teachers to “step-in” when explaining, correcting, and scaffolding and to “step-back” when giving students time to work individually or as part of a group (Englert & Dunsmore, 2002, p. 93). Although the teacher's intervention seems to be a minimum in the process approach, the roles of the teacher in the process approach are to guide and scaffold students through the processes as well as to facilitate them to develop writing strategies for each stage. The process approach is considered by some to be an individual writing activity, and thus not to be social. The process approach, however, can become a social activity when the teacher interacts with students at each stage of their writing process and provides students with activities in which they can interact and collaborate with their peers. Also, the teacher can track the process in addition to the “product” of students' writing to understand the “product” better so that she can provide more appropriate and effective comments (Goldstein, 2004, p. 74).

*Classes.* Each group met for 90 minutes 10 times over three weeks in the summer (See Appendix D for the instructional process). All classes were observed by the first author and video recorded.



Each class was taught as follows. After students read a page or two, they wrote their questions about words, grammar, and the story and discussed them with their peers and the teacher. Then, working on the first step of the thinksheet, students identified and paraphrased the main idea and details of the part of the story they had read. They repeated this process until they finished reading the story. When students had finished the story, they moved to the second step of the thinksheet—organization and reflection—in which they selected the most important ideas that could be helpful for writing a summary and reflecting on the story. While completing the second step, they revisited the first step of the thinksheet and the story. Finally, students engaged in extended writing, summary and reflection. For a focus writing strategy, we selected summarizing. In the needs survey—the results of which will be reported in detail later—students frequently brought up, as desired writing strategies to learn, summarizing and paraphrasing. Among the several writing skills mentioned, we decided, based on research and the students' learning experiences, to focus on summary writing and paraphrasing skills. Research shows that ELLs struggle to write summaries and that teaching summary writing could benefit students' learning of reading and writing (Baba, 2009; Grabe, 2001, 2003; Keck, 2006; Pecorari, 2003; Shi, 2004). In addition, the teachers teaching English at the school reported during the informal interview that the students wrote poor summaries for their book reports due to the lack of experience and instruction that links reading and writing.

In writing a summary and reflection, students were guided to organize their writing in three parts—introduction, body, and conclusion. The questionsheet and the thinksheet were designed to serve as helpful learning tools as they provided students with various ways to interact with texts and allowed them to practice reading through writing and to learn the process of writing. At the end of the intervention, to gain more in-depth information, we examined each student's thinksheet that was used during the intervention

*Pretest and posttest.* All participating students were pre- and posttested before and after the three-week intervention. The same set of questions—ten reading questions (10 points) and one integrated writing question (4 points)—was used for the pretest and posttest. The instructions were provided in Korean. The pretest scores were consistent with the initial proficiency grouping arranged by the school based on the students' exam scores and interviews. The questions in the reading test included comprehension, main idea, detail, word, and sequence questions; each question was worth one point, and they were all multiple-choice types. The writing question was summary writing. Students were asked to summarize a given passage, and their summary was evaluated based on a) the presence of main ideas; b) appropriateness and accuracy of details; c) quality of paraphrase; and d) appropriateness of language use. Each category was worth one point; the highest score students could get for the summary writing was four points.

## Results

In this section, the findings are presented according to the three research questions.

*(1) What are the perceived needs of Korean ELLs regarding reading and writing?*

Among the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, 66% of the students reported

that reading was mainly learned at their school, and 37 out of 93 students (40%) wanted extra help on writing. Students at Yosung Middle School were asked the number of hours they spent on improving the writing skill; they reported spending on average only 0.8 hours per week (with zero hours minimum and 6 hours maximum) working on writing at school. This is a relatively small portion compared to their total hours of learning English at school (4 to 6 hours per week). Students were also asked to indicate specific writing skills they wished to learn: 49% selected creative writing followed by argumentative writing (43%), summary (42%), critique (42%), letter writing (33%), journal writing (30%), and paraphrasing (24%).

Asked to explain why they wanted to improve their writing skills, 42% of the students reported wanting to improve their weakest skill, writing, in order to balance all four skills, and 24% mentioned that writing skills could be helpful in the future (e.g., business or job). In addition, a majority of students reported a preference to learn reading and writing together (75 students or 80%). The most frequently expressed reasons were “Reading and writing complement each other”; “It would be effective or fun to learn both at the same time”; and “By learning to write, all English language skills will be balanced.”

The needs survey provided meaningful information; students recognized a mismatch between their English learning and their desire for additional help on language learning, and they were aware of the unbalanced development of their English skills. That is, the students spent a very small amount of their time learning writing, and wanted to receive extra help on writing so as to attain balanced English language proficiency. Furthermore, the specific writing skills they wished to learn involved reading (e.g., summarizing, paraphrasing, critique). The results suggest that the integrated reading and writing instruction approach could be a potentially useful option to satisfy needs.

*(2) What is the effect of the integrated reading and writing instruction on reading and writing abilities of students at three different proficiency groups?*

To determine whether the three-week intervention impacted Korean ELL students’ learning in reading and writing, their pre- and posttest scores were examined. Students’ thinksheets were also examined. Pretest and posttest means and standard deviations for multiple-choice reading and integrated writing tests appear in Table 1 (see below). The writing test was an integrated reading and writing test in which students were asked to summarize a given passage.

A Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to analyze the effect of the intervention on the integrated writing ability because the assumption of normality was not met for the writing test. As shown in Table 2 (see below), the analysis found that the intervention elicited a statistically significant change in the integrated writing test for students from intermediate ( $Z = -3.020, p = .003$ ) and advanced ( $Z = -2.972, p = .003$ ) levels with large effect sizes ( $d = 1.10$  for the intermediate level and  $d = 1.03$  for the advanced level). But beginning students who received the intervention did not make statistically significant gains in the integrated writing test ( $Z = -.302, p = .763$ ). The beginning students without the intervention did not make gains in the integrated writing test as well ( $Z = -1.025, p = .305$ ).

Table 1. *Pretest-Posttest Means and Standard Deviations*

Reading		Pretest		Posttest	
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Beginning (no intervention)	17	4.4	1.5	4.8	1.8
Beginning	12	5.2	1.4	5.3	2.1
Intermediate	13	5.8	1.6	6.3	1.5
Advanced	14	6.8	1.7	7.2	1.1
Integrated writing		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Beginning (no intervention)	18	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.0
Beginning	11	1.0	0.7	1.2	1.5
Intermediate	15	1.2	0.8	2.3	1.2
Advanced	11	1.7	1.0	2.7	1.0

Table 2. *Integrated Writing Test: Wilcoxon Signed-rank Test*

Level	Wilcoxon signed-rank test		Effect size
	<i>Z</i> score	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Beginning (no intervention)	-1.025 <sup>a</sup>	.305	0.25
Beginning	-0.302 <sup>a</sup>	.763	0.15
Intermediate	-3.020 <sup>a</sup>	.003*	1.10
Advanced	-2.972 <sup>a</sup>	.003*	1.03

a. Based on negative ranks.

\* $p < .05$

Regarding the reading test, two-tailed  $t$  tests showed no significant increase in the multiple-choice reading tests for students from every level whether they received the intervention or not – beginning without intervention ( $t(16)=2.12$ ,  $p = .31$ ,  $d = 0.28$ ), beginning ( $t(11)=2.20$ ,  $p = .85$ ,  $d = 0.04$ ), intermediate ( $t(12)=2.17$ ,  $p = .21$ ,  $d = 0.30$ ), and advanced ( $t(13)=2.16$ ,  $p = .36$ ,  $d = 0.30$ ).

After examining the thinksheet that each student used during the intervention, we found that differences existed among the different proficiency levels in students' integrated writing (writing a summary and reflection). Moreover, the quality of their writing (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, and organization) being noticeable, which could reflect students' language proficiency, processes and strategies were also noticeable regarding their use of the worksheet and the original reading. In their summary, most students at the advanced level a) improved their initial paraphrases on lexical and syntactic levels, b) included relevant details by revisiting the reading text, and c) reorganized their sentences used in Step 1 and Step 2. Many students at the beginning level, on the other hand, a) did not complete their writing or wrote a too short summary, b) did not use important ideas they had selected in Step 1 and Step 2, and c) left out details that could support the main ideas or added unnecessary details.

### (3) *What challenges does the teacher face while teaching reading and writing together?*

The teacher, Kaylee, who taught all three proficiency levels, reported some challenges she faced during the intervention. The challenges were associated with teaching integrated reading and

writing to students at different proficiency levels. Low proficiency students needed help with reading comprehension including learning new vocabulary before they combined reading and writing skills for paraphrasing and summarizing. Most questions that students at the beginning level had were about vocabulary meaning. Kaylee's teaching focused on the meaning of vocabulary in the class with the beginning students, whereas in the classes with the intermediate and advanced students the teacher's instruction largely focused on critical reading and paraphrasing. As a result, students at the beginning level spent less time writing than those at upper proficiency levels, which possibly made the class dynamics of the intervention group at the beginning level less distinguishable from the non-intervention group. This may explain the lack of improvement in beginning students' writing on the posttest.

Another issue Kaylee raised through the interview was the difficulty of teaching paraphrasing to the ELL students. Many students reported that before the intervention they had had few opportunities to paraphrase. A few students at the beginning level copied the original sentences when they were supposed to paraphrase in their thinksheet and on the posttest. Even some students at higher levels showed weak paraphrasing skills in their thinksheet and the posttest. Many students simply replaced a word in the original sentence with the sentence, for example, "The Yankees offered Lou a \$1500 bonus to sign plus a good salary," a student in the advanced level paraphrased "The Yankees gave Lou a \$1500 bonus to sign plus a good pay." Another student in the advanced level missed details when paraphrasing the original sentence "Lou Gehrig played despite stomachaches, fevers, a sore arm, back pains, and broken fingers. Lou's constant play earned him the nickname Iron Horse" to "He still played the game in spite of many injuries." Although Kaylee provided a short training session about paraphrasing and taught various paraphrasing strategies, students mainly adopted a simple strategy, such as using synonyms. Students did not seem to understand the reasons (e.g., avoiding plagiarism and demonstrating their understanding of the original source) to paraphrase an original sentence in their summary and lacked writing skills that needed lexical and syntactical knowledge.

## **Discussion**

### *Student Needs and Learning Environment*

The results of the student needs survey offer an important message to EFL educators and researchers. Learners' perceptions and needs are closely related with instructional and sociocultural factors. Students in this study recognized a mismatch between what was instructed in the classroom and what they wanted the teacher to help themselves in the language learning. They were also aware of the unbalanced development of their English skills. Students reported that their weakest skill was writing among reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and they wanted to improve writing so that all four skills of their English proficiency were balanced. Elements that could have influenced reading-based English classes include the feasibility in relation to class size and teaching resources (e.g., specialized teachers, materials, and curriculum) as well as the EFL context where the major source of input is reading. Although students in general perceived the EFL instruction based on the reading skills, the language skill that they needed additional help with was writing. The students wanted to learn writing to balance all four skills and expressed a need for integrated reading and writing instruction.

Their unmet needs reflect their current learning practice and curricula. Students reported that they spent considerably less time learning to write than learning to read, and they wanted learn more about writing to develop balanced English proficiency. To improve their reading and writing, they expressed a preference to learn these two skills together. How learners perceive their learning “develops and is embedded within a complex web of environmental and social influences” (Fan, 2011, p. 159). To adolescent students in South Korea, similar to those in other Asian countries (e.g., China and Japan), English is an important school subject of educational credentialism (*hakbul*) and peer competition (Kim, 2010). That is to say, students perceive learning English as an important measure to pass the entrance exams of the universities that will help them attain a superior position in society. The focus on reading ability on tests and in the curriculum hindered the balanced reading and writing development of students’ English proficiency. In the context where school curriculum and college entrance exams focus on the reading more than the writing, students desired to have balanced English skills and they believed that developing the balanced skills could help their future (e.g., getting a job).

### *Different Proficiency Groups and the Integrated Task*

After the three-week period of integrated reading and writing instruction, a change occurred in the improvement of writing. The reading ability of students at all levels failed to change significantly, while the summary writing ability of the students at the intermediate and advanced levels improved significantly. This indicate that a brief instructional integrated intervention is ineffective helping ELLs improve their reading. As seen in Brutt-Griffler and Collins (2007), a longer intervention period may help students at both beginning and advanced levels improve their reading. Although no increase in reading ability was observed across any of the proficiency groups after the intervention, the integrated instruction was effective for the performance in the integrated reading and writing task—summarizing and reflecting—but the effects varied by students’ proficiency levels. To be more specific, whereas students at the intermediate and advanced levels showed improvement on the integrated reading and writing task, those at the beginning level showed no improvement in their summarizing ability. As reported earlier, the beginning group spent more time comprehending the reading material and learning new words than practicing integrated reading and writing skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing. It seems that students at a low proficiency level show slower progress in their learning of integrated reading and writing skills. Previous studies have found that ELLs’ summarizing abilities were closely related to their reading comprehension skills and their vocabulary knowledge (Baba, 2009; Yu, 2008). Grabe and Zhang (2013) emphasized the need for well-developed reading abilities to perform integrated reading and writing tasks. The findings of the present study and previous research suggest that a) limited vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension ability should be considered when integrated reading and writing instruction is provided to low and intermediate students, and b) students at lower proficiency groups may develop integrated reading and writing skills slowly. When teaching integrated reading and writing skills to beginning students, teachers could use easier reading texts so that the students are able to focus more on learning the integrated reading and writing skills than spending time understanding the text. Another finding that is more important is that students at the beginning level failed to use the worksheet as intended, while those at the advanced level, as they wrote their summaries, constantly revisited and referred to the previous steps of the thinksheet and the

original reading text. This finding suggests that students need guidance and reminders for successfully integrating reading, planning, and writing into a whole.

One of the issues that Kaylee addressed concerned teaching paraphrasing to Korean ELL students. Students reported having had no previous opportunities to paraphrase, and even students at the advanced proficiency level did not paraphrase the original sentences sufficiently or correctly. Paraphrasing is to rephrase the original text while preserving its meaning. It involves comprehension of the original source as well as rewriting. Advanced students need to be taught more sophisticated paraphrasing skills and to recognize the importance of avoiding plagiarism. Non-native English speakers tend to display less vocabulary knowledge in their writing than do native English writers. English learners' lack of vocabulary knowledge (or their inability to use it) results in using words redundantly and ambiguously when paraphrasing (Hinkel, 2003). In Keck (2006), ESL writers copied significantly more original words from a text in summarizing than did native English writers; native English writers revised significantly more the original source text than did the ESL students. L2 proficiency can impact students' paraphrasing strategies. Hinkel (2003) discussed that ESL writers might not have acquired complex lexical and syntactic constructions by simply being exposed to L2 texts, so explicit instruction (e.g., teaching synonyms for less vague nouns, or it-cleft structure) would benefit ESL writers. ELL students should expand their lexical and syntactical knowledge to improve their summarizing ability. Using authentic texts could be a helpful learning strategy because such texts are not simplified or modified for L2 learners. Thus students would be exposed to varied and complex sentence structures and vocabulary that may seldom occur in the L2-reading text.

## **Implications**

This section discusses practical and instructional implications that emerged from the analysis of our data. While pre- and posttest results indicated that the intermediate and advanced groups improved on the integrated reading and writing task, the class observations and teacher interview allowed us to identify an area where even proficient students have room for improvement including paraphrasing. The students also reported that they had not experienced paraphrasing before. For more improved and sophisticated paraphrasing, explicit instruction and authentic reading materials can be helpful. Teaching the paraphrasing skill can enhance students' understanding of plagiarism. In so doing, practice of paraphrasing, not punishment of plagiarism, should be emphasized (Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

From a practical perspective, teaching summary writing, focused on a crucial academic writing skill, helps EFL students develop a balanced reading and writing skills. Summarizing in L2 requires adequate reading strategies, comprehension ability, grammatical knowledge, vocabulary, and writing skills such as paraphrasing as well as critical thinking skills such as selecting and condensing original text (Kirkland & Saunders, 1991). In other words, learning to summarize is likely to be a promising way to improve those reading and writing skills.

The thinksheet and questionsheet used in the present study could be useful materials to teach ELL students to read and write using the process approach. Following the three steps of the thinksheet, a learner comprehends the text through paraphrasing, planning a summary through

identifying main ideas and details, organizing selected ideas, reflecting on the story, and writing a summary. These processes make a learner constantly interact with and revisit the text and their writing. In this sense, thinksheets can play an instrumental role in L2 learning as well as support a final product. Indeed, a growing number of researchers have studied the potential roles of writing in second language acquisition (e.g., Harklau, 2002; Manchón, 2011; Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2011; Williams, 2012). Learners can improve their L2 proficiency through writing by noticing the gaps between their ability and target ability, by trying out their knowledge, and by reflecting and monitoring output (Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2011). Harklau (2002) maintains that learning a second language through writing is as important as learning how to write in L2. Writing can provide a site for development of other skills especially for adolescent learners who are already literate in L2. Writing about a text while reading helps students' ability to comprehend it accurately and fluently. The notion of using writing as a tool for L2 learning deserves further attention, particularly in a situation where the focus is on receptive skills such as reading and listening skills.

## Conclusion

We conclude our paper with a summary of the major findings and a discussion of the study's potential contribution to the field and its limitations. This study conducted a needs survey and then offered a 10-session integrated reading and writing instructional program for three weeks to ELL students at a middle school in Korea. The survey identified a mismatch between student needs and the school curriculum. Such a mismatch should call for further scrutiny. The English language learning of middle school students in Korea is focused on reading. The students reported that they lacked English-writing ability and that they needed help with their writing so they could develop the proficiency in a balanced way. The specific writing skills they wanted to learn involved reading (e.g., summarizing, and paraphrasing). A majority of the students wanted to learn English reading and writing together and they specified why (e.g., reading and writing complement each other). After the integrated reading and writing instruction for three weeks, however, none of the students at any proficiency level improved their reading, and only intermediate- and advanced-level students demonstrated a significant improvement in the integrated writing test—writing a summary and reflection. This finding suggests that three weeks may not be a sufficient time period for ELLs to improve the reading ability, and students with intermediate or advanced English proficiency are likely to benefit from the integrated reading and writing instruction more than beginning-level students. Students' learning of integrated reading and writing can also be facilitated with strong reading comprehension ability and vocabulary knowledge; these are the essential skills for completing a writing task that is based on the reading sources.

Due to the unique context of this case study, the results may not be directly applicable to other foreign language contexts. This study, however, offers several valuable insights to educators and researchers in other foreign language learning and teaching contexts. First, because foreign language (FL) learners have few chances to write in a foreign language and the major input is reading, many FL learners develop unbalanced reading and writing abilities. Our study clearly identified the actual practice of learning to read and write (i.e., hours of learning) and the perceived need to learn reading and writing together. It is important to inquire into students'

lacks and needs prior to curriculum development and materials design to best address students' needs and to develop effective teaching approaches. Second, identical materials and scaffolds could affect students differently depending on the students' language proficiency. This suggests that teachers who teach students at different proficiency levels should respond to the assessed needs of individual students to provide responsive instruction. Third, an intensive integrated reading and writing instruction can benefit students' reading and writing together. A short period may do little to help students improve their reading in the FL. This is probably because students have established their reading ability and strategies through extensive exposure and practice unlike the writing ability. With respect to writing skills, because of a lack of opportunity to learn and practice integrated writing, a brief series of instructions could lead to an improvement in the writing about the text read.

There are some limitations to this study. The participants were EFL students at a single middle school in Seoul, Korea. Student needs and performances may vary at other grade levels, in other schools, other regions, and other countries. Also, the intervention was provided 10 times for three weeks during the summer. A longer intervention during a regular semester could lead to different results. Future research ought to address these issues by conducting a cross-regional, cross-grade level, or cross-national study for a longer period.

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## Appendix A

### *Sample questions used in the needs survey*

- How many class hours do you study English per week at school?
- What skills (e.g., reading, listening, speaking, and writing) are mainly taught at school?
- How many hours do you study English outside school?
- What English skill(s) do you practice and learn outside school?
- For what skill(s) do you need extra help in learning English?
- Do you want to improve writing skills in English? Why?
- How many hours do you learn writing in English at school?
- How many hours do you practice writing in English out of school?

- What skills do you think are the most important to improve your writing skills in English?
- What writing skills do you want to learn (e.g., paraphrasing, summarizing, journal writing, letter writing, argumentative essay, critique, creative writing)?
- Please explain. Do you want to practice reading and writing during the same class period? Why or why not?
- Please explain. Do you learn English better when you write about the things you have read in class? Why or why not?

## Appendix B

### *Sample questionsheet*

**Directions:** Write questions you have while you are reading and discuss them with your classmates.

#### **Vocabulary**

Page	Question	Answer

#### **Grammar**

Page	Question	Answer

## Appendix C

### *Sample thinksheet*

**Focus Strategy:** Summarize and Reflect

#### **Step1: Ideas and details**

Page 107. What are the most important ideas and details? Discuss with your peers.

Original	Paraphrase
Lou's mother thought games and sports were a waste of time. But Lou loved sports.	

Page 110-111. What are the most important idea and details? Compare your opinion with your peers and decide one most important idea.

Original	Paraphrase

**Step2: Organization and reflection**

**Organization:** You have written the most important ideas. Now it is time to plan for writing a summary. Select 3-4 ideas that you think will be the most helpful as you write a summary.

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**Reflection:** You have selected 3-4 most important ideas. Now think about why they are important and meaningful to you. Did you learn something from them?

**Step3: Extended writing**

**Directions:** Write your summary and reflection. Use the ideas from your planning page as you write a summary and reflection.

**Writing Guidelines**

- **Introduction:** Write what you are going to write about.
- **Body:** Write what the major ideas are and include examples or details.
- **Conclusion:** Briefly mention the major ideas and write what you learned from the story.

**Appendix D***Instructional process*

<b>Session</b>	<b>Major goals</b>	<b>Materials</b>
Session 1	Introduction and pretest	Pretest – Reading and writing
Session 2	Workshop for questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing	Additional handouts
Session 3	Review of questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing Reading comprehension and paraphrasing	Reading p. 107 Questionsheet and Thinksheet
Session 4	Review of paraphrasing Reading comprehension and paraphrasing	Reading p. 108 Questionsheet and Thinksheet
Session 5	Reading comprehension and paraphrasing	Reading p. 110-111 Questionsheet and Thinksheet
Session 6	Reading comprehension and paraphrasing	Reading p. 112-113 Questionsheet and Thinksheet
Session 7	Reading comprehension and paraphrasing	Reading p. 114-115 Questionsheet and Thinksheet
Session 8	Summary planning and drafting a reflection	Thinksheet
Session 9	Summary writing	Thinksheet
Session 10	Revision of summary and reflection Posttest	Thinksheet Posttest – Reading and writing

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