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Academic Language in Book Clubs

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ACADEMIC LANGUAGE IN BOOK CLUBS

By

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A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts in English as a Second Language

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To my husband, children, and mother for believing in me, my sisters for helping me to push through, and my father for teaching me his KISS method.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction .............................................................................. 8
  Researcher Background ........................................................................ 9
  Role of Researcher ............................................................................. 10
  Guiding Question ............................................................................ 12
  Benefits of Study ............................................................................. 13
  Summary ......................................................................................... 15

Chapter Two: Literature Review ................................................................. 16
  Challenges of English Languages Learners Learning to Read ............ 17
    Limited Vocabulary Knowledge ....................................................... 17
  Limited English Background Knowledge ............................................ 19
  First Language Literacy Development .............................................. 20
  Role of Oral Language in Reading Instruction .................................. 22
  Book Club ....................................................................................... 23
  Benefits of Book Club .................................................................... 24
  Academic Oral Language and Book Club ......................................... 25
  Language Needed to Promote Higher Order Thinking .................... 31
    Questioning and Book Clubs .......................................................... 33
  The Gap .......................................................................................... 35
  Summary ......................................................................................... 35
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Bloom’s Taxonomy for the Cognitive Domain.................................32
Table 2: Three Most Successful Scaffolds that Improved Student Preparation......56
Table 3: Strengths and Weaknesses of Lesson Criteria for Book Clubs...............57
Table 4: Bloom’s Taxonomy Pretest Results..............................................59
Table 5: Bloom’s Taxonomy Posttest Results.............................................63
Table 6: Written Work by Student..............................................................64
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Pretest to Posttest Results.........................................................61

Figure 2: Student Response Log Example 1............................................65

Figure 3: Student Response Log Example 2............................................66

Figure 4: Student Theme Map.................................................................67

Figure 5: Student Solution Evaluation Chart..........................................67
I became interested in student use of academic oral language during book clubs several years ago when I began my journey as a teacher. One day, I sat with a group of four students, two of which were English language learners (ELLS), and just listened to each student talk. The students had a mixed level of abilities when it came to language. Some students were native English speakers, and some were second language learners. I found that one ELL in particular was paying close attention to what the other students were saying, and how they said it. She then would try to formulate her sentences in the same manner as the other students had. It occurred to me that she was using the other students as a scaffold to teach herself how to use language. I began to realize that the book club context could be an excellent manner to teach academic oral language to my students.

The book club context is a time during the school day when “…small groups of three to five students meet to discuss a common reading, including specific chapters from longer trade books, folk tales and picture books, articles, and short stories” (McMahon & Raphael, 1997, p. xii). Book club is part of an overarching reading initiative called Reader’s Workshop (Calkins, 2000). Reader’s Workshop is a structured, predictable time that includes a mini-lesson,
student work time (i.e., book club, independent reading, individual conferences, guided reading, and paired reading), and a share time that gives students the opportunity to discuss any information that they found during the work time that provides a link to the previously taught mini-lesson (Calkins, 2000; Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 2001). Activities begin with a 10-15 minute mini-lesson led by a teacher. Then, students engage in approximately 30-40 minutes of work time where they have the opportunity to practice activities that relate to the mini lesson such as participation in book clubs, independent reading, paired reading, and other literacy rich activities. The final component is a 5-10 minute share time where students share what they worked on either in pairs, small group, or as a whole class.

Researcher Background

I began teaching at a language school in Brazil sixteen years ago. I taught upper elementary and high school students for two years before I came back to the United States to begin my initial licensure program in English as a Second Language. When I completed my licensure, I began work as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in my current district. I spent four years teaching 6th grade English language learners though Reader’s Workshop. I currently teach in a different school in the same district as a 4th grade general education teacher.

During these past 11 years, I have attended levels 1, 2, and 3 Reader’s Workshop district training. Reader’s Workshop is an integrated literacy model, which involves students both as readers and as writers. The model focuses on strategy instruction to help students use a variety of ways to gain a deeper
understanding of text. My hope is that the model will improve academic oral language proficiency of my students.

Role of the Researcher

Administrators in my district provide ELL services based on Friend and Cook’s collaboration model (2000). The model is grounded on the principle that successful ESL programs in the United States are those that combine nonnative speakers of English with native speakers of English whenever possible. This allows both the general education teacher and the ESL teacher to work collaboratively to better educate both ELL and general education students. The district currently uses the inclusion setting presented by Friend and Cook (2000) for ESL teachers to service ELLs. Inclusion, defined by the above-mentioned authors, is the belief that all students, regardless of culture, language, disability, or other reasons, bring value to the classroom. All students can learn from one another, and no one student should be excluded because he/she is seen as different. Within the inclusion model, two teachers have the opportunity to present materials and re-teach concepts to better serve the diverse needs in the classroom.

Co-teaching has several different models from which teachers can choose to better teach their students. Common models include one teach-one observe; station teaching, where teachers work with specific groups for specific purposes; parallel teaching, when teachers group students and essentially teach them the same lesson, but the teacher-student ratio is lowered; and team-teaching, in which both teachers are responsible and share the instruction of all students, be it in a
large group, or facilitating learning in small group settings. Through the collaboration model, students have the opportunity to learn language from each other as well as from their teachers (Friend & Cook, 2000).

My first experience with book clubs and ELLs was eleven years ago, when I was a first-year teacher. I had heard that book clubs could help ELLs think critically about text because they had the opportunity to discuss a common text with their peers. By thinking critically about text, I felt that my students would consequently talk more about books. I was not prepared for what I found—a lack of academic conversation skills in many of my students. Instead of talking with their peers, many talked at them. One student commented about a section of the text, and another disregarded the comment. That student would in turn comment on another section that had little to do with the first comment. And thus, the conversation continued until it was time to move on. I felt that the conversations that many of my students had about books were surface-level conversations.

However, some students were able to engage in a level of student talk, which implied their ability to think critically about text. This allowed them to discuss books at a higher level of thinking. When I began to observe these students, I noticed that they came from a range of linguistic backgrounds, some native speakers and some nonnative speakers. I noticed that many of the successful book club students were able to ask and answer higher order thinking questions during book club, such as, “What solution would you suggest to the main character?” I began to wonder what strategies I could teach my students,
native and nonnative English speakers, to help them engage in student talk which would allow them to ask and answer higher order questions.

As well as promoting higher order thinking skills, book club is an excellent context to promote oral language proficiency (Zwiers, 2011). In the book club context, ELLs are placed in small groups, which affords them the opportunity to practice oral language and learn from each other’s various experiences. Since students practice oral language in book club, the context is ideal to teach higher order question strategies to promote oral language proficiency for my students.

The book club context not only promotes oral language proficiency, but in my opinion, one of the benefits of book club is that it has built in gradual release of responsibility. The role of the teacher is to model strategies for the book club, participate with students, and then withdraw to observe and/or step in to facilitate a discussion. Students not only learn self-sustaining strategies during the book club context, they also learn how to foster deep conversations about books. I was confident that all of my students would be able to reap the benefits of the book club experience.

Guiding Question

The purpose of this study is to examine student talk in book club to determine what strategies can be taught to 4th grade level 3-5 ELLs (according to World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment [WIDA] levels) to ask and answer higher order questions such as application, evaluation, synthesis, and analysis questions. Students who are considered levels 3-5 by WIDA standards
are students who have gained a strong understanding of social language, but continue to need support in the four facets of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to be successful in an academic setting. By studying the strategies that I can use to teach higher order questioning and language skills, I hope to find out whether the strategies are helpful in promoting oral academic language proficiency. I feel that by teaching students how to ask and answer higher order questions, they will be able to think critically about the books they read.

Significant research has been done about book club as a means to raise language acquisition for English language learners (Bartley, 1993; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1997; Brock, 1997; McMahon, 1997, McMahon & Raphael, 1997). However, there is minimal research that specifically addresses questioning in book clubs and how higher order questioning strategies can not only impact oral academic language proficiency, but also contribute to academic achievement. My research will focus on the following research question: After being taught the academic language needed to ask and answer higher order questions, how well are students asking and answering questions?

Benefits of the Study

Book club is an essential element of reading because it helps develop student academic discourse about books. Research suggests that when students can talk about books, there is a potential for an increase in oral academic language acquisition (August, 2003). ELLs need to be exposed to a literacy-rich environment in which students have multiple exposures to text and activities,
which include reading, writing, speaking, and listening to be successful in school (Bartley, 1993; August, 2003; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). One method to provide a literacy-rich environment for students is through book club.

The information in this study will also be of value to general education teachers because an essential part of the reading block in upper elementary grades is book club. Also, many upper-elementary teachers at my school are concerned with the quality and quantity of ELL academic talk. By studying my teaching to raise student talk during book club, I will provide elementary teachers insights into what strategies they can teach ELLs to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. This will provide teachers with a tool to use with their students so the students can talk critically about the books they read.

The information will also be of value to the larger ESL teacher population. In past years, many studies have discussed book clubs as a means to raise comprehension skills in reading, but few have addressed the issue of book club as a method to raise critical thinking skills, and therefore, raise oral academic language proficiency. Since critical thinking is an integral part of reading comprehension, the development of critical thinking skills may increase English language proficiency for skills that ELLs may have developed in their native language. For students who do not have these particular skills developed in their native language, the book club experience may serve as a bridge for ELLs to utilize critical thinking skills for future success. Therefore, as students develop higher level questioning, they will also develop academic language proficiency in
the process, and at the same time, develop the crucial critical thinking skills that is essential for their success. My research will offer insight into this issue.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed my experience with book club, my purpose of the study, and the importance of this study. In Chapter Two, I review the most current research regarding the challenges ELLs face as they learn to read, and the role of oral language proficiency in reading instruction. I also discuss the purpose of book clubs, and how book clubs promote oral language proficiency. I end the chapter with a discussion of the types of questions that students ask and answer during book clubs. Chapter Three will present a discussion of the participants of the study, school context, and data collection methods. Chapter Four will present results from the research conducted in this study. Finally, Chapter Five provides a discussion of the results and makes concluding remarks.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The goal of the study is to determine whether or not the teaching of the language for higher order thinking questions will promote oral academic language proficiency in the book club context. The current chapter will begin with a discussion of the challenges English language learners (ELLs) face when they learn to read. I will specifically address vocabulary and English language structure, limited background knowledge, and literacy development. The second section of the chapter examines the role of oral language in reading instruction. A description of book club as well as the purpose and possible benefits of book club will follow. Then, I discuss oral language in book club and how the book club context can promote academic oral language proficiency. The discussion includes an explanation of what we know about the present use of book clubs to promote academic oral language development. The subsequent section addresses higher-order versus lower order questions, and questioning and book clubs. Additionally, the discussion states the value of book clubs to teach questioning strategies to students. I will conclude the review with a discussion of what strategies I can teach my ELLs in an attempt to promote academic oral proficiency (i.e. more talk) in book clubs.
Challenges of English Language Learners Learning to Read

Current literacy research states that there are three main challenges that English language learners face when they learn to read. These challenges are vocabulary and English language structure, limited background knowledge, and the literacy abilities and experiences in students’ first language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000, August, 2008; Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, & White, 2004).

Limited Vocabulary Knowledge

Limited vocabulary knowledge in a second language is one of the main challenges that ELLs encounter when they learn to read. According to August (2008), oral academic language proficiency has a strong relationship to reading comprehension. In a review of studies, August found that for ELLs, oral language proficiency has a direct impact in the areas of English vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, syntactic skills, and metalinguistic features of the language such as word definitions. Further, August refers to four studies that were completed which specifically focus on vocabulary development (Dufva & Voeten, 1999; Carlisle, Beeman, Davis & Spharim, 1999; Jiminez, Garcia & Pearson, 1996; and Carlisle, Beeman & Shah, 1996; all studies as cited in August, 2008). The studies suggest that when ELLs have limited vocabulary knowledge in English, they in turn have low levels of reading comprehension. Additionally, ELLs who have high levels of vocabulary knowledge in English are better able to understand written text at higher levels.
According to August (2008), second language learners struggle with text comprehension because they generally do not have a large vocabulary, or a complete sense of the language structure of the second language. She suggests that while some vocabulary can be learned through reading, there are more effective methods of vocabulary instruction for ELLs. The methods include scaffolding instruction through discourse, the use of multiple strategies to foster comprehension, and targeted professional teacher development such as the use of technology to enhance student learning, and training teachers on teaching vocabulary and language in the content areas.

Zwiers and Crawford (2011) explain that exposure to new vocabulary words is only a small piece to the improvement of vocabulary. To fully understand language, it is important to use new vocabulary and language structures to engage in authentic discourse. Additionally, the use of new vocabulary through authentic conversations with peers helps students internalize the vocabulary so that they can therefore, increase long-term learning of the vocabulary.

ELLs can benefit from learning vocabulary through direct instruction and authentic discourse with peers. In a study of reading performance between Anglo and Latino fifth graders, Carlo et. al. (2004) designed an intervention to teach students useful vocabulary words in context while simultaneously teaching strategies for understanding language structure and meaning. Students were both monolingual English speakers, and ELLs. The researchers designed an intervention to improve student academic vocabulary. The intervention included
strategies such as the use of cognates to infer word meaning, the use of information from context, and morphology, among others. Researchers found that students who were directly taught the strategies showed greater progress than the comparison group in areas such as reading comprehension and the depth of vocabulary knowledge.

Limited English Background Knowledge

Another difficulty that English language learners face when they learn to read is limited background knowledge (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2000) state that children from culturally diverse backgrounds struggle with text comprehension and concepts because they have had experiences that are different from many of the experiences that the native English-speaking children have had. Since many students who come from different cultures have had different experiences, they therefore have been exposed to and have different background knowledge. Unfortunately, most school reading material is grounded on the assumption that students have the same background knowledge and that the knowledge is common for all children. Therefore, when a student reads a text, the interpretation of the text may be different (or at times non-existent) because of the different experiences that many ELLs have had in the past. This poses a problem when ELLs learn to read because many have different background knowledge compared to their native English counterparts. ELLs struggle not only with vocabulary, but with text comprehension as well. One strategy to address this issue is to front-load material and teach clarification strategies that will help ELLs become successful when reading (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2013). For example, a
teacher could teach vocabulary and also teach clarification strategies such as visualizing what is read and stopping when comprehension breaks down to reread and ask questions.

First Language Literacy Development

A third challenge that ELLs face when learning to read is first language literacy development. According to Peregoy and Boyle (2000), students who are literate in their first language, even when it is a language with a different writing system than English, will be more successful when learning to read in English. The reason why there is a higher success rate for students who are literate in their first language is because those particular students have some knowledge of the function of print and can usually decode and comprehend text in their first language. Therefore, they will be able to easily transfer reading skills into their second language. Consequently, students who are literate in their first language may be able to become literate in their second language at a faster rate than students who are not literate in their first language (Collier & Thomas, 2001).

ELLs begin their educational careers with a wide range of literacy levels and skills. Some students begin school in the United States with a strong first language literacy background, and others have not yet learned literacy in their first language. Since first language literacy can have a profound effect on the rate at which students learn to read and comprehend difficult text, it is imperative that teachers take into account each individual student’s literacy ability and scaffold appropriately during literacy activities (Slavin & Cheung, 2005).
Slavin and Cheung (2005) review research that compares different English as a second language (ESL) programs and the effects on reading comprehension. The authors’ focus is immersion programs (learners are taught in the second language with support from an ELL teacher or bilingual aide to help them cope with the new language), bilingual programs (students are taught how to read in their native and second language), and English-only programs (learners are taught in English with no special provisions for language learning). Results suggest that students who learn how to read in their native language are more successful in school than those who only learn how to read in the second language. Further, students who participate in bilingual programs and learn to read in both languages also prove to be more successful in reading than those who only learn to read in the second language.

In sum, research suggests that there are three main challenges that ELLs face when they learn to read. These challenges are vocabulary and language structure, limited background knowledge, and first language literacy development. Many researchers have found that limited vocabulary in the language of instruction plays an important component in reading instruction (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000; Carlo, et. al., 2004; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; August, 2008; and Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). While vocabulary and language structure is pivotal in understanding text, many of our students have the ability to understand difficult text if they have the opportunity to discuss the text with their peers because they can ask questions and their peers can help them draw connections to their learning. Research has also found that
limited background knowledge plays a role in reading success partially because
school reading is grounded in the assumption that students begin school with the
same background knowledge and many of the same experiences. However, many
of our ELLs do not have the same background knowledge and shared experiences
as their native English-speaking counterparts. On the contrary, many of our ELLs
have had different experiences, and therefore come to school with a wide range of
experiences that are unlike many of their English-speaking counterparts. While I
will not address all aspects of reading in my study, I will concentrate on teaching
the vocabulary and language structure needed for students to ask and answer
higher order thinking questions. This will give students the opportunity to think
more critically about text and use language to engage in authentic discourse.

Role of Oral Language in Reading Instruction

Oral language plays a pivotal role in reading instruction. Research
suggests that there is a strong correlation between one’s oral language and one’s
reading ability (Peregoy & Boyle, 1991, 2000; August, 2008). Early studies in
the correlation between second language reading and oral proficiency have
claimed that ELLs cannot learn to read without some degree of oral proficiency in
English. Researchers believe that reading and writing were separate skills that
were built on the base of oral language (Chu-Chang, 1981; Talbott, 1976 as cited
in Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). However, current research suggests that while
students need some sort of oral proficiency to learn to read in a second language,
the degree of oral proficiency is unknown (Devine, 1988 as cited in August,
2003).
Perego and Boyle (1991) study 57 native Spanish speaking third-grade children who began to learn English after they began kindergarten. Students were tested by using a diagnostic test, and placed into groups according to low, intermediate, and high second language readers. Students were also tested in their oral proficiency with the use of an interactive science lesson. They were rated according to grammar complexity, well-formedness (correct English grammar), informativeness (the amount and quality of responses to specific questions), and comprehension. The results of the study indicate that there were significant differences on all four oral proficiency variables between low and high readers. Students who were considered low readers had low oral proficiency, and students who were considered high readers had a high oral proficiency. The study confirmed previous findings that a positive relationship exists between second language oral proficiency and second language reading. In the case of my ELLs, I have found that in many cases, their oral academic language proficiency impacts their second language reading abilities. However, as students become more comfortable with the English language, their ability to comprehend text at a higher level also increases.

Book Club

Book club is a particular approach to literature-based instruction, and is a component of the overarching reading initiative called Reader’s Workshop. As explained in the introduction, Reader’s Workshop is a literacy framework in a balanced literacy program. Students participate in a 10-15 minute mini-lesson, 30-40 minutes of work time, and finally, a 5-10 minute share time. Book club
occurs during student work time, usually between two to three times weekly (McMahon & Rafael, 1997). In this section, I will describe book clubs. I will address the purpose of book club, and the benefits of the book club experience.

The purpose of book club is to give students the opportunity to engage in conversation about books so that they can learn to talk about them, and gain comprehension skills in the process (McMahon & Raphael, 1997; Calkins, 2001; Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 2001). Book clubs consist of three to six students (students can be grouped either homogenously or heterogeneously based on needs) who meet to discuss a common reading such as chapters from longer books, folktales, picture books, and informational pieces. Students discuss their personal responses to the texts, interpretations of text, character development, themes, points of view, and other story elements (McMahon & Raphael, 1997).

Benefits of Book Club

Book club has many benefits for English language learners, particularly because it provides an opportunity for students to engage in authentic academic language while they read age-appropriate texts at their reading level. The benefit to book club is that through authentic conversations, students have opportunities for higher order thinking in English (Raphael, et.al., 2002). ELLs come from diverse backgrounds, and must learn classroom discourse to be successful in school. Book club affords the opportunity for ELLs to practice oral language acquisition because students are in a small group setting and can practice oral language with their peers. According to McMahon & Raphael (1997) “…book club instruction is contextualized to meet the particular needs of students’
acquiring and developing literacy abilities (i.e., reading and writing) and oral language abilities (i.e., as speakers and listeners in meaningful discussion)” (p. xii). Book club therefore provides a context for ELLs to experiment with classroom discourse in a small group setting where peers can help one another and scaffold learning and language acquisition.

Another benefit of book club is that it helps students gain a strong foundation in literacy skills. In the book club context, students read a text, write about it in literature response journals, and engage in small group and/or large group discussions. The framework gives students optimal opportunity to integrate the various aspects of the language arts curriculum into one context (McMahon & Raphael, 1997). Unfortunately, there is limited primary research in regards to book clubs and their importance in literacy development. However, there is secondary research that discusses the fact (See McMahon & Rafael, 1997; Calkins, 2001; Rafael, et. al, 2002; Ketch, 2005).

Academic Oral Language and Book Club

Book club creates multiple opportunities for students to interact with their peers and teacher, gain a better understanding of the text, reevaluate thinking, and make connections (Brock, 1997; McMahon, 1997; McMahon & Raphael, 1997; Ketch, 2005). The framework provides a time for students to practice classroom discourse in a purposeful manner. In this section I will discuss the manners in which book club can promote oral language proficiency.

Book club designers McMahon and Raphael (1997) feel that there is a need to focus on exploratory language rather than on language of performance.
Language of performance was widely used in earlier reading instruction and is described as a small group meeting time that is teacher-led. The teacher focuses attention on accuracy, fluency, skills, and comprehension questions. Students were often passive participants in the small group setting, and practiced correct reading behavior such as the development of skills and text based comprehension questions. While students were in small group, the focus of the group was to develop reading capabilities, and not to foster an engaging conversation about text (McMahon, 1997).

Contrary to language of performance, book club designers designed book club to, “…provide a social context in which learners value one another’s developing thoughts, provide feedback on one another’s ideas, and revise thinking that was undeveloped or unsubstantiated by texts and personal experiences” (p. 91). Students therefore focus more of their attention on “literate thinking” rather than on reading skills such as fluency, accuracy, and basic text comprehension.

In 1995, Goatley, Brock and Raphael study diverse learners in regular education book clubs. The researchers show that with sufficient time spent in the regular education classroom, ELLs can become proficient both in informal (social) and formal (academic) discourse. Moreover, the researchers show that when in a pull-out setting (students taken out of the regular education setting and taught in a resource room), students’ learning of school discourse is reduced because they are limited to interactions with a teacher and other ELLs. Since the home discourse of ELLs may be vastly different from the school discourse, the researchers show that it is beneficial for ELLs to have as much interaction as
possible with their mainstream peers. It is through this interaction that all students can learn from each other and their varying backgrounds.

The researchers of the above-mentioned study used ethnographic information to conduct their research. They collected data that pointed specifically to classroom discourse. The school was an urban neighborhood school in the Midwest. Students had a range of cultural backgrounds including African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Hispanic. Eighty-five percent of the students qualified for the federally funded free or reduced price lunch program. Participants were five fifth-grade students, two girls and three boys (three students qualified for special services, i.e. Chapter 1, special education, and ELL) from diverse cultural backgrounds. Students had a range of experience with the book club context. Some students had participated in book club in previous years, while others had not participated in book club until the current year. The teacher used a variety of strategies to scaffold learning in book club such as think sheets and reading logs. Students read the book Park’s Quest by Katherine Patterson (1988) while the researchers conducted the study.

The researchers collected data over a three-week period. The authors used various data collection techniques that included interviews and questionnaires to obtain information about how the students perceived their roles within the book club contexts, field notes of the components of book club, and audio taped discussions and transcripts of both book club and whole-class discussions. The researchers also videotaped book club sessions to analyze student expressions and physical interactions. Finally, the researchers analyzed student “response to
literature” work. When analyzing the data, researchers looked specifically for number of turns, as well as the number of times that each student participated. Then, the researchers analyzed data in terms of the type of participation the students engaged in such as negotiating meaning, initiation of new topics, extension of comments, clarifying, questioning, etc., to reveal specific patterns of interaction.

The results of the study are significant in that they suggest that the book club experience fosters the opportunity for diverse learners (ELL and special education students) to engage in many forms of school discourse while they construct meaning of the book. Students in the study were able to practice classroom discourse in an informal setting, and this allows them to practice academic talk without the teacher present (which is important for student learning). The fact that the students were in an informal setting afforded them the opportunity to draw on their own experiences and the experiences of group members to interpret text. The study demonstrates that when diverse students have the opportunity to talk to each other in an academic setting, they themselves can engage in different types of participation and draw on each other’s experiences to learn.

In a dissertation study, Webb (2005) examined three instructional contexts that occur during Reader’s Workshop. The contexts were shared reading, dialogue reading journals, and book clubs. In her inquiry, the author studied five fifth-graders who came from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds in her suburban school setting. The researcher showed that learning opportunities of
diverse students were better sustained by the creation of a variety of instructional contexts and the engagement of active involvement across informal and formal social interactions. Webb’s research questions focus on the manners in which reading is socially constructed in the classroom setting, the interactions between diverse learners and mainstream students, the literate practices of students over time, and the resources and limitations that students experience over three areas of reading (shared reading, book clubs, and dialogue reading journals).

The researcher of the above-mentioned study assumed the role of teacher and researcher in her classroom context. She studied five students who came from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Webb uses the definition of culturally and linguistically diverse learners given by Au (1998; as cited in Webb, 2005) as students who come from low-income families of African America, Asian American, Latino, or Native American heritage, and students who speak another language other than English. Of the five students, four were female, and one was male. Three students identified as being African American, one student identified herself as Pacific Islander, and one student identified as Latino. Three of the five students had also been students of the researcher in the year prior to the study. The students were chosen to participate in the study because of their diverse backgrounds.

Webb collected data over a fourth-month period, from August to December. She chose these early months of the school year because it is during this time that teachers create classroom talk with their students, as well as simultaneously creating the rituals and routines for reader’s workshop. Also, she
used language discourse and interaction as her primary source of data, and the first four months of school allowed the researcher to have completed cycles of both shared reading and book clubs. Her sources of primary data collection included transcripts of audio and video recordings, dialogue reading journals to understand student development of reading, interview transcripts, student questionnaires, field notes that contained anecdotal records and observations of students regarding classroom activities, student logs, and student work that included graphic organizers.

While Webb studies three facets of reading (shared reading, book clubs, and dialogue reading journals), the results pertaining to book clubs are significant because she finds that students who have difficulty participating in shared reading activities find a voice and are more able to participate in book clubs. The book club model allows students to have a voice and discuss text openly with a small group of students. Further, Webb finds that it is through academic oral language (verbal participation in book club) that students review new thoughts and make connections that can draw upon their reading. This allows students to talk about their thoughts to others so that they learn to negotiate meaning. Webb also shows that for students to become successful in school and in the future, they need to have a variety of opportunities to engage in academic oral language during the school day.

Research has demonstrated that the book club experience can be a framework for students to interact with their peers and teacher, gain a better understanding of the text, reevaluate thinking, and make connections (Brock,
1997; McMahon, 1997; McMahon & Raphael, 1997; Ketch, 2005). The above-mentioned studies (Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Webb, 2005) reveal the importance of student talk in book club as a means for learners to better construct meaning and experience different levels of participation.

These studies form a framework for my study because like the researchers, it is important for me to discover how I can teach students to generate more academic oral language through student participation in book club. While there are many studies that address the benefits of participation in book club, it is difficult to find a study that addresses the teacher’s use of questioning strategies to generate student academic oral proficiency. The researchers did not study questioning strategies to generate more student talk, which is what my study will address.

Language Needed to Promote Higher Order Thinking

Teachers use a variety of question types to scaffold student talk. Some questions are knowledge-based and are considered “lower order questions”, and some provoke students to think critically about the world around them and are considered “higher order” questions. In 1956, Benjamin Bloom developed a hierarchy of questions to elicit various levels of student thinking. His hierarchy is called, “Bloom’s Taxonomy for the Cognitive Domain”. Bloom’s Taxonomy consists of six levels, which range from low order (level one) to the highest order (level six) of questions (McCown, et.al, 1996). Table 1 describes the various levels of Bloom’s taxonomy.
**Table 1**

*Bloom's Taxonomy for the Cognitive Domain*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Knowledge</td>
<td>Students recall specific facts, methods, and processes. Responses generally relate to rote memorization such as recalling dates for a history test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Comprehension</td>
<td>The first level of understanding. A student understands the idea of what is being communicated, and can use the idea appropriately. Example: Distinguishing between the various parts of speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Application</td>
<td>Students can use information in new situations. Example: Learning a math equation and using the equation to solve other problems like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Analysis</td>
<td>A student can identify an element and recognize relationships among elements. Example: Students discuss story elements (i.e. plot, characters, theme, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Synthesis</td>
<td>Students weave elements together to create a new “whole”. Example: Drafting an essay or performing a science experiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - Evaluation</td>
<td>Students make judgments based on value. Example: Use criteria to evaluate an argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Questioning is an important reading behavior because it focuses student attention on content and allows students to think critically about text (Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996). It is important for ELLs to learn how to ask and answer higher order questions because the questions are multifaceted. The questions help students make connections to life and, therefore, make for an authentic learning experience. Unfortunately, studies have shown that many teachers ask more lower order questions. Of the average 80,000 questions that
teachers ask in a year, approximately 80% of the questions are knowledge and comprehension based questions. Only 20% of the remaining questions are application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation questions (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2000).

According to Zwiers and Crawford (2011), academic conversations between students build vital critical thinking skills. When students have the opportunity converse with peers and think critically about text, they not only build skills in areas such as evaluating evidence, inferring, and analyzing relationships, but students also learn to quickly process information and respond to unanticipated comments. These skills are vital for students to survive in a democratic society because they will need to negotiate meaning throughout their lives from making simple life decisions such as what to buy, to larger scale decisions such as whom to vote. Moreover, the skills that students use to foster these conversations can be easily transferred into other content areas such as history, science, and mathematics. For example, when a student learns to negotiate meaning within a group and evaluate evidence in one subject area such as in an English class, the student will most likely be able to do the same skill in another content area such as in a history or science class.

**Questioning and Book Clubs**

English language learners need to have many opportunities to talk with their peers so that they can experiment with oral language and classroom discourse. In this section I will address what research says about questioning and book clubs.
Book club can be an excellent context for teachers to teach English language learners how to ask and answer higher order questions because students are in a small group setting and are free to take risks with language. The premise of book club is that a context is created in which students can have meaningful conversations about the texts they read (McMahon, 1997). During discussions students make connections, analyze story elements, synthesize information, and make judgments about the text (which uses the four highest levels of Bloom’s taxonomy) (McMahon, 1997; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995).

In the previously mentioned study by Goatley, Brock, & Raphael (1995), students participate in book club over a three-week period. The researchers found that the students (who were considered diverse learners) participate and talk more in the book club context than in the whole-class setting. Moreover, Mei, an ELL originally from Vietnam, embraced the leadership role and asked a series of critical thinking questions that helped her and her group gain a deeper understanding of the text. Since she had personal connections to the text, she could share them, ask questions of the group, and help synthesize information. Mei’s experience suggests that if students can learn how to ask and answer higher order questions, they may be able to have deeper level conversations about the books they read.

Another reason why the book club context is an excellent context for teachers to teach students to ask and answer higher order questioning strategies is because the students themselves provide scaffolds with each other. Roshensine, Meister, and Chapman (1996) review research on teaching students how to
generate questions. The authors show that the act of question generation does not directly lead to comprehension. Rather, students must evaluate text and combine information to generate questions. It is through this process that students comprehend text. In a small group setting such as book club, ELLs have the opportunity to talk with each other and can therefore scaffold each other’s learning so that they can clarify misconceptions about the text. Since they will most likely ask and answer evaluation, synthesis, analysis, and application questions to clarify text, the context seems ideal for teachers to teach questioning strategies to students.

The Gap

While research suggests the many benefits of book club to raise academic oral language, a current gap exists in the field of ESL and oral language proficiency. Presently, there is a large amount of secondary research that states the benefits of book club in regards to diverse learners. However, limited primary research has been done to address the language success of diverse learners by using the book club model. In my study, I hope to discover which strategies I can use to best teach my students how to have deeper conversations about text so that they can gain the oral academic language needed for their success.

Summary

Research suggests that book club is an excellent context to promote oral language proficiency, and to practice classroom discourse in a small group setting (Bartley, 1993; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Brock, 1995; McMahon & Raphael, 1997). Asking and answering higher order questions is a necessary
component of book club because it fosters conversation. It is only through questioning that students can talk more about the books they read and think critically about the text.

While there is significant research that suggests that the book club context promotes oral language proficiency, I have not found research that specifically addresses higher order questioning strategies to promote oral language proficiency in book club. However, I have seen many teachers struggle with the level of questioning that students ask during book club because many are lower order questions. How can we teach students to ask and answer higher order questions so that they can think critically about text? My study may provide insight into teaching question and answer strategies to promote critical thinking. I hope to discover how asking and answering question strategies help students to talk more about the books they read. It is imperative to teach ELLs how to ask and answer higher order questions so they can fully participate in the book club experience. The specific research question I will address is: After being taught the academic language needed to ask and answer higher order questions, how well are students asking and answering questions?

However, I have not yet found research that directly addresses the connection between students asking and answering higher order thinking questions and if it can impact oral academic language proficiency in book club. Therefore, it is important to study how I can use strategies to teach higher order thinking questions for my students. I believe that students will be able to talk
more about the books they read if I teach them how to ask and answer higher order thinking questions.

In this chapter, I began with a brief discussion of the three challenges ELLs face when they learn to read. These challenges are limited vocabulary knowledge and language structure, limited background knowledge, and literacy development. I then discussed the role of oral language in reading instruction. Next, I described the book club context and the possible benefits of book club. I also discussed oral language in book clubs and how book clubs can promote oral language proficiency. I then discussed higher-order versus lower order questions, and why book club may be the ideal context to teach higher order questioning strategies. I concluded with a discussion of possible strategies I can teach my ELLs to promote oral proficiency (i.e. more talk) in book clubs. In Chapter Three, I will present the classroom context, participants of my study, the materials, and data collection procedures.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study was to understand the extent to which book clubs contribute to oral academic language proficiency. The study specifically examined the extent to which book clubs promote level 3-5 ELLs (according to WIDA results) to think more critically about text by teaching them how to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. These students have strong social language, but need support to continue to progress academically in the four facets of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

The specific research question I address is: After being taught the academic language needed to ask and answer higher order questions, how well are students asking and answering questions?

The study is a qualitative case study using several different tools to collect the data. Data collection methods include: (1) Field notes of all components of book club and my teaching to analyze what students discuss during book club; (2) audio recording of student speech to analyze student talk during book club; and (3) Student written work (i.e. graphic organizers, student response logs, etc.) in response to reading. I will collect data during Reader's Workshop, which includes book club and my mini-lessons. During book club, students will discuss their book in accordance with the mini-lesson. Students will be audio recorded
while they discuss books during each session so that I can better understand the connection between the students’ application of my teaching strategies.

Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. First, the research rationale and description of the design is presented as well as a description of the qualitative paradigms. Second, I present the data collection protocols. Third, I present the data analysis. I conclude with a discussion of ethical considerations.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

The method that I have chosen for my research is a qualitative case study. There are common features that form the basis for my study which also characterize qualitative research. In qualitative research studies, data is collected in a natural real-life setting and through concentrated contact over time. The data collector is the researcher in a qualitative study. Accordingly, the data that is collected is through intense observation and includes mostly verbal data (Perry, 2011).

The type of qualitative study that I chose is a case study. According to Johnson (1992), a case study is a study of one particular case where, “A case-study researcher focuses attention on a single entity, usually as it exists in its naturally occurring environment” (p. 75). Case studies allow researchers to find answers to specific questions because the emphasis is on a particular learner or a small group of learners. The researcher can take into account information such as attitudes, personalities and goals, and how they interact with the specific learning
environment (Johnson, 1992). A case study uses a variety of data collection and analysis methods. My case study used observational field notes, audio recordings of student speech, and student written work. This paradigm was the best choice for my research because I analyzed one case of my teaching a group of six students.

Method

My reason for pursuing this capstone was my continued interest in my levels three through five ELLs oral academic language. Despite their knowledge of English, I found that it was difficult for them to have deep conversations about text. My goal was to teach them specific strategies so that they could have conversations about what they read because “Oral interaction is one of the main avenues for developing critical thinking skills” (Reznitzkaya, Anderson, & Kou, 2007; as cited in Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; p. 15).

In this case study I collected qualitative data on myself as the teacher, and my students. Sources of data included: a) field notes of my teaching and components of book club, b) audio recordings of student conversations during book clubs, and c) student written work.

The first source of data was field notes of my teaching students how to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. These notes analyzed how I modeled and taught book clubs, as well as student success during the mini-lessons. The notes included information about student application of my teaching as well as student and teacher body language and expression. The findings were applied to a
rubric that was then assessed by me so that I could use the information to guide my future instruction.

The second source of data collection was audio recordings of student discussions during book club. Students were audio-recorded using a digital voice-recording pen while they discussed the book. The recordings helped me analyze whether or not students used the strategies I taught them, how they used them, and whether students acquired the oral academic language needed to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. I also transcribed and coded recordings to determine success of my teaching strategies.

The third source of data collection was student written work (i.e. graphic organizers, student response logs, etc.) in response to the reading to determine the effectiveness of scaffolded instruction of higher order thinking questions. Student work was scored using a rubric.

My first task to implement the methodology in the study was to audio record student speech during book club as a pre-test. The information from the recordings served as baseline data to drive my instruction. This allowed me to analyze how students use academic oral language to talk about text. It also told me whether or not students used higher order questioning and when they used it. Then, I taught various mini-lessons that specifically focused on how to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. The lessons included children’s literature so that students could discuss text with the use of question stems to practice oral academic language during the mini-lessons. I used field notes after each lesson to
document my reflections. These notes were applied to a teaching rubric so that I could analyze my teaching of higher order questioning strategies to my students.

After I taught mini-lessons, students met in their book club groups and discussed their books. During this time, I audio recorded my students during their discussions. Their discussions were approximately two to three times a week for approximately ten to twenty minutes per session. During this time, I used a gradual release of responsibility to the students. The discussions began with the teacher scaffolding the questions and over time, I gradually gave students the tools they needed to have meaningful discussions without me as a part of the group. I also observed my students while they talked about books to record gestures and expressions during the discussion because many times understanding can come in the form of a gesture or an expression rather than in the speech. However, some of these gestures and expressions may not appear on a tape. I specifically addressed whether or not students used the strategies that I taught them in the lessons, and how they used the strategies that I taught. I also observed whether or not the use of higher order thinking questions raised student oral proficiency (i.e. whether students talked more about the books they read because they were asking and answering higher order questions). I transcribed and coded the conversation questions based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain.

Finally, I collected and analyzed student work to determine if certain scaffolds (i.e. the use of graphic organizers, reader response log, or think sheets) aided students in asking and answering higher order questions, and consequently, promoted English language proficiency for my ELLs.
Data Collection

Participants

Participants in this research study were a group of six fourth-grade students. Three of the students were ELLs, and three students were native English-speaking peers. Of the three ELLs in the group, one was a native Spanish speaker, one was a native Amharic speaker, and one was a native Hmong speaker. ELL students in this book club were considered levels three and four English language learners according to district levels. Two of the ELLs had been in schools in the United States since kindergarten, and one had been in school in the United States for approximately two years. However, this student attended school in the native country for approximately two years.

The ELLs in this study were reading below grade level by one full grade level when they began fourth grade. According to September Mondo Bookshop Reading levels, these particular students were reading at an early to mid second grade reading level, respectively. Also, these students did not meet standards for the state mandated Grade 3 MCA Reading Test in April of the previous year. Like many ELLs in fourth grade, my students could decode words with relative ease, but had difficulty in clarifying ideas and understanding new words. When they read text, they could give a basic retelling and make general predictions of what would happen next. These students had the cognitive capability to ask higher order questions, but lacked the strategies that would help them scaffold their learning to do so.
Before starting this study, fourth-grade students participated in book clubs according to their reading levels from October 2014 to April 2015. Students practiced working in a group and discussing text. The texts were fiction, historical fiction, and nonfiction informational cards. The texts were chosen based on student interests and reading levels. Students met three days a week with a teacher to answer questions, discuss vocabulary, and discuss strategies such as prediction, summarization, clarification of meaning, and questioning. Teachers and students used graphic organizers and co-created charts when appropriate to help organize student thinking. Some students used post-it notes to make note of any questions they had regarding vocabulary or unclear ideas. Many used post-it notes to mark pages where they had personal connections to the text. Students brought these pieces to group discussion, and used them to help aid in book discussions. The final assessment piece for students in book club was to create a representation of the book they read such as keynote presentation or a visual representation that demonstrates learning through character development and themes.

Setting

The Midwestern urban elementary school in which this study took place was a neighborhood school that services two areas of the city. The students came from a range of cultural backgrounds, which included African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, African, Caucasian, and Hispanic. Of the estimated 900 students, approximately 30% of the student population was English language learners. Furthermore, 33% of the students were Caucasian, 21% Asian/Pacific
Islander, 29% African American, and 12% Hispanic. Approximately two-thirds of the students came from low-income families. This was reflected in the fact that 65% of the students qualified to receive federally funded free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch.

The fourth-grade classroom in which this study took place had thirty-one students. Students ranged in ages from age nine to age ten. The classroom was considered a Language Academy classroom (a classroom in which there are students who have been enrolled in a United States school for less than two years and have a home language other than English) according to district guidelines. There were ten Language Academy students, eight ELL students who had either been in the country for more than two years, or they had a language proficiency of a level 2 or higher, and thirteen native English-speaking students. The Language Academy and ELLs spoke a wide range of languages, which included Hmong, Amharic, Vietnamese, Spanish, Oromo, Somali, Tigrinya, and Karen. Approximately half of these students had been educated in their native language at some point in their lives.

Data Collection: Anecdotal Teacher Field Notes

The first data technique I used was anecdotal teaching field notes. During lessons and book club meetings, I wrote notes about my teaching strategies, student behavior, and interactions during my lessons. According to Freeman, anecdotal notes are a useful manner of data collection because they can help the researcher become aware of learning behavior patterns or themes (1998). Also, effective field notes should be descriptive, contain what people say, include the
researcher’s own feelings and reactions about the observation, and should include interpretations and insights so that the notes can aide in the data that was collected for analysis (McKay, 2006). After I taught mini-lessons and observed the students in my case study, I took field notes to reflect on my teaching practices. The notes included specific language targets, a reflection of my teaching and a reflection of what scaffolds from the mini-lesson were successful and which scaffolds were not successful. This data afforded me the opportunity to revise my scaffolding activities for my mini-lessons for the following lesson.

**Data Collection: Audio Recording of Student Discussion**

The second data collection technique that I used was audio recordings of student discussion during book club. According to Johnson (1992), audio recording is a useful tool when observing verbal interactions because audible speech is recorded and can then be transcribed and analyzed in a number of manners. For my audio recordings, I recorded student discussion over a 7-week period. In all, there were 11 transcriptions total. Each transcription varied in length from ten minutes to twenty-two minutes. I used a pen that audio recorded while I took notes to observe student gestures and expressions. The notes reflected pieces of the discussion that could not be recorded, but that was an important piece to student understanding.

The second step of data collection was to download the student discussions onto a device and transcribe each recording. I then read through the transcripts, identified the instances of students asking and answering higher order
thinking questions from *Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain*, and categorized the instances into subtypes based on Bloom’s Taxonomy.

**Data Collection: Student Written Work**

The third technique for data collection was analyzing student written work. Johnson (1992) distinguishes student written work as part of naturalistic observations because it is part of natural occurring communication in a classroom setting. In the case of my students, I used student written work as a means to scaffold students so that they would be prepared for conversations with their book group. Johnson (1992) also states that scaffolded interaction has the means to promote literacy development as well as encourage L2 (second language) language development. One of the writing assignments that students were given was a reader’s response log that had question starters for students to choose from. This allowed students to write down their initial thoughts as well as questions to ask the group. The second section of the log was “points for discussion” in which there were question stems for students to reflect on to help them elicit questions for the group. Students thought about what they wanted to discuss with their group members, and wrote down questions using the stems. Students completed these logs after reading each section (approximately 2-3 chapters) and came to book group with their reader’s response long so that they could use the information to help them with their conversation about the book.

Besides the use of reader response logs, I used a variety of other graphic organizers to scaffold my students to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. These graphic organizers included theme maps, story strings, cause
and effect graphic organizers, character maps, problem and solution charts, and concept definition maps. Students completed these graphic organizers either alone or with a partner throughout the study. The students then used the graphic organizers to help them discuss the themes and possible solutions to the problems that occurred in the book. I graded student work against a rubric to determine the extent to which the work aligns with findings from the audio and video analysis (See Appendix B).

**Materials**

The premise of *Reader’s Workshop* is that students read a variety of books at their independent reading level from a wide range of genres. During guided oral reading, students were placed in groups according to their instructional level or according to a specific skill, and received reading instruction at their instructional level. They also read “just right” books (books at their level) during both independent reading time and book clubs. When students took part in book clubs, they discussed different aspects of the text such as character development, theme, and solutions to the problem, and learned from each other.

The school has a leveled library in which books are leveled according to the Fountas & Pinnell leveling criteria. The criteria is based on what a reader needs to be able to do at each level in regards to reading accuracy, comprehension, and fluency (2007). The library held multiple sets of books that ranged from an early emergent reader to a fluent reader. Levels ranged from kindergarten to eighth grade. Teachers were free to use the texts to support
reading instruction in the classroom, and most teachers used the books to support guided oral reading instruction.

Each classroom teacher in grades 3-5 had multiple copies of chapter books that related to specific themes in the curriculum. These books were used specifically for book clubs throughout the year. Students were introduced to the texts through a book talk, and they then chose their top three choices. A book talk is a time when a teacher offers 3-4 choices of books for students to read. The teacher gives a brief summary of the beginning of each book so that students can decide if they are interested in that particular book. The students then voted on a book that they would like to read. Ultimately, the teacher placed students into book club groups with an attempt to honor student choices as well as reading level.

**Pre-Test**

The pre-test was given by the teacher using audio recording and field notes to observe student academic oral language during book club. This was done before I taught lessons on higher order thinking questions. I observed student participation in book club, coded questions students asked and answered, and indentified which level the question was in relation to Bloom’s Taxonomy for the Cognitive Domain.

**Reading Selections**

The goal of book club is for students to be active participants in real conversations where students are engaged and can share personal, creative, and critical responses to literature (Raphael, et. al., 2002). During the mini-lessons, I
chose a variety of picture books that were culturally relevant for diverse learners, and were also books that provoked thought and discussion. According to Ferger (2006), language and identity are inseparable. Therefore, by providing culturally relevant texts, teachers give students the opportunity to explore their identities and culture while simultaneously accepting the challenges of reading texts. The books I chose ranged in themes and were mostly either nonfiction picture books about people from a broad range of cultures who have made the world a better place, or they were historical fiction texts with deep thematic roots for students to discuss character development, theme, and also synthesize information. The books were chosen purposefully so that they would help students bridge what they learned in the mini-lesson to their own book club book (See Appendix C for list of children’s literature used).

To have a successful book club, student choice in book selection and text depth is imperative. Students need to be given the opportunity to discuss the text at a deeper level, and with a book that they feel is interesting. The first book club session, students chose one of three texts as a group after I gave a brief summary about each text. Then, students negotiated pages to read according to a calendar. Students read approximately two to three chapters every three days, so that they could then discuss the chapters they read. After reading each section, students completed a reader response log (Appendix A) to help them think about the text and also to prepare questions that they had while reading the text. Students came to the book club meeting with their books, their reader’s response log, and any other work that they completed for the session.
Post Test

The post-test was given by the teacher during the final book club meeting. I audio-recorded student discussions during book club and wrote anecdotal field notes of the discussion to observe academic oral language during book clubs. I then coded higher order thinking questions and responses that students asked and answered. I identified which level the questions and answers were in relation to *Bloom's Taxonomy for the Cognitive Domain*.

Data Analysis

To analyze my teaching of asking and answering higher order thinking questions, I graded my lessons against a self-designed rubric. The rubric included information in regards to a clearly stated language objective, teacher modeling, student participation in discussions, and application of the language objective to their book club discussions. After each lesson, I completed the rubric and made notes to inform my teaching, which I used in subsequent lessons. My specific focus was to gain a retrospective analysis of my teaching and the effect of my teaching on my students’ ability to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. The information from the rubric helped me to guide my instruction for the following lessons (Appendix B).

My second form of data collection was to record, transcribe, and code student conversations during their book club experience. I used a pen that audio recorded while I took anecdotal notes on students. As a pre-test, I recorded student conversation during a final book club meeting that they had before the study began. I then transcribed and coded the conversation to analyze to what
extent the students were asking and answering higher order thinking questions. During the study, I then transcribed the recordings and coded each transcript to analyze what types of questions students asked and answered. Each question had a specific color so that I could better distinguish the level of Bloom’s Taxonomy that the question or answer applied.

The third form of data collection was an analysis of student written work. I collected all of their work, which included a student self-assessment. I then used a rubric to analyze their work based on completeness and accuracy of information, their use of work to help have conversations, whether students were able to incorporate the language structures taught in mini-lessons into their written work, and if students added evidence from the text to support their thinking while they completed assignments.

Verification of Data

Verification of data was ensured by the means of data triangulation. Multiple manners of data collection were used to verify validity. Freeman (1998) states that, “Data triangulation makes use of several sources of data” (p. 97). The data collection can take on many forms, which includes but is not limited to; student writing samples, anecdotal assessments, and speech analysis. The forms of data collection in this study were; (1) Teacher field notes of teaching strategies (graded against a rubric) that included teacher perspective on student learning, (2) audio recordings of student conversations, and (3) Student written work.
Ethics

This study employed the following safeguards to protect participant’s rights: (1) Research objectives were shared with participant parent/guardians. (2) Written permission was obtained by manner of a Parent Letter of Consent. Parents kept one copy for themselves, and one copy was signed, dated, and given to the researcher. Translations were made for English language learner parent/guardians. (3) Follow-up phone calls were made to parents. Interpreters made follow-up phone calls to non-native English speakers. (4) Researcher obtained approval from District Review Board. (5) Researcher obtained approval from Institutional Review Board. (6) Researcher blacked out all names and assigned a code to all student work. (7) Researcher transcribed verbatim transcriptions. Transcriptions were coded to protect participant identities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the classroom context, participants, methods, and implementation procedures. The study is a case study research that focuses on myself the teacher, and six students. Three of the students are English language learners, and three of the students are native English speakers. The study focused on book club and whether my teaching of higher order thinking questions help my students think critically about text, and therefore, allows students the opportunity to talk about the books they read. Chapter Four presents the results of the case study research study as well as the implications of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The objective of this study was to determine whether or not the use of book clubs assist ELLs to develop higher order thinking questions and improve oral academic language proficiency. To determine whether teaching higher order thinking questions improve a student’s language proficiency, I collected three forms of data – teacher anecdotal field notes; audio-recordings and transcriptions of student talk during book clubs; and an analysis of student written work. The purpose of the teacher field notes were to help me scaffold future lessons and drive the instruction, enabling students to replicate the process in the book clubs. The purpose of the audio-recordings was to identify instances of students asking and answering these questions. The purpose of analyzing student work was to determine whether the use of tools such as graphic organizers and readers’ response logs helped prepare students for themed discussions during book club. Through the collection of this data, I sought to answer the following question: After being taught the academic language needed to ask and answer higher order questions, how well are students asking and answering questions?

Teacher Anecdotal Notes

Teacher anecdotal field notes are a form of direct observation. In this case, they involved following a rubric to drive my instruction. I took notes after I taught each mini-lesson to the class. The focus of these notes was to ensure the
teaching of a language objective every day, assure sufficient modeling for my students during the lesson, monitor student participation during lessons, and observe to what degree students were able to apply the language objective to their book club discussions. After each lesson, I graded myself against a rubric, which was developed based on the criteria from Reader’s Workshop. The purpose of the rubric was to guide my instruction over the course of the week. The anecdotal notes allowed me to verify what my students needed and which scaffolds were more successful in helping students have deeper conversations about texts. Table 2 summarizes the three most successful scaffolds that improved student preparation.

The rubric played an important role in guiding the lesson planning over a seven-week period. Table 3 summarizes what I learned in the categories of language objective, modeling, lesson discussion, and application. The use of a rubric and observations to guide my instruction are consistent with current research. Many researchers have stated that observations are a useful tool in allowing teachers to understand routine student learning tasks and social interactions in the classroom. The information guides teachers to plan specific modifications in their teaching of subsequent lessons (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000; Webb, 2005).
Table 2

*Three Most Successful Scaffolds that Improved Student Preparation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SCAFFOLD</th>
<th>WHAT WORKED WELL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think Pair Share</td>
<td>Smaller groupings forced student discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The activity allowed the teacher to pair students by academic level so that students felt more comfortable engaging in a discussion with their peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students who were not willing to raise their hand and discuss in a whole group were able to discuss with a partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishbowl Activity</td>
<td>Teacher modeled how to begin a conversation using the question and answer stems so students could use the conversation as a model for themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher could scaffold how to agree and/or disagree with a peer during a discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher could model how to move from one topic to another while in a conversation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher could model the behavior that she wanted to see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Corners</td>
<td>Students were placed in a group that was larger than the Think-Pair-Share so they could practice having conversations with more than one student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students were giving open-ended questions, which encouraged them to add details to their discussions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students practiced using targeted language structures to agree and disagree in a small nonthreatening environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosscutting Issues</td>
<td>Use of culturally appropriate materials in all activities so that students could explore their identities and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culturally relevant texts afforded students the opportunity to share personal connections and therefore, have a deeper conversation about text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3**

*Strengths and Weaknesses of Lesson Criteria for Book Clubs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON CRITERIA</th>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>WEAKNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Objective</td>
<td>Question stems helped scaffold students’ academic oral language.</td>
<td>Groups of level 1 ELLs didn’t meet language objectives, which led to less participation during mini-lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student exposure and guided practice of new language structures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>Modeling of academic oral language allowed students to have two or three examples of how to use the language structure.</td>
<td>Time constraints made it difficult to address different levels of learning styles of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple types of modeling benefitted students based on their different learning styles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Discussion</td>
<td>Over 80% of students were able to participate in conversations.</td>
<td>Groups of level 1 ELLs had a difficult time participating in conversations that were not a personal connection, which led to halting conversations with some peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group discussions forced student participation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approximately 70% of students were able to use the language objective while discussing in small groups.</td>
<td>Time constraints made it difficult for students to complete conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It provided a framework for students to listen to each other and respond appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>The framework provided a scaffold for students to discuss texts in book club using the language objectives that were taught in the mini-lessons.</td>
<td>It was difficult for some students to transfer the language objective to the book club context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students practiced the language structure so it was not new to them when applied in the book club context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Audio Recordings of Student Discussions

Audio recordings play a useful role in observing interactions. After speech is recorded, it can be transcribed and analyzed. Over a seven-week period, I recorded student speech during book club discussions and transcribed those conversations. The focus of the transcriptions was to identify instances of students asking and answering higher order questions based on Bloom’s *Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain*. The audio recordings helped me to identify movement along Bloom’s Taxonomy.

**Pretest-Posttest Results**

Based on the Grade 4 English Language Arts State Standards, students are expected to engage in conversations in which they are able to express their ideas clearly, build their comments from others, clarify and gain information for meaning, and connect their comments to other people’s ideas (Minnesota English Language Arts Standards, 2010). The majority of these learning targets are found in Bloom’s Taxonomy, levels 2 through 4, which are the comprehension, application, and analysis levels. The sections below will discuss the results garnered from the study.

**Pretest results.** Based on *Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain*, I began the pretest by discussing a book titled *Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech (2001). The pretest, which lasted approximately seven-minutes, was intended to help me understand where students fell on Bloom’s Taxonomy. During this recorded discussion, I asked students 15 probing questions intended to measure
their performance. In a book club discussion, one would normally expect that responses would primarily fall between levels two and four. As Table 4 shows, the majority of student responses fell under level 1.

As Table 4 shows, there are three major findings. First, more than half of student responses were level 1-type responses. Second, three-quarters of the responses were between levels 1 and 3, and finally, as the level increased, fewer students were able to provide higher order responses. The implication of these results is that students are focused on recall question and answers. This means that students did not have deeper conversations about text during the book group discussion. Therefore, they have the potential to fall behind their grade level peers.

Table 4

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Pretest Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOOM’S TAXONOMY LEVEL</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF TIMES ELL RESPONSES FELL UNDER THIS LEVEL</th>
<th>NUMBER OF TIMES NATIVE ENGLISH STUDENT RESPONSES FELL UNDER THIS LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Knowledge</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Comprehension</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Application</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4: Analysis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5: Synthesis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6: Evaluation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progression towards the posttest. During the course of seven weeks, I gave students direct, scaffolded instruction on how to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. At the same time, students met in book clubs and discussed their reading while using the strategies that we discussed during the mini-lesson. The objective was to help students apply the scaffolded instruction to their discussions in the book clubs. Students read sections of *Behind the Bedroom Wall*, by Laura E. Williams (1996). This book was chosen because students can relate to the character and the book lends itself to deeper conversations as a result of a number of inferred themes that are present throughout the book. For example, throughout the book, the character – Korinna – must decide if she will believe in what Hitler and her friends say, or to follow her heart and believe that the Jewish population is inherently good. This tension between deciding what she believes in allows students to enter into deeper conversations and higher order thinking. The conversations with students varied between seven and twenty-one minutes and were based on how students felt that day as well as other daily time constraints.

As Figure 1 shows, the overall number of level one questions asked by students during book club over a seven week period decreased as a result of the coaching and scaffolding that I provided. As students learned to move beyond the recall-type and into more substantive, high-order questioning, the number of level 2-4 type questions increased. The result of my study is consistent with research in that scholars suggest that when ELLs participate in meaningful authentic discourse with their peers, the ability for them to learn academic language
increases significantly (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; August, 2008; Brock, & Raphael, 1995).

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** Results from Pre to Post test show marked improvement in the use of Level 2 and 3 type questioning.

Second, even though days six and eight had high levels of level-one responses, level two or level three responses either matched or exceeded the level-one responses. In both cases, there were high level-one responses due to confusion during the reading and students needing to recall information from previous discussions to continue discussing other themes in the story. This type of review and recall is a normal part of the learning process for students.

**Posttest results.** Based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain, I began the posttest by having students discuss the historical fiction text *Behind the Bedroom Wall* by Laura E. Williams (1996). This text is a slightly more difficult reading level than the text used in the pretest. However, it is within their reading level. The posttest, which lasted approximately fourteen minutes (twice as long
as the pretest), was intended to help me understand where students fell on Bloom’s Taxonomy after I taught them several question stems and scaffolded instruction for students to improve their use of academic oral language to ask and answer higher order thinking questions. During the posttest, I asked 28 probing questions. Again, one would normally expect that the responses would fall between levels two and four of Bloom’s Taxonomy, which are the comprehension, application, and analysis levels. As table 5 shows, more student responses were level 4, analysis responses.

As Table 5 shows, new patterns emerged in the posttest. First, there is a pattern of responses shifting upwards to the higher levels. Fewer responses were level one, which amounted to approximately 18 percent of the total responses compared to more than 61 percent in the pretest. Second, approximately 58 percent of the responses were levels one through three in the posttest, compared to 88 percent in the pretest. Third, approximately 82 percent of student responses fell between levels two through four of Bloom’s Taxonomy, where in the pretest, approximately 37 percent of the responses were between these levels. It is important to note that in looking at the table, there are few level three responses. I believe this may be related to the fact that the probing questions I asked were more related to level four. The result is a limitation that will be discussed in the next chapter.

The findings of the posttest are consistent with previous research in regards to providing scaffolds for ELLs to increase academic language. According to Dove and Honigsfeld (2013), students need a variety of scaffolds to
promote language learning. These scaffolds include participation in a range of large and small group conversations to learn how to exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and adjust their own point of view so students can learn how to use academic oral language in a variety of settings.

Table 5

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Posttest Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOOM’S TAXONOMY LEVEL</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF TIMES ELL RESPONSES FELL UNDER THIS LEVEL</th>
<th>NUMBER OF TIMES NATIVE ENGLISH STUDENT FELL UNDER THIS LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Knowledge</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Comprehension</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Application</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4: Analysis</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5: Synthesis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6: Evaluation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Written Work

Student written work is part of a natural occurring communication in a classroom setting. Over a seven-week period, I used graphic organizers such as literature response logs, character maps, theme maps, and problem-solution maps to help scaffold students. The purpose of the graphic organizers was to help students prepare for their book club conversations. Students read a section of the text, and then wrote down their thoughts and ideas in an organized manner.
depending on the focus of the graphic organizer. Additionally, several graphic organizers included a section for students to write evidence from the text to support their thinking.

Table 6

Written Work by Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF READER’S RESPONSE LOGS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6 shows, students completed approximately three or four literature response logs, and between two and four graphic organizers to help them prepare for the book club conversations. The mini-lessons that I taught were linked to the student written work in that the type of scaffolded instruction that I taught during the mini-lesson was part of the student written work. For example, when I taught mini-lessons on question stems, students had the question stems written on their literature response logs and they would write a journal response using the question stems to help begin the conversations. Also, when students had theme, character development, and problem-solution conversations, they first completed a graphic organizer that was specific to the area of study. Each graphic organizer had an area for students to write examples from the text so that they could readily give evidence for their thinking when they discussed the text.
Students were encouraged to bring their written work and to look over it during the discussions.

Below are two examples of literature response logs.
Below are two examples of graphic organizers that students used to organize their thinking.
Figure 4

Figure 5
The literature response logs were a useful tool for students to summarize key points in the reading while also noting questions and comments that they would like to discuss during book club. For example, in Figure 3, the student used prompts to discuss the character and specific things that they noticed about the character. The student wrote, “I liked when Korinna’s mother was helpful and not bossy or mean”. This response was in preparation for a conversation about characters. In the points for discussion, the student wrote, “I wonder why Korinna stopped herself from smiling at Rachel’s drawing?” The question is in reference to a section in the text where the main character, Korinna, realizes that the Jewish girl that is hidden behind her bedroom wall is actually a nice little girl. Korinna struggles between showing empathy for her and going along with anti Jewish propaganda. When it was time for book club, the student brought the response log to group, and used the work as a tool to help guide the conversation. Students were encouraged to begin each conversation with a comment or a question from the response journal to engage others in a conversation about the text. In this way, students prepared and then helped each other move beyond simple recall of information. They began to analyze and relate to the characters. This engagement with the characters can help increase their desire to read; their interaction with text; and hence it improves their English language abilities.

As Figures 4 and 5 show, the graphic organizers helped students to organize their thinking so that they could have deeper conversations about text. According to Dove and Honigsfeld (2013), it is imperative for teachers to help
diverse students scaffold oral language production so that students can expand their thoughts by practicing and using language structures. Since the graphic organizers were specific to an area of study (i.e. theme, character development, and problem-solution), students were able to look for specific examples that could help them support their thinking during the conversations. For example, in figure 4, one of the main themes in the text was courage. The student noted that the main character, Korinna, found courage when she stopped a Gestapo officer and family friend, Hans, from hitting her father. This example illustrates that students are moving from asking and answering recall questions such as “Who did Korinna’s father hit?” to providing evidence for their thinking about a theme such as courage, which is a level 4, analysis skill. Additional examples of both the logs and graphic organizers can be found in Appendix A.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the results acquired through several different instruments that show how different reading tools can help better prepare students to engage with text during book club. With the use of anecdotal teacher field notes, audio recordings of student discussions, and student written work, I found that direct instruction and scaffolding enable students to ask and answer higher order thinking questions, and therefore, have deeper conversations about text. Transcripts of the audio recordings show that over a seven week period, students consistently improved their use of level 2,3 and 4 level questions and used Level 1 type questions to review text from the previous book club. I was also able to triangulate the work students did in their logs and graphic organizers to prepare
for book club to improve use of higher order thinking and language use at book club.

The next chapter discusses these findings and elaborates the implications for teaching reading and ELL language use in classrooms. The chapter will also offer suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Direct, scaffolded instruction is one of the critical components of reading – one that can help raise the academic oral language of ELLs. In this research study, I sought to answer the following question: After being taught the academic language needed to ask and answer higher order questions, how well are students able to ask and answer higher order questions? In this chapter, I will (1) analyze the results from the anecdotal notes, audio recordings, and student written work; (2) discuss major findings; and (3) discuss the limitations of the study; and (4) the implications for teachers and administrators. I will conclude with suggestions for further research.

Major Findings

Book clubs are a unique tool that can help increase student engagement with text and help them learn how to ask deeper, critical-thinking type questions. The results of this research study indicate that using a few key tools such as reading logs and graphic organizers, along with direct instruction and scaffolding, students have the ability to improve their use of academic oral language. Book clubs are a way to bring together these different elements to engage children with language use.
Book clubs are a portion of the literacy block at my school that is optimal for language learning. During book clubs, students have the opportunity to engage in authentic discourse and practice language acquisition in a non-threatening manner. Since students are placed in small groups of four to six, ELLs can practice learning language structures in a manner that uses their peers as a model for learning and builds off peer questioning and discussion (Webb, 2005). Students also have the opportunity to practice higher order thinking questions and responses while simultaneously gaining a foundation in literacy. Finally, book clubs are structured in a manner where students use the four facets of language learning; reading, writing, speaking, and listening because they read text, negotiate meaning during discussion, and write responses to help organize their thinking (Raphael, Pardo, and Highfield, 2002; McMahon and Raphael, 1997; Goatley, Brock, and Raphael, 1995). The following sections highlight the major findings of my research.

Book Clubs Help Build Confidence in Reading

Building student confidence – particularly among ELLs who are learning a new language - takes time and engagement with text. This study showed that scaffolded guided-practice during mini-lessons helped students build their confidence so that they could have deeper discussions about text in book clubs. By teaching students scaffolds such as think-pair-share, modeling fishbowl activities, and four corners, students had the opportunity to think about what they wanted to say, practice the language structure with a partner or small group, and learn to negotiate meaning. It is through this authentic discourse, that students
build their oral language capacity and therefore have meaningful conversations about text (Dove and Honigsfeld, 2013).

As students began speaking more with guided practice, their level of higher order questioning increased. For example, over the course of two days, I read the book *Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Freedom* by J. C. Johnson (2013) as part of a mini-lesson. The story is about Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan scientist and her struggle to plant trees in Kenya. In the guided practice activity, I placed four large pieces of paper around the room, each with a question on it. The questions were higher order thinking questions that allowed students to have deeper conversations about text. Students were placed in small groups and each group stood in front of a paper and read a question. Students then had five minutes to discuss their thoughts. After the discussion, students then wrote down several bullet points and then moved to another paper. When they shifted groups, the first thing they needed to do was to take two minutes to read the questions and the previous group’s responses. Then, they could begin their discussion. In this activity, students learned how to negotiate meaning and practice using targeted language structures to respond to text. Since they needed to read what the previous group wrote, many ELLs were able to discuss more about the text because they could read some of the key vocabulary terms and language structures that could help them form sentences. The activity helped students practice language in a small group setting and building off their peer responses helped them increase their confidence level to use similar vocabulary.
Additionally, Honigfeld and Dove (2013) state that when students, particularly diverse learners, are encouraged or expected to move around the room rather than sitting in one area, the level of participation and engagement in learning is generally heightened. Students in my classroom were active participants in this activity and used language to negotiate and discuss topics in a meaningful manner.

Building confidence in students is further supported by the results from the audio transcripts. As Chapter Four indicates, there was a decline in level one responses and a rise in levels two through four responses throughout the seven-week period. As students learned to ask and answer higher order questions, they began to use evidence to support their thinking, negotiate meaning, infer meaning, and make predictions based on evidence from the text. In the following conversation transcript, students were discussing the main character and some of her traits. Students were able to use examples from the text to support their thinking and to negotiate meaning:

G: I thought that Korinna, she’s a smart girl.

C: How?

G: That she wants to change the world, but that you don’t know it in the chapter, but like…she wants to.

C: Yeah, she doesn’t act like it, but she wants to do it.

G: She wants to change the world.

C: Yeah.

X: But how?

G: Like, by, by trying to calm the Gestapo officers…like…maybe like…
maybe they really are the people that are making Germany lose some of their power, but that doesn’t mean they have to arrest them and put them away so that Germany can get their power back. They could just get them. They don’t have to be German, but they could see what German people are doing and try to be like them.

X: I don’t agree or disagree about that, but I am a little confused…so…

Teacher: What are you confused about?

X: Well, one thing is when G said that…how do they…will they… should they spy on them to act like them? Or, like, or should they do something else. Taking Jews to experiment with them? I don’t know, I’m confused.

The example illustrates students using evidence from the text to support their thinking, which is a level three Bloom’s Taxonomy skill. This example also highlights how students are beginning to infer meaning from text and clarifying comments that they made to each other about the story. All of these skills are responses that move away from the level one-recall responses, and into deeper conversations about text.

As reflected in the above examples, scaffolded guided practice was a key factor in helping students to ask and answer higher order questions in book clubs. By giving students opportunities to discuss texts in mini-lessons, ELLs were able to practice key language structures that they could use when they were discussing books. Since students were in a small group, they had a greater opportunity to incorporate academic oral language and practice in a nonthreatening environment. The language skills they learned in the mini-lessons were easily transferred to their book club discussions. My findings were consistent with current research in that providing scaffolds for language learning affords students the opportunity to
practice authentic discourse in a nonthreatening manner (Dove and Honigsfeld, 2013; Zwiers and Crawford, 2011, Peregoy and Boyle, 2000).

The use of culturally relevant texts may have led to further engagement of students in my study. When students can see themselves in the literature, there is a greater possibility that they can develop ownership of their culture and have authentic and meaningful discussions (Au and Raphael, 2000). I chose mini-lesson texts that were rich in discussion and that also represented a variety of cultures. My students were able to connect the texts to their own lives and share personal connections, which affords the opportunity to have a deeper conversation about text. During one lesson, I read the book Marisol MacDonald doesn’t Match by M. Brown (2013). The story is about a young girl who is multiracial (Irish and African American). She struggled with people telling her that she didn’t fit in and that she was different from other children. In the end, she learned to embrace who she was and learned a valuable lesson that it is more important to be who you are, than who others want you to be.

In these particular lessons, students worked in pairs and did a think-pair-share to scaffold language instruction. A think-pair-share is a scaffold in which students first think about what they want to say, pair up with a partner, and finally, share their thoughts. The exercise can be successful because it gives all students an opportunity to share their thoughts in a nonthreatening manner. Students can also be paired purposefully [i.e., by ability level] so they can practice language structure with a partner. Authors in the field of ESL have suggested that the think-pair-share scaffold has the ability to enhance the academic oral language
ability of ELLs because students have a chance to speak their thoughts to a partner in a manner that is authentic and nontthreatening (Dove and Honigfeld, 2013, Zwiers and Crawford, 2011). During the lesson, I used question stems that helped students formulate connection-type sentences. When it was time for the lesson discussion, students focused on making personal connections (i.e. connecting the text to something in their lives) as well as text-to-text connections (i.e. connecting the text to another text).

When students began to discuss the text, approximately 85 percent of students were able to use academic oral language to discuss a personal connection. While in pairs, students took turns, and compared many of the events that happened with the young girl, to their own lives. For example, one student noticed that in the book, the young girl felt bullied because she was not exactly like the people around her. My student had a deep connection to the main character because she had been new to the school and felt the same thing. She even went further to give examples of her experience and how it compared to the experience of the main character in the book.

By using a culturally relevant text, many of my students felt that they had more to discuss with their partner and they moved from discussing one point of the text in a think-pair-share to using skills such as comparing and contrasting and using evidence from the text to support their thinking, which uses a higher level of cognition from Bloom’s Taxonomy.

While I was teaching mini-lessons on connections, students practiced making connections during book club. Students in my study felt particularly
connected to the main character, Korinna, because she was the same age as my students. The students felt connected to each other because they shared similar social experiences with their friends. The connection that they felt with the main character, along with the connections that they felt with the books that I used in the mini-lessons, led to the ability for students to weave connections into their book club conversations. In one instance, students connected Korinna with the main character in the text from our mini-lesson, Wangari Maathai. The book, *Seeds of Change: Planting a path to Freedom*, by J. C. Johnson (2013) is a true story about Wangari Maathai, an African woman who began the Green Belt Movement in Kenya and was jailed several times for her efforts. Ms. Maathai left her home at an early age to pursue her education so she could have a better life. The following transcript illustrates my students’ ability to make text-to-text connections to make a thematic comparison:

G: It’s kind of like bullying because someone bullies people and you have to stand up for it.

X: Yeah.

G: Maybe she is a bully tester…or whatever it is called because she goes up, because you can go to jail as many times as you want but you’ll never give it up because it’s people and if someone did that to you, and someone didn’t just stand up for you, how would you feel if like…(making reference to text from mini-lesson)

X: It’s like *Seeds of Change*.

G: Yeah!

X: Yeah, because she didn’t stop, she just kept trying, no matter what. Wangari went to jail lots of times.
The above-mentioned example illustrates students’ ability to make connections with texts while in book club. In both texts, students felt connected to the main characters because the texts were culturally relevant and students empathized with the characters. In the case of the book club text, students connected to the main character because she was the same age as my students and had similar social experiences. In the case of Wangari Maathai, my students felt connected to her because she was a minority as they were, and left her country for several years to have a better life; an occurrence that many of my students have experienced. Culturally relevant texts give students the opportunity to have deeper conversations because they feel a bond with characters through their own experiences (Au and Raphael, 2000).

**Engagement in Authentic Discourse Can Increase Long-Term Language Learning**

Authentic discourse, or real conversations, helps students practice language. This study showed that when students engaged in authentic discourse, they were forced to negotiate meaning and had a better opportunity to internalize vocabulary and language structure. According to Zwiers and Crawford (2011), authentic discourse increases long-term language learning. Through authentic discourse, students also used less level-one, recall responses and more levels two, three and four skills because they wanted to discuss more about the text and share thoughts and ideas.

While students participated in book clubs, they practiced using language structures and vocabulary terms, which in turn, helped internalize the language. The following transcript illustrates engagement in authentic discourse:
C: She wants to have friends but she doesn’t want to…

G: There is evidence in the chapter…I think it was in chapter four? She…chapter four or chapter five. She opened the schrank (wardrobe) for no, for none…for no reason and she was like “Why did I do that?” because she didn’t, she was being alone and she just came back from school.

Teacher: Ok, that’s a good point. When she comes home from school and she opens up the schrank, she is kind of lonely. What do you think she wants to get? What is the purpose of that?

X: Maybe her parents…she wants someone to play with her, except for just her friends.

G: She was…she was born alone and her friends were herself, like her brother and sister and her toys were next to her and I think she knows what it feels like to be Rachel because she doesn’t have any THING with her, and it is just herself and moving up and down and it is hard to stay alone, stay still. It is practically hard.

X: I agree with G.

G: And I have a text to self because when I was little and I was born, I didn’t have anybody to play with because I was the only child and people would bully me and nobody would stand up for me and I would just run away.

X: Um, yeah…well, I’m not the older but I am the youngest one, and my brother and sister were older than me and they don’t like me so I usually just play around and…they keep saying, “You were a mistake”.

The transcript above illustrates students using authentic discourse to infer meaning from text and make connections. In the example, students connected their ideas to have a conversation that was on topic and focused. The focused conversation allowed for students to practice language in a nonthreatening manner because they were in a small group and felt safe with each other. Since students were having authentic conversations, they had a direct connection to each other and could see how others view the world. This allowed them to build on their
understanding together and connect their understanding of characters to the world around them and their own lives. Students also practiced language structures such as “I agree with...”, and “I have a connection because...” which offered language practice in an authentic setting. The example illustrates students using a variety of skills to use authentic discourse, and therefore, have a deeper conversation about text.

Authentic discourse is key for ELLs to improve academic oral language because according to Zwiers and Crawford (2011), a major advantage of having a conversation with peers is that one has a direct connection to what another person thinks. Thus, as students discuss text with their peers, they begin to understand how others view the world, and the conversation becomes rich with meaning. In the case of my ELLs, the conversations that they had with their peers in book club helped their academic oral language improve throughout the study. For example, in the pretest, there were only four level four responses. Of these four responses, only two of them came from an ELL. In the posttest, there were thirty level four responses, twenty-two of which came from ELLs. The authentic discourse that my ELLs had with their peers in book club during the study allowed them to build their confidence so that they could improve their academic oral language.

**Graphic Organizers Help Scaffold Language Learning**

The intention of student written work was two-fold. First, it served to help students organize their ideas in one area with the use of graphic organizers so that they could come to group prepared to have a conversation. Second, written work was also intended for students to write down vocabulary and language structures
so that the language was on paper and readily available to them to use during book club discussions.

Specific graphic organizers such as theme maps, character maps, and problem/solution maps, served as a scaffold for students to learn language because students wrote information first, and then discussed in book clubs. According to Goatley, Brock, and Raphael (1995) graphic organizers can be developed as a scaffold to not only record information for a specific activity, but to record types of information such as vocabulary, questions, and language structures as well. The organizers also afforded students the ability to have focused conversations about the text while simultaneously using higher-order thinking questioning and response. For example, one graphic organizer was a problem-solution organizer to categorize their thoughts regarding three possible solutions to the problem. Students wrote the problem on the top of the organizer, and were given three prompts as possible solutions. Each prompt had a section for a good point for the solution, and a bad point for the solution. Students therefore had three solutions, as well as a good point and bad point for each. At the bottom, students decided which would be the best solution and why. After students completed the graphic organizer, they met in book club to discuss their possible solutions.

When the book club meeting took place, each student had three solutions, each with a good and bad point. During the conversation, their level of higher order thinking questions and responses rose as evidenced in that particular conversation transcript partly due to the help of the graphic organizers. In the
session, students used their graphic organizers that had language structures and vocabulary written down to help them discuss their ideas. Consequently, in the transcript, students had thirty-three level five, synthesis responses and only six level one, knowledge responses. Therefore, graphic organizers helped students stay focused and share their ideas in a direct manner.

Book club gave students opportunities to have scaffolded instruction to learn language. Since students were engaged in authentic discourse, they could practice language in a nonthreatening manner so that they could internalize vocabulary and language structure to raise their language acquisition (Zwiers and Crawford, 2011; Goatley, Brock, and Raphael, 1995). The structured mini-lessons during the study served as a model for ELLs to practice higher order questions and responses, which facilitated students in gaining foundational skills in literacy. The use of graphic organizers helped students organize their thoughts and write down language structures and vocabulary so that it was readily available for them to use in conversations. The book club context was a successful context for ELLs to learn how to ask and answer higher order questions to internalize language.

Limitations

This study hypothesized that providing a structure for students to ask and answer higher-order thinking questions in the book club context would improve their academic oral language. While the study was successful, there are a number of limitations that need to be considered to understand the data.
First, the study used a qualitative design with a small sample size so it cannot be generalized outside of my classroom context due to issues of external validity. While I can draw lessons from the study, to draw broader conclusions about techniques to improve ELL reading, researchers would need to design a random-control trial or quasi-experimental design study to determine two factors: Actual impact of book clubs, and the teaching of academic language needed to take part in higher level discussions on improved reading skills.

Second, every year, the context of the classroom changes because the students are different, their learning styles vary, reading abilities vary, and each student comes into the classroom with a unique manner of looking at the world. Also, some students have already been exposed to book clubs in previous years, while others have never participated in book clubs. Therefore, depending on the learners, there may need to be more scaffolding, an incorporation of different learning styles, and more or less guided practice. To truly understand to what extent the teaching of academic language help students to ask and answer higher order questions, I would need to test my research question on different classes over time and, as indicated above, compare my students with similar students who do not participate in book clubs.

Another limitation to my study is time. The results might have been different if I had started the study earlier in the school year and had longer periods of scaffolded guided practice. For example, I found that the Four Corners activity was the most successful scaffolded guided practice for the students. Students seemed to enjoy walking around the room, discussing a specific
question, and writing down their comments. Each group felt that they had a voice and a starting point to converse because they read what the previous group wrote, discussed, and then wrote down additional thoughts. Since the study did not start until the end of the year, I had to choose specific scaffolds that I thought would generate the most improvement in terms of asking higher order thinking questions and responses. It is possible that students might have achieved different results if there were a greater variety of scaffolds for students to practice because a different scaffold might have catered to a learning style that was optimal for a particular student.

Second, given the limited time to complete my study, I found that I had a large amount of teacher prompting during book club conversations. My original intent was to allow students a gradual release of responsibility during book club conversations so that they could discuss the text without me next to them. While the use of teacher prompts decreased over the study, I continued to prompt students throughout the study. At times, students would look to me to ask a question or to agree with them so that they could further discuss the text. My prompts varied from questions asking for clarification, to head nodding and a repetition of a comment from a student so that it was clear to all in the group. Had I had more time for the study, I could have decreased the use of teacher prompts during book club conversations so that students could have the conversation without me present.

Students need a consistent and focused time to improve reading skills. At times, overall school scheduling conflicts with the reading block. Therefore, a
third limitation to my study was obligatory school activities. The reading block
was the first academic subject of the school day, which has positive and negative
consequences. Most students were prepared for the morning activities after
breakfast, and were calm in the mornings. However, my school has a weekly
assembly, which at times, was in the morning, so we could not have our reading
block. Some of my lessons were pushed to the next day because of an assembly.
This caused book club conversations to be moved to the following day as well. I
found that on these days, students needed to have extra time to review their book
club chapters so that they could remember what they read and have a conversation
about the text. Some students had forgotten what they read, and needed a
reminder about what we read. The lack of structure at times, could have led to
some of the students speaking less because they could not remember parts of the
text to discuss.

Similar to the constraint above, another factor in having reading in the
morning is that my students participate in weekly chorus. One day a week, I had
to purposefully plan for shortened reading lessons and discussions because we did
not have time to do all of the activities that we normally do. Therefore, the mini-
lessons were shorter, with less time for students to practice new language
structures, a factor that could have impacted the overall results of the study.
Moreover, the book club conversations either were shorter in length on those
days, or were moved to the following day so that students could have more time
to discuss. The fact that students had shorter lessons once a week and limited
work time, some could not complete assignments in time for scheduled
conversations. At times, our scheduled book club meeting needed to be rescheduled because students were not ready to meet. The factors could have impacted the results of the study because guided practice on those days was for a shorter amount of time, students could have felt rushed to finish their conversation in time for the following activity, and students did not have the full amount of time to complete assignments. It is clear that for student success, the reading block needs to be held during a time that will not be interrupted.

Implications

There are a number of implications arising from this study. The first implication is that for students to be successful, teachers need to begin preparing students for book club at the beginning of the school year. Teachers should begin by implementing a variety of scaffolded activities that teach learners how to have discussions with each other. Scaffolded practice needs to be included as part of students’ every day practice, and in all areas and subjects of the school day. Each of the major subjects begins with a mini-lesson and guided practice. Both ELLs and native English speaking students could benefit greatly from conversing with each other during the guided practice so that they can begin to internalize vocabulary, language structures, and academic content (Goatley, Brock, and Raphael, 1995). An element that needs to be implemented in the scaffolded practice is student discussion in pairs, small groups, and whole class so that students become comfortable discussing their ideas with others. In this manner, students will become accustomed to having a variety of conversations over a multitude of subjects and with different people. This implication is consistent
with current research regarding the development of academic oral language. Both Zwiers and Crawford (2011) and Dove and Honigsfeld (2013) state that for students to be able to be successful in school and beyond, they need to incorporate academic oral language in all facets of the school day.

Further, students need guided practice in book club groups to learn how to ask questions and particularly, how to answer each other in a manner that maintains the focus of the conversation. One of the difficulties of book club is that each student wants to lead a particular conversation. However, what some students want to say, may not necessarily link with what the previous person discussed, which can lead to unfocused, disjointed conversation. One of my goals was to teach students that each person has an important contribution to the group. However, the goal is to listen to group members and respond accordingly. At times, what one person may want to discuss may not be appropriate in a specific context. Teaching students to monitor themselves is a key factor for the overall success of book club. It is imperative for teachers to have teacher training on the implementation of book clubs and also training on how to help students ask and answer higher order thinking questions. With districts moving towards having Professional Learning Committees in reading and math, the structure provides an optimal time for teachers to discuss scaffolds to help all students monitor themselves so that they can have deep discussions about text.

Scaffolded guided teaching and practice of question stems and responses is imperative for overall success. With the use of culturally relevant texts that include a variety of themes, teachers can teach question stems and responses
through guided practice during mini-lessons. Students have the opportunity to practice these questioning strategies over a period of time so that the language is internalized and readily available for use during book clubs. Guided practice during mini-lessons provides a structure for students to internalize language and take risks to practice new language structures in a non-threatening manner. Students feel safe in groups, and can therefore, take their learning to the next level in book club to continue their practice. For this to happen, teachers need time to meet together to discuss what we can do to help our students have more academic conversations. During PLC (Personal Learning Committees), administrators should allow teachers to use the time to match culturally relevant texts to student learning goals. When students feel connected to text, there is a greater chance that they discuss more about the text because they can see relations with their own lives (Ferger, 2006), and therefore, students will use more language to discuss. If teachers have time to discuss culturally relevant texts with each other, they could bring a wide range of relevant texts that could raise the level of academic success.

In my district, the population of ELLs continues to rise and my school is no exception. In today’s world, all teachers need professional development throughout the school year to learn how to support ELLs in their learning of academic content while at the same time learning vocabulary and language structures. This study shows that books clubs is an easy tool to help teachers teach ELLs to use academic oral language to understand text. The implication of this finding is that professional development should be well planned out with opportunities for teachers to try various activities and then report back to their
grade level and or cross-curricular teams. Professional development should also be over the course of several months with a focus on academic language and content so that teachers can witness successes and difficulties and have time to try other scaffolds to see what works best in their classrooms.

Authentic discourse is key for ELLs’ success in academic settings (Zwiers & Crawford 2011). It is with this structure that students practice language and learn from each other. The book club context serves as a platform for students to discuss text in an authentic manner because students come to group with a variety of opinions of how they view the world based on background knowledge, and life experiences. For this to happen, students need to come prepared to group with graphic organizers and student work completed. It is important for elementary school students to have a calendar to organize their assignments. Assignments should be given at least two days in advance so that there is time during the school day for students to work. Both students and teachers need time to prepare for the conversation aspect of book clubs. Teachers should make sure that they are assigning sufficient pages in which students can read in enough time for the conversation while at the same time, making sure that the pages read have enough depth for students to be able to engage in the deep conversations about the text.

Student participation in book club can help raise the academic oral language levels of ELLs. With scaffolded guided instruction, authentic discourse, and direct teaching of language objectives, ELLs can flourish in the academic setting (Webb, 2005; McMahon and Raphael, 1997; Goatley, Brock, and Raphael, 1995). However, some ELL students feel insecure about having conversations
with their native English counterparts. I took this into consideration when I planned mini-lessons so that students could first participate with students whom they felt comfortable with and then practice with other students so that they could bridge their language learning while at the same time feeling success. To do this, teachers should first have students in pairs or small groups during mini-lessons so that they feel comfortable discussing text with their friends. Then, the next logical step is to expand the group size so that students continue to have a conversation with a friend, but also with students whom they do not normally discuss text. The expansion will allow students to feel comfortable because they will have the security of knowing someone is with them that can help them if they need.

Further Research

This study opens the door to further research. First, I would recommend that a similar study be conducted through an academic school year. By applying the techniques throughout the school year, I – and or other teachers – would be able to use a wider variety of scaffolds to cater to the wider range of student learning styles. The objective of such a follow-up study would be to see how much more ownership of the discussions that students can take if they have more guided practice for a longer period of time. A second objective would be to measure whether teacher prompts diminish over time as students ideally take on more leadership of the discussion during the academic year. Potentially, the conversations would be more student-directed with little to no teacher input.
A second potential study would examine whether more academic discussions around a variety of subjects assisted ELLs to practice a variety of language structures and vocabulary. If one of the keys to success is authentic discourse (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011), then it becomes important to research a variety of methods to implement authentic discourse in areas such as math, social studies, and science so that students learn how to converse in different academic settings. Well-written and modeled language objectives could potentially greatly impact not only ELLs, but also native English speakers in relation to authentic discourse.

Another study that would be critical to improving the knowledge around academic language in books clubs is an experimental – or quasi-experimental in design. Such a study would compare student performance on reading between groups of students who participated in book clubs and either compare with students not receiving any support – or comparing to a different support tool. This would allow the researcher to determine the actual impact on reading improvement of book clubs specifically when compared to other reading improvement techniques.

Finally, I would recommend a longitudinal, tracking study that looked at student performance over two or more academic years. Over the course of several years, fifth grade teachers and I have been discussing successes of our students. Many times, I learned that students had forgotten key learning points when moving from fourth to fifth grade. At times, I have found myself stating, “I cannot believe they do not remember how to do that. We worked on it so hard!”
It would be interesting for me to see how students participate in authentic discourse after I have taught them specific strategies. Can they transfer what I taught them into their learning in fifth grade? If there is transfer, is it only in relation to the book club context, or will it transfer into other subject areas as well? I feel that by understanding their growth over a longitudinal time, I could potentially give students more tools to help in their overall success.

Nevertheless, education in the United States is ever evolving. It seems that each year, ELLs are being asked to learn language structures and content at a faster rate than in years past. With the surge of standardized tests, teachers need to find a variety of methods for students to learn language and content so that they can be successful in school and beyond. Teachers also need to be given tools such as scaffolds and strategies to teach academic language to help ELLs learn language so that they can internalize their learning and be successful in school and beyond.
APPENDIX A

Graphic Organizers and Reader’s Response Log
Name: _____________________________

CHARACTER MAP

What the character SAYS and DOES

What others THINK about the Character

Character Name

How the character LOOKS and FEELS

How I feel about the character
**Solution Evaluation Chart**

Choose a problem. Write the problem in the top ox. Write three possible solutions in the boxes below it. Write at least one good point and one bad point about each solution. One the bottom, choose a solution and then write what the result of the solution might be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem:</th>
<th>Solution Evaluation Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Problem:</strong> ___________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 1:</td>
<td><strong>Good Point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bad Point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 2:</td>
<td><strong>Good Point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bad Point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 3:</td>
<td><strong>Good Point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bad Point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think the BEST solution will be__________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BECAUSE ___________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme Map For ____________________________  Name _____________

Theme - writer's message, main idea, what lesson are we being taught

MAIN THEME - THE BIG IDEA

1. 
2. 
3. 

FIND 3 EXAMPLES OF THE BIG IDEA FROM WHAT CHARACTERS DO AND SAY IN THE STORY

WHAT IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON DID YOU LEARN ABOUT THE THEME?
Literature Response Log

Name: ____________________________ Pages: __________ Date: ________________

Title: ____________________________ Author: ____________________________

JOURNAL RESPONSE

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Journal Prompts:
I liked . . .
I felt . . . because . . .
This story makes me think of . . .
If I were . . . I would . . .
I noticed . . .
I think . . .
When I . . .
I was surprised by . . .
I didn't like . . .
I wonder . . .
I wish . . .

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION
I'd like to talk to my group about . . . I'd like to ask them . . . I wonder why . . . It was interesting that/when . . .

________________________________________________________________________

AM I READY?

__ I finished my assigned reading
__ I dated and labeled my responses
__ I put my best effort into my work
__ I completed my response
__ I marked the parts I wanted to share
APPENDIX B

Assessment Rubrics and Student Self Assessments
# Higher Order Thinking Questions Teacher Rubric (Lessons)

Date: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4 - Exceeds</th>
<th>3 - Proficient</th>
<th>2 - Developing</th>
<th>1 – Needs Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Objective</strong></td>
<td>Language Objective clearly stated 3 times or more during the lesson.</td>
<td>Language Objective clearly stated 2 times, or stated 3 times but not clear.</td>
<td>Language Objective was stated, but it was confusing for students.</td>
<td>Language Objective was not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modeling</strong></td>
<td>Teacher modeled the language for the activity. Modeling was clear, focused, and purposeful for students to understand. All students were able to apply strategy and language to their learning independently.</td>
<td>Teacher modeled the language for the activity. Modeling was clear, focused, and purposeful for students to understand. Most students were able to apply strategy and language to their learning.</td>
<td>Teacher modeled the language for the activity. Modeling was somewhat confusing. Some students may not have understood the purpose, or needed direct guidance from the teacher to apply strategy and/or language to their learning.</td>
<td>Teacher either did not model the lesson activity, or the modeling was confusing and students did not understand the purpose. Students were not able to apply strategy or language to their learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Nearly all of the students were able to participate in lesson discussion using the language objective following the modeling.</td>
<td>Approximately 75% of the students were able to participate in the lesson discussion using the language objective following the modeling.</td>
<td>Approximately 50% of students were able to participate in the lesson discussion using the language objective following the modeling.</td>
<td>Approximately 25% of the students were able to participate in the lesson discussion using the language objective following the modeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Students were able to apply the language objective to their book club discussion independently.</td>
<td>Students were able to apply the language objective to the book club discussion with some help from the teacher.</td>
<td>Students were able to apply language objective to the book club discussion with direct guidance from the teacher.</td>
<td>Students needed to be retaught the language objective to be successful in the book club discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
**Book Club Evaluation: Student Work**

Part of your grade for literacy is demonstrating mastery of the following strategies and skills that we worked on in your collection of student work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Completeness and Accuracy of Information</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 - Exceeds</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 - Proficient</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 - Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>1 - Beginning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student completed all assignments for the book group. The assignments were well thought out and detailed. All information was accurate.</td>
<td>Student completed all assignments for the book group. Information was accurate</td>
<td>Student completed all but 2-3 assignments for the book group. Information was accurate, or mostly accurate.</td>
<td>4 or more assignments were incomplete for the book group. The information was either mostly accurate, or not accurate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Use of Student Work</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 - Exceeds</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 - Proficient</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 - Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>1 - Beginning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student came to book group ready with assignment prepared. Student was able to use the assignment to help drive the conversation.</td>
<td>Student came to book group ready with assignment and prepared for a conversation with the assignment in hand.</td>
<td>Student came to book group with assignment partially prepared. Students was able to refer to the assignment during book group.</td>
<td>Student came to book group but the assignment was either not present, or not complete.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Language Structures</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 - Exceeds</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 - Proficient</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 - Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>1 - Beginning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student took particular care to add language structures that we practiced during book group and/or mini-lessons into work.</td>
<td>Student added several language structures that we practiced during book group and/or mini-lessons into work.</td>
<td>Student added a few language structures that we practiced during book group and/or mini-lessons into work.</td>
<td>Students rarely added, or did not add language structures that we practiced during book group and/or mini-lessons into work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Evidence</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 - Exceeds</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 - Proficient</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 - Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>1 - Beginning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student added evidence from the text at all times to support thinking when appropriate. Evidence included page numbers. Students used evidence in conversation with peers to support thinking.</td>
<td>Student mostly added evidence from the text to support thinking (approx 75%) when appropriate. Evidence included page numbers. Students were able to use evidence in conversation to support thinking.</td>
<td>Student sometimes added evidence from the text to support thinking (approx. 50%) when appropriate. Evidence sometimes included page numbers. Students sometimes used evidence in conversation to support thinking.</td>
<td>Student rarely, or did not add evidence from the text to support thinking (approx 25%) when appropriate. Evidence either rarely or did not include page numbers. Students rarely, or did not use evidence in conversation to support thinking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
End of Book Club Self Assessment

1. Did you like the book? 
   Yes          No

Why? ___________________________________________

2. What is your favorite part about book club? (circle)

Reading      Writing      Discussion      Learning something new!

Why did you like that part the best? ________________________________

3. Which mini-lessons on how to ask questions and listen to your peers were helpful?

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

4. Look through your student work folder. Find your best entry you did. Why do you think this is your best one?

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

5. Do you think that doing the work in your folder helped you to prepare for your discussions with your group? Why or why not?

________________________________________________________________
What do you think you need to work on for next time?

Reading  Writing  Discussion

Why do you think this?

On a scale of 1-5, 1 = Never, 5 = Always, rate yourself on the following questions. Circle the number that best describes you.

1. I was prepared for book group discussions every time we met. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I listened to other students and added important information to what students said.

   1 2 3 4 5

3. I worked hard to use what I was taught in the mini-lesson to help me in my conversations. 1 2 3 4 5

4. I shared ideas. 1 2 3 4 5

5. I was focused on the conversation and was not distracted. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I used my student work to help me discuss the book. 1 2 3 4 5

Anything else you would like me to know? Write it here!

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Bibliography of Children’s Literature Used
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN’S LITERATURE


REFERENCES


Lansing.


