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The Effects On Reading Comprehension When Using Prompts In Book Clubs

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THE EFFECTS ON READING COMPREHENSION
WHEN USING PROMPTS IN BOOK CLUBS

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A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Hamline University
St. Paul, Minnesota
May 2016

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Overview

One of my favorite quotes is by Dr. Dahlia Hall. She stated, “It’s not about teaching the child to read. It’s about teaching the children to love to read” (Hall, n.d., p. 1). It is this quote that has helped me to develop my capstone research idea. Getting kids excited about books is my main goal. I have seen kids develop this skill by talking and sharing about books they have read. Building strong talk skills develops more meaningful conversations about books as well as a deeper understanding of the text. After seeing the success of using prompts in book clubs with fourth grade students, I wondered why we do not attempt these strategies at an even younger age. After comparing book club groups that used prompts to clubs that did not use prompts, I found that the groups that did use prompts made much larger gains on a continuum rubric for book talk. This data led me to want to find out if teaching the same strategies at a younger age would also be beneficial to student learning. I would like to see if second grade students would be able to participate in book clubs to build reading skills and to increase their love for books.

The school that I teach at does not introduce book clubs until fourth grade, but I would like to challenge second grade students to see if they could handle such a task. It is my belief that if strategies are taught with fidelity and skills are modeled and practiced
with a gradual release; second grade students would be able to achieve this goal. I am very excited to explore this possibility! My goal for this research is to be able to introduce book clubs to second grade students and thus answer the question: *What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?*

Throughout the remainder of the chapter, I will discuss my teaching experiences, defining Readers Workshop, observing the power of book talk, and introducing the research plan. I think that our experiences as educators along with our personal lives and stories create who we are. These things combined have created my desire to get kids talking about books to enhance their reading skills and also to deepen their love of reading. I am hoping that with the use of prompts, second grade students will be successful in book clubs.

**My Teaching Experiences**

I graduated from Hamline in 1995 with a degree in Elementary Education and Legal Studies. Teaching jobs were scarce and I knew that I needed to have a backup plan. I had dreamed of becoming a teacher since I was in third grade and I was fortunate to be offered a job immediately following graduation. I have taught grades PreK-5, but spent the majority of my years in fourth grade. I have taught in schools with families that have extremely high incomes and I have also experienced teaching in a very diverse population with a high poverty rate. I have spent almost my entire career teaching in a school that is filled with diversity and students that have experienced trauma. It can be challenging, yet also very rewarding. My experience as a preschool teacher taught me a great deal about how kids learn. It also taught me that kids can often meet academic
challenges that we might not expect them to meet. The one piece that I found consistent through every grade that I taught was that kids loved having someone read to them.

When I started teaching twenty years ago with fourth grade students, I was scared to death to try to introduce literature circles to them. I really did not know much about literature circles and I am quite certain that I did not teach them with fidelity. I did however experience a different side of reading instruction that seemed much more meaningful to each student and also seemed to pique an interest in books that I had not seen when my students were reading from the basal. As I grew as an educator I developed a strong passion about which strategies I thought were meaningful when teaching reading. My methods have changed greatly over the years, but throughout all of the different methods that I experimented with, the desire to teach kids to love reading was always with me!

Educators need to be flexible, and over the years, that has proven to be true. In my early years, I taught lessons on a chalk board. Then, I became accustomed to the white board. After that, I had the pleasure of learning how to use a Smartboard, and I was even challenged further with a document camera. Just as technology advanced and changed in our classrooms, so did the strategies and best practices with instruction. How I teach reading has changed the most. Curriculum has advanced and it has become more tailored to better meet the needs of students. This means that the curriculum is often differentiated to meet students at their level of learning.
Readers Workshop

Teachers College Readers Workshop (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, 2014) is what we use as reading instruction at the school where I currently teach. The curriculum focuses on the belief that kids need to read a lot of texts, with high comprehension, in order to move up levels of text complexity. Students are matched to texts at their level and they read for 35-40 minutes during reading workshop every day. Teachers College also incorporates the fact that students need to read a wide genre of literature, which includes fiction text, nonfiction text, text of high interest and text that is focused on curriculum area. It is a rigorous form of instruction and it pushes students to strengthen reading skills, build comprehension, and achieve a higher level of critical thinking (2014). This model teaches through large group instruction, small group work, interactive read aloud, grand conversations (whole class, student led discussions about a text), shared reading, and book clubs. It meets the needs of all learners as it allows for students to work at their level and at a pace that is appropriate for the individual (Research Base Underlying, 2014). The model is designed to look like this:

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The Power of Book Talk

I have always enjoyed teaching reading and watching my students learn to love books. I also have a passion for reading at home with my own kids. I have three sons and I have a mini (maybe even bigger than a mini) library at home for them! Since they were born I bought them tons of books to read. Whatever topic they were interested in, I found books to go along with it. My oldest son loved to read and the skill came very easily to him. Reading was not a strength for my middle son. It was very rare that he was excited about a book. The school book fair was coming and he was thrilled to be able to buy *The Lightning Thief* (Goodale, 2005). I am sure he wanted the book simply because he saw the movie; however I was ecstatic that he actually wanted to buy a book! He came home from school that day without a book. His school also taught Readers Workshop and he was told that “the book was above his level and he could not buy it”. He was heartbroken and I was too. This made me question if I was also making kids feel this way about books by telling them that a book was above their level. I changed that day for the better. At home, we did read that book that he desired so badly, and we read it in the form of a family book club. I knew that I needed to model for them what this would look like though, so I first read the book *The Tiger Rising* (DiCamillo, 2001) to them as an interactive read aloud. I had never done that at home before and it actually became an activity that was loved by our entire family. From there we moved into the book club. We were able to have some great conversations about the book. I was able to see the benefits with my own son and this enhanced my love for book clubs.
My Research Plan

My research focuses on how to develop meaningful accountable talk in students by using strategies of talking prompts in book clubs. I teach fourth grade and we introduce book clubs to our students using Teacher’s College curriculum and instruction. Now that I have seen the success with fourth grade students, I would like to see if the same strategies would work with second grade students. A book club is a group of people that read the same book and meet together to discuss the book that they read. The purpose of book clubs is that students will read and discuss literature with their peers. The goal is for the students to have a deeper understanding of the books that they read (O’Donnell-Allen, 2006, p.1). The intention is also that we raise the levels of students’ conversations and provide scaffolds to support independence, which will lead to natural conversation. I would like to know if students can become more successful at this if they are provided a prompt to use during their book talk. A prompt is used to increase the level of accountable talk in a book discussion. Here are some prompt ideas to list for students:

- I wonder why…
- I have a question about…
- I agree/disagree with…because…
- That reminds me of…
- On page ____ it says______ so I think…
- I would like to add to what ___ was saying

Book clubs are an amazing experience for students. They teach kids the importance of working together as a group, they help kids to better understand what they read, it holds kids accountable for their reading, and it helps kids to become better
I am very passionate about helping my students learn to love reading. In my opinion, book clubs are a great way to encourage kids to dive into a book. In my experience, it is a way to create an excitement in students about what they read and to encourage them to discuss what they have read with others. My students have loved book clubs in the past and I have found it to be one of the most fun experiences that we share all year. I just want to make sure that I am giving students all of the tools and strategies that they need in order to make it a meaningful experience for them.

It has been proven that accountable talk does not occur naturally with students (Fisher, 2008). Fisher also found that there should be a gradual release of responsibility to scaffold and model the conversation process for students. Students need to understand the expectation that they will communicate through body language, active questioning, and connecting with the statements of other students. Accountable talk is a way for students to explain their thinking process. When students develop meaningful talk strategies they are able to process information more deeply through active discussion. They are also able to better express their ideas and opinions about materials they have learned. Teachers are able to assess students through their participation in conversations (2008).

I am hoping to strengthen student’s comprehension and level of understanding of what they read by enhancing the strategies they use to develop meaningful accountable talk amongst each other in book clubs. I have requested a grade change to second grade for the upcoming school year, so I have decided to do my research with a group of second grade students to see if the implementation of talk prompts in book clubs impacts the development of their level of accountable talk in order to improve their comprehension of
text as well as the retention of what they comprehend. I also had discussed my work with fourth grade students with friend of mine, who is a principal in a different district than I work in, and she was interested in having me do some professional development about book clubs at her school. She was hoping that I could have results for primary and secondary levels of elementary students. This along with my desire for change piqued my interest in working with second grade students.

Next Steps

The next few chapters will encompass my journey. My literature review and research plan will focus on answering the following question: What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs? I will be researching book clubs, comprehension within book clubs, accountable talk, and the use of talk prompts to enhance accountable talk. I am hopeful that throughout my journey, I will also be promoting and encouraging the love of books to young students.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study of research will be completed in order to help me determine whether using talk prompts in book clubs to increase accountable talk will have an effect on reading comprehension. I want to know if using talk prompts to enhance accountable talk in book clubs is an effective strategy to use with second grade students in order to improve their comprehension skills. The following literature review seeks to answer the question: What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs? The review of literature will explore book clubs, the pros and cons of book clubs, and how comprehension develops in book clubs. It will also explore accountable talk and what is necessary in the development of accountable talk in book clubs. Another area that will be studied is the use of talk prompts and how to use them with fidelity to enhance comprehension. The review will incorporate information from field experts, articles, and studies that include accountable talk in book clubs and the impacts it has on comprehension.
Book Clubs

There are many studies about book clubs and they appear under a variety of different names including literature studies, text clubs, book circles, literature discussion groups, literature circles, and cooperative book discussion groups. The clubs often have variations of how they are structured; such as teacher control as opposed to student led, and teacher assigned books rather than books that are chosen by the students (Daniels, 2002). For the remainder of this research, all variations will be referred to as “book clubs”.

As described by Raphael (2001), a book club is a group of individuals that read the same book and then meet to analyze and discuss what they have read. Book clubs are one way to help students become stronger readers. It is a way to learn through combining collaborative learning with student centered investigation. Whatever level reader your child is, having them participate in a book club can help them to learn to love to read (Goatley, 1992). The main purpose of using book clubs in school is teach students to read and discuss literature with their peers. It is a strategy that combines cooperative learning and student centered inquiry. Book clubs give students at different ability levels the chance to learn from each other and to work in their own area of strength. They give the teacher the opportunity to observe the student’s social and academic performance while they engage in talk within their clubs (Raphael, 2001).

According to Goatley (1992), a book club is a strategy that introduces reading to students in an interactive, social experience. Students are able to give personal responses to demonstrate comprehension as well as an evaluation of the text that they read. When strategies and skills, such as active participation are taught in book clubs, students learn
the habits of lifelong readers. Book clubs provide a bridge for students to read more
difficult texts. Book clubs are a great way to engage struggling readers, at-risk students,
and students that are reluctant to read (Goatley, 1992). Book clubs are often the result of
silent reading that leads to student-led discussion. The readers are often excited about
reading and to talking about what they read with their peers (O'Donnell-Allen, 2006).
One research study on book clubs concluded that “Student growth was noted through
three areas: nature of the book club interactions, change in written response, and types of
questions discussed” (Goatley, 1992, p. 42).

Book clubs are a great way to have kids learning collaboratively with their peers.
When students work in book clubs, the learning that takes place seems to come more
naturally for many students. An example of such learning is determining the meaning of
the text or gaining a deeper understanding of the text. In book clubs, the main goal is to
gain an understanding of the text by visualizing and talking about it with peers
(O'Donnell-Allen, 2006, p. 13). Since about 1979, round-robin reading has not been
recommended as a teaching strategy in classrooms (Opitz & Guccione, 2009). First of all,
struggling readers find reading out loud to be embarrassing. Their reading can be hard to
understand as pronunciation of difficult words is a challenge for them. The pacing when
students read out loud is also generally a challenge for struggling readers. Although
struggling readers do need more practice, reading aloud in front of their peers is not
found to be an effective method of achieving that goal (O'Donnell-Allen, 2006, pp.13-
14). Second, if a text is at an appropriate reading level for students to read out loud, they
should be capable of reading it independently. If a text is above the reading level of the
student and it is too hard for a student to read independently, it is recommended that the
teacher read the text as a read aloud instead. Round-robin reading can be tedious and boring for all students involved and many students often lose interest in the text (Opitz, & Guccione, 2009). In book clubs, occasionally the teacher will read part of the text with the group to model interpretation or comprehension of a text, however, most of the reading students do for book clubs is done independently before the scheduled meeting time where the students then hold a student-centered conversation (O'Donnell-Allen, 2006, p.7). Raphael (2001) explained that educators find book clubs to be effective because they offer students an opportunity to apply skills that they are learning through social interaction.

There are many benefits for students that work in a book club (Young, 2012). When three or four students are reading the same text, there is an opportunity for great conversations about the text. Talking about text with their peers also helps create more excitement for students (Matlick, 2014). There can be differentiation within the club. Young (2012) has found that students can all be at the same reading level, or clubs can be made up of students that read at different levels. Students are all individuals that see things differently; therefore each book club member will bring a different lens or viewpoint on the story. This is an excellent way for students to have a much deeper discussion about the text. A huge benefit is that struggling readers have shown a much higher level of excitement and interest in books and in reading when they are in a book club. There is much more engagement when they get to talk about interesting parts of the story with their peers (Young, 2012).

According to Matlick (2014), “the curriculum of a book club is based on four major topics; Language Conventions, Comprehension, Literacy Elements, and Response
to Literature” (p. 4). Being a fluent reader does not mean that a student is a good reader. If a student does not understand what they read, why should they read it at all? The text holds no importance to them if it has no meaning. When students participate in a book club discussion, they tend to dig deeper in their thoughts so that they are able to seek out the true meaning of the text. They are able to ask question that cause them to think and delve into the text. When students share what they have learned through a text, they are sharing ideas, responses, and confusions (Matlick, 2014). Young (2012) went on to explain that students who are talking about a text with other members in a book club discussion will ask questions about the text as well as make predictions. The predictions that they make are typically based on their past experiences that pertain to a personal experience or another book that they have read. When students are able to relate the text to their own experiences they are able to give the text meaning. If the text has a meaning, the student has a purpose for reading it (Matlick, 2014).

Distefano (2014) completed a research study on benefits and book clubs. Her goal was to promote fun and a love for reading. Her research was based on previous findings from April 2001 of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) where it was reported that “Students who reported reading for fun on their own time every day had higher average scores than students who reported reading for fun less frequently” (as cited in Distefano, 2014, p.12). She was pleased with the results that her study found:

- Kids who read more minutes per day have higher scores on tests.
- At all grade levels, students who talked about what they read with family or friends had higher reading scores than students who did not talk about what they had read.
- Twenty-eight percent of 12th-grade students never read just for fun.
- Families that shared in conversations about books showed a drastic improvement in family communication.

According to Daniels (2002), being a part of a book club is a great activity any time of year, but it has proven to work very well in the summer because schedules tend to be less hectic. Reinforcing reading skills throughout the summer also prevents a loss of skills that were learned during the school year (Daniels, 2002). Participating in a book club during the summer reinforces reading skills, reduces boredom for kids, builds on social skills, and nurtures a stronger love of reading. Kids of any age can learn other valuable lessons by participating in a book club as well. They learn how to read for understanding, relate their reading to personal experience, and how to be a part of a discussion where they are expected to take turns and respect the opinion of others (Young, 2012). Friendships with other book lovers are built and kids are challenged to read books that they might not have chosen to read on their own. Book clubs are also a wonderful opportunity to learn how to work cooperatively in a group. Not only are book clubs excellent in building academic skills, they also focus on social skills, which is something that students today really benefit from (Daniels, 2002).

In the article *Textbook Circles for Teaching Comprehension*, by Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2010), it stated that teachers are finding that book clubs can also be used with textbooks in the classroom. Textbook book clubs are a great way to cover required material in a meaningful way. Students use the same skills that they learn in book clubs and transfer them to discuss textbook content. It is a way for students to enhance reading comprehension through discussions with peers. With this type of a club, it is important to
have learners that are at different ability levels. This gives struggling readers the peer support that they need in order to be more successful. It is also more beneficial to have groups cover a section of the text rather than a certain number of pages (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012, pp. 5-6). This way, their discussion can focus on a particular topic of content. Students have stated that textbook reading can be difficult to understand when read independently, however reading the material as a book club gives them a better understanding. It is helpful to connect, ask questions, predict, and visualize the text with their peers in a book club discussion (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010).

**Potential Problems in Book Clubs**

Book clubs can be a great method of teaching reading skills to students, however, there are some possible issues that could interfere with learning and it is important to be mindful of how to handle these obstacles. Manwill (2012) found that if a book is universally disliked by all members in the club, the discussions tend to be very shallow and not very meaningful. Another possible problem is personality conflicts within the clubs. If there are a lot of strong personalities in the group, the conversation is not equally balanced and it can be dominated by one or two voices. The intention is for everyone to take turns and to be silent when others are talking, but sometimes members have conflicting opinions and loud voices. On the opposite end of the spectrum, it is possible that the members are all quiet readers who do not speak up and no one initiates the discussion (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). Manwill (2012) went on to explain that at times, members show up unprepared. This can cause a conflict because you are all relying on each other to maintain the responsibilities of meaningful accountable talk after reading a text. If one or more members fall behind in the reading, it creates problems with
discussions. Another potential problem is that the conversation gets off task and the group starts to talk about things other than the book (Manwill, 2012).

Although researchers have found significant advantages for using book clubs in the classroom, there are also some obstacles at times. Bowers-Campbell (2011) elucidated that students can get off topic and conversations can deviate to topics that are not related to the text. In older students, the best results were found when the teacher would stay and monitor the behavior of the club members (Manwill, 2012). In other instances, school schedules with programs or celebrations often throw off scheduled book club time and they are hard to reschedule and fit into a busy school day (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). Given both the advantages and limitations of face-to-face book clubs, the benefits clearly outweigh the slight obstacles. It is also a great way to increase face-to-face peer interaction in a world that is currently consumed with texting, messaging, blogging, and visiting other online communities because social skills are lacking in kids today (Bowers-Campbell, 2011).

**Comprehension in Book Clubs**

Reading comprehension refers to how much the reader understands after reading a text (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). The reader should be able to make connections to the text and be able to make inferences. Readers have different needs with comprehension and texts have different levels of difficulty. One way to strengthen comprehension of a text is to summarize the text after reading (Calkins, et al., 2012). Another strategy is discussing the text and answering questions about the text while talking with peers (Calkins, 2001, p. 17). Students can have a better understanding of the text by talking about what they have read. Skilled readers are able to strengthen their
comprehension by participating in dialogues about the text while they are reading it (Rubin, 2006). This strategy can be practiced by participating in a book club. The book club discussion could include making predictions, connecting the text to experiences, clarifying confusing parts, and discussing main idea and sequence (Calkins et al., 2012, pp. 3-4).

When students know that they are going to be discussing books with peers in a book club, their independent reading and the way they process the text is different (Rubin, 2006). Talking about the text in a book club gives students a chance to process the text, reflect, and build a deeper meaning of the text due to the fact that they can hear the interpretations of the other readers (Calkins, 2001, p. 20). This type of instruction gives students the ability to effectively process texts. Giving students the tools they need to comprehend the fullest meaning of the text should be the goal every time they read (Calkins et al., 2012).

Fountas and Pinnell (2006), highly respected curriculum writers in the world of reading, have developed a curriculum, “Comprehension Clubs”, which is made up of interactive read alouds and book clubs. They felt so strongly that comprehension is directly tied to the engagement of accountable talk around text that they named the strategy “comprehension clubs”. The goal of their new curriculum is to “bring deep discussion, reading, and thinking to students with engaging, high quality literature and informational text sets across multiple themes” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 1). Finally, research studies have proven that students that are engaged in book clubs demonstrate increased comprehension, the ability to engage more deeply with the text, and a higher level thinking (Bowers-Campbell, 2011).
VanKeulen (2011) completed a study on the correlation of comprehension and engagement during book clubs. VanKeulen found that reading and comprehension are essential skills that all people need in order to be successful in life (VanKeulen, 2011). The study went on to explain that one way to increase student comprehension and engagement is teaching reading by implementing book clubs (VanKeulen, 2011). Comprehension is not a simple thing to teach students. Comprehension is a thinking process that is very complex (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012, p. 9). The book clubs that were implemented in the study by Van Keulen focused on incorporating certain strategies. The strategies that VanKeulen used to improve comprehension included: making connections, asking questions, inferring, and visualizing, determining importance, monitoring, and synthesizing (VanKeulen, 2011). VanKeulen found that these strategies need to be named for students and modeled before students can be gradually released to practice and use them on their own. The results of the study showed that student comprehension increased in fifty percent of the students with the implementation of book clubs. Engagement and excitement of reading and books also greatly improved through the use of book clubs (VanKeulen, 2011).

Another study was completed by Manning (2010), who also looked at student comprehension in book clubs. The study stated that reading comprehension improves the basic understanding of a text. It further went on to explain that “book clubs provide meaningful learning that includes these skills for students: retell, relate, question what they have read, and engage in cooperative learning” (Manning, 2010, p.10) The results of the study found a significant difference between pre and post-tests resulting in a higher
level of achievement in comprehension. Readers gained comprehension skills as well as social skill growth (Manni, 2010).

Research supports that comprehension is a vital component of reading and literacy (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012, p. 9). Reading comprehension can be viewed as a critical part of the development of reading skills in students (Calkins, et al., 2012, p. 9). It also plays a significant role in their life-long learning and their ability to obtain an education (Marshall, 2006). Marshall completed a study to determine the benefits of learning through book clubs. More specifically, the research compared comprehension growth of students learning in book clubs in comparison to students that learned from direct instruction of the same text (Marshall, 2006). The results of the study did not find that there was a significant difference of growth in comprehension when comparing the two types of instruction. In fact, the evidence revealed that the groups that were below grade level did not respond as well to book clubs as groups that were at or above grade level (Marshall, 2006). The groups were made up of students that were at the same reading level, and based on the results; Marshall found that it may have been more beneficial to all learners to be in groups of differing levels of ability (Marshall, 2006).

**Accountable Talk**

Talking with others about ideas is a very important part of the learning process (Calkins, 2001, p. 12). It gives students the opportunity to organize thoughts and thinking and expand on their own thinking. Simply because students are talking does not mean that they are learning (Junyk, 2016, p. 11). “In order for classroom talk to promote learning, it must be accountable” (Michaels, O’Connor, Hall & Resnick, 2013, p. 16). This means that the talk is in response to and further develops what others say (Calkins,
Accountable talk is defined as meaningful talk that is beneficial to both the speaker and the listener. It stimulates higher-order thinking and helps students to communicate their own knowledge and understanding with their peers. Accountable talk enhances learning as it teaches to students to reflect on what they have read on a deeper level than reading and reflecting independently (Michaels et al., 2013, p.1). Accountable talk happens throughout the day (Poff, 2013). It is not something that happens on a set schedule. It should occur naturally with an opportunity for open ended discussion and therefore involves a shift to a constructivist way of thinking for educators (Junyk, 2016, p. 12). Using accountable talk as a strategy requires teachers to see that there is a difference between right answers and valuing the ideas of the students that they work with (Resnick, 1999). Accountable talk maximizes student achievement because it increases student engagement (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012, p. 4). As a result behaviors that interfere with learning are reduced. It builds thinking skills and teaches students to learn to negotiate and create meaning in the topic of discussion (Resnick, 1999). It also creates a learning environment where risk-taking feels safe for students. Accountable talk enhances an increase in self-efficacy, comfort, and success for students (Poff, 2013).

Talking and expressing thoughts is a very important part of everyday life (Zwiers, 2014). In order to create a strong foundation in the area of talk, educators can do a few key things. First, we must value oral language development, next we must put an
emphasis on the communication of ideas rather than grammatical correctness, and finally we should value the importance in the fact that oral language is a way for students to learn and remember content (Junyk, 2016, pp.13-15). Zwiers, a senior researcher at Stanford University, felt that there are three main strategies to help the development of talk.

Strategy One: Make Sure That Activities Include Authentic Talk: In this stage, teachers adapt activities to create more authentic talk with extended discussions so those students have the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful conversation. Students often prepare notes about what they will talk about or what topics they will bring to the conversation (Zwiers, 2014).

Strategy Two: Use Activities that Develop Strong Language: In this stage, students develop stronger answers by talking to different partners in an activity. This works on many valuable skills for students and is very different from the more common whole class discussion type of learning. A critical piece in this component is that students cannot talk about the same thing each time; instead they should build on previous talk to improve or expand their answers (Zwiers, 2014).

Strategy Three: Use Strong Discussion Prompts: In this stage, students are given prompts in order to guide the conversation and get the conversation to a deeper level with a better conversation. Giving students prompts can lead them into conversations around topics that they are expected to be talking about. Once they are in those conversations, hopefully it will also allow students the opportunity to disagree, argue, or negotiate ideas because this is where the most learning will occur (Zwiers, 2014).
Haag (2015) explained that teachers facilitate book clubs to make sure that everyone gets a chance to talk, that the members encourage each other, that they reference the text, and that they cite evidence to support theories or text they are discussing. Book club members should also be capable of describing inferential and literal interpretations of texts. While students are talking teachers can assess whether students can analyze and fully evaluate the texts (Haag, 2015).

Eventually, students come to their book clubs understanding that they will be discussing what they noticed in the text as well as what they did not understand in the text (Haag, 2015). It helps them to gain a better understanding by discussing it with their peers. They are often able to see things from other perspectives as well (Zwiers, 2014). They prepare for their discussions by marking or jotting down places in the text that are confusing. These notes give the club members ideas for a place to start their discussion (Haag, 2015). Book club members often look forward to clearing up confusion and explaining theories about texts with their friends. The evidence-seeking strategy that encourages question-posing between students helps to better prepare students for tests, especially in the area of comprehension (Haag, 2015).

Researchers have found that just because students are talking out loud to one another does not mean that learning is occurring (Junyk, 2016, pp. 16-17). What the students are actually talking about and how they are discussing the information is the critical piece (Resnick, 1999). Accountable talk is not something that randomly or spontaneously comes out of students mouths (Poff, 2013). It takes time, modeling, and scaffolding to develop the strategy (Junyk, 2016, p.31). Once the skills have been developed, there will be evidence that rigorous academic thinking and learning is
happening (Haag, 2015). Accountable talk can occur in all grade levels and in all subject areas. It is also a method of learning that all students, regardless of their level, can participate in (Michaels et al., 2013).

According to Goldman (2014), there are five important ways that talk can promote learning:

1. Talk makes thinking visible. Teachers have a chance to hear what students understand or do not understand about a text. Students that share their ideas and get feedback about them gain insight about what they know and understand. In other words, teachers can determine what level their students are at and tailor their instruction to meet the needs of all students.

2. Talk boosts memory. Talking about or hearing others talk about academic content allows students to see concepts, procedures, and representations from different angles. It also opens up the possibility of linking to other concepts and meanings we already have. This makes it easier to remember new ideas, terms, and concepts. It helps develop a richer understanding, so that new learning can be remembered and used in new contexts.

3. Talk supports language development. When academic talk occurs in classes, students are able to get a deeper knowledge of what words and phrases mean. They also are learning about how to use the words or phrases in context.

4. Talk helps students develop their reasoning skills while incorporating evidence. This is a crucial skill that students need to meet Common Core State Standards and also for college readiness. Most children come to school able to think practically and argue for what they think is right. That is a good start, but they all come at different
levels and not all children have had exposure to a higher level of thinking and reasoning, where they learn to explain their thinking more clearly. These skills develop with practice. These improvements often lead to and transfer to improvements on standardized tests.

5. Academic talk teaches students to talk in the disciplines. As students get older, academics become more rigorous and often require students to provide evidence to support their arguments. The nature of the evidence, goals of reasoning, and forms of persuasion for these arguments may differ. (Goldman, 2014)

There are many ways to accomplish successful learning through accountable talk, but there is not a particular method that works for all students at times (Michaels et al., 2013). In fact, there are some challenges that occur (Poff, 2013). Teachers need to make sure that the conversation that occurs is spontaneous yet still instructional and also that all students are able to participate in challenging academic talk (Michaels et al., 2013). In order to reach these goals, teachers must plan purposeful structuring of tasks and they must monitor the discussion (Poff, 2013). It is crucial for teachers to establish recurring, predictable routines with specific talk formats in order to ensure high levels of academic rigor and equitable participation (Junyk, 2016, pp.31-32). Surface features of accountable talk are easily identified; however teachers need to assess student growth based on evidence of accountability, rigorous thinking, and accurate knowledge (Michaels et al., 2013).
Accountability to the Learning Community
a. Careful listening to each other
b. Using and building on each other’s ideas
c. Paraphrasing and seeking clarification
d. Respectful disagreement
e. Using sentence stems

Accountability to Accurate Knowledge
f. Being as specific and accurate as possible
g. Resisting the urge to say just “anything that comes to mind.”
h. Getting the facts straight
i. Challenging questions that demand evidence for claims

Accountability to Rigorous Thinking
j. Building arguments
k. Linking claims and evidence in logical ways
l. Working to make statements clear
m. Checking the quality of claims and arguments

Figure 2. This is a summary of the features of accountable talk (Institute for Learning, 2010, p.17)

Accountability in Accountable Talk

Based on what we know about the way classroom talk brings out learning and culture, there is some criteria that is necessary in order to achieve accountable talk (Alexander, 2010). An important factor in making connections and building literate communities is making sure that students are engaged in the literacy rather than just going through the functions. Evidence of accountability to the learning community would be that students are attentively listening to each other so that they can build on the ideas that they hear (Michaels et al., 2013). Students would consistently pay attention to each other, ask clarifying questions of each other, and there would be a strong sense of respect, trust, and risk taking (Resnick, 1999). The challenges, disagreements, and criticism that come up would be directed at the ideas and not at individuals (Alexander, 2010).
There also must be evidence of accurate knowledge (Michaels et al., 2013). A classroom in which students engage in effective accountable talk generally display evidence that the teacher has invested time and effort making sure that all students were equipped with strategies and tools in order to be successful (Junyk, 2016, p. 28). When speakers make an observation or a claim, they try to be as accurate and specific as possible. They do not just say things randomly (Alexander, 2010). They should be sure that what they are saying can be supported with text evidence or with an explanation or an example that is grounded with supporting evidence that is accurate and relevant to the rest of the group (Alexander, 2010). Students do not interrupt discussions based on personal preference or opinions that defy challenge (Calkins, 2001, p. 23). This does not mean that the discussion will go without challenges. The challenges that arise should be supported with accurate evidence to create an even more rigorous discussion (Alexander, 2010). Other supporting evidence in this area would be that the learning community would be constantly building on knowledge that it acquires collectively (Michaels et al., 2013).

Accountability to rigorous thinking is also significant in maintaining a strong learning environment using accountable talk (Resnick, 1999). Rigorous thinking is building a line of argument (Resnick, 1999). Classrooms that are held to rigorous thinking standards require clear statements of positions, explanations, and predictions that are made in a logical manner (Resnick, 1999). The claims are then supported with warranted evidence that has been critically evaluated. It is not enough for the evidence to simply be accurate; it also needs to be sufficient enough to support the claims (Alexander, 2010). Successful accountable talk also enhances the skill of being able to
read between the lines and also to determine what may have been left out (Resnick, 1999). These skills are further developed in classrooms that establish well-practiced routines that are recurring (Resnick, 1999). According to Alexander (2010), the ultimate goal is that students will expand and improve their reasoning skills. They will also be able to express clear ideas to others. Another goal is that their conversations will be elaborate and explicit (Alexander, 2010). Students should eventually dig deeper and question their assumptions to evaluate the validity of the evidence. They will also be able to see things from a variety of different perspectives (Resnick, 1999). There must be a balance with students as far as implicit language and discussions in a more expanded form (Grice, 1975). Grice (1975) came up with some guidelines to follow in this area:

- Maximum Quality: say what you know to be true that you can back up with evidence
- Maximum Quantity: do not say more than you need to say
- Maximum Relevance: contribute relevant information to the discussion
- Maximum Manner: participate in a way that is expected

Using Prompts to Stimulate Discussion

Building accountable talk using talking prompts is an effective way to stimulate discussions for students (Blum, Koskinen, Bhartiya, & Hluboky, 2010). Prompts are used in many different forms and are referred to in a variety of ways. Some of the many terms used to describe prompts are: talking stems, sentence starters, language stems, question stems, talk cards, and talk placemats. Some of the many variations they are created are: sentence strips, bookmarks, posters, individual strips, and worksheets. There are a variety of different ways to present prompts which makes it easier to differentiate according to
grade level and ability (Blum et al., 2010). This also gives students a variety of options in using prompts according to their own learning style (Michaels et al., 2013).

In research by Fielding and Pearson (1994), it was found that the biggest area of change in reading instruction in the last 15 years has been in the area of comprehension. It is no longer presumed that comprehension a natural result of decoding (Pohl, 2002). “Comprehension is now viewed as a much more complex process involving knowledge, experience, thinking, and teaching. It depends heavily on knowledge—both about the world at large and the worlds of language and print” (Fielding & Pearson, 1994, p. 64). Their extensive research found that in order to successfully teach comprehension instruction four main components must be included: “large amounts of time for text reading, teacher-directed instruction in comprehension strategies, opportunities for peer and collaborative learning, and time for students to talk to a teacher and one another about their responses to reading” (Fielding & Pearson, 1994, p. 66). A way to implement the strategy of talk with students is by guided experience of peer learning (Pohl, 2002). Many educators post talk prompts for students to use as a guide to help them build their levels of talk and strengthen their comprehension as a result (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Questions on talk prompts are often based on the higher level thinking process of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Pohl, 2002).
Figure 3. This figure shows Bloom’s active way of thinking (Clark, 2015, p.3)

Giving students prompts to use is a strategy that allows students to effectively talk with each other about a topic without having to be verbally prompted by the teacher (Blum et al., 2010). Students need time to try new forms of discussion and they need explicit directions and examples of what is expected of them. Teaching students to use talking prompts in a way that is beneficial must occur before students can be expected to try to use them on their own (Berg, 2014). One way to have kids develop the skill of effectively using talking prompts is to observe others that are using them and then discuss what they observed. This helps them to determine strengths as well as things that do not seem as useful when using prompts (Talking Point: What is Productive Talk, n.d.). You could also model the strategy with a handout, which seems to work better with older students than younger students (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

It is important to teach students how to effectively use talk prompts in order to make talk more accountable (Blum et al., 2010). The goal is to enhance young students’ vocabulary and comprehension through in-depth experiences where students are able to listen to text and then discuss what was read to them. This type of learning experience is
called an interactive read-aloud (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). One way to introduce using talk prompts is through an interactive read-aloud (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). Talking about the text with students is what creates the interactive talk and increases building comprehension skills far greater than if is story is read aloud to them without a follow-up discussion (Berg, 2014). Teaching students to talk about text not only develops comprehension skills; it also enhances their overall language development (Blum et al., 2010). Giving students a talk prompt to help start their talk or keep the talk focused on open ended subject matter that is accountable is a great way of teaching kids to talk more effectively about the text that they have read (Berg, 2014). A benefit to using an interactive read-aloud as a strategy is that you can provide students with challenging content in higher level texts that may be above much more challenging than their independent their reading level (Beck & McKeown, 2001). Research has shown that texts that are effective in language development and comprehension need to be conceptually challenging (Berg, 2014). Being able to keep students engaged in challenging texts and using prompts to scaffold student responses is a great way to build listening skills, literacy skills, and comprehension skills (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

As stated by Daniels (2002), a classroom where kids read out loud and then answer recall questions that are called out by the teacher is no longer considered to be a classroom where good instruction is taking place. A higher rigor of learning is taking place when students are expected to engage in texts at a higher level of thinking, make inferences, form hypotheses, draw judgments, and support conclusions of what they read (Daniels, 2002). One strategy for scaffolding these skills is teaching kids to use talk prompts in order to produce strong accountable talk in book clubs (Daniels, 2002, p. 5).
These strategies can even be used with pre-readers using picture books in book clubs (Daniels, 2002, p. 6). The same strategies are even taking place on internet book clubs (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). Some teachers are even using Skype to do book clubs with students in different classrooms (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). It has been found that the use of prompts drives accountable talk in a process that keeps club members on track and it helps to give students the skills they need to form open ended question ideas more readily so that they are able to keep the talk going (Forno, n.d.).

Another way of using prompts to build comprehension through book talk is in grand conversations (Mc Gee & Parra, 2015). A grand conversation is a student led discussion about a text in which students deepen their comprehension (Bridges, 2013). The discussions last about 15-20 minutes and students sit in a circle so that they are all able to see each other. The teacher acts as a facilitator, but the talk is primarily among the students (Mc Gee & Parra, 2015). The text can be one that is read to the students by the teacher, or read independently. The students ask the questions, discuss thoughts about the text, challenge the thoughts of others, and deepen the meaning of the text as they talk (Forno, n.d.). Today’s classrooms should be anything but silent (Richardson, 2010). It is compelling for students to be able to leap into a conversation with excitement over ideas and questions that they have about the text (Forno, n.d.). In a grand conversation, everyone shares their own interpretation of the text (Peterson & Eeds, 1990). This is a powerful method of collaborative talking between peers (Mc Gee & Parra, 2015). “Students learn to delve deep into intellectual inquiry: to explore issues, share interpretations, and build on each other’s evolving meanings” (Bridges, 2013, p. 3). It has changed the way we look at text in a classroom: instead of covering the text, we uncover
the text (McGee, & Parra, 2015). Talking in a grand conversation gives students the skills they need to challenge other students to determine the meaning of a text, develop interests in possible interpretations, and generate new questions that often challenge all readers involved to think more deeply about the text (Bridges, 2013). Posting anchor charts of talk prompts is an effective way to set the focus for students participating in a grand conversation and it helps them to maintain purposeful accountable talk (Richardson, 2010).

Although preparing for accountable talk strategies does take teachers time to compose, it is important to look at what is best practice as well as what kids truly need over how much prep time is involved for the teacher. Overall, research has found that kids learn best by “doing” so allowing the use of talk prompts in book clubs in order to build strong accountable talk is in the best interest of the students (Daniels, 2002, p. 15).

![Diagram](image)

Figure 4. This figure shows a Grand Conversation Dialogue (Grand Conversations, n.d., p.1).

Types of Talk Prompts

There are many different types of talk prompts that can be used. Some educators give students handouts or bookmarks with talk prompts listed on them, but there are
many creative variations of how to present prompts to students (Forno, n.d.). Prompts used with students are all created with the same goal: to build literacy skills, improve language development, and develop and strengthen comprehension (Berg, 2014). Some examples of the most common types of prompts are shown in Appendices I-L.

**Summary**

My review of literature has shown that using talk prompts in is an effective strategy to use to increase accountable talk between students. An increase in accountable talk tends to lead to a stronger development of comprehension skills. In Chapter Three, I describe the research methods for measuring whether or not using talk prompts in book clubs is an effective method to teach to second grade students in order to develop accountable talk skills and in turn, improve comprehension. This will be done by comparing book clubs that use talk prompts to groups that do not use prompts. Both types of groups will read the same text and take the same comprehension tests to measure growth. Thus will serve to answer my research question: *What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?*
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS

Seeing my students engaged in book club discussions where they are smiling and excited to discuss the books they are reading is very gratifying. Knowing that they are learning from each other as they point to pages in their books, make predictions, defend their own opinions about the text, and share about their favorite part is the piece that piques my interest. My literature review provided research on strengthening reading comprehension through accountable talk in book clubs with students. Specifically, I studied using talk prompts in book clubs as a strategy to deepen students’ understanding of a text. It identified benefits and barriers to using prompts in book clubs to increase comprehension. The following chapter describes my action research methods that were used when I conducted my book club study. This action research was designed to address the following question: *What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?*

Research Setting and Subjects

The following research study took place during the summer months of 2016 with a group of eight second-grade students. The population of the group includes 50% Caucasian, 12.5% Hispanic, 12.5% Asian, and 25% Black students. They come from single parent homes and homes that have two parents. The group is made up of 62.5%
boys and 37.5% girls. The parents of the students have disclosed that 62% are from middle class families and 38% are from low income families, meaning that their child receives free/reduced lunch at school. The group consists of 50% of students that read at grade level, 12% that read above grade level, and 38% of the students read below grade level. One student is an EL student and Spanish is their first language. The students are ages 7-8 and they live in the same neighborhood. They all attend the same elementary school, which is very similar to the population of the school that I will be teaching at next fall. There is a balanced level of differentiation within the group. We will be meeting once a week in a study room in the local public library. Both groups will meet at the same location, but at separate times.

I emailed all of the parents of the students involved in the research and explained that I have used book clubs in my fourth grade classroom for several years. In our discussions, I also told them that I have observed the success with fourth grade and that I was interested in finding out whether second grade kids were equally successful. I went on to describe that it was my intention to complete the research as a part of my graduate program and also because I am contemplating a grade level change. I am passionate about my work with book clubs and accountable talk with kids and this opportunity would be a great way to gain knowledge of younger students and what they are capable of as well as to determine if there is success in reading comprehension when using talk prompts in book clubs. Allowing students to participate in a book club during the summer months has some benefits. First of all, the kids will have time to focus on the assigned text and they will have plenty of time to get their reading done. Several parents were thrilled with the opportunity to have their kids be able to read and learn during the
summer months for free. The parents of the struggling readers were particularly excited to learn about my research project and they felt it would be a way to involve their kids in summer reading in a fun, relaxing environment.

**Research**

For my action research I used a mixed methods procedure, including both quantitative and qualitative methods in my research. According to Creswell (2014), mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative research in a research study (p. 14). Qualitative research uses a narrative approach and the data tends to be open ended and does not have predetermined responses. The process of research involves developing questions and procedures; collecting data, analyzing the data, building on the data, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014, pp. 13-14). Quantitative research uses data that is measurable to discover patterns or formulate facts in research. The data is typically analyzed using statistical measure. Quantitative data collection methods are typically more structured than qualitative data collection methods (Creswell, 2014, pp. 12-13). Both quantitative and qualitative research is essential in understanding the research problem. I am using scores on comprehension quizzes as quantitative data and notes on a graphic organizer from my own observations during book clubs as qualitative data.

Based on my previous experiences with how students have book club discussions in fourth grade, I am very interested to learn how comprehension will be impacted with second grade students. A goal of the research is to have a better understanding of the scaffold and gradual release with teaching kids skills to make their talk in book clubs more meaningful. I want to know if it is a good idea to focus instruction around the use of
talk prompts. A second goal is to understand if the use of talk prompts will allow students to develop strong and meaningful talk that will then transfer into strengthening comprehension skills. As Berg (2014) found, deepening the talk that students have in book clubs also helps them to have a better understanding of what they read (2014). It gives them the skills they need to make connections with text, understand characters, make inferences and predictions, understand problems and solutions, and also to better follow the sequence of events that occur throughout the text. As a result, their comprehension strengthens (Forno, n.d.). By forming better talk skills in book clubs, it also gives students powerful skills to have more meaningful discussions in other subjects as well (Zwiers, 2014). I am anxious to see if the talk prompts will aid in strengthening the skills around making talk meaningful and more accountable in book clubs and strengthen comprehension as a result. I hope that my research will be able to strengthen book clubs in my own classroom as well as the possibility of sharing my findings in professional development so that others can also benefit from my research.

Book clubs can be set up in many different ways. You can have clubs with readers that read at a variety of different levels in one group. Another way to set up clubs is to have readers that read at the same level be in a group (Matlick, 2014). The data and results will be more accurate if I can compare like groups. In my study, I will be working with two book clubs that will each be made up of four students. According to research by Marshall, (2006), it was found that it may be most beneficial to have groups with readers at varying levels. For this reason, each club will have students that are below, at, and above grade level in reading based on the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). The BAS measures the reading levels that students read and
comprehend at. Both groups will be reading the same four books over the course of the study.

The duration of the study will be five weeks. This means that the groups will read one book each week. I will spend the first week introducing how we will run our book clubs. At this time we will go over the expectations and rules for the clubs. Together we will practice what book conversation should look like and we will also watch a video called *Grand Conversation* as a model for the students to follow (Jones, 2014). The first week we will meet once for an hour and a half and we will meet once a week for the remaining four weeks for an hour each time. With one group, I will introduce talk prompts and how to use them effectively to deepen accountable talk in a book club. The other group will not be using talk prompts in their discussions. In both groups, each club member will be responsible for coming to the club meeting prepared to discuss the assigned text.

The books that the students read are from Reading A-Z (Reading A-Z, n.d.). They are leveled books that come with comprehension quizzes that match the text. The students read the book before they came to the book club meeting. They took a comprehension pre-test upon arriving to the meeting, before any book club talk took place. After the pretest, the book club discussion took place. The group then took the same comprehension test again after the talk as a posttest (see Appendices A-E). One of the groups used talk prompts and the other group was the control group and therefore did not use prompts. Both groups followed the same procedure with testing.

During the first week, we read the fiction book, *New Planet, New School*, together as a group and practiced what a book club discussion should look like. As a group, we
completed the comprehension test that accompanies that story so that all members understood what would be expected of them in the following weeks. Over the next four weeks, the groups read two fiction books, *Anna and the Magic Coat* and *Fishing in the Rain*, and two nonfiction books, *What Lives in This Hole* and *Blackbeard the Pirate*. While the groups had their book club discussions, I took notes on a graphic organizer (See Appendix F). This gave me the information that I needed to compare their scores on the written comprehension tests with their verbal comprehension understanding. While the students took the posttest, I filled out the book club observation checklist (See Appendix G). This allowed me to compare engagement between the groups as well as keeping track of whether the groups stayed on topic. It was also a way to keep track of any problems that arose during the club meetings and whether or not the group that was using talk prompts was utilizing the use of them.

**Approval to Conduct Research**

To protect the participants of this study, I followed the procedures of the Hamline School of Education Human Subjects Committee. I submitted my proposal to the Hamline University Institutional Review Board. Following my capstone proposal meeting, I completed the Human Subjects Committee application. I received approval from the Hamline School of Education to conduct my research. The requirements of Hamline’s Human Subject Research review have been met. I was then able to start the action research. At this time a letter of consent was sent home with each child participant explaining the procedures and purpose of the study. Parents or guardians of the students signed consent letters for minor children to participate in the research and to have the results represented in this capstone. They were assured that all results will be anonymous
and confidential. All of the work that the students complete will be collected stored in a locked file cabinet until the data is recorded. The papers will then be shredded. This letter is in both English and Spanish and can be found in Appendix H.

Data Analysis

The data gathered was from comprehension pretest and posttest scores as well as observation notes on a graphic organizer from the book club meetings. In this method of pretest and posttest research using two groups, one group used talk prompts to enhance their discussion and then results were gathered at the end. The control group did not use talk prompts, however they were given the same tests. I was then able to analyze the data by comparing the results of the pretest and posttest to see if there was an increase in comprehension after students participated in a book club discussion. Furthermore, I could determine if there was a difference between the group that used talk prompts in comparison to the group that did not use talk prompts. Although Michaels, O'Connor, Hall, and Resnick (2013) determined that accountable talk does improve comprehension in students, it is stated that there is not a single best way to achieve accountable talk (2013). My research allowed me to determine if talk prompts are an effective strategy to use with second grade students.

Conclusion

Chapter three explained the plan and materials involved in completing my research project and answering the question: What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs? It was described that I used a mixed methods study that will collect data in quantitative and qualitative forms. Chapter four discusses the results and findings of the research plan.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This research study was completed in order to help me determine whether using talk prompts in book clubs to increase accountable talk has an effect on reading comprehension. I wanted to determine if using talk prompts to enhance accountable talk in book clubs would be an effective strategy to use with second grade students in order to improve their comprehension skills. The research was completed and data was gathered in order to answer the question: *What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?*

Overview

Once I had gained parental consent from the parents/guardians of the students, I was able to begin the book club study. I worked together with the parents to develop a schedule that would work for all of the students each week. It was important to work around their other activities so that I could ensure that I had their full attention during the book club meetings and that the students were not worried about missing out on other summer activities. I also planned the schedule so that the students had ample time to read the text that they were assigned to read at home.
I had the opportunity to work with two second grade book clubs, both consisting of four members each. We met once each week for five weeks at a public library. Both groups read the same book each week and both groups took a comprehension pretest and posttest for the text that they had read. Each group had students that read at or above grade level as well as students that read below grade level. The groups were equally divided based on gender and ethnicity. My decision to have differentiated levels in the book clubs is based on research from a study done by Marshall (2006). Marshall completed a study to determine the benefits of learning through book clubs. More specifically, the research compared comprehension growth of students learning in book clubs in comparison to students that learned from direct instruction of the same text (Marshall, 2006). The results of the study found that there was not a significant difference of growth in comprehension when comparing the two types of instruction. In fact, the evidence revealed that the groups that were below grade level did not respond as well to book clubs as groups that were at or above grade level (Marshall, 2006). The groups were made up of students that were at the same reading level, and based on the results; Marshall found that it may have been more beneficial to all learners to be in groups of differing levels of ability (Marshall, 2006). For this reason, the groups were made of readers that read at differing levels.

Week One

During the first week, I introduced book clubs and practiced a club meeting with both groups separately. I explained to the students what our meeting would consist of and then we got started. First, we watched a video called Grand Conversations (Jones, 2014) so that the students had a model of what accountable book talk should look like. Next,
we read the book, *New Planet, New School* together. The students then took a comprehension test as the practice pretest. After that, we practiced accountable book club talk about the text. With one group I introduced the talk prompts that the students would use in order to deepen their accountable talk. The other group did not use talk prompts, but still participated in a book club discussion. After the book club talk, the groups took the same comprehension test as the practice posttest. We went over questions that the groups had and I assigned the next text, *Anna and the Magic Coat*. I explained that they would read the book at home and be ready to take the pretest and have a club meeting when we met the next week. Everyone understood their assignment and explained back to me what would happen next.

**Week Two**

This week the groups were responsible for coming prepared to the club meeting and they had to maintain the book club talk on their own. Both groups came fully prepared to the book club meetings. Each meeting started the same way. The groups took the pretest based on the text, *Anna and the Magic Coat*. After that the book club discussion started. I will first describe the group used talk prompts in their book club discussion. All of the group members were participating and engaged in the book club discussion. The communication was very interactive and the members did not have problems staying on topic. The book club talk with the group that did not use talk prompts looked very different. Members had a difficult time staying on topic and some of the members had a difficult time participating in the conversation at all. The book talk in the group without prompts struggled to discuss the book. Both of the groups took the posttest following the book club discussion. To end the meetings, I went over the
assignment for the following week in which the groups would read the book *Blackbeard the Pirate*, a nonfiction text. The results for the pretest and posttest for *Anna and the Magic Coat* are as follows: The group that did not use prompts went from 60% proficient on the pretest to 62.5% proficient on the posttest collectively. The group that used prompts went from 57.5% proficient on the pretest to 80% proficient on the posttest collectively. These results showed that both groups increased in proficiency after conducting a book club discussion, however, the group that used talk prompts in their discussion had an increase in proficiency at a rate of 20% higher than the group that did not use talk prompts in their discussion.

![Figure 5. Results of Anna and the Magic Coat](image-url)
Week Three

The meetings started off great due to the fact that again all members of both groups had read the assigned text, *Blackbeard the Pirate*. Each group completed the pretest before we dove into the book club discussion. The group that used talk prompts had a discussion that stayed on topic. Members would often refer to the prompts to help guide them with talking ideas to bring up. Members used their prompts to ask questions as well as to elaborate in their talk. Communication in this group was interactive between members and all members participated equally. The group that did not use talk prompts really struggled with a book club discussion about the text. The talk was not interactive and there was not equal participation. The group struggled with what to discuss. I gave them a verbal prompt and although that did help briefly, the talk did not continue in a strong, meaningful discussion. Following the discussion, both groups took the posttest and then we went over the next book, *Fishing in the Rain*. The results of the pretest and posttest for *Blackbeard the Pirate* are as follows: The group that did not use prompts went from 55% proficient on the pretest to 57.5% proficient on the posttest collectively. The group that used talk prompts went from 55% proficient on the pretest to 66% proficient on the posttest collectively. These results showed that both groups increased in proficiency after conducting a book club discussion, however, the group that used talk prompts in their discussion had an increase in proficiency at a rate of 8.5% higher than the group that did not use talk prompts in their discussion.
Figure 6. Results of Blackbeard the Pirate

Week Four

All of the students in both groups came to the meetings ready to participate. They were happy and excited to be there, which really set a great tone for the club meetings. First, both groups took the pretest for the story, Fishing in the Rain. After that, the book club discussions began. The group that used talk prompts in their book club discussion was completely engaged and stayed on topic. The level of accountable talk went to a higher level this week as the members of the group were making connections by
comparing life experience to things that occurred in the text. This caused other members to elaborate about the text and communication was extremely interactive and continuous. They were asking questions about the story and there was even a debate over the meaning of one particular part of the story. The group that did not use talk prompts looked very different. This group really struggled with what to talk about. Conversation was minimal and there were periods of no talk at all. The group was well behaved, they just simply struggled with what to discuss as far as the text. Overall, the two groups looked very different this week as far as how the book club talk went. Once the book club talk ended, both groups took the posttest and then we talked about the last book that they would be reading, *What Lives in This Hole?* The results of the pretest and posttest for *Fishing in the Rain* are as follows: The group that did not use talk prompts went from 55% proficient to 60% proficient collectively. The group that used talk prompts went from 52.5% proficient to 72.5% proficient collectively. These results showed that both groups increased in proficiency after conducting a book club discussion, however, the group that used talk prompts in their discussion had an increase in proficiency at a rate of 15% higher than the group that did not use talk prompts in their discussion.
Figure 7. Results of Fishing in the Rain

**Week Five**

This week is the final book club for my research. The book that the students read was nonfiction and it had several challenging words as well as materials that can be tricky to comprehend. All members had read the book, *What Lives in This Hole*, and they were ready to take the pretest. After the pretest, the book club discussions began. The group that used talk prompts started off asking each other questions and they were trying to compare other animals to the animals in the text to make connections. The conversation was at times a debate between members to discuss the meaning of subjects in the text. One member was referring back to the text and pointing out page numbers so that the other members could look in the book to help them determine the real meaning. The conversation was powerful and impressive between these four young readers. No problems occurred and the group was able to stay on task. The group that did not use talk prompts started off real slow. Members struggled with what to talk about and some members seemed reluctant to talk at all. Suddenly a squirrel jumped up on on the ledge outside of the window and it caused a distraction for the group. Surprisingly, this ended
up to be a good distraction, because the group members were able to discuss the fact that squirrels live in holes in trees and they bury food in holes. It was by chance that this squirrel acted as a breakthrough and in turn was a “prompt” to help this group into conversation. It just so happened that the text was about animals that live in holes, and they were fortunate enough to have a funny situation help them into a more meaningful conversation about the text they had read. This was the most this group discussed in a book club meeting. Both groups then took the final posttest and we discussed the importance to keep reading over summer break. The results of the pretest and posttest of *What Lives in this Hole* are as follows: The group that did not use talk prompts went from 57.5% proficient to 62.5% proficient collectively. The group that used talk prompts went from 62.5% proficient to 77.5% proficient collectively. These results showed that both groups increased in proficiency after conducting a book club discussion, however, the group that used talk prompts in their discussion had an increase in proficiency at a rate of 10% higher than the group that did not use talk prompts in their discussion.
Figure 8. Results of What Lives in this Hole

Conclusion

In chapter four I was able to write about the results of my book club study and share the evidence that I collected during the process of answering my research question: *What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?* I was also able to describe details about the club meetings and how the meetings went as a whole. Overall, I found that there was a positive effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts in book clubs with second grade students. In Chapter five I will describe how I shared the results with the students, what I have learned throughout this process, and how I plan to share my findings with others.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The reason for my research project was to determine the effect book club talk had on reading comprehension with second grade students. To be honest, I was not even certain that students could carry on a book club conversation as young as 8-9 years old, but I was truly intrigued by the thought of testing it. I had no idea whether or not it would impact their comprehension level either. What I knew from prior teaching experience and also from research is that accountable talk is a very powerful strategy that does enhance comprehension levels (Calkins, 2001). That being said, just because kids are talking does not mean that it is accountable. Accountable talk must be accurate, meaningful talk that relates to the text (Michaels, O'Connor, Hall & Resnick, 2013).

In my study, I was able to compare two book club groups. Each group was made up of four students, and the groups both had students at different reading levels and abilities. The reason for my decision to set up the groups with students at different reading levels was based on a study done by Marshall (2006). In his study, Marshall found that it may have been more beneficial to all learners to be in groups of differing levels of ability (Marshall, 2006). One of the groups used talk prompts to guide their book club talk, and one group had a book club talk without using talk prompts. This was
completed in order to answer the research question: What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?

**Findings**

Each week the students were assigned a book to read and were expected to come to the book club meeting prepared. They would take a pretest and then get started with a book club discussion. Following the discussion, they would take a posttest. I took notes based on observations throughout the club meetings on a graphic organizer to maintain consistency with the content. It was very easy to compare data on the pretest/posttest, and it also took away any chance for bias or opinion. My findings were similar to other a few other research projects that had been done. In a study by Manning (2010), it was found that there was a significant difference between pre and post-tests resulting in a higher level of achievement in comprehension. In this study, it was found that readers gained comprehension skills as well as social skill growth after participating in a book club (Manning, 2010). A similar study by Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman (2012) also found book clubs improved comprehension.

My research found that both of the clubs that participated showed a growth in comprehension after having a book club talk, however, the group that used talk prompts had an increase at a higher rate. This meant that accountable talk does improve comprehension. More important to my research, the use of talk prompts in book clubs increased the proficiency in reading comprehension as well as the level of accountable talk within the group. The groups read both fiction and nonfiction stories and the biggest growth that occurred was with the fiction stories. When looking at the question: What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students
in book clubs? My findings would be that using talk prompts in a book club with second grade students does increase reading comprehension proficiency.

My Learning

The part that amazed me the most with this study is how much fun I had with the book club groups. It was a unique situation because it was completed during the summer months. The kids that I worked with were not my classroom students. I was impressed with how well the groups went and especially pleased with how comfortable the kids were. The reason for completing the study during the summer months was based on two things: first, the timing of my own graduate program and second, I had read a study that spoke about the benefits of a summer book club program. It was found that being a part of a book club works very well in the summer because schedules tend to be less hectic (Daniels, 2002). I also found this to be true.

Based on my notes and observations, I learned many things that I plan to share with colleagues. Most importantly, I found that with the right support, second grade students are fully capable of participating in book clubs and it positively impacts student achievement. The support that I found to be most useful was the use of talk prompts to help guide the conversation. Watching second grade students have deep, meaningful conversations about the book that they read was very inspiring. I observed them making connections, asking for clarification, and even challenging or questioning things that were said by their peers. I observed them referring back to the text as well as agreeing and disagreeing with ideas that were shared. The group that used talk prompts was able to hold powerful talk amongst each other.
I recently read an article that contained a quote that has proven to be very true. “No two persons ever read the same book~Edmund Wilson” (Warnekes, 2012, p.1). This is a quote that stuck with me and also caused me to reflect about the meaning. Each person is an individual with different background and different interpretations (Warnekes, 2012). When books are read, often times they are interpreted differently by the readers that read them. When we can talk about text with peers, we can gain a deeper understanding of the meaning (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). All of these facts, leads to the knowledge that a powerful way to increase student reading comprehension and engagement can be done by implementing book clubs (VanKeulen, 2011).

Sharing With The Students

As I was recording the final data and looking at the findings, it occurred to me that not one time throughout the process did any student ever ask me about their “score”. I was shocked. This is so unlike the classroom, where students are constantly asking about their grade or how many they got right. I was truly impressed that none, not even one asked me for a score. They did however ask if we could continue to have book clubs even though our five weeks had ended. To me, this spoke volumes about the experience they had with their book club groups.

I asked the parents if I could meet the groups for a short talk and treat at the Dairy Queen in town so that I could share with them what I found out during the research. I met with the group that used talk prompts first. I first explained that I was so proud of the effort that each of them had put forth and for the work that they had done. We never discussed any scores, however, I told them that their reading comprehension was better after they talked in book clubs. I went on to explain that the talk prompts that they used
was a great tool to teach them to have powerful and meaningful book club talk, just like older students do. I told them that they should be very proud of themselves. We discussed that talking about a text with a peer pushes our thinking and deepens understanding of a text. I asked them if they had any ideas about how they could practice this skill on their own. They came up with a few ideas: partner read a book with a friend, read a book with a parent and talk about it after each chapter, develop a book club on their own, and ask their teacher this year if they could have book clubs and meet with them during independent reading time once a week. What a great list they were able to come up with. Most importantly, we talked about remembering to use the talk prompts and to share them with their peers.

I met with the group that did not use prompts the next day. Our time together was similar, however, after I shared with them that talking about books does improve reading comprehension, I told them that I had a tool they could use to make talking about books even easier for them. I showed them a couple different talk prompts and explained that this tool could help them to push each other to think deeper about the text, increase their book club level of talk even further, and increase their comprehension to an even higher level. They all thought the talk prompts were really cool and they wanted to know if we could do another meeting so they could try them.

**Conclusion**

It warmed my heart to see kids so excited about reading. It was almost overwhelming that they wanted to continue the groups and it for sure was not expected. This made me aware of the importance of teaching kids to do things that are challenging, but without the stress of doing the task simply for a grade. It is something that I definitely
plan to share with colleagues. When I started the process for this research, I had no idea what I would truly experience when I set out to answer this question: *What is the effect on reading comprehension when using talk prompts with second grade students in book clubs?* I had not expected to see the level of talk that I experienced with second grade students. I think that as educators we need to challenge our kids to do hard things, but give them the support and tools that they need in order to be successful. This might mean that it takes a little more time, effort, and processing on our part as educators so that we are better able to meet students where they are and build on their learning from there. After all, “It’s not about teaching the child to read. It’s about teaching the children to love to read” (Hall, n.d., p. 1).
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Appendix A Fishing in the Rain Test

Reading A-Z

Quick Check

Fishing in the Rain

Name ___________________________ Date ____________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. When was school starting in this story?
   A. one week
   B. one month
   C. two weeks
   D. several months

2. How did the Hoppers feel about the rain in this story?
   A. surprised
   B. excited
   C. happy
   D. sad

3. Read this sentence: Our hot dogs and marshmallows will get soggy. What does soggy mean?
   A. old
   B. wet
   C. eaten
   D. lumpy

4. What did Grandpa Grizzly say always happens when it rains?
   A. Camping becomes no fun.
   B. The tent gets wet.
   C. The birds stop singing.
   D. The fish always bite.

5. What did the Hoppers do after they set up the tent?
   A. They stayed inside and played games.
   B. They went to the river and fished.
   C. They said they didn’t like the rain.
   D. They got ready to go to school.

6. The fish didn’t bite because ________.
   A. it was too noisy
   B. it was too cold
   C. the rain was falling
   D. there were no worms

Quick Check continued on following page
Fishing in the Rain

Name ___________________________ Date ___________

7. Why did Grandpa Grizzly tell the Hoppers they should all go back to the tent?
   A. It was getting dark.
   B. They had to go home.
   C. They were catching colds.
   D. There were no fish to catch.

8. Grandpa Grizzly jumped in the river the second time to __________.
   A. catch a fish
   B. go for a swim
   C. pull out Snubby Nose
   D. pick up a fishing pole

9. How did the problem in this story get solved?
   A. Grandpa Grizzly took the Hoppers home.
   B. Snubby Nose caught a really big fish.
   C. The Hoppers all went into the tent.
   D. Snubby Nose fell into the river.

10. What did the Hoppers have for dinner on the night of the story?
    A. fish
    B. hot dogs
    C. cold cereal
    D. hamburgers

11. Extended Response: Why do you think the Hoppers and Grandpa Grizzly stayed at the river for five days?
## Quick Check Answer Sheet

*Main Comprehension Skill: Sequence Events*

1. **A** Sequence Events
2. **D** Analyze Character
3. **B** Vocabulary
4. **D** Story Elements
5. **B** Sequence Events
6. **A** Make Inferences / Draw Conclusions
7. **C** Cause and Effect
8. **D** Sequence Events
9. **B** Problem and Solution
10. **A** Story Elements

11. Answers will vary somewhat but should include the following idea: they were **having fun catching fish.**
Appendix B Anna and the Magic Coat Test

Reading A-Z
Quick Check

Name __________________________ Date ____________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What game did the children play first?
   A) tag
   B) hide-and-seek
   C) kickball
   D) Red Rover

2. What happens when Anna takes off the coat?
   A) Wind swirls into the sky.
   B) Big clouds pile up.
   C) Fat raindrops fall.
   D) All of the above

3. When does Anna have the most fun at the picnic?
   A) when she controls the weather
   B) when she sits down to eat
   C) when she takes off the coat
   D) when Ms. Storm finds her

4. Read this sentence: The wind swirled around Anna’s feet. What does swirled mean?
   A) went up to the sky
   B) came down from above
   C) came up from the ground
   D) went around and around

5. How do you know that this story is a fantasy?
   A) The coat is magical.
   B) The coat is heavy.
   C) The coat is long and gray.
   D) The coat makes Anna hot.

6. Why did everyone run into the gym?
   A) It was windy and raining.
   B) Anna could not eat any food.
   C) Ms. Storm found Anna behind a tree.
   D) They wanted to play Red Rover.

Quick Check continued on following page

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Quick Check (continued)

Anna and the Magic Coat

Name __________________________ Date ____________

7. How does Anna feel at the beginning of the story?
   A fearful
   B sad
   C angry
   D happy

8. How was Anna feeling when she finally decided to take off the coat?
   A sad and angry
   B surprised and afraid
   C happy and excited
   D upset and frustrated

9. At the beginning of the story, what made Anna think it would rain?
   A the weather report
   B the dark clouds
   C the wind
   D the rain the day before

10. What did Anna say rain was not good for?
    A flowers and trees
    B bees and bugs
    C games and singing
    D picnics and cupcakes

11. Extended Response: Write about a time when it would have been helpful for you to have had the magic coat. Explain why it would have been helpful.
Main Comprehension Skill: Analyze Character

1. A Sequence Events
2. D Cause and Effect
3. C Analyze Character
4. D Vocabulary
5. A Identify Genre
6. A Cause and Effect
7. B Analyze Character
8. C Analyze Character
9. B Make Inferences / Draw Conclusions
10. D Main Idea and Details

11. Answers will vary but should include a time when a magic coat would have been helpful.
Appendix C New Planet, New School Test

Reading A-Z
Quick Check
New Planet, New School

Name ___________________________ Date ____________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What is one of the author’s purposes for writing this story?
   A. to persuade readers to switch schools
   B. to entertain readers with a fantasy story
   C. to entertain readers with a realistic fiction story
   D. to inform readers about space stories

2. Who is telling the story?
   A. Hululialana
   B. the girl’s parents
   C. the new girl
   D. Swiss Pumpernickel

3. Which word means to make fun of or provoke in a playful way?
   A. tease
   B. look
   C. talk
   D. glare

4. What event concludes the story?
   A. The girl meets Hululialana.
   B. The girl moves to a new planet.
   C. The girl befriends Hululialana.
   D. The girl begins her new school.

5. Who is a main character in the story?
   A. Swiss Pumpernickel
   B. Hululialana
   C. an alien in the hallway
   D. the girl’s parents

6. Why does the girl have to go to a new school?
   A. She is moving up to a new grade.
   B. Her family moves to a new planet.
   C. She doesn’t like her old school.
   D. Her old school is shutting down.

Quick Check continued on following page
7. What lesson does the author hope the reader learns from reading this story?
   A. Schools are better on different planets.
   B. People should be friends with others like them.
   C. Friends come in all shapes and sizes.
   D. Never eat lunch in the school cafeteria.

8. How do the illustrations support the theme of differences explored in the story?
   A. They show a wide variety of different creatures.
   B. They feature many human characters.
   C. They show scenes from school life.
   D. They feature different emotions on the girl’s face.

9. What does the word galaxy mean?
   A. a small group of streets
   B. a large group of trees and flowers
   C. a large group of stars and planets
   D. a small group of animals

10. How is the girl changed by the end of the story?
    A. She is friends with everyone and finally happy.
    B. She knows she can be friends with others different from her.
    C. She goes back to her old school where she can be like everyone else.
    D. She is unhappy at her school because she can’t make friends.

11. Extended Response: How would this story be different if it took place on Earth instead of on a different planet? Write four sentences describing how the characters and the plot would change with a change in setting.
Main Comprehension Skill: Author’s Purpose

1. □ Author’s Purpose
2. □ Character Point of View
3. □ Vocabulary
4. □ Sequence Events
5. □ Story Elements
6. □ Cause and Effect
7. □ Author’s Purpose
8. □ Make Inferences / Draw Conclusions
9. □ Vocabulary
10. □ Analyze Character
11. Answers will vary. Example:

   If this story were set on Earth, the girl would not be going to school with aliens, but only with other humans. She would still be nervous because starting at a new school is scary, and she might have a hard time meeting friends. Other characters would be different from her in the way they dress or act or their race instead of being different by being aliens. The plot could still be about her meeting a person different from herself and learning to accept differences in other people.
Appendix D What Lives in This Hole Test

Quick Check

What Lives in This Hole?

Name _______________ Date __________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What is another good title for this book?
   - A. What Lives in Caves?
   - B. Burrowing Animals
   - C. Insects and Spiders
   - D. Animals Around the World

2. The author included photos in this book to show __________.
   - A. desert tortoises and their homes
   - B. puffins and their homes
   - C. naked mole rats and their homes
   - D. all of the above

3. Why do salamanders and puffins lay their eggs in their burrow?
   - A. The eggs like the dark.
   - B. The female doesn't want the male to see the eggs.
   - C. The burrow protects the eggs from enemies.
   - D. None of the above

4. Which of the following is an opinion?
   - A. Wombats have huge claws.
   - B. Wombats are very cute and furry.
   - C. Wombats sleep during the day.
   - D. Wombats eat plants.

5. As one naked mole rat digs through dirt at the front of the tunnel, __________.
   - A. several others sweep the dirt to the back
   - B. the others wait outside
   - C. several others start new tunnels nearby
   - D. it eats whatever it finds

Quick Check continued on following page
6. Now that the student in this book has written about these animals, what is he planning to do next?
   A) learn about Australian animals
   B) study more animals that live in holes
   C) visit the zoo
   D) all of the above

7. Which of the following is a detail about puffins?
   A) They don’t like the water.
   B) They live in the tropical rainforest.
   C) They are brown and dull-colored.
   D) They swim better than they fly.

8. Naked mole rats dig ________ in teams to find roots to eat.
   A) houses
   B) tunnels
   C) eggs
   D) nests

9. The author probably wrote this book to ________.
   A) let readers know about Goliath bird-eating spiders
   B) entertain readers with photos of cute wombats
   C) inform readers about animals that burrow
   D) persuade readers to travel to other places in the world

10. A salamander is a ________.
    A) a type of sea bird with a brightly colored beak
    B) a tool for digging tunnels
    C) a kind of amphibian that has smooth, wet skin
    D) none of the above

11. Extended Response: Why did the author include a glossary at the end of this book?
Main Comprehension Skill: Main Idea and Details

1. **B** Main Idea and Details
2. **D** Make Inferences / Draw Conclusions
3. **C** Make Inferences / Draw Conclusions
4. **B** Fact or Opinion
5. **A** Main Idea and Details
6. **B** Sequence Events
7. **D** Main Idea and Details
8. **B** Vocabulary
9. **C** Author's Purpose
10. **C** Vocabulary

11. Answers should include the following: the author wanted the reader to be able to look up unknown vocabulary words before, during, or after reading the story.
Appendix E Blackbeard the Pirate Test

Quick Check

Blackbeard the Pirate

Name ___________________________ Date ________________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What was the author’s main purpose for writing Blackbeard the Pirate?
   A to entertain
   B to inform
   C to persuade
   D all of the above

2. Read this sentence: Blackbeard captured a large, fast, French ship. To capture is to ________.
   A travel across water
   B act aggressively against an opponent
   C catch or take control of by force
   D own something that is very valuable

3. Blackbeard’s ship got stuck in the sand. What did he do next to solve his problem?
   A He loaded all his treasure onto another ship.
   B He captured another French ship and crew.
   C He moved back to England and gave his treasure away.
   D He sank the ship into the ocean with all its treasure.

4. Which of the following sentences from the book informs?
   A Blackbeard scared everyone who saw him.
   B Sailing a large ship close to the land is hard to do.
   C The Ranger’s crew threw Blackbeard’s body into the sea.
   D All of the above

Quick Check continued on following page
5. Which of the following tells the definition of a crew?
   (a) a person who attacks and robs ships at sea
   (b) something that is very special or valuable, especially if owned by a pirate
   (c) a way to travel across water in a boat or ship
   (d) a group of people who work together, especially those who operate a vehicle or machine

6. Which sentence tells what happened after Blackbeard climbed onto the Ranger during his last battle?
   (a) Blackbeard captured the crew and took over their ship.
   (b) The governor of Virginia sent a ship to find and capture Blackbeard.
   (c) The Ranger’s crew jumped out from their hiding places and began to fight him again.
   (d) Blackbeard stole the treasure on board the Ranger.

7. Which sentence tells an opinion?
   (a) Blackbeard was a very mean and angry man.
   (b) He was shot five times before he finally died.
   (c) Blackbeard had four fast ships and a crew of over 350 men.
   (d) England is the country where Blackbeard was born.

8. How are pirating and sailing similar?
   (a) They both involve robbing other ships.
   (b) They both take place on the ocean.
   (c) They both involve only pirates.
   (d) All of the above

9. Read the following sentence: The governor of Virginia was tired of Blackbeard’s attacks. Does this sentence inform, persuade, or entertain?
   (a) inform
   (b) persuade
   (c) entertain
   (d) all of the above

Quick Check continued on following page
10. What caused people to believe Blackbeard had stopped being a pirate?
   A. He sunk the Queen Anne’s Revenge.
   B. He moved to Charleston, South Carolina.
   C. He deserted his crew on an island.
   D. He got married and bought a house.

11. Extended Response: List five facts about Blackbeard the pirate.
Main Comprehension Skill: Author's Purpose

1. (B) Author's Purpose
2. (C) Vocabulary
3. (A) Sequence Events
4. (D) Author's Purpose
5. (D) Vocabulary
6. (C) Sequence Events
7. (A) Fact or Opinion
8. (B) Compare and Contrast
9. (A) Author's Purpose
10. (D) Cause and Effect

11. Answers will vary but should include five facts from the book, such as the following: he lived three hundred years ago; his real name was Edward Teach; he joined a crew to help the English navy during a war; his first ship was the Queen Anne's Revenge; he became very famous; he was a huge man with a thick, braided, black beard; he had four fast ships and a crew of over 350 men; his last ship was called the Adventure; he was killed by the crew of the Ranger; and so on.
### Assessing Book Clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk:</th>
<th>Comprehension:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Next Steps:</th>
<th>Next Steps:</th>
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### Appendix G Book Club Observation Checklist

**Book Name:** _______________________  **Date:** _______________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group members participated and shared in the discussion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication was interactive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group members asked questions for clarification or elaboration.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group members stayed on topic in the discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group members used the talk prompts in their discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were there problems during the club meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H Letter of Consent in English and Spanish

May 3, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a graduate student working on an advanced degree in education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I plan to conduct research with the use of talk prompts in book clubs and the effect it has on comprehension from June-August, 2016. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission for your child to take part in my research. This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline’s Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

I want to study how using talk prompts in student book clubs affects comprehension. I plan to meet with the book clubs 5 times during the months of June-August, 2016. The steps will be to meet the first time and do a practice book club meeting so that the students will know what is expected of them. During the following four club meetings, the students will participate in a book club talk. The students will be given a book to read before each meeting. First, a comprehension pretest will be given. Next, the book club discussion will take place. Finally, a posttest will be given. This will allow me to see if there is a change in comprehension with the use of talk prompts.

There is little to no risk for your child to participate. All results will be confidential and anonymous. I will not record information about individual students, such as their names, nor report identifying information or characteristics in the capstone. Participation is voluntary and you may decide at any time and without negative consequences that information about your child will not be included in the capstone.

I have received approval for my study from the School of Education at Hamline University. The capstone will be catalogued in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository. My results might also be included in an article for publication in a professional journal or in a report at a professional conference. In all cases, your child's identity and participation in this study will be confidential.

If you agree that your child may participate, keep this page. Fill out the duplicate agreement to participate on page two and return to me by mail or copy the form in an email me no later than ______.

If you have any questions, please email or call me.

Sincerely,
Kelly Bridge
651-808-7474
kbridge@isd622.org
Informed Consent to Participate in Qualitative Interview

*Keep this full page for your records.*

I have received your letter about the study you plan to conduct in which you will study the use of talk prompts in book clubs and the effect it has on comprehension. I understand there is little to no risk involved for my child, that his/her confidentiality will be protected, and that I may withdraw or my child may withdraw from the project at any time.

______________________________  _______________
Signature  Date

Participant Copy
Informed Consent to Participate in Qualitative Interview

*Please return this portion to Kelly Bridge.*

I have received your letter about the study you plan to conduct in which you will study the use of talk prompts in book clubs and the effect it has on comprehension. I understand there is little to no risk involved for my child, that his/her confidentiality will be protected, and that I may withdraw or my child may withdraw from the project at any time.

___________________________________  _________________
Signature  Date

Researcher Copy
Estimado Padre o Tutor,

Soy un estudiante graduado que trabaja en un grado avanzado en educación en la Universidad de Hamline, St. Paul, Minnesota. Como parte de mi trabajo de graduación, tengo la intención de llevar a cabo investigaciones con el uso de mensajes de conversación en los clubes de lectura y el efecto que tiene sobre la comprensión de junio a agosto de 2016. El propósito de esta carta es pedir su permiso para que su hijo tome parte de mi investigación. Esta investigación es la beca pública del producto abstracto y última será catalogado en Hamline de Bush Biblioteca Digital Commons, un repositorio electrónico y que puede ser publicado o utilizado de otra manera.

Quiero estudiar cómo usar charla solicita en los clubes de lectura de los estudiantes afecta a la comprensión. Tengo la intención de reunirse con los clubes de lectura 5 veces durante los meses de junio a agosto de 2016. Los pasos serán para satisfacer la primera vez y hacer una reunión del club práctica libro para que los estudiantes sepan qué se espera de ellos. Durante las cuatro sesiones siguientes del club, los estudiantes participarán en una charla club de lectura. Los estudiantes recibirán un libro para leer antes de cada reunión. En primer lugar, se dará una prueba previa comprensión. Posteriormente, el análisis club de lectura hablará lugar. Por último, se le dará una prueba posterior. Esto permitirá que vea si hay un cambio en la comprensión con el uso de mensajes de conversación.

Hay poco o ningún riesgo de que su hijo participe. Todos los resultados serán confidenciales y anónimas. No voy a registrar información acerca de los estudiantes individuales, como sus nombres, ni información de identificación informe o características de la piedra angular. La participación es voluntaria y puede decidir en cualquier momento y sin consecuencias negativas que la información sobre su hijo no será incluido en el coronamiento.

He recibido la aprobación para mi estudio de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad de Hamline. La culminación será catalogado catalogado en Hamline de Bush Biblioteca Digital Commons, un repositorio electrónico. Mis resultados también podrían incluirse en un artículo para su publicación en una revista profesional o en un informe en una conferencia profesional. En todos los casos, la identidad y la participación de su hijo en este estudio serán confidenciales.

Si está de acuerdo que su hijo puede participar, mantenga esta página. Rellene el acuerdo de duplicada para participar en la segunda página y vuelve a mí por correo o copiar la forma de un correo electrónico mí no más tarde de _____.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, por favor correo electrónico o llámeme.

Sinceramente,
Kelly Bridge
651-808-7474
kbridge@isd622.org
El consentimiento informado para participar en entrevista cualitativa

Guarde esta página completa para sus archivos.

He recibido su carta sobre el estudio va a realizar en el cual se estudiará el uso de charla solicitada en los clubes de lectura y el efecto que tiene en la comprensión. Entiendo que hay poco o ningún riesgo que implica para mi hijo, que su / su confidencialidad será protegida, y que puedo retirar o mi niño puede retirarse del proyecto en cualquier momento.

_________________________________________________________________

Fecha de firma

Copia Participante
El consentimiento informado para participar en entrevista cualitativa

*Por favor, devuelva esta porción de Kelly Bridge.*

He recibido su carta sobre el estudio va a realizar en el cual se estudiará el uso de charla solicitada en los clubes de lectura y el efecto que tiene en la comprensión. Entiendo que hay poco o ningún riesgo que implica para mi hijo, que su / su confidencialidad será protegida, y que puedo retirar o mi niño puede retirarse del proyecto en cualquier momento.

________________________________________________________

Fecha de firma

Investigador Copia
Appendix I Sentence Stems and Sentence Strips (Martin, n.d.)
Appendix J Accountable Talk Cards (Accountable Talk Posters Set, n.d.)
Accountable Talk:

• I agree with ___ because...
• I sort of disagree with ___ because...
• Why do you think that?
• Where can I find that in the book?
• So, what you're saying is...
• Couldn't it also be that...?
• Can you explain what you mean?
• Can you tell me more?
• Can you give an example of that?
Appendix L Accountable Talk Placemats (Accountable Talk Posters Set, n.d.)