

Teaching English Language Skills to the Slow Learners at Primary Level in Bangladesh

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy in Education

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the research work entitled ‘Teaching English Language Skills to the Slow Learners at Primary Level in Bangladesh’ submitted to the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy. I have conducted the research work and written this research report based on original research findings from a field study acquired by me, under the supervision and guidance of Dr Sharmin Huq, Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka. The research work or any part of it has not been submitted for any other institution for any other degree.

I also certify that the materials used in this research report have been cited properly and the full citations are enlisted in the bibliography section of this thesis.

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Certification

This is to certify that the thesis entitled ‘Teaching English Language Skills to the Slow Learners at Primary Level in Bangladesh’ submitted to the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy is an original research work done by Trina Sarker, registration number-224, under my guidance and supervision. I hereby certify that the research work has not been used for any other purposes or the thesis has not been submitted to any other university or institute for any degree.

I further certify that this original research work is worth submitting to fulfill the requirements of the above-mentioned degree.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved mother, Mrs Sabita Sarker, my best inspiration and greatest confidant.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Almighty for giving me the strength and spirit to pursue the study. I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to my respected supervisor, Dr. Sharmin Huq, Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka whose guidance, monitoring and evaluation of my work allowed me to complete the research. Her constructive remarks and comments on each phase of the research have contributed to the fruitful outcomes of the present research.

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Abstract

English as a widely used global language has a considerable impact on the national education policy and the curriculum in Bangladesh. The expectations for primary level students are to develop competencies in the basic skills of the English language to use the language in different contexts and serve their purposes. This study was conducted to investigate the strategies used and challenges faced while teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners in the regular classroom. The study used qualitative methods of data collection such as classroom observation, teachers' interview, focus group discussion and interviews with experts. Data were collected from the 6 government primary schools located both in rural and urban areas in the Netrokona district of Bangladesh. Data were analyzed through the thematic analysis process. The major findings reveal that some of the teachers had less concern to use differentiated planning and instructions in the classroom. Besides, during interviews, the teachers stated the limited uses of additional strategies for the slow learners while teaching reading and writing skills of English language in the classroom. The findings also describe many challenges that are faced by the teachers and the slow learners in this regard. Based on the challenges found from the study, educational experts suggested some strategies on how to support slow learners to develop their proficiencies in reading and writing skills. Therefore, the recommendations from the study might have a positive impact on using differentiated planning, providing additional support to slow learners and reviewing national education policy and the primary curriculum to address the needs of students with varied educational needs.

Key Words: Slow learners, instructional strategies, English language competencies, reading proficiencies, writing skills

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List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DFID	Department for International Development
EIA	English in Action
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELTIP	English Language Teaching Improvement Project
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IQ	Intelligence quotient
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
TB	Textbook
TE	Teacher Education
TG	Teachers' Guide
TPD	Teachers' Professional Development
TTC	Teacher Training College

Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the era of globalization, learners need to think across national borders and adapt necessary skills to cope with new technologies, social and economic changes for effective participation in education, work and social life (Black, 2009). Through Education, students develop the capabilities to flourish as human beings and adopt in better ways in the dynamic society (Sutherland, 2014). Effective and quality education is now the priority for education (Bass, et al., 2010). To achieve the goal ‘ensuring quality education for all’ in the Sustainable Development agenda, 2030, a great priority has been given on inclusive and equitable quality education to create lifelong learning opportunities for students (Pollitzer, 2019). Children and youth who get the opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in a nurturing environment, they might have full realization of their potentialities, abilities, rights and responsibilities.

Twenty-first-century literacy demands students’ growth in skill development (Calkins, 2015). Communication is one of the most significant skills of the present time which is the way of being connected with one another (Parvis, 2001). For effective communication and collaboration around the world, English language plays a vital role. In many places around the world, English is used as a communicative language to access educational, technical or professional opportunities (Hinkel, 2006). Therefore, English language competencies are considered a way of communication with the international community for education, research and business (Chen, et al., 2018). In this century, the education system includes technology-supported learning and literacy practices. Before, in the 1900s, the skills for reading, writing and calculating were considered as the basic literacy skills for the students. But now, those literacy skills are considered as the starting points to build the literacy skills (Black, 2009). Again, digital literacy is considered as one of the most important skills which includes basic

print literacy and technological and information literacies which can make students aware of local and global issues. Developing English language proficiency can help learners in developing digital literacy skills and maintaining communication all over the world.

Primary education, which is the first stage of compulsory education, provides students with the basic skills in literacy and mathematics that can be students' core foundation for their following stages of education (Newman, 2017). In regard to the capacities and potentialities of students, the development of skills needs to be age-appropriate for achieving educational goals and successfully continue their education in this level. For all students, developing competencies in literacy should be a major focus with a view to completing primary education successfully (Eggleton, 2010). So, in the literacy classroom of the 21st century, new research-based ways of classroom practice have been introduced to build the foundation for quality literacy experiences that should be provided to the students in the early years of their lives (Gibbons, 2005).

Developing proficiencies in a language is a key element of the literacy gains of students (Benavot, 2015). Considering the increased amount of information, it is necessary for the learners to have access to information from a variety of sources including online that needs a strong foundation of students' language skills (Hanemann, 2015). There is also a great emphasis on language learning in the national curriculum (2012) and the national education policy (2010) of Bangladesh. Similarly, in the primary education of Bangladesh, both Bangla and English languages are taught as compulsory subjects. Bangla is our mother tongue, so the necessity of learning Bangla knows no bounds. It is expected for the learners to be competent users of the Bangla language and learn the language up to the standard level. Similarly, the importance of learning the English language is known to all of us for its enormous global use (Xuan & Cadman, 2017). So, in our education system, English is also taught with great

importance and therefore, it is a compulsory subject in our curriculum from the pre-primary level.

The textbooks are designed in accordance with the goals and objectives in the national education policy and the curriculum with a view to providing quality education for our learners. For English language teaching and learning, the textbooks at the primary level are also designed following the instructions in the curriculum and the national educational policy to achieve the learning goals. In the textbooks, there are major focuses on the activities that can develop students' four basic skills of the language; listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to many language specialists, there is a chain of how the learners develop these four skills; for example, good listening and speaking skills can lead the learners to improve quality reading skills (Gibbons, 2005). Again, the learners who read more have significant improvement in developing their writing skills (Warschauer, et al., 2013). When the links among these skills are maintained, it makes a pathway to develop good language skills.

The present study laid great importance on the development of reading skills as it helps the learners to develop their language skills in many ways such as it can improve their vocabulary, spelling, grammar as well as writing skills (Zhang, 2008). Besides, writing is an important skill for language learning which provides learners with opportunities to express their own thoughts and ideas on different topics (Brown & Brown, 2014). While writing, students use different words, phrases, grammatical structures, expressions that can improve their ability to think in English.

Learning a language is a holistic approach that depends on developing the basic skills of the language for use in real-life situations (Tankersley, 2005). Taking into account the importance of English language and its usage that plays an essential role in one's life, the government of Bangladesh had taken the initiative to enhance the standard of English language in the education policy. Further, emphasis was also given to teach the knowledge of the English

language and to develop basic skills to foster students' proficiency to use the language. The National Education Policy (2010) focused on learning English for the purpose of communicating both locally and globally. Giving emphasis on communicative English language, the national curriculum at the primary level has been revised focusing on developing competencies in four major skills of English language. The purposes of the changes in the curriculum were to make students proficient in using the English language and enhance their capability to communicate locally and globally. The contents of the textbooks were revised to incorporate the changes in the curriculum (2012) and the national educational policy (2010). The revised English textbooks contain topics both on local and global issues. The topics have been selected with the focus of helping students to address the needs of real situations for the purpose of communication, for example, there are many texts that were included in the textbooks to teach students how to read instructions with or without sign while walking on the road, going to the airport, restaurants, shopping malls and different places. Besides, text and contents are included in textbooks for each class at the primary level which can create opportunities for students to practice pronunciation, stress, and intonation at students' grade level. The planned activities mentioned in the textbooks are also designed in such ways to include students are able to practice all the basic skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing during their teaching-learning activities. It is also considered that the improvement of listening and speaking skills may work as the foundation skills of students to improve their reading and writing skills as well.

Students' engagement in language learning activities is essential, because, the competence in the four basic strands of language is acquired when those are practiced by students (Eggleton, 2010). So, all the learners need to get the opportunity to practice these language skills in the classroom or even outside of the classroom. If the teachers intend to engage all the diversified learners with teaching-learning activities, they need to focus on the

different learning needs of individual students. Again, students have different learning styles, so the teachers need to make sure that they are arranging activities that can address different learning styles (Tomlinson, 2014). So, the students from different educational level and needs would be able to develop their basic competencies. Thus, it will enrich the student's ability to develop new and diverse skills to apply in real-life situations. The teacher can help students to become knowledgeable and practice their knowledge to be responsible lifelong learners to adapt themselves to the progressive global world (Graham, et al., 2001).

Each student is unique in the classroom. In almost every classroom, there is a group of students whose intelligence quotient (IQ) is between 70 and 89 which is below the average range of IQ (Malik, 2009; Cooter & Cooter, 2004;). They are slow learners who can learn necessary academic skills, but the standard is below the average compared to their peers because of their low IQ level. Though, they are more likely other students in many general aspects (Featherstone, 1951). But there are a few or more differences between the learning style of slow learners and the average students or fast learners. We all know about their presence in the classroom, but it is a matter of regret that we do not think much about how to deal with them properly to teach them the necessary knowledge and skills for their better education (Clubok, 1983). As they delay developing critical thinking and reasoning skills, it makes new concepts difficult to learn. Therefore, the teaching strategies need to be more structured following a cumulative and sequential process along with the relevant motivation for their better learning (Reed, 2006). In reality, in developing countries like Bangladesh, the student-teacher ratio in the classroom is a big concern to focus on all the students including the slow learners to ensure developing their skills, especially for language skills. Many teachers face difficulties and they have concerns on how they can provide quality education to the slow learners who need additional support in many areas to develop.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Reading and writing skills is substantially important to acquire basic proficiencies in the English language (Tankersley, 2005). As many slow learners face difficulties to develop language skills especially reading and writing skills, they need more attention and additional support to develop the language proficiencies. The communication skill of many slow learners is also poor (Malik, 2009). But, learning the English language is not only gathering knowledge about the language rather developing the skills to communicate in this language (Copland, et al., 2014). Again, practising language skills in the classroom largely depends on effective communication, interaction and collaboration among students and the teacher (Benavot, 2015). Considering the importance of effective communication and collaboration in language learning classrooms, there is no alternative for the slow learners to be actively engaged in language learning activities to develop their basic competencies in the English language.

Considering the above circumstances, this study intended to investigate the present situation prevailing in the regular classrooms for teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners. Further, the research intended to explore the challenges faced by slow learners and the teachers in the classroom that interrupt to develop reading and writing proficiencies of English language. The intention of the research was to provide some recommendations for the teachers and the respective concerns to take measures in order to minimize challenges in this regard.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the present status of instructional strategies for slow learners to acquire reading and writing skills in the English language
- To find out challenges of the existing teaching-learning strategies for learning reading and writing skills

1.4 Rationale of the Study

In the 21st century, most of the elements of our lives have become much influenced globally. In order to sustain in the global world, the learners must need to develop skills in some major areas, language is one of them (Hobert, 2013). Again, for the rapid globalization of the English language, it has become a widely used language across the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Xuan & Cadman, 2017). Similarly, the use and practice of English language has been given a great emphasis in the education system of Bangladesh. Therefore, since 1990, the government of Bangladesh introduced English as a compulsory subject (Mamun, 2015).

Language development is a dynamic process (Smagorinsky, 2013). There is a social and cognitive dimension of literacy skills that drive the learners to learn basic language skills (Olson et al.,2015). Learning and acquiring the basic language skills is also influenced by the motivation of the learners, the strategies and techniques used for the acquisition of the skills. Again, learning a foreign language is even more difficult for the students as it has different structures, rules, and systems from the mother tongue.

In almost every classroom, there is a group of learners who have low growth and development in education because of their deficiencies in cognitive abilities (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). Their IQ range is below average and because of their low cognitive abilities; they cannot perform as their peers. These learners need a safe and friendly classroom environment where the teachers make them feel they are worth getting teachers' time and support. The slow learners also struggle to acquire the necessary skills of a language. Therefore, acquiring the skills of a foreign language is even harder for them (Wilson, 1982). They cannot easily participate and engage themselves with different classroom activities and academic conversations; they may need clear expectations and supportive feedback from their teachers. They struggle to acquire language skills, especially reading and writing skills (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). As they develop slowly to develop language skills, it leads to a great challenge

to acquire the goals of language learning (Tincher, 1965). When they can understand their difficulties, instead of trying their best, they are found to avoid practising reading or writing skills. While reading, they usually struggle to identify the main ideas and understand significant information from texts. Again, when they write, they find it difficult to organize their works and prepare quality pieces of writing. In this situation, they either drop out of school or finish their school performing as low achievers. Another great concern is that many slow learners are naturally shy and they have poor communication skills. So, they face the problem of communicating with other students in the classroom. But, communication, collaboration and engagement in language learning activities are important in order to develop skills of a language (Tankersley, 2005). Having issues with communication skill and cognitive abilities, the slow learners are lagging behind to a great extent in the area of language learning.

The slow learners in the mainstream classes face difficulties to cope with the regular teaching-learning provisions. Thus, they need additional support for their success in acquiring basic skills, they should be cared more for by the teachers (Hasyim et al., 2016). Their motivation to read and write and develop language proficiencies can be dependent on the encouragement and motivation from their teachers (Olson et al., 2015). As teachers are an integral part of any education system, they are expected to try new teaching techniques and methods to cope with the modern world. In the era of globalization, it is suggested by many experts and researchers to use diversified teaching techniques and methods so that teachers can address the needs of every student in the classroom (Xuan & Cadman, 2017).

At the primary level English language classrooms, slow learners are neither rare nor unique. But, the irony is that many teachers are to some extent reluctant or ignorant in identifying the weaknesses of a slow learner in their respective classes. Neither, are they considering themselves to modify their teaching learning techniques appropriate for the slow learners. In addition, in the traditional or typical classrooms, it is seen that teachers prioritize

activities like copying from the board, remembering, reciting, writing answers to the questions and practising writing using model test papers, which are less engaged in developing language skills. When the teachers give less focus on engaging students in language learning classrooms, it provides them fewer opportunities to develop their language proficiencies.

Under the above circumstances, it was considered of great importance to conduct the present study in the area of teaching and learning of the English language in Bangladesh, emphasizing the needs of slow learners in the classroom. It is necessary to have the importance of conducting a study in a specific background that can contribute to the field in positive ways (Stenius, et al., 2017). Similarly, the researcher found the importance to conduct this study in the context of Bangladesh that can contribute to using effective teaching strategies to address the needs of the slow learners in the classroom. Thus, the study might have a significant impact on minimizing the dropout rate of slow learners from school and leading them to better education.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In spite of being a part of regular schools, the slow learners are often ignored by the respective concerns. At the same time, the readiness to address their needs in the classroom is also ignored. Many of the slow learners have a problem in achieving the developmental milestones at the pace of their peers which affects their learning in many ways. When they perform slowly in the classroom, it is difficult for parents and teachers to determine if they are learning slowly because they cannot keep up with others or because they choose not to keep up with others. Therefore, it is necessary to know more in-depth about slow learners and the strategies that can help them for their better understanding of different concepts and develop their skills.

This research might help the teachers to have more insight on the slow learners and develop their concerns to provide more support as they need. The teachers may also think of

the strategies that can help the slow learners in their classroom in developing language and communication skills. They may also get ideas about many strategies that are being used while teaching reading and writing skills in different countries of the world. Thus, the teachers would be more concerned and thereby incorporate effective strategies in their lesson plans to support these learners.

The teacher might be more focused on parent's responsibility and discuss with them what they can do to help their children. Also, the teachers can discuss some strategies they apply in the class so that the parents do the same at home. Last, not the list, the teachers can encourage the parents to stay connected with the teachers, overall, the student's education program. Thus, parent-teacher collaborative attempts might help the slow learners to develop their English language skills and use the language in different real-life situations.

1.6 Overview of the Study

Teaching English language skills specifically reading and writing skills to the slow learners is the key area of focus and discussion in this study. An overview on the chapters of this study is given below:

Chapter 1

The first chapter includes background of the study, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, rationale of the study and significance of the study.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 starts with an introduction of the chapter and then follows with English language teaching practices in Bangladesh. Then it includes English in National Education Policy, instructions to teach reading and writing skills in the national primary curriculum and teacher's training on teaching English language. Then, there is an emphasis on the existing literature on slow learners, screening, assessment and diagnosis, identification of slow learners in the classroom, supporting slow learners, teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners,

challenges of teaching reading skills, challenges of teaching writing skills, and conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter 3

This chapter describes the methodologies of the study in terms of nature of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample size and sample technique, tools of the study, data analysis technique, triangulation and thematic analysis approach, ethical consideration of the study and limitations of the study are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the analysis of data according to the observation of classroom, responses of teachers, students and experts. Data analysis is done with categorizing under themes, subthemes based on the finding of the study. Teachers' statements, slow learners' comments and experts' opinions are described with some of their direct quotations.

Chapter 5

This chapter includes an introduction that is followed by the discussion of the findings from the study. The finding from the study is also compared to the findings of other similar studies conducted in Bangladesh or other countries around the world. This chapter also include the recommendations from the study.

Chapter 6

The last chapter of the study restates the thesis statement, provides an overview of the important contribution and implication of the study and then it includes the concluding remarks.

Chapter Two
Review of Literature

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

A literature review for this study analyses the relevant literature within the area of the study. It provides an overview of previous research in the area of the present study. The highlights from previous research and the present state of thinking on this research topic have been presented in this chapter (Creswell, 2008). This chapter refers to the collection of information from published research work such as books, journal articles, research reports, reports of government and non-government organizations and the national curriculum (2012) and the national education policy (2010) of Bangladesh.

There was also an insight into the emerging trends and new approaches related to the area of study. Thus, the researcher could gather relevant information about the present status of teaching reading and writing skills of the English language in Bangladesh and around the world. The strategies that are commonly used for supporting slow learners while teaching reading and writing were reviewed and presented in this chapter. Before reviewing any research material, the researcher ensured that it was relevant to the objectives of the study. The researcher checked the credibility and reliability of the sources of information. The major focus areas of the literature review were different teaching strategies the teachers are using while teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners and the challenges that are faced while teaching reading and writing skills to the slow learners.

2.1 English Language Teaching Practices in Bangladesh

Regarding education, economy, social and communication as well as the development process of Bangladesh, the importance of learning English knows no bounds (Sultan & Rahman, 2010). According to the national primary curriculum (2012), English is taught using a communicative way of teaching and learning. A major focus has been given to develop communication skills in the English language to prepare our students to effectively communicate with the globalized society and fulfil their different purposes (Mazumder, 2011).

The Bangladesh government and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom started a project named the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) which introduced textbooks focusing on communicative approaches up to Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level in 2000 (Farooqui, 2008). Gradually, the National Education Policy and the national curriculum reformed to teach English communicatively.

As mentioned above, English occupies great importance in the education system of Bangladesh. But all the teachers and the classrooms are not ready to conduct classes in communicative ways. There are many teachers who consider textbooks as essential teaching material in the classroom. Most of the time, teachers focus on the contents in the textbook and plan teaching-learning activities based on those contents (Farooqui, 2008). It represents a teacher-centred approach that plays a vital role while lesson planning, selection of content and integrating skills for planned activities.

Still, many teachers are traditionally conducting classes, though the national curriculum stresses the communicative use of the English language. The students who cannot practise language skills and develop basic competencies, can not use the learning in real-life situations. The learners who cannot continue natural communication with others in using English, lose their focus on learning the language. On the other hand, if the students can learn the language in a natural setting through natural conversation, they would be able to get the meaning to learn the language.

2.1.1 English in National Education Policy (2010)

In the national education policy, Primary education has been considered as the stage to build up the foundation skills of students. This is the stage when the teachers can prepare the learners for higher education by ensuring the learners gain adequate knowledge and skills and receive a quality education. In the national policy, it is also mentioned that quality teachers should get appointed to teach at the primary level. The teachers would be monitored to observe

their teaching style whether it can attract the learners or not. The national policy also suggests teaching through individual or group work in the classroom using an interactive and communicative teaching approach. The teachers are also suggested to explore appropriate methods for effective teaching through research and continuous monitoring and evaluation of student's work. According to the national policy, while teaching English, the teachers should follow the instructions below:

"Appropriate steps will be taken from the very beginning to ensure English Writing and Speaking skills and that will be continued and emphasized in the forthcoming classes as per needs. Teaching methods will be joyful, attractive and learner-friendly".

2.1.2 English in the National Primary Curriculum (2012)

According to the national primary curriculum of Bangladesh, the purpose of teaching of English is to help students develop proficiencies in basic English language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. As the study focused on the reading and writing skills of the English language, the researcher reviewed the goals of teaching reading and writing skills. The primary curriculum (2012) emphasizes the development of reading skills of the English language. In the curriculum, the objective regarding the reading skill is 'to read and understand different types of texts appropriate to the learners' ability level'. There are some terminal competencies for primary students, such as, 'to read aloud texts with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation', 'to recognize and read both cardinal and ordinal numbers, 'to read the names of the days, weeks, months and the time', 'to read silently with understanding paragraphs, stories, and other text materials', 'to read instructions and carry them out, to recognize punctuation marks and read accordingly’.

The objective for the primary level regarding the writing skill of the English language is to 'to write English to describe persons, objects, places and events and to express needs and feelings. There are also terminal competencies regarding writing skills, such as, “to write non-

cursive and cursive letters both capital and small, 'to write cardinal and ordinal numbers, 'to write words, phrases and sentences using non-cursive and cursive letters both capital and small, 'to write figures for words and words for figures', 'to use punctuation marks, to use capital letters, to write the names of the days, weeks, months and to write the time, to write words, phrases and sentences correctly, to take dictation, to write short and simple compositions, to write simple personal letters and 'to fill in simple forms'.

2.1.3 Teacher's Training on Teaching English Language

The DPED program has been introduced to bring a change in our primary education to improve quality education. Under this program, the teachers in primary schools get training on how to teach using a modern and dynamic approach. This program aims at keeping teachers' training updated with the changes in primary education around the world. Thus, under this program, the teachers at the primary level get training on how to conduct classes using modern philosophy and technologies. As a part of the actions of the DPED program, they have published a resource book and an Instructor's Guide through collaboration with the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) on subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of English. This resource book and the Instructor's Guide contain instructions so that the teachers can get guidelines on how to conduct English classes in a communicative way.

In the resource book, there are two parts, one is content knowledge and the other part is pedagogical knowledge. In the pedagogic knowledge part, there are clear instructions on how to teach the English language at the primary level. There are instructions for teachers on how to help students to practise listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, make classroom activities meaningful and enjoyable. From this resource book, the teachers also get instructions on how to relate textbook topics with real-life situations and conduct the classes in a communicative way through meaningful and joyful activities. But, in this resource book, there

is limited instruction on how to prepare differentiated planning to focus on students from different educational levels and needs.

2.2 Slow Learners

Slow learners are students who have below-average cognitive abilities, learn slowly than peers, perform below grade level and struggle to cope with the activities in a mainstream classroom. (Watson & Rangel, 1989). Their educational performance is not up to the mark of the expectations for the grade level. They are generally below grade level to perform different school tasks (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). Mostly, the slow learners are born with the problem that continues throughout their life (Clubok, 1983). But these children are often overlooked because most slow learners don't seem to have any special needs unless they are closely observed. Most of them have normal development in emotional, social and motor skills (Karlin, 1961).

2.2.1 Screening, Assessment and Diagnosis

Identifying a student as a slow learner in the classroom is a long process. At first, if the teachers suspect a student is a slow learner, they need to observe the students very closely and keep a record of observation data. Then the teachers can talk to parents or other family members to know about the particular student very well.

The teachers can also discuss among themselves and analyze the student's performance in different subjects. After collecting in-depth data, if the teachers find that it is necessary to go through an assessment process for the child, they can recommend it for formal assessment. Then it is necessary to go through a process that includes standardized IQ test and scores on tests. Similarly, their educational achievement, grades in class, teacher ratings, psychologist's report, are also important to diagnose a student as a slow learner. Generally, in standardized IQ testing, slow learners score less than average IQ scores. Their intelligence quotient (IQ) score

remains within the range of 70-89 (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). The average range of IQ is between 90 and 110 (Clubok, 1983) and the slow learners' IQ score is below the average score.

2.2.2 Identification of Slow Learners in the Classroom

In the classroom, the majority of slow learners are not initially identified as slow learners as most of them have normal functional skills and they can perform classroom activities to some extent (Swiss & Olsen, 1976). Their motor skills that are developed enough to perform different activities in different situations. However, much research indicates that academically slow learners face difficulties in schools because of their low cognitive functioning skills, difficulties in critical thinking and problem solving, abstract thinking and organizational skills (Shaw, 2008).

As the slow learners lack problem-solving skills, it is difficult for them to make the connection of new information with their prior knowledge (Shaw, 2010). They may also have poor organization skills and have difficulties transferring and generalize information (Shaw, 2010, Cooter & Cooter, 2004). Slow learners often face difficulties following multi-step instructions. They struggle to develop strategies to help themselves while learning. They may have special problems in specific areas such as math, science, language learning, etc. Most of them face many difficulties to develop language skills, especially reading and writing skills. They cannot set long-term goals on their own (Shaw, 2010). The regular teaching-learning activities in the classroom are often not sufficient for them to achieve the educational goals at grade level standard.

In terms of communication, slow learners may have difficulties. They usually are lack in skills of initiating social talk, interpersonal relationships, making friends easily. They are usually quiet and shy in the classroom and they often develop poor self-esteem (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). They may have poor self-confidence and so they can develop emotional and behavioural

problems (Shaw, 2010, Eastmead, 2004). Their low self-esteem develops less motivation for academic works (Eastmead, 2004). They have trouble making friends (Eastmead, 2004).

Facing all these difficulties in mainstream classroom settings, gradually they may develop self-poor esteem. They may sense that they are not like their peers to fit in the school which develop a high risk of drop out (Watson & Rangel, 1989).

2.2.3 Supporting Slow Learners

To support slow learners' education and development in school, it is necessary to have specifically designed intervention plans following their ability levels (Shaw, 2008). Before designing the intervention plans, teachers and parents must go through a formal assessment process to determine the specific areas where these learners need extra support and intervention (Carroll, 2002). Through close monitoring and evaluation, the teachers can also find out the problem areas of students and can help them to design a proper intervention plan for them (Eastmead, 2004; Lescano, 1995). After designing the intervention plan, the teachers would accommodate some strategies to address the additional needs of slow learners in the classroom. Again, they need to monitor the slow learners and their classroom activities to understand if the intervention design is working or not. If necessary, the plan can be changed according to the student's educational and other social and emotional needs. When necessary, the teachers can make backup plans for pending works of the slow learners so that they can cope with the classroom activities to some extent. Many researchers claim that extra time and repetition can make them learn what other average students can learn (Gentile, Voelkl, Pleasant, & Monaco, 1995). But time alone won't be sufficient all the time.

Teachers can take some appropriate strategies to help the slow learners to manage their uncertainty, redirect their efforts productively and keep trying when they get frustrated. The teachers can be role models for the students. They can share their learning journey and the difficulties they face while learning new things. Thus, they can make the slow learners

understand that it is okay to have failures but then they need to try again and again to be successful. Again, they can discuss with the students and know how they are thinking about doing a task and then redirect their thinking process in the right way if necessary. Thus, the teachers can take the initiatives to support the students to accomplish a task systematically and strategically. The teacher should monitor the work of the students and give them motivation and necessary feedback and thus they can keep the students away from frustration and help them perform at their highest possible level. It is also necessary to think about the difference between the students. If a student has minimum motivation for their study, the teacher can not force them to spend their whole time in study. Rather, the teacher can encourage the student to be involved more in those activities they enjoy and can be successful (Shaw, 2010). If the teacher allows them to do such activities they enjoy, that may increase their motivation to come to school and study (Eastmead, 2004). Teachers can support slow learners in such a way they can build up confidence and be attentive to work. If they try harder, they may do better. In this respect, the teacher should have planned activities to help these students. The teachers can discuss together and make IEP (Individual Educational Plan) for a slow learner (Eastmead, 2004). In the IEP, teachers should determine the appropriate instructional strategies for the learners. But the instructions should be concrete not abstract (Shaw, 2010). When the teacher gives the students a task to do, the teacher can think differently for the slow learners. While individual work, the teacher can pair students with peer mentors. Again, the teacher can break down a task into short separate parts. If a student can perform even one or more parts of a task successfully, not the whole, he/she may be praised for his work or efforts (Shaw, 2010). The student can be provided with different ways to show his competence in doing a task. (Shaw, 2010). The teacher can also provide the student more opportunities to repeat the work and if the student can do it finally, the teacher can create scope to practice the skills that needed much time to master.

In language learning classrooms, students need more engagement in different language learning activities to master the necessary skills. But the slow learners are less engaged and spontaneous to use different strategies for mastering any skill than fast learners (Gentile, 1995). Besides, the fast learners can relate their present knowledge with a similar new topic and they can use similar strategies for similar content spontaneously. In this regard, the slow learners need prompts or clues to use similar types of strategies. Teachers need to find out effective strategies to make them a more active participant in a language learning classroom. Teachers also can plan how to make the slow learners more focused on classroom activities and keep them on task. Sometimes, the teacher can arrange a discussion on reading or writing, sharing stories or facts from books, sharing writing with the whole class. These activities can help the learners to be more focused and engaged during lessons. In recent times, many researchers have also given more emphasis on many factors while teaching language skills in the classroom, such as teaching-learning strategies, classroom environment, teaching-learning resources, assessment and evaluation process, learning process and outcomes, collaboration and communication among students and the teachers' friendly relationship with students (Watson & Rangel, 1989).

Some strategies are recommended through much research that can help the slow learners to cope with the classroom activities. For example, the teacher should give more time for slow learners to talk over their problems and give them more concentration if necessary. After many failures, many struggling readers stop trying and they start to believe that their failures were the result of their luck or lack of ability. They don't think of their efforts. Motivation is more necessary for those learners to make them understand that maybe their efforts can lead them to success. In this regard, the teachers can find activities that are meaningful, related to their lives and help them to be self-motivated. Besides, teachers should pre-plan group work activities and make the groups in such a way the students in the group can

help each other (Hassanien, 2007). In a friendly classroom environment, when the slow learners can work in collaboration with their peers, they can learn their best (Watson & Rangel, 1989).

The friendly relationship between the slow learners and the teachers in the classroom can play a vital role in the teaching-learning process. Sometimes, the slow learners face problems understanding the instructions to complete a task or they get puzzled about what to start and where to start. In this situation, they need to ask questions to their teacher to clarify their understanding. Here, the good relationship and easy access to the teacher can motivate the students to easily ask questions whenever they face difficulties to complete any task. If a slow learner becomes an independent learner, and they are ready to ask questions, to be sure about his or her understanding for a given task, it is much easier for a teacher to repeat the instructions or to give further instruction (Wilson & Murdoch, 2008). Teachers should be friendly and maintain a good relationship with students and give them easy access to discuss their ideas and share their difficulties.

In the classroom, the slow learners may still face challenges to raise their voice and share their ideas. Many of them possess low confidence and so they may hesitate to share their ideas with others while doing pair or group work. Here, the teachers can make an individualized and targeted working or behaviour plan so that those students can also be involved with other students with close monitoring. Similarly, the other students in the classroom should be encouraged to work collaboratively with the slow learners. If the students work collaboratively and cooperatively, it makes a balance of classroom tasks between individual work and collaborative work (Wilson & Murdoch, 2008). Again, quality classroom management is an integral part of a quality teaching-learning environment (Hassanien, 2007). When the students are given the ownership of their learning and they can have their voice, developing the language skills become easier for these learners. When the students are given and they feel trusted, they take more initiative for their learning. But it is not easy to manage this type of classroom. To

manage the friendly classroom environment, the teachers have to use a very clear and constructive approach to make students understand the expected behaviour from them (Gentile, 1995).

Some students learn better when they have opportunities to learn something through hands-on activities. It is helpful to use the kinesthetic intelligence of students when they can actively be engaged in any activity. They can use their movement to express and share their ideas, for example, students can arrange a puppet show, play or a drama. (Hassanien, 2007). Through writing the script, they will develop writing. Kinesthetic learners learn better through hands-on activities or experiences. To set educational goals, students need to identify their needs and be able to monitor their learning. (Wilson & Murdoch, 2008). The teachers can support slow learners to become independent learners who are conscious about what they understand or where they struggle. Slow learners should be encouraged to challenge themselves instead of racing to compete with others. Because slow learners may tend to give up easily instead of trying their best. In this regard, some tasks which encourage goal setting may help them to focus more to develop skills. Thus, the teachers can help the slow learners to set challenging but achievable goals that may encourage their persistence and hard work (Wilson & Murdoch, 2008).

2.3 Strategies to Teach Reading Skills to Slow Learners

Reading is a process that develops hierarchically through the stages of phonemic awareness, decoding, development of vocabulary level, development of fluency and understanding of reading (Afflerbach et al., 2008). Many researchers describe that the students who achieve success in reading at early grades show their improvement through the following grades in the school (Tankersley, 2005). So, the emphasis on reading should be from the early years. On the contrary, the students who begin reading poorly at their young age tend to perform worse in future. So, the teachers should emphasize working towards developing students' reading skills

at early grades. According to Eggleton (2010), “creating a lifetime reader is the greatest gift teachers can give to their students” p-6.

2.3.1 Individual Reading

Independent reading is one of the basic strategies for any reading program (Eggleton, 2010). Students must practice reading skills regularly to upgrade their reading level. While independent reading time, students can work on their vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency (Tankersley, 2005). For slow learners, the teachers can guide them when they read individually. For example, the teachers can give them specific tasks and assign them different books based on their reading levels and monitor their reading (Fountas, & Pinnell, 2012). During their reading time, the teacher can observe the students and provide support if necessary.

2.3.2 Pair Reading

Pair reading can help a great deal for struggling readers. When the students in a pair read together, they decide how they would continue reading during their pair reading session. Sometimes, the teachers guide how the partners would take turns to alter their reading (Eggleton, 2010). It is helpful for many struggling readers to read and discuss in pairs. When they read aloud to another, it helps them to think and comprehend the reading materials. It also helps to develop their reading fluency. Another way of pair reading is that the partners would start reading silently, then they would stop at the key points to discuss. The pairs usually determine at which points they would stop silent reading and when they would share about the reading with each other (Tankersley, 2005).

When students work cooperatively and support each other, it provides them with opportunities for successful learning experiences and fosters their learning effectively (Eggleton, 2010). If a slow learner gets support from a pair, it can help to improve reading skills to a great deal. While peer reading, the students discuss what they are reading. Thus, it helps to improve comprehension from reading. Besides, pair reading may help the learners to

transfer their learning to different contexts. It may happen when the pairs discuss and apply the learning even outside the classroom (Wilson, 1982).

Another way of developing reading is serving as reading buddies to the younger students. The teachers can guide the students on how to perform as reading buddies and help the early graders. The teachers can help the students to choose books and practise reading from those selected books. They can also encourage the students to read interestingly and entertainingly to the young readers. While reading for the young graders and helping them in reading, the struggling learners also develop their reading fluency and proficiency.

2.3.3 Chorus Reading

Chorus reading can be turned into a fun activity by practising various ways of doing it. Students can read in small groups and the whole class together. The groups can be made by rows, by gender, by any other category using creative ways. In chorus reading, the students may take turns reading sections from the text. This practice helps the readers who still need to develop fluency in reading (Tankersley, 2005).

2.3.4 Shared Reading

The shared reading approach is usually used for all students in the classroom. Sometimes, it is also used for a group of students purposefully. When it is a whole-class approach, the resource needs to be selected very carefully that can be based on the student's age and interest level so that they remain engaged in the lesson (Eggleton, 2010).

While conducting the shared reading session, if the teacher and the students read a text which is rich in language or chunk of rhyme or both, it can help students in many ways. For example, it can motivate the students in reading for joy and help them enrich their vocabulary, correct their pronunciation, reading flow and phrasing. It also helps students to use comprehension strategies as well.

Teachers may have many focuses while using the approach, such as comprehension, vocabulary, flow, phrasing, fluency, phonic knowledge, phonemic awareness, etc. (Eggleton, 2010). To use this approach, it is also necessary to start a reading session with a familiar topic. If the students have no idea about a topic, they may lose interest in reading it. When the teachers make the connection with the student's prior knowledge, they get more interested. The teachers can use different other techniques, such as prediction, visualization, giving opinions and generating questions. The reading techniques may be used for different purposes, such as engaging the students and enhancing their comprehension skills. For enriching vocabulary, the teacher can encourage students to find new words from the text. Then the teacher can write the words on the board and discuss them. Besides, the teacher can tell the students to note down the new words and use them later on while writing.

2.3.5 Guided Reading

Guided reading is a reading approach when a small number of students are grouped according to their school performance, reading level and needs. These groups of students are observed or closely monitored by the teacher while reading. In guided reading sessions, teachers need to choose resources very carefully that can be appropriate to the student's level and needs (Eggleton, 2010).

2.3.6 Echo Reading

Echo reading is particularly used when there is a group of students who struggle in reading. While using the technique, the teacher or a fluent reader model reading to a student or a group of students. Then the readers try to read the text following that has been modeled for them. For any struggling readers, echo reading can be one of the most effective strategies. When it is done one-on-one sessions guided by the teacher or any fluent reader, helps the struggling readers to develop reading skills and brings greater benefits from it (Tankersley, 2005).

2.3.7 Using Technologies

In the 21st century, there are many aspects to achieve the goals of literacy. Technology can help a great deal to develop literacy skills (Bass, et al., 2010). Nowadays, many of the students are computer literate (Tankersley, 2005). Teachers can use many digital tools to support learning in the classroom, such as audiobooks, different apps, webpage and software. While using digital tools, it is really important to link the tools to the skills of literacy, link to the content. Besides, teachers can use these tools to engage students in a language learning classroom designing activities that need students' collaboration and communication. The use of technology may also lead to better classroom engagement and student achievement (Bass, et al., 2010).

2.3.8 Using Tools

Using graphic organizers while reading can help learners to understand a topic. The organizers can be used based on students' present knowledge on the topic and also students' development level of language (Cady, et al., 2010). When the teachers want to introduce unfamiliar content to the students, they can suggest the students use expository organizers which can help to explore the main idea and link the topic with students' prior knowledge. When the students work to understand how an unfamiliar topic is similar or different from other familiar topics, they can use comparative organizers. Thus, the use of different organizers can help the students to understand a familiar topic while reading. The use of graphic organizers along with different diagrams, for example, Venn diagrams, KWL charts, may be more helpful for students to understand and get the main idea of a topic (Cady, et al., 2010). Additionally, the use of graphic organizers and pictograms along with visual cues give the students more exposure to understand the relationships between words and concepts.

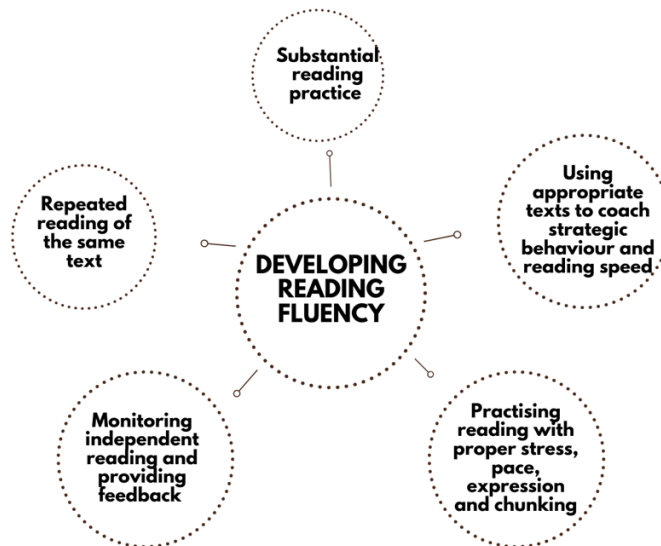
2.3.9 Developing Reading Fluency

Slow learners work slowly to accomplish academic tasks at school (Shaw & Gouwens, 2002). Many of them are also slow to develop reading proficiencies. Rereading helps students to understand the meaning of reading. Repeated reading procedures can be used as an intervention approach for struggling readers, through repeated reading they can gradually develop an understanding of what they read (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). The teachers can help the student to chunk sentences to go smoothly with an expression that makes sense.

The teacher can read aloud to the struggling readers regularly whenever possible even if it is for a short time, for example, for 5 to ten minutes. By doing it regularly, the teachers can help the slow learners to support their reading. Tankersley says, “Hearing adults model fluent reading helps struggling readers and English language learners to develop an ear for the sounds and flow of the language” (2005, p. 23). Hearing good oral reading helps the students to understand how the words are expressed and emphasized. Struggling readers become so concerned while reading that they cannot keep up with proper phrasing, expression and pacing. Thus, their reading tone becomes flat, monotonous and expressionless. Besides, struggling readers face difficulties to visualize the characters, setting, and actions in the text. In this regard, the teachers can play a vital role by asking them to stop and visualize what they read. The teacher can also ask them to tell about the characters, setting and the action. Thus, the teachers can help the learners be deeply involved with reading and get a picture of what they read in a meaningful way. This is the way the teacher can develop students’ fluency and reading comprehension skills to a great extent.

Figure 2.1

Some Effective Ways to Develop Reading Fluency (Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Tankersley, 2005)



2.3.10 Developing Vocabulary

Vocabulary plays a vital role in developing reading skills (Roskos & Neuman, 2014). A strong vocabulary level can lead students to develop fluency in reading and make sense of new ideas (Hinkel, 2006). When students start a new topic, they need to learn specific vocabulary and related issues on this topic. In this regard, reading plays an important role to make students familiar with the topic and other related issues (Brown, & Bown, 2014). Students can choose to read according to their reading level and teachers can help students to find resources for reading along with their textbooks. There is no alternative to reading to develop a language base. The more one reads, the more he or she can develop the vocabulary base (Hinkel, 2006). While teaching a new topic, the teachers need to identify the difficult and confusing words from the text so that they can address those words while introducing the topic to the students. The use of visual cues, such as photographs, drawings can help students to illustrate the meaning of a new word. Some students struggle to understand new words when

the words are spoken. So, the teachers use flashcards of new words so that it might be easier for them to grasp when they see those in written forms. Again, when a vocabulary word is somehow connected to the students' lives, they can easily understand and remember the word later. To make the connections, the teacher can sometimes use real-life objects such as puppets, stuffed animals, toys, geometric figures etc. to help students' learning (Cady, et al., 2010). Many experts also suggest using word games to teach vocabulary when students can play and learn in a joyful manner (Doemel, 1970).

2.3.11 Developing Reading Comprehension Skills

While reading, the readers need to develop a way of thinking so that they can process words and get the meaning of a text. The readers can try to connect a new topic with their prior knowledge. Developing the thinking process is an important factor to comprehend a text.

The readers also need to know the adequate vocabulary in the content areas. The readers can practise new vocabulary from the text and if necessary they can take help from the dictionary. If a student's vocabulary level is quite good, it is quicker for the students to process words and develop understanding. But the vocabulary is not alone for developing comprehension skills. The readers also need to develop some strategies to develop comprehension level. For example, they can monitor their reading and when they cannot understand, they can pause and ask questions to themselves about reading. Then, they may go back and reread some part of the text if necessary. Rereading can help to understand the meaning of a text and it helps to make a summary from the reading. Many readers who struggle to understand the text, tend to give up reading instead of developing necessary strategies to help them understand (Tankersley, 2005). The teachers can guide the struggling readers on how to develop strategies in order to develop their understanding level. The following table shows some component skills of comprehension that can help the struggling readers in developing their reading comprehension skills.

Table 2.1

Component skills of comprehension (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Tankersley, 2005)

Componential Skills of Comprehension	Suggested skills for struggling learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word meanings in the context• Using background knowledge to understand new ideas• Associating meanings with symbols• Main thought• Answering specific text-based questions with the paraphrase• Draw inferences about content• Draw inferences about content• Understanding author's purpose• Organizing, evaluating, and retaining meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearsing (Taking notes while reading)• Elaborating (Taking notes by paraphrasing)• Organizing (Outlining and mapping)• Comprehension monitoring (Applying thinking strategies for metacognition and using self-questioning skills)

While reading, developing metacognition involves being aware of your own learning. The students need to monitor his or her learning, reflecting on the learning process and outcome. It helps to plan to go forward and develop skills gradually. Again, without comprehension, reading alone does not help the students to develop skills of reading. There are also some strategies which help the students to comprehend more about a text. For example, after reading, they can do some activities such as, teach a lesson, draw the text, act it out and write about it. Writing about reading is a common strategy that is used in many classrooms to reinforce comprehension skills of students. The students can make a summary and write it down or they can write about reading from their own perspectives or the students can write about a character, about any event he or she liked in the text. While writing, they can also make connections of the text with their background knowledge. For example, they can use sentence starter, such as: “This reminds me of.....,” “What I liked most was.....,” “I used to

think.....now I think....” (Tankersley, 2005). Thus, the students can make a good connection with what they read with their real life.

2.3.12 Running Book Clubs

Peer acceptance can play a vital role for slow learners to be easy and work comfortably in the classroom. If the struggling readers practise reading with their peers in the book club, they become more aware of their reading practice. If slow learners become interested in discussing the books with peers, they would take prior preparation for reading. If they do reading assignments regularly, they would be more confident about reading. Thus, the book club can help the students to develop their reading skills. It can work even better under teachers’ supervision. The teachers can help the students in many ways, such as asking open-ended questions related to the characters in a book, actions and events in the story. They can also help the students to develop the habit of referencing pages, paragraphs from books. The students can refer to anything from the books they read to support their opinion or comments. Open-ended questions help the students to think deeply about the content and understand the meaning of the text. To support students-let discussion groups, the teacher can guide students to choose books at different reading levels. It would be helpful for the students of varied educational levels to select books at their reading levels and be engaged in the activity and discussion.

2.3.13 Practising Sight Words

It is not always helpful to learn words in isolation. Many experts suggest using phrases as the best unit of study for struggling readers (Tankersley, 2005). To practise sight words, students can choose high-frequency words, organize those into phrases and practise pronouncing smoothly with proper stress and expression.

For reading competencies, oral reading fluency is an important indicator. While reading, proper verbal expression is necessary. The teachers can model reading aloud with a verbal expression that is helpful for language learners, especially for struggling readers.

2.3.14 Goal-oriented Activities

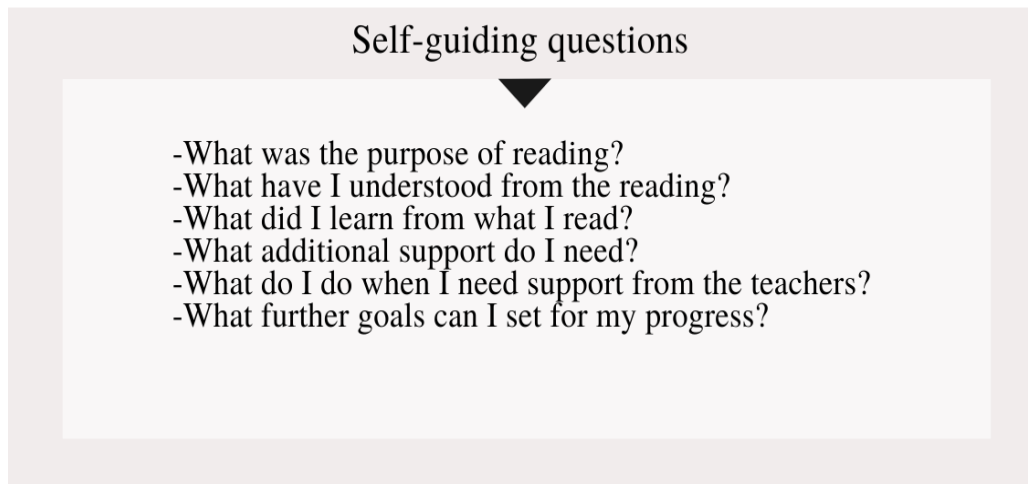
From many experts' opinions and research, it is found that setting goals for all students including the slow learners can help them practise reading regularly and develop strategies to develop reading in their ways. It helps the students to fix their reading pathways and other literacy goals and work towards achieving the goals. When the learners have individual goals, the teacher also can assess students' progress based on their individual goals. If necessary, the teachers can guide the slow learners to choose reading materials for example fiction and nonfiction texts, newspapers, magazines etc. When the students can read based on their choices, the learners can develop an interest in reading more than before (Calkins, 2015). After goal setting activity, sharing the goals with the teachers is also necessary. If possible, the teacher has a one-on-one conference about the student's individual goal, he or she can give feedback. The students may also get suggestions if necessary. Besides, some other strategies such as closely monitoring, assessing students' continuous progress and using reinforcement can help students in this regard.

2.3.15 Self-assessment

The strategy of guiding one's reading using self-assessment can lead the reader to the pathway to success. According to Eggleton (2010), for self-assessing, the readers can have a list of questions that can guide their reading.

Figure 2.3

Some questions to guide independent reading (Eggleton (2010))



For reading, students can be guided to use reflective thinking skills and metacognition. While reading, students can use some strategies such as self-questioning helps the readers to recall what they have read. After self-questioning, if the readers feel they need to review and revise, they can go back and read again. Thus, the readers who struggle to understand what they read can develop new strategies which include self-questioning, recalling, reviewing, and revising and summarizing (Wilson, Murdoch, 2008).

2.4 Strategies to Teach Writing Skills to Slow Learners

Writing is a way to express feelings and thoughts. There was a time when writing was rarely taught in the classroom. Rather, any writing task was assigned and then corrected by the teacher. If there was any teaching for writing, it was teaching of grammatical rules or categorizing written products. The main emphasis was always on the final products. Now is the time when the focus is on the process of writing, not the product or the final piece of writing. Writing can be a reflection of the individual student. Sometimes, when student writes, the writing can be far different from the ideal text that they have in their minds. It can be also far from the ideal of writing that the teacher has been expecting from the student. Students need

the skill as well as the willingness and motivation to develop as writers (Olson, Scarcella & Matuchniak, 2015).

Some students can find out the gaps in their writing and try to fill those gaps. Some students struggle to find out their gaps and make their texts align with the ideal ones. In this situation, those struggling learners need help with the process of how to produce a good piece of writing. Slow learners in the classroom usually belong in the group of struggling writers who need extra support to make a good piece of writing expected for the grade level.

Teachers might be a researcher while teaching writing. The students have their style of writing. Whatever they write, they use their strategy. But some students may not be able to develop the strategies to help them to write. In this regard, the teacher can be a researcher to observe those students who struggle with writing and develop strategies to guide their writing. If the teachers can find the areas where the students are struggling, they can help those students accordingly. Then the teacher can also discuss with the student what strategies may work and what strategies may not work based on the student's interests and writing abilities.

2.4.1 Developing Writing Habits

Self-starting habits are helpful for many slow learners in the classroom who often wait for the teachers to remind them to start the writing when they are assigned any writing task. Many of them find it difficult how to start. The teacher can use classroom rules and set up routines for all students to start their writing after they provide the instruction to write (Judith, Gould & Mary, 2005). The students who struggle to write, need to follow steps and teacher's instructions to develop a writing piece. While writing, the strategies such as the rehearsal, drafting, revision and editing are some of the major steps for developing a writing piece (Calkins, 1994). Writers always find potential stories everywhere. Rehearsal is the stage that is the preparation for writing. During rehearsal, the writer sketches a story in their mind, draws an outline or writes some clues for their story. These clues lead them to make a whole story.

Drafting is the stage of writing when the writers finish writing about all the clues as much as they can. Then, they start making connections among facts and issues in the draft. In this stage, they can also add necessary details if necessary to make the story meaningful and clear to the readers. Revision means seeing again. Writers can reread what they have written.

Nowadays, it is a common scenario that students don't like to write very much. In the classroom, when students ask the teacher how much they should write on a particular topic, it expresses their unwillingness for writing (Calkins, 1994). But, from a very early stage, pupils have the intention to express themselves through writing. Later, when they go to the upper level of education, gradually, writing becomes a burden for them. It is a matter of great concern to find out the reasons behind the negative attitude towards writing.

If teachers can encourage students' natural desire to write, it makes things easy to motivate students to take steps to become good writers (Calkins, 1994). But many teachers struggle to find ways to motivate students to write. Again, many teachers are not encouraged to find ways to motivate the students for writing. It is important to know the level of students also to give them proper guidelines for writing. Many often teachers avoid the importance of classroom-based research. If teachers can tap students' natural desire to write from their childhood, that would lead them to be motivated for writing and use different strategies to improve their writing as well (Calkins, 1994).

Instead of telling students to write on a specific topic, teachers can give them choices sometimes. For example, they can get choices to write about their favourite things. It is seen that instead of investigating why students dislike writing, teachers try to push students for writing. Different teacher-led activities can involve students in writing for a particular time or on a particular topic, but that does not lead them to be creative writers and become deeply and personally involved in writing.

Giving choices while creative writing can be a real motivation for the writers. Teachers can help students to get ideas from their feelings and memories. Then, the teachers can guide them to make their draft writing. Then the teacher can guide them on how to improve the quality of that draft writing. Students have different lifestyles, they have different choices. The teachers can help them realize that they have worthwhile stories to write about, then they can choose their topics, their genre, and their audience. It is also true that students will not always find topics to write, they may struggle sometimes. This time they may get help from teachers. But the important thing is that, when the students are told to choose their form, voice, subject, and audience, they can understand that they have the responsibility and the ownership of their writing. Thus they can understand that this is not only an assigned work, but it's also more than that. They need to practice writing to become good writers so that they can express themselves very well. Thus, their writing tasks can be personal projects. Then, teachers' role can be to guide them to extend their growth in writing. Thus, teachers can make a big difference in the area of language teaching and learning.

2.4.2 Activities to Foster Genre-Specific Writing

Narratives are very familiar to English language learners from their early ages. Narrative stories are often presented to children at homes and schools. Through narrative writing, the students can share their real-life stories and experiences. Learners develop their communication skills by engaging themselves in language play and make-believe stories.

The narrative writers use a setting, characters and a plot to present a clear picture in readers' mind while writing factual and imaginary stories. There are different forms of narrative writing, such as short stories, biographical writing, essays, letters and diary entries. The Narratives can be used for different purposes, for example, it can be a writer's simple story writing. Again, it can be used while writing problems that require a solution. Although there

are variations, most writers begin narratives with the present tense. Many writers use a variety of sentence structures with participles, prepositional phrases, and gerunds.

Struggling learners, especially slow learners, having low-level proficiencies in English face many challenges while writing narrative stories. They may have problems in making sentences and using basic vocabulary. As they have limited fluency and accuracy, they require many scaffolding strategies to develop narrative writing pieces. The teachers can support them with narrative templates, related vocabulary list and graphic organizers.

In informational writing, the writers share information to inform different aspects of the social or natural world. The writers gather information from various sources through critical analysis. While writing informational text, the writers usually include a title and an introduction for the writing, a body, and a concluding section. To make sure the readers understand the topic, the writers write the central purpose of writing and detailed information so that the readers get a clear understanding of the writing.

English language learners, especially slow learners often lack the language resources needed to write informational text. They may be unfamiliar with the patterns of informational text. They also may not have the lack of information and skills to write information text accurately. So, the teachers should plan for the slow learners and other struggling writers in the classroom to provide them with enough support they need while teaching informational text writing in the classroom.

2.4.3 Strategy Instructions

Strategy instructions provide students with the strategies to plan, revise and edit texts while writing (Olson, et al., 2015). Strategy instructions include the process of establishing a purpose for writing and determining priorities for contents while writing, such as, thinking about the prior knowledge about the topic and searching for new information to incorporate new things with the existing knowledge to create a new piece of writing. The strategy

instructions may also include monitoring strategies while conducting the activities. After each writing lesson, students can get instructions to reflect on their writing to think about what has been written and rethink what they can add in the next lesson time. For the slow learners in the classroom, the strategy instruction may be modified, for example, the teachers can unfold systematically from describing the strategies to these students. The teachers can also model the strategies how to use them. If necessary, the teachers can scaffold the practices for the slow learners to support them to use those strategies effectively. Gradually, the slow learners will get instructions on how to use those strategies independently to meet their writing needs.

2.4.4 Modeling

Modelling is an instructional strategy when the teachers write alongside their students and show them how to write and what to write. The teachers model their writing process by thinking out loud and describing the process and decisions the writers must take while writing. Students can understand teacher's expectations very well when they model the writing in front of the students. For the slow learners who struggle to write, modelling can help them when the teachers introduce a new writing topic or genre (Olson et al., 2015). Modelling can provide a pathway for students how to start their writing and what to write for a particular topic.

2.4.5 Scaffolding

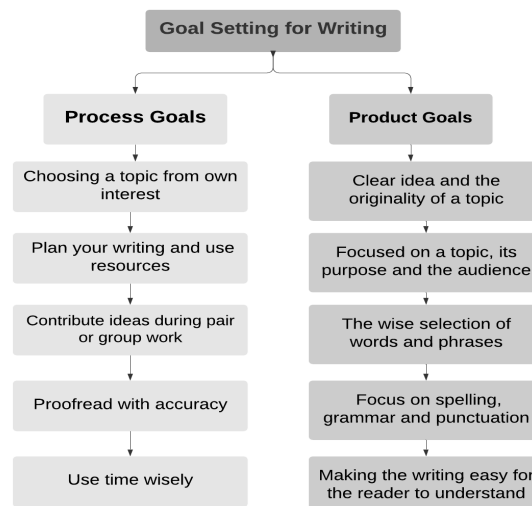
While writing, Scaffolding tasks can help slow learners to develop writing skills. The learners who need additional academic, instructional, conceptual and linguistic support, scaffolding instructions can help those learners with specific instructions step by step to perform a task (Olson, et al., 2015). When starting a new genre, learners need to understand the expectations from their writing. Then, they need to plan and organize their writing. Scaffolds can be included with outlines for writing, graphic organizers, essay templates. Graphic organizers visually present provides visual representation on how to organize writing from different genres.

2.4.6 Goal Setting for Writing

Before starting a lesson, it is also necessary for students to get ready with certain things. For example, setting writing goals, establishing routines, and procedures. On the contrary, for a teacher there are also some preparations for conducting successful writing lessons, setting up classroom rules, expectations from students and a good planning for the lesson. (Judith, et al., 2005). Experienced teachers know that practice is an important factor to master language skills. The more they practice, the better the students will master the skills. So, first of all, the students need to practice regularly working towards the goals, thus they can develop practising writing and gradually it will become their habits. The next step, the students will choose writing topics on their own and they will take responsibilities on how to improve their work (Judith, et al., 2005).

Figure 2.2

Some Steps to Set Goals for Writing (Judith, et al., 2005).



2.4.7 Writing Conference

While the student is going through the writing journey, the teacher can do conferences with the students individually (Judith, et al., 2005). Conferencing can be a great initiative to help students while writing. When a student approaches the teacher for a conference, teachers need to have some specific questions in their minds. For example, ‘How am I going to start the conference?’ What can be the starting question? How can I provide the students with the necessary feedback? There may be many more questions that the teacher should bear in mind. The best way to start a conference is by asking questions of how it is going on. Thus, the teachers can give the student the responsibility for his(her) writing and ask related questions that can lead to improving the writing. Then, the teacher can also ask how he or she can help the student. This is how the teacher can start the conference.

If the teacher wants the student to add more information, he (she) can ask further questions. For example, “What’s the main focus of your story?” “Who is your target audience?” “Where can you add more details that can clarify your main theme of the story?”

While conferencing, there may be a discussion about many things. The conference may be a content conference, design conference, process conference, evaluation conference, editing conference, etc.

The content conference is an amazing way when the students discuss their topics with their teacher and the teacher gives full concentration and value to listening to them. While conferencing on a topic, usually the teacher talks to a particular student at a time and listen to the topic and the story behind it. This time, the teacher also helps the student to know what they know actually and tries to grow eagerness to write on the topic discussing the topic in detail. If this conference goes well, the student’s interest in writing increases thereby. If the teacher finds interest in discussing the topic a student has arisen, it gives them confidence that the topic is worth enough to write about. All the time the teacher doesn't need to inspire the

student to write on the topic he or she has discussed. Sometimes, the teacher may give enough clues to rethink the topic or to think of something else. It is an indication of a good writing classroom when there are students who have interests in writing. Students have their own stories to tell and they have the interest to discuss their topic with their teacher. In such an environment, the teacher sometimes makes pairs or groups where students can share their writing. This time, the students also have conferences on their topics with other students as well as teachers. It helps them to write stories longer and full of detailed information. This discussion with each other led the students to ask several questions to themselves, for example, “What else can I add?” “What do I mean by that?” “Did I make clear the main theme of the story?”. Finally, the teacher helps the students to choose what to edit and when to stop writing and start final editing. Students need to know where to stop and prepare a final piece of writing.

Design conference is the process of rough drafts and then revising. The design is how to present the content that is in their minds. At first, the students may have scattered information and jumbled facts based on the story. Now, the students would have the goal to put scattered information in a sequence that makes sense to others. Another important thing of designing writings is that the writer should think of the facts which he (she) would tell in detail, which will be described in brief. These are all important facts that need taking into consideration. When the student goes to the teacher to do a design conference, the teacher may ask some other questions, for example, “What is your main focus of the story?” “What is the most important point you want to get across?” “Do you think your most significant thing got the focus to be the most significant to the readers too?” When the students are asked such questions, they become more conscious to rethink their sequences of story and if necessary they can edit to some extent.

Process and evaluation conference can go together. This helps the teacher to understand the students’ growth in writing. It also helps to give an idea if students need support in a

particular area that leads to nurture their growth as well. According to Calkins (1994), “When we ask process and evaluation questions of children, the children teach us about themselves and their writing. These insights about our children provide the ground for our teaching” p.151. In this stage, the teacher can discuss with the students keeping the draft writing and based on it, they can continue the discussion. Thus, they get the ways how to take further steps to prepare a final piece of writing. This process can also help slow learners to plan what they will write and how they would write it.

2.4.8 Writing Tools

Writing tools can also be helpful for some writers (Judith, et al., 2005). For instance, the use of graphic organizers, flowcharts, the idea starter etc. can help students in their writing process. Venn Diagram helps the writers while writing on topic when there is something to compare and contrast. Flowchart organizer is a tool that is mostly used for putting ideas in order.

2.4.9. Combining Reading and Writing

According to Gibbons (2005), “if there is one thing that makes a writer, it is reading. p.1. Select different texts and reading contents from different genres, for instances, narrative writing or argumentative texts. Based on students’ reading, they can be given the instructions to write about their reading using grammar structures and related vocabulary. Additionally, the instruction can be provided to bring the learners' attention to the use of languages in contexts, such as e-mail messages, news reports, or written academic prose, and their attendant linguistic and discourse features.

2.4.10 Word Banks for Writing

Slow learners often face difficulty to start writing because when they are asked to write, no words come to their minds to start. To help these groups of students who struggle, the teacher can ask the class to brainstorm and list some words related to the topic. If the teacher

collects those words and writes them on the board as visual cues for writing, it can be very helpful for the learners who struggle.

2.4.11 Portfolio Creation for Writing Development

Many research shows that keeping students' work in a portfolio can foster students' writing skills. It is a good habit to keep work in writing a portfolio (Judith, et al., 2005). The students keep works in the portfolio with the date, title of pieces of writing, and with their reflection about the writing. A writer can reflect when he will go through his writing pieces to assess their development in writing. (Judith, et al., 2005). It can foster their self-reflection and metacognition (Silver, N., 2019). It can build a student's academic identities as they reflect on their progress and capabilities. Keeping a portfolio helps the learners to facilitate the integration of learning connecting their learning across courses and time. In their portfolio students can keep their plan for their academic goals for a certain period and they can go through this from time to time. Thus, they can improve their self-assessment abilities to judge their work using the same criteria as their teachers or other experts use.

2.4.12 Self-assessment while Writing

Teaching-learning approaches and pedagogical concepts change from time to time. At present time, pedagogy promotes the teachers to facilitate students to become independent learners who can take ownership of their learning. The independent learners are conscious about what they understand or where they struggle (Wilson & Murdoch, 2008). They might be able to set goals for themselves to go further. They can be also motivated to learn from their failures (Ricci, 2013). They should also know how they would respond to their failures. When the students fail and can understand that they should apply a different strategy and give more effort to the task, they have more chances to succeed later on. On the contrary, if the students think that they would never be successful after a failure, they limit their ways to be successful in future. Self-assessment and performance assessment can help students and teachers to work together to find out ways the areas of difficulties and the ways to help them move forward

towards progress (Calkins, 2015). After assessing, when the teachers discuss with the students on the basis of their assessment, they can provide the students with the necessary feedback to develop their pathways of progress.

2.5 Challenges to Teach Reading Skills

Regarding language learning, slow learners face a lot of problems. Their reading difficulties are detected when students enter school. They have a problem with the following punctuation, forms of speech, number, etc. They tend to avoid detail reading and try to get an overall meaning of a text. Thus, most often they fail to understand the proper meaning of a text. While reading, they also face difficulties to comprehend and interpret. Reading helps learners to develop general language proficiency and content knowledge (Zhang, 2008). Developing reading skills are not possible through conceptual development. Instead, it is necessary to introduce skill-oriented approaches to learner development through interactional participatory activities (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995). The students can also learn through their failure (Ricci, 2013). When the students face difficulties, they need a clear direction to go forward (Calkins, 2015). The teachers can give the direction to move forward and improve reading skills by assessing their growth in reading. The teachers can ask relevant questions to understand students' depth in reading. The students may be asked to think and reflect on their own about their growth and improvement. Supporting struggling readers in the classroom

The struggling readers face difficulties mostly in decoding and understanding, vocabulary development and fluency (Tankersley, 2005). While reading, many of the slow learners give up when they struggle. and give less efforts to develop their reading skills. Thus, they fall behind their classmates and at a point, they go far behind their classmates. Thus, falling behind, these slow learners feel frustrated and become more demotivated to learn. They develop a lack of self-confidence and think of themselves as poor readers. Consequently, they try to avoid reading in front of their teachers and classmates. They may also be less encouraged

to come to school and spend their time. If the struggling readers get explicit tutoring by specially trained teachers in addition to regular classroom reading activities, they can have significant changes and they may have developed in reading fluency (Tankersley, 2005).

In a primary classroom, it is often found that differences in students' readiness, background knowledge, interests and ways of learning. When all students work together to practise reading, it increases social interaction and communication among students. The teachers need to include all students from different learner profiles and address students' needs. While teaching reading skills, differentiation of materials or content can create opportunities for the students to read different topics and understand concepts (Tomlinson, 2014). Differentiation can also be arranged when students share about their reading. It is really encouraging for students if they can choose their ways of presenting and demonstrate what they have learned.

2.6 Challenges to Teach Writing Skills

The literature on teaching English has identified a number of critical challenges while teaching struggling learners in the classroom. One is that English is often introduced as a compulsory subject at primary school but while recruiting teachers it is not specified what is the minimum requirements and educational background of a teacher to teach English at the primary level. As a result, there is a shortage of trained primary school teachers of English in Bangladesh. Furthermore, many teachers start teaching English without adequate training in English. The situation is even worse in rural areas of Bangladesh.

According to the national education policy and the national primary curriculum of Bangladesh, learners need to acquire communication skills of English rather than knowledge about English. In accordance with that, the teachers' guide for the primary level has been designed to provide guidelines for the teachers to teach using a communicative approach. Besides, different teachers' training modules also include the introduction of some form of

communicative language teaching (CLT) in the classrooms. However, teachers may find it challenging to apply this communicative approach in the classroom. CLT is a pedagogical approach that is more suitable to apply in well-equipped small-sized classrooms (Copland, et al., 2014). It may not be applied effectively when the teachers are not fully trained and there is a large group of students in classrooms. Moreover, many schools have a scarcity of teaching-learning resources. Another potential challenge for teachers is the knowledge and skills of teachers to teach English at the primary level. In many countries like Bangladesh, it is often mentioned in the literature about the teachers' low proficiency levels in English and the lack of training on the communicative way of teaching and learning. Along with that, having low confidence to conduct classes in English, they often use their mother tongue as a medium of instructions while teaching the English language. Again, many teachers believe that many students in the classroom need the instructions in their mother to understand better.

A large number of students in the classroom is a common challenge in many countries of the world. Many teachers who teach in large classrooms believe that it is challenging to introduce learner-centred teaching in large classes. They have several reasons such as the difficulties to monitor student's activities in a large classroom. It is also difficult to organize pair work and group work (Hoque, 2009).

The national curriculum and the teachers' Guide (TG) that typically advocate teaching communicatively are not aligned with the demands of national examinations. There is a tendency to invest more time to teach to the test (Copland, et al., 2014). The teachers intend to spend less time devoted to activities that are not part of the test. These are the key challenges identified in the literature of many research studies. Teachers training is a crucial factor to conduct an effective teaching-learning approach in language learning classrooms. It is up to the teachers how they would engage the students in the classroom. As the development of language skills largely depend on the collaboration, communication and engagement of

students in the classroom, the teachers need to take effective measures to involve all the students. Both pedagogical approaches and behaviour management strategies are necessarily focused on the training so that teachers are trained to use different strategies to apply in the classroom to include all students. In a language learning classroom, teachers need to know how to engage all students so that they can practice skills of the language. They need to conduct classes in a communicative way while teaching language skills.

The appropriate use of assessment for learning is necessary to find out the learning needs of students. Thus, the teachers can differentiate planning to address the learning needs of diversified students. Teachers need to possess a positive mentality to address the learning needs of different types of learners in the classroom and they also need to improve skills and knowledge for working effectively in the classroom. If the teachers and other respective concerns work to promote success for all the students including slow learners, the challenges can be minimized to some extent.

Giving the students choices to choose writing topics can enable students to choose work from their interested areas (Tomlinson, 2014). Differentiation of the learning process can provide students with various ways of learning, the students can choose their own ways of learning. There are so many ways the teachers make the differentiation happen in the classroom. Through differentiation, the teachers can address students' different learner profiles. Some students need both visual and auditory instructions when they start writing about a topic. Providing different resources can provide different ways to learn, such as audio, visual, spatial, kinesthetic. In a classroom, where there are students with different learning needs, small group instructions can be a great strategy while teaching. It provides the opportunity to give instructions based on the student' need. When students have similar interests and education level, small group instructions help students to develop essential knowledge, understanding

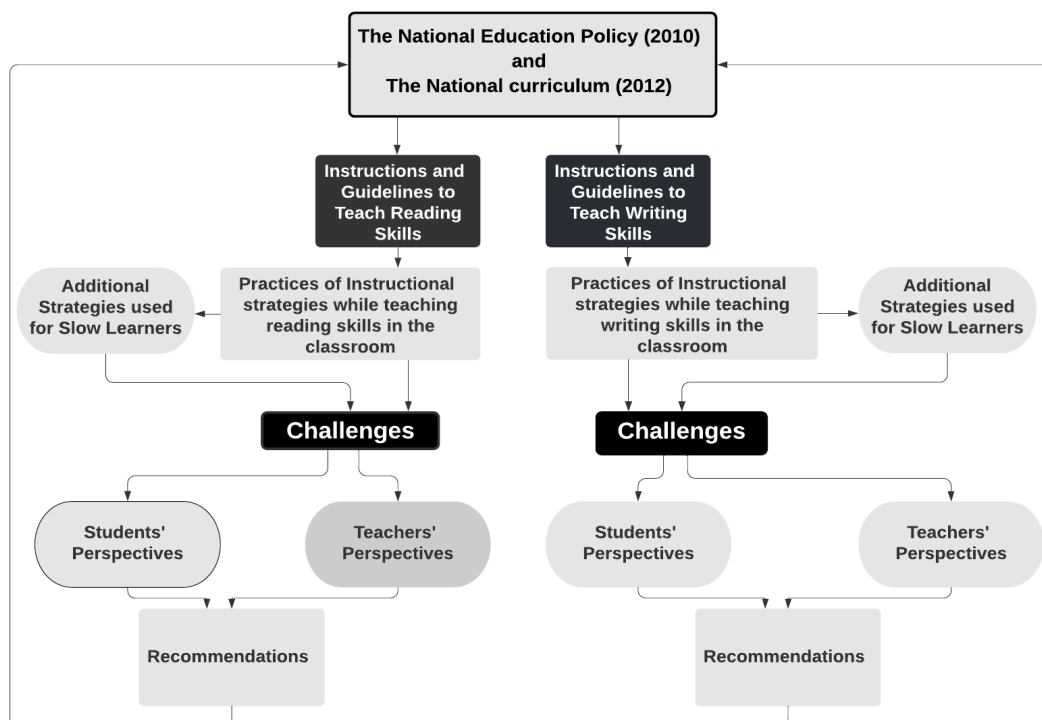
and skills. In a small group, the teacher can assess students' needs easily that can be used for planning students' next steps of learning.

2.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study intends to investigate the uses of strategies while teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners at the primary level. The study also focuses on the challenges faced by the teachers and the slow learners to develop reading and writing skills. According to the national education policy and the national primary curriculum, there are specific instructions and guidelines to teach English language skills in a communicative way. At first, the instructions to teach reading and writing skills have been reviewed to see the practices in the classrooms accordingly.

Figure 2.3

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter mainly focuses on the nature of the study, study area, sample, sampling technique, tools of data collection, data analysis procedure, the timeline of the research, limitations and ethical considerations of the study. This research followed a constructivist paradigm to explore facts through classroom observations, interviews and focus group discussions. According to the constructivist paradigm, different people have different opinions, and it is not an easy task to explore any fact by just observing any human behaviour (Lynch, 2008). This study used qualitative methods of data collection. So, the researcher used ‘objectivity’ to interpret data gathered from observing and interviewing different human beings. So, there was ‘phenomenological’ influence while interpreting data and emerging ideas from it (Wragg, 1999). Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Initially, literature and the national education policy (2010), the national primary curriculum (2012) were reviewed. Then, the empirical data was collected to get a clear understanding and fulfil the objectives of the study.

3.1 Nature of the Study

The research objectives, research methods, data analysis strategies followed the qualitative nature of the research. The researcher gathered data through qualitative interviews, classroom observations, focused group discussions which helped to understand and correlate findings according to the different perspectives of participants. The researcher used qualitative approaches to explore the behaviour, perspectives and experiences of the participants of the study. The research also intended to determine the nature of different aspects related to the research issues. Following the characteristics of qualitative study, the data collection process followed the participants in their natural setup.

The researcher visited the selected schools, observed the teaching-learning process, teacher and students. To investigate the behaviour and contexts of participants, the researcher

observed the teachers and the students in the classroom and talked to them directly while conducting interviews or focus group discussions. In this study, the researchers intended to investigate and interpret their observation and understanding based on responses of the participants, their context, situation and backgrounds.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in 6 Upazilas such as Netrokona Sadar, Kendua, Durgapur, Atpara, Kalmakanda and Khaliajuri of Netrokona district under the Mymensingh Division of northern Bangladesh. Three government primary schools were selected from rural areas of Atpara, Kalmakanda and Khaliajuri Upazilas. Besides, three government primary schools were selected from the urban areas of Netrokona Sadar, Kendua and Durgapur Upazilas of Netrokona district. In total, six government primary schools were selected purposively considering the facts of accessibility to schools and transport communication system to the schools. For the study, the researcher used a consent form to apply all the research tools and conduct IQ test to identify suitable student respondents for the research. Details of the selected schools are shown in Table 1.

Table 3.1
Area of Study

Division	District	Upazila	Number of Schools (Urban)	Number of Schools (Rural)	Total Number of Schools
Mymensingh	Netrokona	1. Netrokona Sadar 2. Kendua 3. Durgapur	3	---	6
		1. Atpara 2. Kalmakanda 3. Khaliajuri	---	3	

3.3 Population of the Study

The study was conducted in grade five at six primary schools. So, the teachers who teach reading and writing skills in English classrooms in grade five and the slow learners who belong to those classes constitute the population of the study. The experts who have enough knowledge, skills and experiences in the area of teaching English language skills and the inclusive environment of the classrooms were also an integral part of the study.

The selection of teachers and students had gone through the following considerable facts.

1. Teachers who are teaching English in grade five in government primary schools in Bangladesh
2. Slow learners who are in grade five in government primary schools
3. The experts in the areas of teaching and learning of English language and having expertise in inclusive education

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

In a qualitative study, it is a critical decision to determine the number of participants for the study to interview and observe (Kuper, et al., 2008). Sampling was done systematically using the purposive sampling technique (Stenius, et al., 2017). The sampling process was guided by the research objectives so that enough data might be collected for the research.

3.4.1 Sampling of Students for Classroom Observation and Focus Group Discussion

Six fifth-grade students from each selected school were selected as student participants using the purposive sampling technique. At first, the researcher made a list of 12 students through screening based on teachers' comments on students' academic performance, school attendance and academic results of the last yearly examination. Before administering the IQ tests, permission was taken from the headteachers and the class teacher to pull the students out of the class, individually to administer the IQ test one by one. Written permissions were also

taken from the parents, for the students to participate in the study. The researcher administered the standardized IQ test on the students in the list and calculated the IQ score using the IQ testing manual. After IQ testing of each student in the list, the researcher calculated IQ score. As soon as the researcher found 6 students having IQ scores in the IQ range of 70-89, the researcher stopped IQ testing and selected those 6 slow learners as the respondents for the study.

Table 3.2

Range of IQ Scores of slow learners selected for the study

Range of IQ Score	Number of slow learners selected for the study
70-79	15
80-89	21

3.4.2 Sampling of Teachers for Classroom Observation and Interview

Class teachers were selected purposively whose classes were observed and who were interviewed for the study. As the study focused on teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners, it was necessary to observe the English classes. Again, the students from grade five from each selected school were selected for classroom observation and focus group discussion. Similarly, the English teacher who teaches in grade five was selected purposely to observe their classes and to take their interviews. Teachers were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule, whose classroom was observed previously. Semi-structured interview schedule was used to get the in-depth data from the teachers as the research was qualitative in nature.

3.4.3 Sampling of Experts for Interview

After collecting data from selected schools, the researcher also selected five experts who have both theoretical and practical knowledge and experience in the area of teaching and learning of the English language and who also have expertise in inclusive education. The

experts were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was selected as a technique to select the experts; as the research required experts fulfilling the criteria of having pedagogical knowledge, skills and expertise in the field of teaching-learning of English Language as well as the concept of slow learners and inclusive education.

The sample for the study consists of 3 categories, such as teachers, slow learners and experts. The purposive sampling technique was followed to select respondents from all categories of the sample. The researcher collected data from 6 government primary schools both from the urban and rural areas. Sample type, sample size, sampling technique, data collection tools and research methods in the selected schools are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Sample and Sampling Technique and Data Collection Tools in Schools

Methods	Type of sample	Data collection tools	Sampling technique	Sample size in each school	Total selected schools	Total number of sample
Classroom observation	Slow learners & English teachers	Classroom observation schedule	Purposive Sampling	3	6	18
Interview	English Teacher	Interview Schedule	Purposive Sampling	1	6	6
Focus group discussion	Slow learners	Focus Group Discussion Guideline	Purposive Sampling	6	6	36

Sample size, sampling technique and data collection tools for the experts are shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Sample, Sampling Technique, and Data Collection Tools for Experts

Methods	Type of sample	Data collection tools	Sampling technique	Sample size
Interview	Experts	Interview schedule	Purposive Sampling	5

3.5 Methods and Tools of Collecting Data

For the present study, the researcher collected data both from secondary and primary sources. Secondary data were collected through published document analysis from different sources such as the National curriculum of Bangladesh (2012), the National education policy (2010), journal articles, books and book-chapters, academic theses, etc. On the other hand, the primary data were collected through classroom observations, interviews and focus group discussions. The methods for data collection were selected systematically to gather information based on the research objectives (Kuper, et al., 2008).

The data sources and the data collection methods are presented in the following figure.

Figure 3.1

Methods of Data Collection for the Present Study

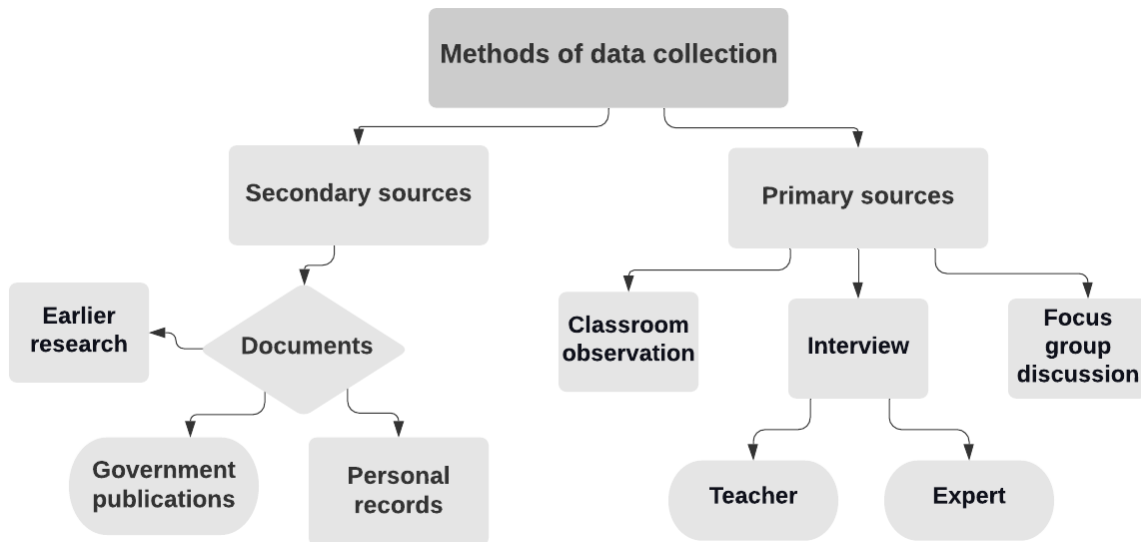
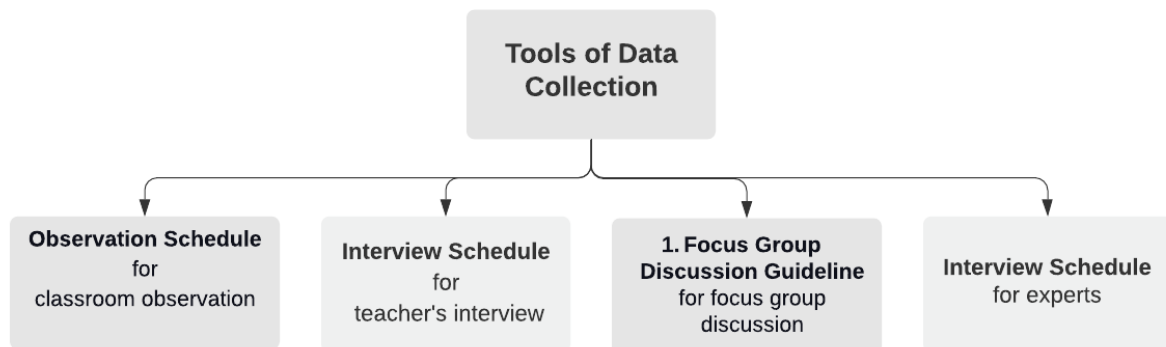


Figure 3.2

Tools of Data Collection



3.5.1 Classroom Observation

The researcher observed three consecutive English classes in grade five in each selected school to cover the variations of the activities while teaching reading and writing skills in the

classroom (Stenius, et al., 2017). After taking consent, the researcher started to observe teaching activities of class five. Usually, when someone comes into a classroom to observe, the presence may influence classroom activities more or less (Wragg, 1999). So, before classroom observation, the researcher talked to the students, in brief, to make them easy about the situation that someone will be observing the classroom activities sitting at the back of the classroom. On the first day, the researcher observed one class informally to make the situation comfortable for the teacher, the students as well as the researcher.

From the following day, the researcher observed classes and started collecting data. During classroom observation, the researcher used an observation schedule that focused on collecting data about teaching strategies of reading and writing skills and the participation of slow learners in teaching-learning activities. As the study focused on the slow learners in the classroom, the researcher mainly focused on slow learners' activities in the class. The researcher followed the qualitative method of classroom observation focusing on the significance of any event or activity, searching the reasons or meaning of anything happening in the classroom. The researcher also applied the technique of collective interpretation of events if anything was confusing (Wragg,1999). For example, the observer also took notes when necessary about any event that was needed for further clarification from the teacher or student. After classroom observation, the researcher asked questions about any particular issue afterwards when the participants had a suitable time because it is essential to understand students' and teacher's behaviour during teaching-learning activities, and it is necessary to translate data very carefully later on (Wragg,1999).

3.5.2 Interview

3.5.2.1 Teachers' Interview. Interviews were conducted to collect in-depth data from the teachers who are teaching the English language in grade 5. While taking the interviews, the

researcher was always aware of maintaining reflexivity and thus, tried to avoid either assumption for any answer or biases by the interviewees (Hsiung, 2008).

After all the classroom observations, the researcher interviewed the class teacher. In total, six teachers were interviewed from six selected schools. While taking an interview, a semi-structured interview schedule was used. The interview questions were focused on teaching approaches to reading and writing skills. Besides, the researcher had sometimes some notes from classroom observation that needed discussion with respective teachers for clarification; if so, those issues were also discussed while interviewing. The researcher used probing questions rather than being confined to the interview questionnaire (Bass et al., 2010).

3.5.2.2 Experts' Interview. After collecting data from selected schools, the researcher analyzed data at the initial stage to explore the challenges in the teaching-learning process of English reading and writing skills for slow learners. Then the researcher selected five experts who have expertise in the teaching-learning process of the English language and in inclusive education. The researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule including the challenges derived from data collected for the study. The experts gave their opinion about possible ways to minimize those challenges.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion

The researcher conducted one focus group discussion with the selected slow learners from grade five in each school. In total, six focus group discussions were conducted in 6 selected schools for the study. From each selected school, 6 slow learners participated in the focus group discussion. During focus group discussion, the researcher talked to the slow learners to know about the activities when they practise reading and writing skills of the English language in the classroom. They were also asked to share if they had faced challenges when they practise reading and writing skills in the classroom. A focus group discussion guideline was used to facilitate conducting the discussion sessions.

Consents were taken from the slow learners before conducting the FGD with them. Before starting the discussion, the students were taken to a quiet room and the researcher described the purpose and method of the focus group discussion in brief. Then the FGD was conducted using the guided questions in the Focus Group Discussion Guideline and took notes based on the discussion with the respondents.

3.6 Preparation and Planning

As the study focused on the teaching strategies for slow learners in the classroom, the researcher had to confirm that there were slow learners enrolled in a school before selecting any school for data collection. First of all, the researcher had to visit a school and conduct introductory sessions with the headteacher and the class teacher to explain the objectives of the study. Then, the written consents were taken from the parents, headteacher, class teacher and most importantly from the students, before conducting standardized IQ testing on the students who were listed through screening. When the researcher found that there were at least six students in grade five whose IQ scores were below average, then the researcher selected the school purposively to collect data for the study.

As the study also focused on teaching reading and writing skills of the English language, the researcher had to discuss with the teacher before to make sure to observe classes that covered the teaching skills of reading and writing.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Before selecting students for IQ testing, the researcher analyzed documents to identify the process of screening some students of slow learners. It was a lengthy procedure to make a list of students for IQ testing. For screening, at first students' last annual examination's results were analyzed, through which the first list was made. Then the researcher talked to the class teachers to know about class performance and participation of those students. Then, the researcher checked the record of students' class attendance. After doing all these procedures, a

list of 12 students was prepared. To measure students' IQ level, the researcher used a standardized test kit (Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale-5th Edition) to know about student's cognitive abilities. The researcher previously had theoretical knowledge and practical experience in administering the test on more than 200 individuals in collaboration with a recognized professional psychologist.

Taking consent, the researcher administered the test to the students individually who were on the list. Before starting the testing session, the researcher attempted good rapport building with each student to make them feel comfortable. Then, the purpose of the testing was briefly described to them. Before starting the test, the rules and procedures of standardized testing were described. After giving all the instructions, the testing session was started. The total time for a full testing session ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on the student's depth of knowledge and skills. After administering the test on each student, the researcher completed calculating the IQ scores using the IQ calculating manual included with the test kit. If the researcher found that the student's IQ score was in the range of 70-89, that student was selected purposively to be the sample for the study.

It took one or two days to administer the IQ tests on students and to select the student respondents for the study. After selecting slow learners as student's respondents for the study, the researcher had a meeting with the class teacher to know the class schedule and fixed a date to start classroom observation in grade five. The researcher observed three consecutive classes of the same teacher to collect in-depth data on the teaching-learning activities of reading and writing skills of the English language. After completing 3 classroom observations, the researcher conducted an interview with the teacher at the teacher's convenient time. When the teacher's interview was done in a selected school, the researcher conducted the focus group discussion with the selected slow learners for the study. The FGD was conducted in a quiet room in the absence of any other adults from the school and also free from external noise. After

finishing all these activities in all the selected schools, the researcher analyzed data initially to explore challenges in the area of teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners. Then, the experts were selected purposefully. The researcher shared challenges with the Experts to get their opinions on how to minimize those challenges in this area. The experts were interviewed individually at their convenient time.

3.8 Data Analysis

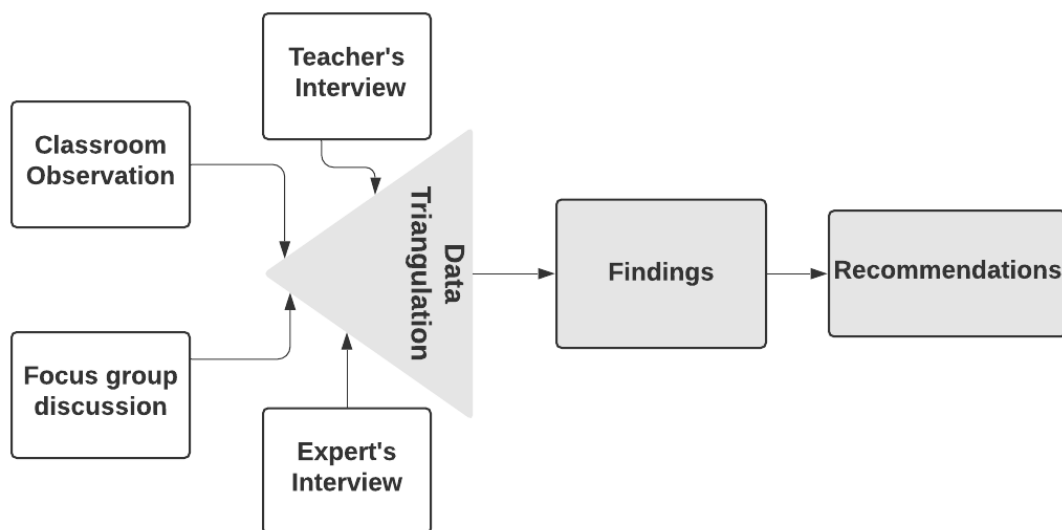
The study followed a systematic way of data analysis. In qualitative research, the transparency of the analysis is a crucial factor. It means that the researcher would provide necessary information step by step on how the analysis was done which can provide a visible insight to other readers (Stenius, et al., 2017). Soon after collecting data, the researcher interpreted them on the same day they were collected. The data collected from classroom observation, teachers' interview and student's focus group discussion for fulfilling the research objectives, were analyzed thematically. According to the data collecting tools and responses of the respondents, themes and subthemes were identified by the researcher for thematic analysis. Following each theme, data collected from classroom observation were correlated with teachers' interview and student's focus group discussion. Several subthemes were derived from those themes, and they were also described according to the responses. Classroom contexts were highly prioritized while explaining every theme and subthemes. Respondents' opinions were also mentioned in quotation form were required to support the themes and subthemes. Although the number of respondents was not too large to represent the whole scenario of the country, the in-depth and detailed data derived by the researcher using the research tools and respondents were able to describe the predefined research objectives.

The researcher used data triangulation techniques while analyzing data to explore the research objectives from different contexts (Kuper, et al., 2008). It involves the acquisition of data collected from different sources, such as classroom observations, interviews with teachers,

focus group discussions with slow learners and interview with experts to describe major findings from the study (Tan, 2019). To ensure the correlation among the different sources of data, the research used triangulation of data. Classroom observation helped the researcher to get data from the real scenario of the English language classrooms to triangulate data with the responses of teachers during the interview and with the responses of students during focus group discussions. Moreover, observing three classrooms of each teacher, ensured the possibility of a more realistic scenario. Teachers' interviews provided an opportunity to get detailed explanations about the teachers' activities in the classroom in several contexts. Besides, findings from focus group discussion were correlated to classroom observation and teachers' interview and get an explanation about students' and teachers' interaction and classroom activities in the classroom. Alongside, opinions and recommendations of experts mostly reflected the findings from the other three tools. The data triangulation technique is shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3

Levels of Data Triangulation



3.9 Timeline of the Study

The timeline of the study is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Timeline of the Study

	Oct 2017- Jan 2018	Feb 2018- March 2018	April 2018- May 2018	June 2018- Sep 2018	Oct 2018- Dec 2018	Jan 2019- Feb 2019	March 2019- April 2019	May 2019- August 2019	Sep 2019- Nov 2019
Literature Review									
Research methodology Design									
Preparation and finalizing research tools									
Data collection from selected schools									
Data analysis (1 st phase)									
Data collection from experts									
Data analysis (2 nd phase)									
Draft report writing									
Revise and submitting the thesis									

3.10 Limitations of the Study

The researcher conducted the study in six government primary schools. Though the government primary schools have some similar rules, regulations and practise all over the country, there are also differences regarding areas, infrastructures of the schools, qualifications and training of teachers and some other aspects. Therefore, the findings from the study may not be generalized for the whole country. Again, the researcher focused on the teaching strategies for reading and writing skills of the English language. The study could not cover the listening and speaking skills of the English language. For reading skill, the present study only focused on 'text reading' and collected data observing those classes where the teachers taught reading skill using any text. The researcher did not collect data on how teachers teach reading

poetry. Besides, the researcher conducted the study focusing on grade five from each school not covering all the grades at the primary level.

3.11 Ethical consideration

It is essential to follow research ethics to ensure that the research work does not harm the participants or the environment (Archer, 2019). Similarly, the researcher followed some procedures such as taking consent from the participants, maintaining confidentiality, interpreting data appropriately and storing data safely (British Psychological Society, 2013). The researcher collected detailed information about the teaching-learning process of reading and writing skills to the slow learners in the English language classroom. The researcher used objective reflexivity not being biased on any participant or situation. The researcher preserved all the rights of any participant for this research. Before collecting data, the researcher described the purpose of the study, the ways how data would be used, and the social consequences of the study. The participants were asked if they could refuse to participate in the study at any time. The researcher also ensured the privacy and confidentiality of the collected data to the participants. Thus, the participants felt free and safe to participate in the study.

Chapter Four
Findings and Interpretation of Data

Chapter Four: Findings and Interpretation of Data

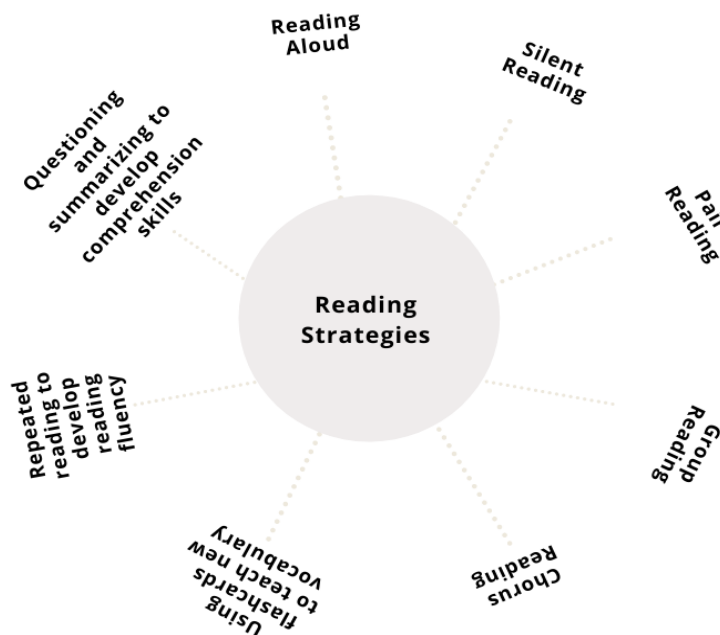
This chapter presents the findings from collected data through a qualitative analysis process. According to the objectives of the study, the researcher analyzed data. The research findings provide a picture of current practices of using instructional strategies for slow learners while teaching reading and writing skills in English language classrooms at the primary level in Bangladesh. The researcher collected data through classroom observation, teachers' interviews, focus group discussion with slow learners and interviews with experts. The data gathered from fieldwork were analyzed qualitatively using the thematic analysis approach. Based on the objectives of the research, the major findings are described below according to the themes derived from collected data.

4.1 Strategies to Teach Reading Skills to Slow Learners

From the findings of the study, the researcher enlisted some strategies that are usually used by the teachers to teach reading skills in the classroom. The strategies are presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Commonly Used Reading Strategies in English Classrooms



Through classroom observation and teacher's interviews, the researcher found that the teachers usually start the reading lessons with the 'Reading aloud' activity. After reading aloud, the teachers allocate some time for students to read silently. Some of the teachers arrange pair reading and group reading activity in the classroom. The reading is also practised chorus when the teachers and the students read together from any text. To develop students' vocabulary level, the teachers use some strategies such as, while reading from the textbook, they write the difficult words on the board and sometimes they use flashcards written new words from the text. The teachers also work on developing student's reading fluency and comprehension skills.

4.1.1 Reading Aloud to the whole Class

While classroom observation, 'Reading aloud' appeared to be the most common strategies used in the classrooms while teaching reading skills. During a lesson, when the teachers aim to teach reading skills, they usually start the lesson reading aloud from a text. Usually, they read the text once or twice and explain the meaning of some new or difficult words. Then they select students to read aloud from the text. Most often, the students who are good at reading are selected to read. Some of the teachers think the students who are good readers can model good reading for the whole class. The teachers rarely chose any students from the group of struggling readers to read aloud to the whole class.

During interviews, the teachers also mentioned that they usually start the lesson reading aloud to the whole class. When the teachers were asked how they create opportunities for students to read aloud, some of them said they randomly choose students to read. One of the teachers said she choose students who are good at reading. She further said that the good readers read fluently and the other students in the class can listen to them and follow their fluent reading styles. One teacher's comment is as followed:

"The good readers in my class can read correctly and take less time to read the whole text. They are good models for other students in the class".

In a different picture, it was found that one teacher is more conscious of creating opportunities for all students to practise reading including the slow learners. She provides the students with the opportunities to read to the whole class by rotation. She made groups of students and fixed days for different groups to read aloud and practice their reading. The teacher writes the names of the students according to the groups in her diary. Thus, she keeps track of student's reading to provide opportunities for all students to practise reading.

During focus group discussion, some of the slow learners shared that they never get chances to read aloud in the class. Again, some of them said, sometimes their teachers choose them to read from the textbook.

4.1.2 Reading Silently

While teaching reading in the class, the teachers also allow some time for students to read silently. After the activity 'reading aloud', the teachers usually tell the students to read silently from their textbooks. The teachers usually give the instructions for students to read the text silently and try to understand what they read. During interviews, some of the teachers shared their purposes for conducting silent reading in their reading lessons. One teacher said,

“When I give the students any silent reading task, I set some targets for the students. For example, I ask the students to focus on the understanding of the meaning of the text and find unknown words from the texts.”

Another teacher commented,

“When I arrange an activity of silent reading for the students, I always make sure the students read with the focus of understanding paragraphs or stories. I also tell them to get the inner meaning of the text and make a summary in their head so that they can share about their reading.”

Some of the slow learners shared what they focus on when they read silently. One of the students said,

“When I read silently, I go through the punctuation of the difficult words from the text”.

Some of the students said that while reading silently, they try to understand what they read.

4.1.3 Pair Reading

Some teachers arrange pair reading activity in the classroom. Usually, the teachers make pairs of students who sit next to each other. Pair reading is sometimes used by some teachers for developing students' reading skills. Sometimes, the teachers monitor students pair reading moving around the class. The teachers circulate to ensure that students are reading and there is no problem between the pairs to work together. Before starting a pair reading session, the teachers usually provide instructions on what to do. Sometimes, the teachers tell the students to read a particular text and then to discuss in pair. Sometimes, the teachers write some questions on the board based on a text. Then, they tell the students to read the text and then discuss to find out the answer to the questions.

During classroom observation, it was observed that slow learners sometimes remain inactive while the teacher tells the students to read in pair. But during the teacher's interview, some of the teachers said that they pair a slow learner with a fluent reader so that the fluent reader can help the slow learner while reading. On the contrary during the focus group discussion, some of the students mentioned while pair reading sessions, they usually read on their own.

4.1.4 Group Reading

While observing English classes, sometimes it was observed the teachers arrange group reading activities for the students. In some classes, the researcher observed that some teachers took a long time to provide the instructions for group work and organize the groups. The teachers usually made groups of approximately 5 or 6 students who were sitting close to each other in the classroom. In some classrooms, the students also took a long time to start group work and the students seemed puzzled about what to do. During focus group discussion, some of the

students shared that it is very rare they do group work while reading. But from teachers' interviews, it is one of the most common techniques shared by the teachers as they usually organize group reading activity in the classroom.

4.1.5 Chorus Reading

In the classroom, the chorus reading is usually practised by the whole class together. The teachers read a sentence and tell the students to read after them. In this way, the teacher finishes any section or the full text and the students repeat each sentence after the teachers read. During focus group discussion, most of the slow learners said that they like to read in chorus. Some of their comments are as follows:

"I like to read when our teacher read and we read along with her".

"I enjoy reading in chorus because I make no mistake to pronounce difficult words".

During classroom observation, it also seemed that most of the students like chorus reading. The slow learners also participated in chorus reading spontaneously.

4.1.6 Developing Vocabulary

Many teachers believe that for reading comprehension, developing vocabulary is an essential part. They also know many of the students, especially the slow learners in the classroom, have the vocabulary level below their grade level. Some of the teachers are aware of student's vocabulary level and their comments are given below:

"I work on developing student's vocabulary level. I usually use flashcards written with the new words from any text I teach. As my students sit for public examination in Grade five, they need a developed vocabulary level so that they can understand the unseen comprehension during the examination".

Another teacher commented as below:

"To do well in the public examination, students must read and understand the meaning of the various source passages for answering questions in the multiple-choice and essay sections. So, I always tell my students to practise new words they find while reading any text".

The teachers use some strategies so that the students practise vocabulary. One teacher said that she uses flashcards to teach new words while teaching a new lesson. She believes it helps the learners to learn and remember the new vocabulary. one teacher mentioned that she teaches students to use context clues to understanding vocabulary words. She believes that learning context-based vocabulary is a good strategy for students. She commented as follows:

"My students collect words from the text when they read. Then they write down the words in their copies and practise those words frequently."

Another teacher said,

"I tell my students to use the dictionary when they read at home."

While observing a class, the researcher noticed that in a classroom there was a vocabulary chart hanging on the wall. After classroom observation, the researcher interviewed that teacher and asked about the vocabulary chart. She said she and her students use the chart when they find new words while reading. She said,

"We have a vocabulary chart on our classroom wall. When I read a new text to the students, I write new words on the board. Then, my students add those new words in the vocabulary chart".

While focus group discussion, some of the slow learners also said that they practise vocabulary in the classroom. They write down new words in their copies. But some of them said, even they practise new words, they forget the meaning of those words after a few days.

4.1.7 Developing Reading Fluency

The teachers believe that to develop reading fluency, the students need to practise reading every day. The more the students read, the more they develop their fluency in reading. One of the teachers said,

“To develop reading fluency, I tell my students to practise reading aloud and to read the same text again and again”.

Regarding the fluent reading of struggling readers, one of the teachers said, she tells them to practise repeated reading of a text during the class.

Another teacher talked about ‘rehearsing’ to develop reading fluency. For example, she tells the students to rehearse reading a text a few times during silent reading time. Thus, she inspires her students to use the silent reading time wisely to be prepared to read aloud any text fluently.

During focus group discussion, some of the slow learners shared their difficulties to read fluently. One of them said,

“The classroom is always noisy. When the teacher read, sometimes I cannot hear properly how they pronounce different words. When I read, I spell every word but still, I face difficulties to read fluently”.

Most of the slow learners said they struggle to pronounce difficult words. When they were asked how they can practise pronunciation, they had the common answer that they need to practise reading aloud regularly.

While classroom observation, the researcher found very few activities that focused on teaching correct pronunciation. In most of the classes, the teachers start reading any text from the textbook and then they tell students to read aloud a part of a text or the whole text. They usually choose students to read to the whole class. Many times, teachers were found to choose

those students who can read with the most correct pronunciation. The backbenchers or the slow learners got fewer chances to practice reading in the classroom.

4.1.8 Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills

Many slow learners shared their difficulties to understand questions and find out answers to the questions when they read an unknown topic. Again, many students who can read, still face difficulties comprehending the meaning and find out answers of questions from the text. On contrary, many teachers said that reading comprehension is also an important skill for the students when they sit for exams as they have to answer questions from known or unknown reading materials. The teachers shared different ways they teach students how to develop comprehension skills. One of the teacher's comments is as below:

I teach my students how to find answers from the text. First, I tell the students to start the answer using the words in the questions. Then I ask them to connect more words from the text to complete the answer. This is the easy way I think that can help students who struggle to comprehend the text and find answers quickly.

Another teacher said that he believes the students need to develop their thinking skills to develop comprehension skill. To develop students' thinking process, he usually has discussion with the students about reading. After the discussion, he asks questions from the text. Thus, he involves students in reading the text many times and develop an understanding of it.

During focus group discussion, the slow learners shared their difficulties about understanding the meaning of the whole text. One of them said,

“I read but sometimes I don't understand what I read”.

Some of the slow learners said when the teachers read and explain the meaning of each sentence, they can understand. But later when they read on their own, they struggle to understand the meaning and find the answers of the questions from the text.

4.2 Strategies to teach Writing Skills to Slow Learners

The researcher intended to explore the writing strategies, which the teachers usually use to support the slow learners to develop their writing proficiencies. During the interviews, the teachers said they help slow learners when they face difficulties while writing. The teachers also told the researcher that they always monitor the writing activities of the struggling writers in their classrooms.

One of the teachers said,

"When I assign any writing activity to my students, I always monitor their writing from the beginning they start. When I see any of my students are not writing, I usually go to that student and support on the basis of the student's needs".

During classroom observation, the researcher observed that some of the slow learners could not finish their writing tasks. The teacher did not notice them. In most of the classes observed, the teachers checked student's writing copies sitting in their chairs. The students who went to the teacher, the teacher checked their writing.

The researcher also observed that some of the slow learners were spending their time looking at the outside, talking to each other or sitting down doing nothing. At that time the teacher was busy checking student's copies who completed writing and went to the teacher sitting at the front of the classroom. The teacher did not ask those students to bring their writing who could not complete it.

4.2.1 Individual Writing

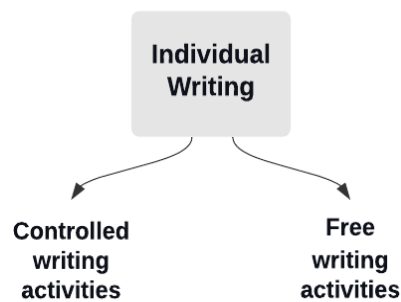
When the teachers conduct writing lessons, the most common thing is that they assign individual writing tasks for students. The common individual writing activities in classrooms are writing answers to the questions from the text, filling in the gaps, short and simple compositions and simple personal letters. Besides, the students are assigned the writing activities to write the answer from unseen passages from the test papers. The teachers provide

the instructions to read the passages and read the questions carefully. Then the students write the answer to the questions on their own. These are some common activities the students have during their individual writing time.

When the students are assigned writing tasks individually, they are usually told to do two types of activities. The two types of writing activities assigned to students during their individual writing time are shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

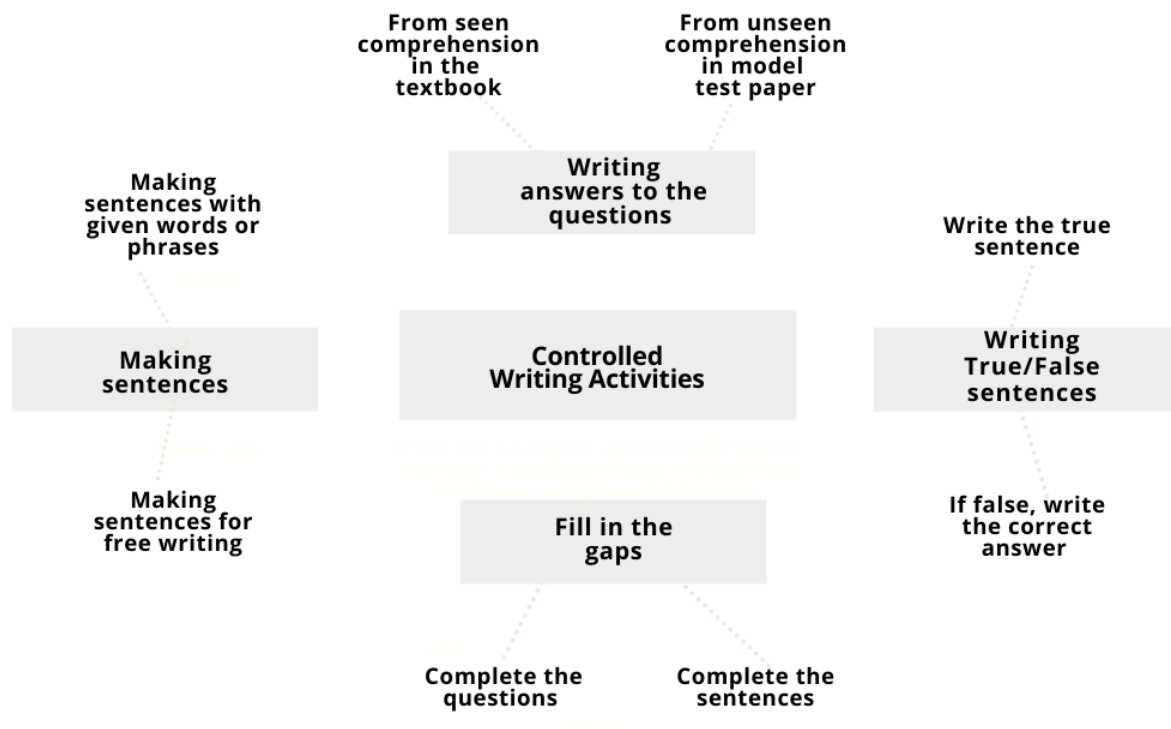
Activities during Individual Writing Time



4.2.1.1 Controlled Writing Activities. There are some controlled writing tasks, the teachers usually assign to students in the classroom, those activities are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

The Controlled Writing Activities in the Classroom



From classroom observation and teacher's interview, the researcher found the most common activity during writing lesson was 'to write the answers to questions from a text'. Usually, the teachers read a text to the students and discuss the answers to the questions related to the text. Then they tell the students to write the answers to the questions in students' copies. When they finish writing, the teacher checks some of the students' copies. For the students who cannot finish on time, the teachers usually tell them to correct the copies from other students.

During focus group discussion one slow learner commented as below:

"The students who can finish writing during class time, they go to the teacher sitting on her chair in front of the class and the teacher check the copies. But for the students who cannot finish on time, the teacher tells them to complete writing at home and to check their copies from their friends".

The teachers teach the students how to make different types of sentences. The teachers usually write some words and phrases on the board and tell students to make sentences using those words. During the interview, one teacher said,

"When I teach a new topic from the textbook, I make a list of difficult words and phrases from the text. After I read and explain the text to the students, I usually write those selected words and phrases on the board and tell students to make sentences using those".

Another teacher said,

"To teach my students to make sentences correctly, I keep 5 to 10 minutes in every writing lesson when I give some words and tell my students to make sentences".

During focus group discussion, the students said they like making sentences with the given words from the textbook. They make sentences using their own words. If they find difficult words, they copy the sentence including that word from the textbook. Before the students start writing, the teachers provide instructions to focus on some issues, such as using capital letters correctly, using commas, full stops, question marks and exclamatory marks.

4.2.1.2 Free Writing Activities. During free writing time, the teachers usually remind students to use punctuations in the proper place. During the interview, the teachers shared that they discuss the importance of using punctuations, such as, commas, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks in the class. One of the teachers said,

"When the students write during class time, I always reinforce them to use punctuations".

When the teachers tell the students for free writing, they usually tell them to write paragraphs, letter and compositions. Again, some of the teachers shared that sometimes they tell their students to make a summary based on any texts or stories. The students are also asked to write about any character from any text the teacher teach in the class. Some of the teacher's comments is as followed:

"When I teach any new lesson from the textbook, I tell my students to choose any character from the text and to write 5 sentences about the character. My students enjoy the activity".

"I tell my students to write about themselves and sometimes to write about their favourite characters".

During focus group discussion, the slow learners shared about their free writing activities. Some of them said, they like writing paragraphs and letters because they can learn at home from their guidebook. But they do not like to write compositions. Because they forget what they learned. Some of the slow learners shared their difficulties to make summaries from their reading or when they are told to write about any characters from the text. Most of the slow learners told that they do not like free writing activities.

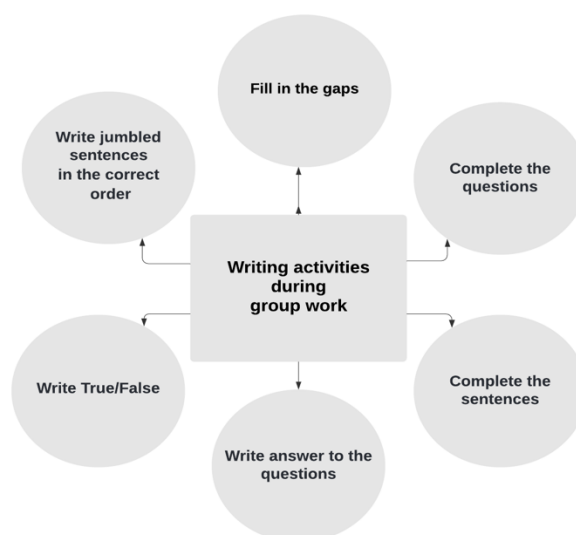
4.2.2 Group Work for Writing

Sometimes, while teaching writing, the teacher arranges group activities. During classroom observation, the researcher observed that the teachers selected the students for making groups. In a class, the teachers made groups with those students who were sitting close to each other. While giving instructions, the teachers told the students what to do during group work.

Group works were organized with some controlled writing activities. For example, in a class, the students were told to fill in the gaps in 5 incomplete sentences the teacher wrote on the board. In another class, the teacher assigns the activity to write the answers to 5 questions from a text in the textbook. The students were asked to discuss the answer to the questions in a group and they all needed to write the answers to the questions in their writing copies. During interviews, the teachers also mentioned some writing activities they assign for students during group work. The activities that are usually used during group work for writing is presented in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

Writing activities during group work



During classroom observation, it was seen that the teachers were monitoring the group activities. But they rarely give any instructions to make sure all the students in the groups are working actively. When the researcher closely observed the slow learners' activities during group work, some of them were seen to be inactive during group discussion. They were quiet. During focus group discussion, some of the slow learners shared the same thing about their activities during group work. One of them commented as follows:

"When we do group work in the classroom, I always listen to others. Someone in the group starts writing what the teacher tells us to write. Then we all copy from that student's copy who complete the writing".

4.3 Challenges to Teach Reading Skills

Most of the teachers shared their difficulties teaching reading to slow learners who are reading weak in reading. They acknowledged their lack of knowledge and skills in teaching students

from different reading levels at a same time during limited class time. While interviews, the teachers mentioned some major challenges, such as lack of adequate knowledge about slow learners, training on how to teach slow learners using different reading strategies, and lack of reading materials. The challenges are described below:

4.3.1 Lack of Time to Provide Additional Support

During interviews, the teachers acknowledged that the slow learners demand additional support from them. But their biggest challenge is the limitation of class time. One of the teachers added that it is not always possible to provide that additional support for slow learners. He said, there are 53 students in his class. He needs to work with all of them.

Another teacher's comment is given below:

"To teach my forty-seven students in the classroom, sometimes, I have to overlook the struggles of slow learners to read fluently. Though they deserve my extra time and support, I cannot always provide the support to them".

4.3.2 Lack of Resources

Some of the teachers think that to bring diversity while conducting reading activities, they need different resources. One teacher said,

"In our school, we largely depend on the textbooks for teaching reading. Our students need to develop reading habits. But we do not have multiple reading materials such as books from different genres, magazines, newspapers and journals".:

"To teach my forty-seven students in the classroom, sometimes, I have to overlook the struggles of slow learners to read fluently. Though they deserve my extra time and support, I cannot always provide the support to them".

4.3.3 Large Class Size

Large class size is a common challenge mentioned by all the teachers. This is a challenge because when there are students from different reading levels, the teachers can not design

different reading activities for a large group of students. Some of the teacher's comments are as follows:

"I have a large number of students in my class. How can I provide opportunities for all the students to read aloud during class time?"

"It is difficult in a large classroom to let every student read aloud. Specifically, it is even more time-consuming if I ask slow learners to read to the whole class. They take more time than expected".

The teachers also shared that in a large classroom they can not spend a long time for reading activities. They need to organize writing activities too. Besides, the teachers have to spend some time managing the classroom environment because sometimes it becomes so noisy that both the teacher and the students can not concentrate.

4.3.4 Lack of Motivation.

The teachers also face challenges to focus on those students who do not share their difficulties and ask for help when they need it. Because all the learners in the classroom do not have a similar level of reading and so they may need different types of supports. Therefore, the teachers think the students should ask for help when they need it.

Another important issue that the teachers mentioned is that slow learners do not ask questions to them. So, the teachers face problems to understand their difficulties.

4.3.5 Lack of Training

During the interview, some of the teachers acknowledged that they have limited knowledge about helping slow learners in developing their reading skills. One teacher mentioned,

"I face challenges because I do not have the training how to teach reading skills especially to slow learners and other struggling readers in my class".

While teaching pronunciation, the teachers hear the slow learners and other struggling readers struggle to pronounce many words incorrectly. Then, the teachers read the difficult words to

the students again and again with the correct pronunciation. One of the teachers added that she does not know what else she can do to correct the pronunciation of those struggling readers.

4.3.6 Experts' Opinion to Minimize Challenges

Based on the challenges faced by the teachers and the students, the experts who were interviewed for the study suggested some strategies for helping slow learners in developing their reading proficiencies.

4.3.6.1 Monitoring and Assessment for Reading. Though reading skill is not assessed during the examination, still the teacher can assess reading through formative assessment. Some of the expert's comments are as followed:

"Slow learners need regular exposure and feedback on their reading."

"Through regular assessment, the teachers can suggest the slow learners what can be the next step to progress on their reading skills".

During interviews, the teachers shared that in a large classroom they can not provide opportunities for all learners to practise reading skills. Experts opinion suggest finding out ways the teachers can make sure by rotation every student get the opportunity to read in front of their teacher. When the teachers would hear the slow learners reading, they would be able to provide feedback and suggest strategies how to develop their reading step by step.

4.3.6.2 Motivation for Reading. The Struggling readers often get demotivated for reading. As they know they can not pronounce words correctly, they try to avoid reading especially in front of their peers. Thus, they develop even more difficulties in reading. In this situation, there is no other way but to motivate them. If the teachers can help them to develop self-assessment strategies for reading and the students see their changes, they may develop motivation for reading.

One of the Experts Suggested as follows:

“Help students to prepare a balanced routine for reading. Encourage students to read books from different genres such as fiction and non-fiction books”.

“To motivate students to read, the teachers can discuss different types of books in the classroom so that they find their interests for reading and select books according to their choices”.

“I suggest the teachers share their journey as a reader to motivate the learners to find their ways to be successful readers”.

4.3.6.3 Resources and Supportive materials for Reading. The teachers can facilitate student's reading providing them with resources to support reading. For example, the students can monitor their own reading using rubrics and charts that can keep track of their reading progress (Calkins, 2015). Using these materials can help students to understand their hard work, use of different strategies can lead them to progress (Calkins, 2015). There are also some tools that can be used to help students to assess their work. Thus, using different supportive materials can help students to see their improvement in reading in a visible way.

Teachers can also use tools for collecting data or keeping records on the reading time of students. Keeping record of reading time and regularly checking students' reading log can help students be more conscious about reading (Tankersley, 2005). Thus, it can become a habit of students to read regularly.

4.4 Challenges while Teaching Writing Skills

The teachers who were interviewed for the study noted significant challenges while teaching writing to slow learners. The most common challenges mentioned by the teachers were 'providing additional support to the slow learners during free writing activities such as when the slow learners write paragraphs, essay and personal letter. The struggling writer often makes spelling mistakes and make grammatical errors. Lack of training was another challenge

stated by some of the teachers. The teachers said that they have minimum knowledge about teaching writing slow learners step by step as they need extra support.

The major challenges while writing and the expert's opinion to minimize challenges are described below.

4.4.1 Providing Additional Support during Free Writing Activities

The most common challenges mentioned by the teacher was 'providing additional support during free writing activities. It is not surprising that slow learners face challenges while writing. But they face most challenges when they are asked to write using their own words. During focus group discussion, the slow learners shared their difficulties with free writing activities. During classroom observations, the researcher also observed slow learners faced to struggle when they were told to make a summary.

Free writing activities are designed in such a way that the students need to use their thinking skills and imagination to write about a topic, write a story or summary of a story. Sometimes they get puzzled about what to write and how to start. Many slow learners do not understand how to complete these kinds of tasks maintaining expectations of grade level. Sometimes they are not even able to start the activities.

"It is difficult to make them write on their own, one thing they do is to memorize any essay or paragraph I teach in the class".

She added, "They are reluctant to make sentences and practise creative writing, rather they like to memorize".

4.4.2 Lack of training

Having The teachers shared having a lack of training facilities on conducting writing classes effectively. In the class, there are students from different writing levels. Some of the teachers shared that they know they should use differentiated planning for the students in the classroom

to address all students needs to some extent. But they have no training to make differentiated planning. Some of the teachers mentioned that they have minimum knowledge about teaching writing to slow learners who need step by step instructions and additional support. Some of the teachers from the respondents' group of the study acknowledged that "Teacher's education training' did not adequately prepare them to teach writing. The teachers said they allocate writing time in almost every English classes though there is no fixed time for writing. They believe that if they had training on teaching writing, they could know how to plan for a daily writing with proper instructions, and resources to conduct meaningful writing lessons.

4.4.3 Lack of Motivation.

Some teachers believe that many slow learners do not understand the purpose of learning English. They have less motivation to learn English. One of the teachers commented as below:

"Our weak students need more efforts to develop their writing skills. Instead of trying their best, they easily give up and do not try further".

Most of the teachers believe that they work hard to focus on all the students in the classroom. They also try to motivate the students. Still, the students who don't get motivated. At that point, they do not know what else they could do to motivate those learners to practise writing. One of the teachers said,

"I conduct my lessons in a well-designed classroom and I always plan for my writing classes. sometimes, I feel I don't know what to do extra for the slow learners in my classroom".

Slow learners have some common issues that interrupt their writing development to many extents. For example, most of them do not know how to plan before starting to write about the topic. They also face difficulties to organize their works. Many of them know about their difficulty areas but they do not know how to solve them or how to improve their writing. Regarding asking the teacher's help, either they feel embarrassed or they do not know exactly

what to ask. While focus group discussion, they share some issues and difficulties while writing, some of the comments of slow learners are given below:

“I am not good at writing. Sometimes, I get confused about where to start writing on a particular topic”.

“I make spelling mistakes very often”

“I cannot write longer paragraphs or compositions.”

“When I do not finish my writing on time, the teacher says to correct my writing from other students’ copies that she checked.”

The teachers also believe that the lack of student's motivation is hindering students; success in writing.

4.4.4 Assessment in Limited Class Time

In some classes, it was found that the teacher shares the expectations of the writing lessons at the beginning. Before starting, the students know what the teacher expects from that particular writing lesson. Then the students set goals for themselves based on their own writing level. Those students are trained in this way so that they can take the ownership of their writing. The teacher in the classroom shared that she believes that if the students know the expectations and standard for their writing, they can go for goal setting and write looking forward to achieving the teacher’s expectations. Slow learners in that school also shared their ownership for their own learning. They believe that their success depends on their own actions and effort and hard work (Ricci, 2013). The teacher in the classroom shared that she believes that if the students know the expectations and standard for their writing, they can go for goal setting and write looking forward to achieving the teacher’s expectations. Slow learners in that school also shared their ownership for their own learning. They believe that their success depends on their own actions and effort and hard work (Ricci, 2013).

4.4.5 Experts' Opinion to Minimize Challenges

4.4.5.1 Model Writing. The teachers who loves writing and shares their writing journey with students, can inspire the student to a great extent. Modeling is a powerful tool for all the learners in the classroom specifically for those students who struggle to start a writing on their own (Judith, Gould & Mary, 2005). While planning a writing lesson, the teacher should think of a part where he can write and set an example for the students with the criteria and the expectations from the writing. When the teacher writes in front of the students, they can describe the purpose, the audience and the topic of writing. They can also discuss with their students at the same time they write. While modeling writing, the teachers can also write a variety of sentences using different sentence structures such as simple sentence, complex sentence and compound sentence. Thus, the teachers can use modeling to show how to write on different genres and what are the expectations for specific genres (Eggleton, 2010).

4.4.5.2 Motivation for Writing. To motivate the slow learners, the writing tasks need to have a clear purpose so that they get motivated and engage themselves in writing activities. If the students are motivated to write, it leads them to succeed in writing. During classroom observation, the researcher observed that sometimes they tell the students to share their writing to the whole class. For example, when they write answer to some questions from the textbook, write paragraph and letter. When the teacher asks to share students' writing in the class, they usually choose those students who completed their writing tasks. A few times, slow learners got chances to share their writing. It was also noticeable that slow learners or the back-benchers do not bother to finish their writing task most of the time. Again, the teacher hardly monitored the writing activities and did not notice that many students did not finish their writing. While conducting interviews with the teachers, they were asked about this issue. Most of the teachers had similar answers. They stated that as slow learners cannot complete their writing on time, it is not possible to provide them with the opportunity to share their writing to

the whole class. During focus group discussion, some of the slow learners shared that the teacher do not tell them to read from their copies what they write. They think they are not good at writing and so the teachers choose the good students to read from their copies. One of them commented as below:

“Sometimes, our teacher chooses students to read what they have written. The teacher never told to share my writing. I usually listen to others.”

4.4.5.3 Setting expectations for writing. In some classes, it was found that the teacher shares the expectations of the writing lessons at the beginning. Before starting, the students know what the teacher expects from that particular writing lesson. Then the students set goals for themselves based on their own writing level. Those students are trained in this way so that they can take the ownership of their writing. The teacher in the classroom shared that she believes that if the students know the expectations and standard for their writing, they can go for goal setting and write looking forward to achieving the teacher’s expectations. Slow learners in that school also shared their ownership for their own learning. They believe that their success depends on their own actions and effort and hard work (Ricci, 2013).

4.4.5.4 Differentiated Planning. All the teachers shared about the challenges to teach students who are at different stages of learning and different individual needs. Slow learners often struggle to learn language skills. The teachers mentioned the slow learners as 'Weak students'. One of them said, "Teaching writing skills in a large classroom is difficult and time-consuming. The weak students in the classroom make it even more challenging as they do not want to learn English." Some teachers mentioned particular problems faced by slow learners such as lack of basic knowledge, less motivation and confidence. Several comments revealed that the teachers face many challenges to teach when there are students with different learning needs. Many teachers also do not know how to differentiate planning for writing classes when they can focus on every student and help them in their writing process.

4.4.5.5 Instructional Modification for Writing. Experts suggested some strategies to follow while giving instructions for writing, such as clear instructions with visual cues, check student's understanding, repeat key words while giving verbal instructions, highlight key words while giving written instructions, maintaining eye contact, state decided behavior and expectations from students. If it is seen that the strategies for a planned captivity aren't working for the slow learners, the teacher can change the strategy which can help them in their own ways. Thus, the teacher can try to minimize any opportunities for the slow learners to feel excluded from any lesson. Give them opportunities so that they can participate in their own paces.

4.4.5.6 Scaffolding. Scaffolding helps the struggling learners to get an idea of how to start a new task and complete it step by step (Applebee & Langer, 1983). There are some aspects of scaffolding such as setting goals and expectations for work. For example, before starting a writing task, if the students are aware of the expectations for that specific writing task, it helps the students to plan for the writing accordingly. One of the experts suggest that, "Set a clear purpose for writing and clearly describe the expectations for a specific writing task. It helps the struggling writers to plan for a work from the very beginning".

Slow learners often struggle with how to start their writing especially when they want to write on a specific genre. If they get an idea about the features of that writing, it is easy for them to follow the features from the beginning. To make it happen, the teachers can show sample writing and describe different aspects of it. Thus, the slow learners would get an idea about different genres. Gradually, they would develop skills for specific writing areas.

Scaffolding helps the struggling learners to get step by step instructions and work accordingly. The main goal is to complete any task successfully. In this process, if the teacher provides necessary feedback in every step, it provides the slow learners with every way to

success. In this regard, the expert's opinion suggests the teacher be a facilitator. The teacher can work collaboratively with slow learners to guide them in their journey.

4.4.10.4 Combination of Reading and Writing. Experts opinion suggest introducing linked reading and writing activities. Sometimes, the teachers can assign writing tasks based on students' reading activities. For example, when the teachers introduce a new lesson, at first, they can read the text to the students. Then, the students can read several times. Then the teachers can write some questions on the board based on the text. They the students would write the answers to those questions. Then the teacher can reread the text. This time, the focus may be to develop student's comprehension skills. Then the students can read the text on their own again to get a clearer view. After that, the teacher can tell the students to write a summary of the text. Thus, a combination of reading and writing activities can engage the students more in classroom activities. The students also develop both reading and writing skills simultaneously. One of the expert's comments is as follows:

The teachers can combine writing task with reading. After reading a text, provide students with several writing tasks, for example, answering questions from the text, writing about any character or writing the summary of the text. While writing, most of my students read the text several times. Thus, slow learners will get opportunities to reread and write based on the reading from the text.

Chapter Five
Discussion and Recommendations

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

This chapter presents the discussion and the recommendations from the study. The discussion is presented based on the major themes derived from data collected from the study. Similarly, the discussion follows the same sequence as the presentation of research findings. According to the themes, the researcher discussed the major findings. The finding from the study is also compared to the findings of other similar studies conducted in the area of the study. The second portion of this chapter presents some recommendations based on the document analysis and the findings from the study.

5.1 Different Reading Strategies for Slow Learners

‘Reading aloud is a common strategy used by teachers when they conduct classes to teach reading skills in the classroom. The researcher asked the teachers how they teach students to read aloud from any text with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation. The most common answer from the teachers was that they ask the students to read aloud from the textbook and tell them to practise it regularly. In the classroom, the teachers usually choose students to read from the textbook. When they complete reading, the teachers give them feedback based on their reading proficiencies. In the primary curriculum (2012) of Bangladesh, one of the terminal competencies for the primary students is ‘to read aloud texts with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation’. Through the ‘read aloud’ strategy, the teachers also aim for their students to practise reading with proper pronunciation. Tankersley (2005) from her 28 years of experience in the area of teaching reading, also suggests starting a language learning class every day with the activity ‘Reading aloud’ for 10-15 minutes. The main reason for starting a class with reading aloud activity is that the struggling readers in the classroom benefit a lot from it. When the struggling readers hear modelled reading by the teachers and they follow the reading of their teacher, it helps them to a great extent to develop their reading competencies.

Silent reading is another commonly used reading strategy that the teachers use in the classroom. In the curriculum at the primary level, one terminal competency is ‘to read silently with understanding paragraphs, stories and other text materials’. In the classroom, the teachers also arrange the activity to read silently. Some of the teachers set some target for students when they ask them to read silently. For example, the teachers ask students to read silently and answer questions on the text. Sometimes, the teachers ask students to find difficult words from the text and to write down those words to practise later. Thus, the teachers give instructions to students to learn vocabulary in context. When the teachers provide instructions for the time and link some activities with silent reading, it helps the students to be more engaged while reading silently (Siah & Kwok, 2010). Another key to silent reading activity is teacher mentoring. Teachers need to monitor student's silent reading and make reading recommendations. The teachers need to monitor those students closely who has less motivation for reading. Sometimes, additional support is necessary for struggling readers to encourage them to use the 'silent reading' time wisely (Lee, 2011).

Pair reading is another strategy that is used in language learning classrooms at the primary level (Eggleton, 2010). While reading, if the partners share their ideas and thoughts, it can develop their understanding from reading and thus progress on reading skills (Calkins, 2015). For the struggling readers, if the teachers read with them to help them practice their reading skills, it can be a good example for other students. The other students in the class would be motivated to work as a pair with the struggling readers. Thus, the teachers can encourage them to work with the slow learners and support them while pair reading.

Pair reading can also be arranged as an extra reading practice in the one-to-one situation for weaker readers. If the teacher makes pairs a weak reader with a strong reader and tells them to practise reading together, the strong reader can play the role of a tutor and help the weak reading during the reading session (Topping, 1989). Sometimes, the teachers should monitor

the pair reading to encourage the pairs to work with cooperation and collaboration. When the students practise reading in pair outside of the classroom, the teacher can also provide the guidelines and adequate stimulation to make 'the pair' reading successful to develop reading proficiencies. Some pairs may need further individual demonstration and prompting to use the technique successfully.

Group reading can be considered an excellent strategy to create a joyful reading environment (Wilson, 1982). But the activity should be monitored by the teachers to ensure that the students are using the group reading time consciously. The students should be encouraged to help each other to develop their reading proficiencies. The struggling readers can get support from fluent readers when they work collaboratively in a group. During the teachers' interviews, some of the teachers mentioned that they allocate students to groups based on students' education level and friendship. Engagement in reading activities is a stronger predictor of reading achievement for students (Sailors & Kaambankadzanja, 2017). While reading in a group, the students can work collaboratively and actively engage themselves in reading activities.

Chorus reading practice helps the readers who still need to develop fluency in reading (Tankersley, 2005). Students usually like reading in chorus. The teachers can also arrange the chorus reading in different ways. For example, students can read in chorus in different ways, such as in small groups, large groups or the whole class together. Again, the students can be asked to read by rows or by gender to make the chorus reading engaging and joyful. Chorus reading is also very helpful for struggling readers who feel embarrassed and shy while reading aloud. For those students, chorus reading is a great way to practise reading without embarrassment.

Developing vocabulary is an essential part of developing reading skills. In the English classroom, many students face vocabulary challenges when they read (Nelson, 2008). Many

slow learners also have a vocabulary level below the grade level that affects their comprehension and understanding while reading any text. The teachers use different strategies to develop students' vocabulary level. For example, using flashcards and using a vocabulary chart can help those learners who need visual cues. Using word games to enlarge a student's vocabulary is a popular way. Playing games with new words can encourage the students to play and learn simultaneously (Doemel, 1970). The teachers can also foster student's conceptual knowledge incorporating movement and gesture with vocabulary lessons (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013). Tankersley (2005) also suggests the teachers encourage and motivate students to experiment with words and teach them the strategies for word-learning.

The development of reading fluency can be stimulated by the development of accuracy and speed of oral reading (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Many teachers think that fluent reading leads to reading faster. But the meaning of fluent reading is far broader than reading faster. The developmental process of fluency in reading depends on building decoding skills that lead to reading comprehension. Building and extending vocabulary and oral language skills are necessary to develop fluency gradually (Tankersley, 2005).

5.2 Different Writing Strategies for Slow Learners

While teaching writing, the teachers must take into consideration the additional support for slow learners and other struggling writers in the classroom. During classroom activities, the teachers should keep a close eye on them to see if they are showing any sign to get help (Mccardle, et al., 2018). While writing sentences with given words, sometimes slow learners copy from the textbook instead of using their own words. To help them to make sentences and extend their growth in writing, the teachers need to know the difficulties they are facing. Experts suggest building a good rapport with those learners so that they can share their difficulties and ask for help. Teachers can motivate the slow learners to share their ways how they learn. In this regard, the teachers can take the initiatives to understand the difficulties of

slow learners by observing and monitoring them closely. If the teacher can understand why they are making errors, it is possible for the teacher to work on that particular area to develop growth in writing. Besides, when the teachers teach the students how to make different types of sentences, they can check slow learners understanding so that they do not struggle later when they are asked to make sentences with given words or phrases (Nan, 2012).

Punctuation is an important tool while teaching writing to the students. The teachers can teach the students how to use different punctuation marks to separate words, phrases, and sentences. We need to teach punctuation for the weaker students to feel confident while writing (Gorlewski & Heveron-Smith, 2012). The teachers need to teach students sentence construction skill and help them to include sentences of different patterns. It is also necessary to motivate the slow learners and struggling writers to work on their handwriting, punctuation, spelling and grammar (Graham & Harris, 2016). In mini-lessons, the teachers can reinforce punctuation and spelling with explicit instruction on developing these skills that make students more conscious while writing (Hickey, et al., 2016).

Many slow learners and struggling writers are less motivated for writing. Experts suggested using different strategies and plan to do something different in the classroom so that students get motivated for learning (Bunn, 2013). Writing materials make differences in what and how students will write. For example, simply changing the shape of paper or the colour of the pen can make a difference. Sometimes during writing lessons, the teachers can give students a piece of white paper, lined paper or colored paper instead of telling them to use their writing books. Thus, the teacher can start a writing lesson in a different way to motivate the students and engage them in writing. These little things can make differences in writing lessons. Again, for publishing writing, teachers and students can make simple books by stapling some papers together. After publishing their writing pieces, teachers can display those books of each student somewhere in the classroom. Thus, the teachers can find different ways to celebrate the writing

of students in the classroom. While classroom observation, the researcher found that the teachers displayed the writing pieces from good writers. Experts opinion suggest the teachers give importance to each of the students' work. When the teachers display all of the students' writing pieces, the weak writers get motivated. They may get a feeling that their writing is also worth getting important by the teacher. Thus, they may develop motivation for enhancing their writing skills and writing better in future.

Publishing students' writing is another way to motivate them to be a writer. When the students get opportunities to publish their writing and present it to the audience, it can enhance their motivation to a great extent (Olson, et al., 2015). It is not a difficult task. When the students develop a writing piece on their own choices through free writing activities, they can easily make any handbook with paper and publish their writing. After publishing, when they read their own writing, it develops their love for writing.

In order to conduct a good and interactive writing lesson, the teacher needs to be thoughtful while selecting teaching-learning strategies and writing materials. The strategies, instructions and resources should be related to the topic of the writing lesson (Harris, et al., 2013). If students get involved in writing in such a way they become confident about their writing skills and become enthusiastic, they will love to share what they write in their writing lessons. They may think of themselves as authors which leads them to be more engaged during lessons. The deep involvement of writing, sharing and perceiving themselves as an author; these things are connected to each other that can help students to improve their growth in writing to a great extent (Calkins, 1994).

During classroom observation, it was seen that the teachers ask good writers to share their stories with others in a group or with the whole class. Slow learners rarely got chances to share what they wrote on a given topic in the classroom. Most of the time, slow learners and other struggling writers were seen not to complete their writing task. Experts opinion suggest

focusing more on the struggling writers and monitor their writing activities. There are some students who have the intention not to complete the assigned writing tasks. Experts suggest the teachers using scaffolding strategies for them so that they get step by step instructions on how to complete their writing (Denny, 2018).

The teachers cannot provide the opportunity to every student in the class to share writing every day. But, they can develop a system to hear from everyone by rotation or using any other tricks. Listening to student's writing and discussing, is an important element of teaching writing (Calkins, 1994). The teacher can be a good facilitator listening to the student's writing with patience and providing them with the necessary feedback to improve their work. Thus, the teacher can help students to foster writing skills. Listening to all the student's writing has other benefits too. It helps the teachers to know which students are writing better and who are struggling. Thus, the teacher can take the initiatives to support those students who are struggling.

5.3 Challenges and Suggestions to Teach Reading Skills

Teaching students with reading difficulties is extremely challenging. Many slow learners have reading difficulties associated with deficits in cognitive abilities and language. In this situation, it is even more difficult for the teachers to teach them how to develop their reading proficiencies. Further, their lack of confidence and less motivation for reading may also interfere with their learning. Although there are many examples of slow learners who successfully learn to read, most of them need additional support to develop basic reading skills and achieve reading goals.

Reading research has advanced remarkably in recent decades as thus we have learned how to assist struggling readers to lead them to the way to success and become good readers (Allor, et al., 2009). From the present study, it was found that many slow learners find it difficult to understand the questions from any passage especially when the topic is not familiar

to them. Similarly, they also struggle to find answers to the questions. Facing difficulties to find answers to the questions from a reading material is a common phenomenon for many struggling readers (Tankersley, 2005). The teachers need to make students understand that reading is thinking, they need to develop their thinking skills to build their comprehension skills. Many experts suggest the teachers motivating the struggling readers to process their thinking before they can comprehend the text with meaning. While reading, the teacher must teach the struggling readers how to monitor comprehensions consciously. To process text and understand, they have to develop their thinking strategies, self-questioning techniques. They can break the text into measurable units and process the understanding and then proceed to further read (Tankersley, 2005).

Reading aloud is a common strategy that the teacher usually uses in the classroom. After the teachers read aloud to the students, they usually choose students to read aloud from their textbooks. The teacher chooses fast readers or fluent readers for the activity. Slow learners who are also weak readers get very few chances to practise reading through reading aloud activity. It makes them even more backward regarding developing reading skills. As language learning largely depends on developing the basic skills of the language, slow learners need to practise the specific skill regularly. Here, it is notable that the slow learners also need to practise reading skills under the guidance of the teacher. To speak the truth, they even need more opportunities to practise reading in the class. Because, to develop a skill, slow learners need more practise and more rehearsing of the skill.

Slow learners sometimes need support to develop decoding strategy. The teachers can use appropriate texts to coach decoding strategy and build reading speed. Using repeated reading strategy is considered as one of the useful techniques for struggling readers. Repeated reading is another strategy that can help struggling readers to develop their fluency in reading

(Pikulski & Chard, 2005). So, the teachers need to provide instructions with instructions for rereading that can support the struggling readers to a great extent (Roskos, & Neuman 2014).

The slow learners and weak readers need more engagement in reading activities. To make students more active, experts opinion suggests using multiple teaching-learning strategies and techniques. For example, while using the 'reading aloud' or 'silent reading' strategy, the teachers can link other techniques, like, 'asking questions to make the students more engaged to the reading. When the students would know that after reading, the teachers would ask questions from the text, they would be more focused while reading. It may also lead them to reread some parts of the text if necessary. Thus, the students especially the struggling readers would be more focused on reading.

There are some other activities suggested by the experts and the researchers that can lead students to reread the text and develop a deeper understanding of it. The teachers can pause reading at different key points and ask the students to summarize what is read so far. Different students would share different perspectives. The teacher can take some notes and write those on the board. Then they can tell the students to write down those notes from the board. Thus, if the teachers continue reading following this method after a regular interval, it is easy to draw a summary of the reading. In this case, the students will have a deeper understanding of a text read in the class (Tankersley, 2005).

Some findings from the study also reveal that many slow learners struggle to pronounce words correctly. Therefore, they lose their confidence to read. Some of them struggle to read even the title of a specific text. But the title of a text is read by the teachers many times in the classroom. So, listening to a word pronounced correctly is not only the way the students can learn correct pronunciation. They need to practise pronouncing difficult words, above all practise reading regularly. In the curriculum, there are some terminal competencies for primary level students. To achieve those terminal competencies, the students need to learn to read the

names of the days of the week, the months and the time. For struggling readers, practising reading on their own does not work all the time. The teacher-guided reading is necessary for them until they develop the strategies to guide and assess their writing progress. can guide them to practise pronouncing difficult words from the text. When they would develop the isolated words to pronounce correctly, they would develop confidence. Then the teacher can also guide them on how to read long sentences and paragraph carefully.

Effective early reading interventions in necessary for struggling readers at their early age. Because, reading difficulties and vocabulary gaps developed at an early age may prevent the readers from performing well later in life (Tankersley, 2005). Similarly, if the learners do not develop strong decoding skills at early grades, they may develop reading difficulties and become struggling readers. Typically, many slow learners with low IQs, require reading interventions in oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. For some time, we have known that slow learners are capable of learning isolated skills, such as sight word recognition and basic phonics. So, the teachers need to teach the struggling learners to practise and apply those skills in context. In other words, when slow learners are taught explicitly and carefully, most of them can develop basic reading skills (Allor, et al., 2009).

The teachers opined that many slow learners have lack motivation for reading. They teach them different reading skills in the classroom but they do not practice reading at home. Many experts suggest the teachers motivate the students to read regularly. Maintaining a reading log can help teachers to facilitate students' motivation in reading, build up their stamina to read longer and make students more engaged in reading (Tankersley, 2005). If teachers keep running reading records and find out students' reading problems, sometimes they can arrange for small group support or one-to-one support if necessary.

5.4 Challenges and Suggestions to Teach Writing Skills

Helping the students to become good writers is not an easy task. When it comes to developing the writing skills of struggling writers, it is even more challenging. The teacher needs to establish a friendly and enjoyable writing environment where all the students get support as they need and the teachers use differentiated planning for the writing lessons (Graham & Harris, 2016). The writing activities, instructions and assignments should be aligned with the students' writing levels and interests.

To keep records of writing progress, both the teachers and students can fix goals for a new writing unit or for writing on a specific genre. If the teachers share the goals with students verbally and in a written form, the students would know the expectations for writing. Similarly, the student can set goals for themselves according to the expectations from their teachers. Thus, setting goals can help both the teachers and the students. For the teacher, it would help them to keep track of students' progress. Similarly, the students can keep a track of their progress based on their personal goals. The teacher should have specific criteria and a clear vision of what they want to teach (Calkins, 2015). According to the vision of writing lessons, the teacher can guide the students to set their individual goals. Again, there must be some students who would struggle to set their specific goals. The teachers should provide them with additional support to give them ideas to set their own goals. For example, the teachers can have conferences with the students who are struggling to set their specific writing goals. During the conversation, the students would be encouraged to share their difficulty areas they should improve on. When the teachers know about the difficulties of the students, they can guide those students accordingly. Thus, through the conference, the teacher can help the struggling writers to identify their strengths, weaknesses and difficulties and set their individual goals for writing lessons (Wilson & Murdoch, 2008).

When the students both good writers and struggling writers know what is their next step to work on, it is the stage when the students are ready to improve the writing skills and work toward the expectations of grade level. Empowering students to ask questions is a challenge for the teachers. But if they can do it, they are in the right way to do the best for their students. The student including slow learners in the classroom can also do their best for writing when they can ask the questions “I have done this.....now what should I do?”. This is a stage of learning when students become independent learners. In that stage, the role of the teacher is to help them to set goals for the next step for their writing.

It is also true that empowering the slow learners to reach in this situation is not an easy task for the teachers. The teachers can arrange writing conferences with them to know their strengths, weaknesses and difficulties. The weak writer may also take time to open up and share their writing difficulties. To help them in that stage, the teachers can provide those students with guided questions. The guided questions can help the struggling writers to ask students to themselves to improve their writing. But it is not easy to create such an environment when students are independent learners and can take ownership of their learning. The teacher needs to have patience and invest enough time to create the situation. The teachers would provide the students with enough guidance to choose their own goals and ways to succeed in writing.

When the teachers have enough background knowledge about the students in the class, they can help them in many ways. Based on the students writing level, students can get support to improve their present level of writing and move further. Here, the teachers also need enough expertise and training on how to scaffold students writing and provide them with step by step instructions to become successful writers. Experts suggest providing students choices for writing when they have 'free writing' lessons. All the time, the teachers should not choose topics for the students. During writing sessions, the students may have their own choice of writing topic, but the teachers can support them in other ways. For example, when the students write,

teachers can teach them different sentence structures and how to use sentences of different categories to make their writing meaningful and interesting (Gibbons, 2005). Providing writing rubrics can help the students to check their writing according to the expectations from their teacher. For struggling writer, the teachers can give them writing tools such as graphic organizers to plan their work and work accordingly. Similarly, struggling writers need guidance on how to scaffold their writing and develop strategies that can guide them in their writing process. Thus, the teachers can be facilitator leading the students to their way of success and grow as writers (Calkins, 2013).

In English language classroom where there are a large group of students from different educational levels, background and needs, the teachers may face a series of problems to address the needs of all students. The struggling learners may also face difficulties to develop language skills if they do not get the support they need. The experts and practitioners suggest some strategies that the teachers can use based on the needs of students in their classrooms. In a large classroom, when the teacher cannot have a one-on-one session with an individual student, the experts suggest using the scaffolding strategy for the small groups. Scaffolding can be provided through the instructions for the lessons, classroom activities and learning materials. The groups can be formed with students of similar educational level and needs. The instructions for scaffolding can be provided based on the educational level and needs of students in groups. Thus, the teacher can apply differentiated planning for the groups so that the students in a group get the explicit instructions and support they need. To apply scaffolding and differentiated planning for writing lessons, the teachers need to think about some issues that may arise while group activities. The teachers need to determine possible difficulties that the students may face while planning for a new writing task. They also need to predetermine the strategies that may be helpful for those writers who struggle to overcome the challenges they face. Both motivation and instructional scaffolding helps struggling learners to focus on writing (Carillo, 2017). The

teachers can use motivational scaffolding for good rapport building with students and motivate them to share the difficulties they face while writing. Thus, the teachers can understand students' difficulties areas and help them according to their needs.

The teachers can do a better job for the students when they know their students very well. When the teacher plan for the lesson knowing the student's education levels and background, that plan works better. Students get encouraged to work when they are given preferences for any classwork or homework (Connell, 2005). While writing, the students get fascinated and engaged when they are provided with the choices and ownership over the writing. Thus, they can learn through their preferred learning styles (Hickey, et al., 2016).

Teachers can help and motivate students to come up with clear and specific learning goals and develop their self-assessment skills. If it happens, the students would be able to assess their progress towards achieving those goals. Calkins (2013) also suggests helping each student set up, develop, celebrate their personal goals. After the students have their goals, it is necessary to work towards achieving those. The teachers have a vital role in making sure the students are working towards achieving those goals. For gathering evidence, a teacher can go through student's writing copies, notebooks or writing folders. (Calkins, 2013). Help students to develop the quality of their writing. The teacher can tell the students to write reasons, facts and evidence to support their writing (Graham & Harris, 2016). In the writing process, the students can work collaboratively and get suggestions from each other to plan, make the draft, edit and revise their writing to make a good writing piece. Another important thing is to use reinforcement to foster student's learning in many ways (Carillo, 2017). Praise and positive statements on the students' performance, demonstrations of concern and empathy for students can help to motivate students to try at their optimal level.

5.5 Recommendations

Regarding the teaching-learning practices of the English language to the slow learners in mainstream classrooms; the findings from this study are worthy of consideration to many extents. The researcher strongly believes that the study will have in-depth impact on emphasizing the teaching-learning strategies that can address all the students in the classroom regardless of their educational levels. The research recommends additional support to the slow learners participating in mainstream classrooms to minimize their challenges in the process of learning English language skills. The researcher also explored a significant number of challenges the teachers have to face while teaching English reading and writing skills to slow learners in regular classrooms to develop proficiencies and capabilities in these skills. Based on the challenges faced by the teachers' and students' perspectives, the study provides some recommendations to improve the teaching-learning quality while teaching slow learners in regular classroom settings. Besides, some recommendations might be considered as necessary while reviewing the National Educational Policy, the National Primary Curriculum, the teacher's guide and the teachers' training manuals at primary level. The followings are suggested as recommendations based on the data from this study.

1. Slow learners may need additional support to succeed to achieve their educational goals.

Some findings from the study may draw our attention to the fact that a large number of slow learners are mostly being ignored to get the extra support that they deserve. This situation increases the possibility of widening learning gaps that may result in drop out in future. The teachers in the classroom must be aware to pay more attention to the slow learners and their activities while conducting lessons. The teachers need to find out ways to create opportunities for the slow learners to succeed, considering all the circumstances including limited class time and insufficient resources.

2. The government should take initiatives to link the teachers with professional organizations that can help them with the necessary information, learning materials and strategies to conduct the classes in an inclusive approach.
3. The teachers should get the training on conducting classes in an inclusive approach. Because, the teachers need to address the students from different education levels to ensure their learning practices and develop necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes.
4. It is known that in a regular classroom setting, there are students who have different learning styles and educational needs. Therefore, it is also necessary to provide training to the teachers on the ways of using differentiated planning for the classes considering all the students in the classroom. English teachers should be provided with the skills to prepare differentiated planning for the classes, so that they can create opportunities for all students in the classroom to practise the skills of the English language.
5. The teachers, head teachers, students and the related concerns, all should develop and nurture a positive attitude towards the slow learners.
6. The teachers should motivate all the learners in the classrooms to work collaboratively and cooperatively with each other irrespective of slow learners or not. If so, the slow learners would get more opportunities to interact with peers and learn from each other in a friendly and joyful classroom environment.
7. The Government of Bangladesh and the respective concerns should introduce a close monitoring system to ensure a quality teaching-learning process in the English language learning classrooms. The school authority should also closely monitor on the teachers who are conducting English language classes, as the national curriculum of Bangladesh at the primary level recommend communicatively teaching English.

8. The teachers who teach English at the primary level should be provided training on developing the basic skills of the English language as a part of teachers' professional development.
9. The national primary curriculum has an objective to help students to address the needs of real-life situations. It is mentioned to introduce the topics such as announcements, instructions with or without signs and medical instructions. So, the students can read and understand commands and instructions and follow them accordingly. To fulfil the objective in the curriculum, that students should be provided with instructions about developing English language skills and practice the skills in a real-life situation.
10. Reading helps in many ways in creating a pathway to develop writing proficiencies. But writing is considered more important as the evaluation system mainly focuses on writing skills. So, it is recommended that reading skill should be included in the evaluation system along with the writing, so that the students, teachers, parents and school authority would provide more emphasis on it. The head teacher, class teacher, parents and students should be motivated to focus on the English language and the basic four skills of the language rather than studying English for obtaining marks in the examinations.
11. Integration of technologies and digital tools might be used to engage students in practising language skills, keeping in alignment with the textbook. Different apps, websites, online books and journals, are some examples for students to read online under the guidance of their teacher and parents. English classes can be conducted in a multimedia friendly classroom, where the teachers can incorporate digital materials to make the classroom more enjoyable and engaging.
12. Language learning is a life-long process. So, we cannot only be confined to the acquisition and development of reading and writing skills in the classroom. Students need to use and develop their reading and writing skills for different purposes and in different ways in their

wide range of life spheres. A variety of sources and materials should be available for the learners such as; school libraries, public libraries, access to reading and writing materials in the electronic media that can stimulate their language learning skills. So, the national language learning policies and strategies should focus on creating a culture of reading and learning at the community level (Hanemann, 2015).

13. In the National Education Policy of Bangladesh, Primary education is considered an important stage to build up the basic skills of students. There are also instructions to take necessary steps from the very beginning, in order to ensure the development of English language skills. But many students, especially slow learners struggle to master the basic skills of the English language. So, the government of Bangladesh should take further steps to ensure for the students to develop basic competencies in English language skills and the teachers should support the students to achieve the goal.
14. There has been considerable concern that many teachers have lack of knowledge and adequate preparation on how to teach reading and writing skills. Besides, how to prepare differentiated planning while teaching reading and writing to make adaptations for weaker students, it can draw attention from the national policymakers for changes in the primary teachers' training manual including more instructions and resources for teaching reading and writing skills of English language.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

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The researcher conducted a qualitative study in the area of teaching English language skills to slow learners at the primary level in Bangladesh. The study was conducted in the Netrokona district of the Mymensingh division in Bangladesh. The researcher intended to investigate how the teaching-learning activities are being conducted while teaching reading and writing skills in the English language classrooms at the primary level. In this research, it was a major focus to study how the teachers are focusing on the slow learners and addressing their needs while conducting activities to teach reading and writing skills of English language. Through the literature review, the researcher also described some good practices and strategies of teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners in language learning classrooms around the world. Many practitioners aim to find out the best strategies considering the students in the classroom for creating a good teaching-learning environment where students can be motivated to engage themselves spontaneously in the classroom activities. Similarly, the research aimed to explore the strategies used by the teachers in Bangladesh while teaching reading and writing skills of the English language at the primary level. The researcher also intended to explore the challenges the teachers usually face when they teach the above-mentioned language skills to slow learners. The current study intended to explore challenges in this area both from the teacher and student's perspective.

While conducting the research, the researcher collected data through classroom observations, focus group discussion with students, interviews with teachers and experts. The researcher also administered the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (Fifth Edition), a standardized IQ testing tool, to measure the IQ of students to identify slow learners in the classroom. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to determine the sample for the study. After selecting respondents, the researcher visited the selected schools for the study and collected data from

the schools. After analyzing data from school, the researcher found the strategies and challenges in the area of teaching reading and writing skills to slow learners. Then the researcher interviewed the experts selected for the study. The major challenges were shared with the experts and they were asked to give their opinion on how to minimize those challenges.

This study may provide a road map for teachers and other concerns in the school, administrators and parents who were looking for effective and reliable strategies to boost language learning activities in the classroom (Hobert, 2013). Findings from the research would help the teachers' community to engage themselves to find out best practices for their classroom so that they can reach all the students and address their needs within limited time and resources. Besides, this study may contribute to the field of education and research of students from diversified groups to support inclusion in the classroom in terms of theoretical and practical aspects. In respect of the theoretical aspect, this study broadens our understanding of the concepts to use differentiated planning and multiple teaching-learning strategies that can reach every individual and address their learning needs to a great extent. Regarding the practical aspect, some strategies were suggested by the experts and practitioners to teach reading and writing skills to the slow learners based on the facilities, resources and the context of classrooms in Bangladesh. This initial attempt of the researcher and the experience from the findings might further inspire more researchers to investigate more teaching-learning strategies which can support slow learners in language learning classrooms.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Classroom Observation Schedule

General Information

School's name		Date	
Upazila/Thana		District	
Teacher's name		Gender	
Mobile no		Class	
Lesson no		Lesson name	
Time of lesson start		Time of lesson end	
No of students		Present	
Absent		Observer's name	

Notes on context:

Pictorial views of the classroom setting and some close-up pictures to capture the sitting arrangement of the slow learners.

(File Name _____)

Any other comments on the classroom setting:

Observation Notes:

Time	Teaching-Learning Activities						Teaching-learning materials	Comment
	Reading skill			Writing skill				
	Teacher's activity	Slow learners' activity	Activities of other students	Teacher's activity	Slow learners' activity	Activities of other students		
0-5 mins								
6-10 mins								
11-15 mins								
16-20 mins								
21-25 mins								

26-30 mins								
31-35 mins								
36-40 mins								
40-45 mins								
45-50 mins								
50-55 mins								
56-60 mins								

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After the observation:

In general, the teacher	Circle/Comment
Seemed well prepared for the class	Yes/No/Comment
Moved around the classroom to focus all the students	Yes/No/Comment
Used the appropriate teaching learning materials	Yes/No/Comment
Explained all the instructions in details	Yes/No/Comment
Gave the students feedback after reading	Yes/No/Comment
Used strategies to assess oral language?	Called on individual pupils to repeat phrase/word/sound/ to give brief (e.g., yes/no) response/.....Choral response with signal to repeat phrase/word/sound/ to give brief (e.g., yes/no) responseCalled on individual pupils to give free expression response

Used strategies to assess reading?	Ask children to read aloud individually /Choral reading on signal / Ask comprehension questions/Others _____/None
Explained the topic for writing	By writing the theme on board (With clues/without clues)/encouraged for creative writing/
Gave feedback after writing activities	Verbal feedback/correcting the individual script/whether the teacher confirmed the correction for the slow learners copy
Used the strategies while teaching	Individual work/pair work/group work/presentation/others _____
Involved the slow learners in classroom activities	Yes/No/ comment
Does the teacher involve the slow learners while addressing the classroom?	Yes/No/comment
What did the teacher do when a slow learner gave the wrong response or did not respond at all? (check all that apply)	Call on another child /Provide feedback /Provide remediation-modeling the complete sequence /Provide remediation-analysis (breaking the task down) /Criticize the child/Encourage the child to try again/Ignore the error /Other: _____

Comments: _____

In General, the slow learners	Circle one/more
Seemed to enjoy the lesson	Yes/No/ comment
Seemed to be interested in reading	Yes/No/ comment
Seemed to be interested in writing	Yes/No/ comment
Seemed to engage actively while in group work	Yes/No/ comment
Interacted properly with others while in reading activities	Yes/No/ comment
Interacted properly with others while in writing activities	Yes/No/ comment
Students participated in	Individual work/pair work/group work/presentation/others _____

Comments: _____

Note if there was any particular incident that seemed informative. Also note if the day or class was irregular for some reason. _____

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guideline

School's name		Upazila/Thana	
Teacher's name		Gender	
Class		Date	

Participants in FGD

1		4	
2		5	
3		6	

- Focus Group Discussion Guideline:
- Classroom /Teacher's interaction pattern
- Teacher's Instructions
- Activities done for teaching reading skill
(Individual work /group work /pair work/role play, reading from the textbook, reading from a poster, teach the spelling, punctuation, game/ Others)
- Most-liked activities for learning reading skill
- Challenges while learning reading and writing skill
- Activities done for writing skill
(Individual work /group work /pair work, Teaching Strategies, classroom activities, instructions for writing, teacher help while working individually, type of criteria when choosing the students for working in a group? How do you divide the work in the group? continuous guidance and support while writing activity)

- Most-liked activities for learning writing skill

- Challenges while learning writing skill

- student-teacher interaction in the classroom

- Feedback(Praise/criticize)
 1. How does your teacher help you when you work individually?
 2. How does your teacher help you when you work individually?
 3. How do you feel when working in a group?
 4. What advantages and disadvantages are there from working in a group?
 5. What is your role when working in a group?
 6. Do you find it beneficial to work in groups when doing written activities? Why?
 7. How do you feel when your teacher praises you for a work?
 8. How do you feel when your teacher scolds you?
 9. What usually teacher does to teach the spelling?
 10. What usually teacher does to teach the punctuation?
 11. How does the teacher give you instruction for writing?
 12. Do you provide continuous guidance and support while writing activity in the classroom?
 13. What is the role of reading in learning?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule for Teachers

This questionnaire has been developed for use in a research entitled as **Teaching English Language Skills to the Slow Learners at Primary Level** conducted through the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka. The researcher is giving you full assurance that the information provided in this questionnaire will be confidential, and will be used only for the purpose of the research. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Instruction

- a) Please read the questions thoroughly once and then try to answer them all.
- b) Please put a tick (✓) mark in the box you think to be the most appropriate answer.
- c) Try to be brief and clear in replying to open ended question.

Section: A

General Information

School's name		Upazila/Thana	
Teacher's name		Age	
Gender		Highest Academic Qualification	
Professional Degree		Length of teaching experience as a teacher	

Training experience

Name of the training <input type="checkbox"/>	Year	Duration	Major Activities
CLT <input type="checkbox"/> SESDC <input type="checkbox"/>			

NAEM <input type="checkbox"/> FSSAP <input type="checkbox"/>			
ELTIP <input type="checkbox"/> CPD <input type="checkbox"/> Others			

1. What are the teaching learning strategies do you usually apply while teaching?

2. How do you distinguish among high and low achievers in your classroom?

3. How do you interact with the slow learners while teaching?

4. Do you face any challenge while interacting with the slow learners? If yes, please mention.

5. How these challenges can be minimized?

Reading skill

6. What teaching learning strategies do you usually apply to teach reading skill in English classes?

7. What kind of activities do you like mostly for teaching reading skills in the classroom?

Why?

9. Do you use any additional instructional strategies for the slow learners to teach reading skill in the English class?

Yes No

If yes, please mention the strategies you use.

10. Why do you use these strategies?

11. How the slow learners respond to the activities to acquire the reading skill?

12. What are the teaching materials you usually apply while teaching reading skill for your students?

14. How do you assess the reading skill of the slow learners?

15. What are the challenges to teach the Reading skill to the slow learners?

Writing skill

16. What teaching learning strategies do you usually apply to teach writing skill in the English class?

17. What teaching learning strategies do you usually apply for the slow learners to teach writing skill in the English class?

18. How do you monitor slow learners writing activity? Give an example

20. Do you provide continuous guidance/support while writing? How?

22. How you assess the writing of the slow learners?

24. What is your strategy to motivate the slow learners in writing task?

25. What are the challenges to teach the writing skill to the slow learners?

28. Do you use ICT materials for teaching English in the classroom?

30. What is your opinion about teaching slow learners in the classroom? Are the teachers ready to handle these students?

Appendix D: Interview Schedule for Experts

1. What could be done to motivate the slow learners to become active readers?
2. What could be done by the teachers that would involve and actively engage the slow learners in classroom activities?
3. What motivations for literacy are effective for slow learners across the primary grades (in which they are becoming fluent at reading and producing text)?
4. What are the goals, instructional strategies the teachers should have at the primary level for teaching writing?
5. How do the teachers can prepare differentiated planning for reading and writing lessons of the English language?
6. Please suggest some joyful and effective reading and writing activities for the slow learners.