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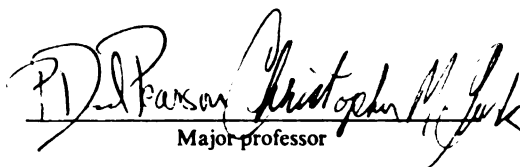
The Road to Participation: The Evolution of
a Literary Community in an Intermediate Grade
Classroom of Linguistically Diverse Learners

presented by

AILING KONG

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THE ROAD TO PARTICIPATION:
THE EVOLUTION OF A LITERARY COMMUNITY IN AN INTERMEDIATE
GRADE CLASSROOM OF LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

By

Ailing Kong

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE ROAD TO PARTICIPATION: THE EVOLUTION OF A LITERACY COMMUNITY IN AN INTERMEDIATE GRADE CLASSROOM OF LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

By

Ailing Kong

The purpose of this study is to examine the process in which a class of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learned to participate in the discourse of a literary community. Over the past two decades, the number of students who speak a language other than English at home or practice a non-mainstream home culture has risen dramatically, and this number continues to grow (August & Hakuta, 1997). The language barriers and the cultural differences these students encounter at schools prevent them from gaining access to success there. Studies show that English-language learners receive lower grades and score below their classmates on standardized tests of reading and math (Moss & Puma, 1995). Studies also show that literacy learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students is best facilitated in classrooms where learning opportunities are created for students to participate in reading, writing, and talking about texts in classroom learning communities.

Data for this study were collected during the 1998-1999 school year from a 4th/5th grade split classroom in an urban school and included field notes of observation, audio- and video-taping, interviews with the teacher and students, students' writing samples, and students' pre and post SORT test scores and a pre

and post meta-comprehension strategy survey. This study focuses on how students learned to participate in Book Club discourse. Data analysis reveals a gradual release of responsibility in conducting Book Club group and whole class discussions from the teacher to the students over the school year (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). Teacher talk and teacher-led talk at the beginning of the year gave way to student-centered talk, though the teacher continued to provide guidance and support to the students. By the end of the year, students assumed more responsibility in their group and whole class discussions by initiating topics of their own interests, monitoring their own discussions, and constructing new knowledge together. Data analysis also reveals that learning opportunities in Book Club were created for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Five features highlight the practice in this classroom. First, the teacher believed that all students bring with them rich experiences and knowledge to contribute to the discussions and tried to cultivate this belief among students to create a community of learners. Second, students were given the time and space to share with each other their responses to quality literature, and they were encouraged to construct meanings collaboratively. Third, students were pushed to think critically and reflectively about what they read by writing responses to high level questions. Fourth, the teacher employed multiple modes of teaching, from telling, modeling, scaffolding, facilitating student discussions, and participating as a member (Au & Raphael, 1998). Finally, the teacher persisted in challenging the students and maintained high expectations of the students.

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This work is dedicated to my parents,

Xianji Kong and Fanglian Kong

With love and appreciation

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Jenny taught me to be sensitive to the language used by the teacher and its effect on the students in their learning and how to examine patterns in the interactions between the teacher and the students. Discourse analysis plays a big part in helping me understand the classroom in this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore how a class of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learned to participate in the discourse of a literary community. Two assumptions are underlying the study. First, it is assumed that the goal of literacy education is to best prepare all students, including students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to be competent participants in the literacy practices of a democratic and diverse society. Literacy practice is used here in a broad sense and includes the cultural, political, and economic practices of a society. According to socio-cultural perspectives of learning and development, human actions and human higher order thinking processes are mediated by signs and tools, primarily psychological tools such as language (Vygotsky 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Language affords, as well as constrains, human actions and human thinking. Thus, in order to prepare students to be competent participants in the cultural, political, and economic practices of a democratic and diverse society, teachers must not only help students acquire cultural heritage or "common knowledge" (Edwards and Mercer, 1987), but also help students become independent and critical thinkers and reflective life-long learners (Dewey, 1916). Teaching and learning becomes a process of transformation.

Second, it is assumed that a multicultural society is a society in which different ethnic groups learn from each other and contribute to the common good of the society (Nieto, 1992; Spindler & Spindler, 1994). Thus, in teaching students

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with diverse backgrounds, teachers should not only help them gain access to the cultural capital (Delpit, 1995), the conventions and norms of discourse privileged in our schools and society, they should also engage students in developing knowledge and skills that will benefit a multicultural society, such as active participation, respect for difference and diversity, pride in self identity, and a disposition toward cooperation and collaboration (Au, 1998).

In this chapter, I construct an argument for studying the classroom literacy learning experiences of students with diverse backgrounds, with a focus specifically on how they learned to participate in literary discourse. I begin by briefly describing the changes in student population and the challenges educators have in teaching students with diverse backgrounds. I then discuss the socio-cultural theoretical framework to illustrate how classroom literacy learning experiences affect students' acquisition of the literacy knowledge and skills.

A Growing Diverse Student Population

The number of students who speak a language other than English at home or practice a non-mainstream culture has risen dramatically over the past two decades and this number continues to grow. According to a 1990 U.S. census report quoted by August and Hakuta (1998), about 14 percent of the total number of students in the U.S. population live in a home where a language other than English is spoken. According to a more direct estimate based on a nationally representative sample of school districts, the number of English-language learners in grades K-12 in the fall of 1991 increased almost 1 million since a survey

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conducted in 1984 using similar methodology (Fleischman and Hopstock, 1993). Among these students, a large proportion were native speakers of Spanish (73 percent). This was followed immediately by native speakers of various Asian languages, such as Vietnamese (3.9 percent); Hmong (1.8 percent); Cantonese (1.7 percent); Cambodian (1.6 percent); Korean (1.6 percent); and Laotian (1.3 percent) (August & Hakuta, 1997, pp. 17-18).

Educators and researchers have provided evidence showing that the differences and discontinuity between diverse students' experiences at home and at school create difficulties for them to achieve academic success at schools (Heath, 1983; Au, 1998; Banks, 1993). The language barriers and the cultural differences prevent these students from gaining access to educational success (Valdes, 1998). Studies show that English-language learners receive lower grades; they are judged by their teachers to have lower academic abilities; and they score below their classmates on standardized tests of reading and math (Moss and Puma, 1995). There is also a high drop-out rate for students whose first language is not English (Fillmore & Meyer, 1992). The gap between the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds and their mainstream peers is also documented in the results of reading and writing tests administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Donohue, Voelkl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999) and in the standardized tests scores obtained by states (Au & Raphael, 2000). Statistics also show that these students are overwhelmingly from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (August & Hakuta, 1998), a factor that may negatively affect diverse

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students' literacy development (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Many studies explore how diverse students develop literacy knowledge and skills (Au & Mason, 1981; Raphael & Brock, 1993; DeStigter, 1998; Hiebert, 1991; Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992; Moll 1992; Nieto 1999). Yet, more research is needed to focus on how to help these students beat the odds and obtain the necessary literacy skills to succeed at school and society (Au, 1998; Delpit, 1995; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999).

Socio-Cultural Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the sociocultural perspectives of learning and development by Vygotsky (1978, 1986), Wertsch (1985), Lave & Wenger (1991), and Rogoff, Matusov, & White (1996). A fundamental tenet of socio-cultural theory is that all higher psychological processes originate in purposive social interactions among human beings and with their living environment. Hence, learning and development becomes a process of transformation of participation that takes place within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. In this section, I first introduce briefly the three interrelated themes of the Vygotskian socio-cultural theories summarized by Wertsch (1985) and the concept of learning as transformation of participation by Rogoff, et al. (1996) and Lave & Wenger (1991). Finally, I discuss the Vygotsky space (Gavelek & Raphael, 1996; Harre, 1984) which delineates the process of the transformation.

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Vygotskian Socio-Cultural Theory

Vygotskian socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) explicates individual learning and development within social, cultural, and historical contexts. Wertsch (1985) summarizes the three fundamental themes of Vygotskian socio-cultural perspectives. First, to understand any phenomenon, we must understand both its origin and the processes by which it is acquired. Who we are and what we do can be explained by our experiences. What students experience in the classroom shapes what they will learn and who they will be. What teaching materials to use, what learning activities to organize, what assessments to give, what power relations to be established between the teacher and the students, and what languages to use will either help create learning opportunities for the students or exclude the students from learning.

Second, mind is social in nature. Knowledge is constructed and learning occurs in interactions with the more knowledgeable members of a community in meaningful contexts. For students to develop their literacy knowledge and skills for participation, they must have the opportunities to observe and participate in the practices, while being assisted by the more knowledgeable others. Vygotsky (1978) distinguishes the actual mental development and the zone of proximal development (zpd). He defines zpd as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). He urges educators

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to foresee mental development prospectively and create the zone in their interaction with children. For students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to construct their understanding and interpretation of the literacy practices, the establishment of a zpd enables them to make connections between the knowledge they bring into the classroom and the new practices they learn.

Third, human action, including high level mental processes, is mediated by signs and tools - primarily psychological tools such as language. Language, with its vocabulary and structure and their associated concepts, affords and constrains how we perceive and interact with the world around us. Gee (1992) describes language as a carrier of the "the characteristic ways of talking, acting, interacting, thinking, believing, and valuing, and sometimes characteristic ways of writing, reading and/or interpreting" (p. 20) of any socioculturally defined groups of people. As a tool, language mediates how the speakers perceive and make sense of their physical and social world.

Vygotskian socio-cultural perspectives view the process of learning and development as a process of internalization/transformation of the cultural practices of a community. Learning and development occur in interactions with more knowledgeable members of a community in communal practices within unique historical contexts and are mediated by language in use. Thus participation becomes the essential element in analyzing the process of learning and development.

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Learning as a Process of Transformation of Participation in Cultural Practices

The dialogic and interactive nature of learning and meaning construction highlights the importance of participation, which is the goal as well as the means of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, et al., 1996; Dewey, 1916). To Dewey (1916), "knowledge is a mode of participation, valuable in the degree in which it is effective", and "cannot be the idle view of an unconcerned spectator" (p. 393).

Lave and Wenger (1991) delineate the process of the participating mode as a process of knowledge construction. They argue that the process of participation proceeds from peripheral to full in the purposive activities carried out by members of a community in specific situations. In this process, novitiates appropriate and practice the knowledge and skills required to engage in full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community. Rogoff, et al. (1996) take the idea a step further. To them, learning and development is a process and a transformation of one's participation in socio-cultural activities. Participation in the social and cultural activities of the community transforms the participants' understanding, roles, and responsibilities.

Children are enculturated into "school" ways of reading, writing, talking and thinking through participating and experiencing in their daily activities, especially in the classroom and school learning activities. The learning-as-transformation-of-participation view has changed the view of children as learners from being "blank slates" to "thinkers" and "belief-holders" (Bruner, 1996). Their limited experiences help them to construct a theory of the world. This theory, or

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schema, gives them a lens for understanding their experiences. Bruner believes that pedagogy is to help the children understand better, more powerfully, less one-sidedly, or to modify and expand their theory of the world. To achieve this is through discourse, collaboration, and negotiation rather than imitation or didactic instruction. He believes that "knowledge is what is shared within discourse, within a 'textual' community" (p. 57).

Vygotsky Space

While Lave and Wenger (1991) point out the trajectory of learning through participation, Vygotsky (1978) delineates specific details of how learning occurs in interaction and participation. According to Vygotsky, "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (p. 57). Gavelek and Raphael (1996) adapt Harre's (1984) "Vygotsky Space" to capture this learning process from social to individual and to social again, and from public to private to public again. They created a visual representation for this process. In this model, learning begins from the social/public arena, when the learner/novice observes the cultural practices of the community. What they see and hear gets internalized or transformed through the learner/novice's personal and individual space. Then the learners/novices demonstrate their understanding and interpretation of their observation of the cultural practices at the public/social space again. While the learners/novices repeat the cycle of observation, appropriation, internalization/transformation, and

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demonstration of their interpretation, the more knowledgeable members of the community continue to model expert behavior of participation and at the same time scaffold the learner's participation behavior. New understanding and interpretation of the cultural practices occurs and gets demonstrated again. As a result of the recursive cycles, a learner/novice proceeds from peripheral participation to expert participation through appropriation, transformation, publication, and conventionalization.

Thus, the social, cultural, historical, and physical contexts help to shape the kind of experiences children and novices have, which in turn, shape what they will learn and whom they will be. The view that learning occurs through interaction and participation in cultural practices and mediated by language directs us to examining what goes on in the interpersonal space between the participants to understand learning. To explore how students learn in classrooms, we need to examine what constitute the experiences of the students, such as what expectations held by the teacher and students, what role they assume, what materials are used, what learning activities are organized, what assessments are given to students, etc. All these help us to understand how students with diverse backgrounds develop their literacy knowledge and skills and explore what facilitates this learning process.

The Importance of Classroom Learning Experiences

Research has shown that there are many factors affecting how well students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learn to read and write, such as

their home exposure to books and literacy, their motivation in learning to read and write, and even their attitudes towards the culture of the language (Ogbu, 1993). However, what happens in the classroom has a direct impact on students' literacy achievement (Au & Raphael, 2000; Cummins, 1997). What learning materials the teachers decide to use, what learning activities they organize for the students, how they assess students' learning, what power relations they establish between the students and themselves, and what languages they use in interacting with the students will either help create learning opportunities for the diverse students or deprive them of the learning opportunities.

The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) (1998) summarizes 10 research-based principles to improve the reading achievement of America's children and emphasizes the importance of programs and instructions. Only one principle points out the importance of the children's home language and literacy experiences and two others highlight professional development and collaboration of the whole school staff. The other seven principles all focus on the programs and instructions that directly constitute the children's experiences in the classrooms. Programs that create a "variety of classroom language and meaningful reading and writing events" and instructions that provide guidance to support successful reading acquisition help improve students' reading achievement. For students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, effective instruction includes "assessment, integration, and extension

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of relevant background knowledge and the use of texts that recognize these diverse backgrounds".

Cummins (1997) examines students' learning in the classroom and focuses on how power relations between the teacher and the students affect students' participation in the learning activities. He points out, "These microinteractions [in the classroom] form an interpersonal or an interactional space within which the acquisition of knowledge and formation of identity is negotiated. ... As such, the microinteractions constitute the most immediate determinant of student academic success or failure" (p. 425).

To summarize, socio-cultural theoretical perspective points us to examining the participation patterns of diverse students and their interactions with the more knowledgeable/powerful others in classroom practices to understand how they learn at school and to explore ways of helping them to improve their literacy achievement. What students learn is influenced and shaped by their experiences, of which classroom constitutes an important part. This study explores the process in which students were enculturated into the classroom literacy practices, i.e., Book Club, and developed the knowledge and skills that are needed for participation. It examines the changes of the learning activity structures, the interactions between the teacher and the students, the different roles of the teacher and the students, the participation patterns of the teacher and the students in Book Club activities, and the factors affecting the changes over the school year.

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CHAPTER 2

DIVERSE LEARNERS, LITERATURE-BASED INSTRUCTION, AND BOOK CLUB : A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This study examines how a fourth/fifth grade classroom of culturally and linguistically diverse students learn to develop literacy knowledge and skills and to participate in the conversations of a literary community. In this literature review, I focus on studies in three areas that inform the current study: (a) studies on teaching diverse students in classroom settings, (b) studies on the literature-based instruction, and (c) studies on Book Club, the specific instantiation of literature-based reading employed by the teacher in this study.

Teaching Diverse Students in Classroom Settings

Second Language Acquisition

The traditional view of second language acquisition regards language as a system of structures consisting of phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and lexicon. To learn a language is to analyze and understand all these components as objects of study. More recent views emphasize the cultural aspects of language and focus on language in use. Learning a language is not only learning the codes, but also acquiring the culture in which the language is embedded (Widdowson, 1984).

Garcia (1994) summarizes studies on bilingualism and second-language acquisition with regard to the acquisition of linguistic skills, cognitive development, and social/cultural aspects of language. Garcia concludes that a

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student's linguistic, cognitive, and social experiences play an important part in how culturally and linguistically diverse students learn to develop "the full repertoire of linguistic skills in English, in preparation for participation in mainstream classes" (p. 88). This is because:

1. The linguistic, cognitive, and social character of the child are developing simultaneously.
2. Linguistic, cognitive, and social development are interrelated. That is, cognitive processing factors may influence linguistic and social development, linguistic development (the ability to operate within the structural aspects of languages) may influence social and potential cognitive functioning, and, in turn, the development of social competence may influence directly the acquisition of linguistic and cognitive repertoires (p. 69).

Debate over Language of Instruction for ESL Students

One issue of debate regarding the education of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the United States focuses on the language of instruction. Should teachers teach in the child's native/home language or the English language? The supporters of native language for instruction recommend that teachers use students' native language for instruction and not introduce the English curriculum until students master that language. They believe that students' mastery of their native language provides important cognitive and social foundations for second-language learning as well as academic learning in general. Supporters at the other end recommend minimal use of native language from the beginning of the students' school experience. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) have examined the issue of instructional language in teaching early elementary students and find very little data-based evidence to answer specific questions of

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language acquisition and ultimate attainment of second language learners. Relying on a review by August and Hakuta (1997), Snow and her colleagues note that English speakers in French immersion programs in Canada acquire literacy in French after initial instruction in French, but add that the success of immersion in Quebec may be due to the fact that the English-speaking children come from families that are generally middle-class and academically motivated and have the access to many academic and literacy resources.

At the same time, Snow, et al. (1998) note that the development of a child's first language plays an important role on how the child acquires a second language. Cummins (1979) reviews a number of studies that show high interlanguage correlations on literacy and literacy-related tasks. His study also demonstrates this transfer between languages belonging to different language families, such as between English and Japanese and between English and Vietnamese (Cummins, 1984). Collier and Thomas (1989) find that on average children who have presumably established basic literacy skills in a native language catch up with monolingual English-speaking peers in all areas within a couple of years after arrival, unless those children enter U.S. schools in kindergarten or first grade. Their study highlights the importance of the development of first language in affecting the students' school learning in general. From this array of patently insufficient evidence, Snow et al. conclude, "It is clear that initial reading instruction in the first language does no harm and it seems likely both from research findings and from theories about literacy development that initial reading

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instruction in the second language can have negative consequences for immediate and long-term achievement” (p. 238). They urge initial literacy instruction in a child’s native language whenever possible and suggest that literacy instruction should not be introduced in any language before some reasonable level of oral proficiency in that language is attained.

To demonstrate the complexity of the issue of instructional language, García (1994) cited Ramirez et al.’s (1991) study of three programs on a native language and English instruction continuum, with late-exit transitional bilingual education programs at one end, early exit programs in the middle, and structured English immersion strategy programs at the other end. All three programs share the same instructional goal: to help the language minority student to acquire sufficient English language skills to succeed in an English-only mainstream classroom. The programs differ in the amount and duration that English is used for instruction as well as the length of student participation time. Though results show “the immersion programs gave the youngest students an initial advantage when tested in English, but this advantage disappeared by third grade” (p. 78). Overall, the results suggest that there were no program differences at the end of four years (K-3). Instead of focusing on finding out which language of instruction helps students of diverse backgrounds develop a second language, Garcia (1994) asks the field to pay attention to the broader contexts of U.S. society’s treatment of these students in and out of schools, as also suggested by Heath, (1986), Cummins (1986), Freire (1973), Ogbu (1987), and Trueba (1987). He calls on the field to

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develop a new pedagogy that “redefines the classroom as a community of learners in which speakers, readers, and writers come together to define and redefine the meaning of the academic experience” (p. 80). He further describes the new pedagogy:

In any case, it argues for the respect and integration of students’ values, beliefs, histories, and experiences and recognizes the active role that students must play in the learning process. However, this responsive pedagogy expands students’ knowledge beyond their own immediate experiences while using those experiences as a sound foundation for appropriating new knowledge. (p. 80)

Classroom as a Community of Learners

Consistent with Garcia’s call for a new pedagogy, educators have been studying the social and cultural experiences of diverse students in and outside schools. As students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds seem to fall more easily into the at-risk categories, studies are conducted to examine the discrepancy between these students’ home experience and their school experience. Differences are documented in the interactional/communication styles these students experience at home and at school (Heath, 1983; Au, 1981). Many scholars investigate creating classroom learning environments to help diverse students achieve the same academic success as their mainstream peers (Raphael & Brock, 1997; Zuniga-Hill & Yopp, 1996; Garcia, 1991; Trueba, Jacobs, Kirton, 1990; DeStigter, 1998; Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992). The common theme among these efforts shows that learning opportunities are created for diverse students when teachers build communities in their classrooms.

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Community has become a new buzz word in the language of education.

Rogoff and others explore the idea of community of learners (Rogoff, 1994, 1995; Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996), based on the premise that knowledge is socially constructed and “learning occurs as people participate in shared endeavors with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles in sociocultural activity” (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209). In discussing community building in schools, Sergiovanni (1994) makes a distinction between “community of place” and “community of mind”. Quoting the German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies (1940), Sergiovanni calls a group of people bound by external forces, such as the classroom, a “community of place” in contrast to a “community of mind”. The latter distinguishes itself from the former in that it transforms a collection of “I’s” to a collective “we”, hence providing the members with “a unique and enduring sense of identity, belonging, and place” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. xiii). In general, the members of a community of mind have shared values and ideals; they are bounded by internal factors, such as commitment, obligations and duties; and they usually care for, listen to and value each other.

Kohn (1996) describes a classroom community as “a place in which students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. They experience a sense of being valued and respected; the children matter to one another and to the teacher. They have come to think in the plural: they feel connected to each other; they are part of an ‘us’. And, as a result of all this, they feel safe in their classes, not only physically but emotionally” (pp. 101-102). Kohn

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emphasizes that “students need to feel safe in order to take intellectual risks; they must be comfortable before they can venture into the realm of discomfort” (p. 103).

Studies of school and classroom effectiveness show that classroom as a community of learners creates learning opportunities for students to participate and develop their academic and social skills (Rogoff et al., 1996; Dudley-Marling & Stires, 1992; August & Hakuta 1998; Cummins, 1994). Classroom learning communities usually share these underlying features: (a) students are respected and valued for who they are, (b) students enjoy certain control over their mental activity in the classroom, (c) students engage actively in collaborative learning activities and have opportunities to share, and (d) instruction builds on students' prior knowledge so that students can make connections between their personal experience and the subject matter they are learning (Brown, 1997; McMahon, Raphael, Goatley, & Pardo, 1997; Englert & Rozendal, 1996; Green & Yeager, 1995).

Evidence also shows that literacy learning of the culturally and linguistically diverse students is best facilitated in a classroom where student diversity is treated as a resource rather than a deficit. There are several commonly shared features of such classrooms: (a) the teacher and students create a classroom learning community in which all students feel respected and all ideas are valued (Moll, 1998; Nieto, 1992), (b) learning opportunities are created for students to engage in reading and writing when they construct knowledge collaboratively

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(Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992; DeStigter, 1998), (c) teachers believe that the diverse students are capable of “generating wonderful ideas” and hold high expectations of students (Meier, 1995; Zuniga-Hill & Yopp, 1996), and (d) instruction builds on students’ prior knowledge and is delivered in ways that are congruent with students learning and communication styles they bring into the classroom (Au, 1981; Trueba, 1990; Garcia, 1994). These features contribute to developing classroom as community of learners in which children are enculturated into “school” ways of reading, writing, talking and thinking while participating in their daily learning activities. The power relations between the teacher and students and the verbal interactions among them exert a substantial impact on this process of enculturation (Cummins, 1997; Green, & Yeager, 1995; Hiebert, 1991).

For example, the teachers in Au and Mason’s (1981) classrooms practiced “a balance of rights” in speaking and turn-taking between the teacher and students that allowed students to demonstrate and develop higher achievement-related behavior. Heath’s (1983) teachers explored a two-way-path intervention to help the Trackton children acquire the school-based discourse, as they showed students the connections between their home socialization experiences and the new ways of questioning and answering that school usually required. Dudley-Marling and Stires (1992) explore how to include at-risk children to engage in reading and writing and recommend that “teachers should concentrate on transforming their classrooms to make them places which are more congenial to the linguistic, cultural, social and intellectual backgrounds students bring to school. In short,

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teachers need to create a community of learners” (p. 359). Ladson-Billings (1994) observes African American teachers and concludes that incorporating students’ home and community culture into classroom life enables the teachers, students and researchers to work together as a community of learners. Ladson-Billings argues for using the intellectual and cultural resources of the students’ families and communities as an empowering process to affirm students’ self-worth, to build a positive cultural identity, and to enhance their confidence as learners.

The teachers studied by Nieto (1999) built on students’ strengths and accommodated the perspectives and experiences of the students to help them increase their academic achievement. Like Cummins (1997), Nieto sees the nature of the teacher-student relationships central to students learning. She points out, “Teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and actions, within the broader context of the society in which these take place, are fundamental to understanding student learning” (p. 167). In DeStigter’s (1998) learning community, Latino English-as-a-second-language high school students and at-risk Anglo counterparts read Spanish and English-language literature, wrote stories and poems, and helped revise each other’s work, while drawing upon their own experiences and family histories. In the process, participants also developed affective relationships among each other, which enabled members of the community to encounter difference as complementary rather than divisive. The teachers in Moll’s (1994) schools with large Latino populations incorporated the “funds of knowledge” of the community to help children establish connections between the texts and the worlds.

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The balance of this evidence on explicit community building efforts suggests that students thrive in classrooms that are constructed as communities of learners; students are more engaged in these classrooms because the teachers value students' background knowledge and who they are, and create learning opportunities that use what they bring to the class in making sense of what they learn.

In other research efforts, community, while residing in the background, nonetheless emerges as an important factor explaining student learning. Two other studies examine effective second language teachers. Zuniga-Hill & Yopp (1996), in an analysis of the practices of eight exemplary elementary school ESL teachers' instructional practice, find consistent themes that help explain what makes their lessons successful for ESL students. First, these teachers believe that the students are capable of high academic achievement, and they use different teaching techniques to help students understand key concepts without compromising content knowledge. Second, these teachers activate their students' prior knowledge and help them develop general knowledge and the language with which to express it. Third, these teachers use current instructional strategies and techniques in the language arts, such as thematic teaching and integrated literature-based units. Fourth, they embed instruction in a context that fosters respect and mutual accommodation, when "both teachers and students modify their behaviors in the direction of a common goal" (Nieto, 1992, p. 258). The teachers learn to approach teaching with a mindset that is different from working with a class of mainstream

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students. They stress the importance of flexibility in organizing instruction, and the importance of accepting diverse ways of learning and expressing knowledge. Fifth, the teachers engage in reflective practice. They articulate a high level of awareness about their classroom practice and they think carefully about what they learn and how to implement it in their teaching.

Similarly, the three effective Spanish/English bilingual teachers in García's (1993) study use language in highly communicative ways and focus instruction on what is meaningful to the students. They provided students opportunities for active learning as they implement a literature-based reading program and engage students in a writer's workshop, when they generate topics, write about them, revise and edit the drafts, and finally publish them. The teachers encourage collaborative interactions among students and give them time to work together on a wide range of instructional activities. They also share some unique dispositions. They are highly dedicated and they view themselves as "creative," "resourceful," "committed," "energetic," "persistent," and "collaborative." They are also committed to improving themselves and their teaching and, at the same time, they are confident about their teaching abilities. In addition, these teachers value who their students are and they hold high expectations for all their students.

To summarize, the available evidence from both explicit and implicit community building efforts suggests that when teachers conceptualize their classroom as community of learners, opportunities are created for diverse students to practice and develop the social and cognitive skills needed to participate in the

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literacy community. Teachers who are effective in promoting the learning of diverse students build on the skills and knowledge they bring into the classroom and at the same time create opportunities for them to practice the skills. Although building on students' prior knowledge and creating an active learning environment benefit all students, they are more critical to the success of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Literature-Based Instruction

Beginning in the middle 1980s and continuing at least through the late 1990s, literature-based instruction has gained increasing attention in both research and classroom pedagogy. Originally popularized as an antidote to the dominant skill-based instruction, such as basal-based instruction or “basalized” literature instruction, it gained momentum alongside process writing and the whole language movements (Pearson, 2000). Au and Raphael (1998) describe the purpose of literature-based instruction as “to engage students in active meaning-making with literature, to give them the ability both to learn from and to enjoy literature throughout their lives” (p. 124). Purves (1993) highlights the educational impact of literature and suggests, “Literature, that collection of imaginatively created and artistically crafted texts, is an important cultural expression, and its place in the schools is to bring the young into an understanding of their culture and the cultures that surround them” (p. 360). Galda (1998) views literature as “mirrors and windows” through which we learn to understand better about ourselves and others, as she believes reading literature is a process of

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transformation. She also quotes Hade's (1993) four reasons for teachers to teach literature in the classroom: (a) teaching reading, (b) developing literary knowledge, (c) developing self-understanding, and (d) developing social responsibility.

Literature-based instruction uses literature as a tool to engage the readers/learners in reading, writing, talking, and thinking about themselves, about others, and about the world that surrounds them. In the process, children learn to become confident and competent participants in the cultural and social practices of their community and later the society.

Affordance of Literature

Rosenblatt (1978) makes a distinction between two kinds of reading: efferent reading and aesthetic reading. In efferent reading, "the reader's attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue after the reading" (p. 23). In aesthetic reading, "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (1978, p. 25). When reading aesthetically, a reader is focusing on the experience that the text makes possible. Benton (1983) describes this experience as a journey through the secondary world created between the reader and the text. Galda (1998) summarizes Benton's arguments and says that when we read aesthetically, "we picture characters and events, anticipate actions, think back over what we have read, identify with characters, and make the virtual experience we are shaping part

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of our lives” (p. 2). Reading is a creative, transactional process that involves readers in actively creating meaning under the guidance of the words on the page.

Purves (1993) extends this exploratory sort of reading to include social and cultural aspects. He views reading not necessarily aesthetic but “hermeneutic”. His definition of reading is based on the epistemological assumption that “meaning resides in the negotiation among readers in an interpretive community, not in the text, in authorial intention, or in the individual statement concerning the significance of the text” (p. 352). To him, reading literature possesses multiple goals, from seeking exploratory interpretation to generating argument and speculation. Reading literature hermeneutically is similar to reading philosophy and speculative prose. Thus, teachers should gear their instruction toward creating “a humanities seminar or an intellectual talk show” for students to participate (p. 352). Purves also emphasizes the importance of helping students develop certain “habits of mind”. One of them is that readers “need to acknowledge themselves as readers with prejudices, ignorances, and beliefs that impinge on their readings and interpretations” and apply the same to interpret the authors as writers (p.359). He reminds us that “we are not just reading the writers, but reading the writer in a cultural context and understanding ourselves as culturally situated readers” (p. 359).

Like Benton, (1983) who values what the journey through the secondary world can do to the readers, Purves cherishes the richness in literature: “that collection of imaginatively created and artistically crafted texts” (p. 360), and

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emphasizes the importance of engaging students in interacting with literature hermeneutically. He also suggests including multicultural literature and art in school curriculum to help youngsters develop the understandings needed to inhabit in a global village.

However, in classrooms, neither the epistemic mode of engagement nor the hermeneutic engagement of texts is common (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992). Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) study reading and writing texts in the classroom and find that the texts in the classroom are most likely to induce the performative, informational, and functional modes of engagement. In many classrooms, there is little or no opportunity for students to engage with texts in a re-creational or epistemic mode. They dismiss the concern of some scholars who view the different modes hierarchical and argue that students must engage with texts in lower modes before they are ready to tackle higher modes. They view it as a version of the pedagogical fallacy:

In learning to be literate, they [students] do not need to have fully mastered the code and the information contained in the text in order to begin to interact with it epistemically. Indeed, just the reverse. For it is when children understand, from shared story reading, that texts are representations of worlds waiting to be explored, challenged, and even improved upon, that they will be most strongly motivated to master the performative mode of engagement so that they can read them for themselves (p. 144).

Wells and Chang-Wells suggest that epistemic mode of engagement should be seen as “the most effective point of entry for literacy learning and as the focus

for each unit of work at every level of education,” because it has the potential to “empower the students’ thinking, feeling, and action” (p. 145).

Changing Practices and Changing Beliefs

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, skill-based reading instruction was replaced by literature-based instruction in many schools around the country (Raphael & Hiebert, 1996; McMahon, et al., 1997). Accompanying this new instruction are new understandings of how learning occurs, new views of students, and new definitions of literacy knowledge and skills. Literature-based approaches have adopted socio-cultural perspectives as an underlying theoretical lens, emphasizing reading and writing as higher order mental processes and acquired through interaction with more knowledgeable others in meaningful practices (Vygotsky, 1983; Brock & Gavelek, 1998). Students are seen as knowledgeable beings with their own theories of the world (Smith, 1975; Anderson & Pearson, 1984) rather than “blank slates” or “empty vessels” waiting to be filled with knowledge. Reading is not just decoding the word but also making sense of the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Literature-based instruction encourages students to construct meanings actively when the text, the reader, and the community of learners to which the reader belongs to all play a role. Instruction in this case is not centered around transmitting a set of disconnected decoding skills but rather around making sense of the text through discussions and sharing interpretations of the text.

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Implementing a literature-based instruction requires the teachers to understand “children’s responses to literature, the value of the experience of reading for reading’s sake, the use of literatures in the teaching of reading, the content of the literature-based curriculum, and appropriate forms of assessment” (Raphael and Au, 1998, p. xiii). This understanding helps teachers make decisions on what reading materials to choose and shapes their interactions with students over texts (Hiebert and Colt, 1989). Purves (1993) suggests that teachers use multiculturalism as the selection principle and choose books that best represent the best depictions of the many cultural experiences that make up the world. In practice, many classroom teachers implement literature-based instruction in different formats. Some teachers may only use literature as reading-aloud and silent reading materials. Some may engage students in small group and large group discussions. Others may develop an integrated curriculum using literature in teaching not only reading and writing, but also other subjects such as social studies (Highfield, 1998) and science (Morrow, Pressley, & Smith, 1997).

The change to literature-based instruction requires not only a change in selecting materials and organizing learning activities, but also a change in beliefs of reading and literature, the learning process, the learners, and the power relations between the teacher and the students. McGee and Tompkins’s (1995) describe four plans for using the book *Stone Fox* (Gardiner, 1980), each representing a different theoretical perspective, to demonstrate the connections between instruction, beliefs, and theory. The four theories of reading guiding their lesson

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plans are (a) reading as an interactive, strategic process; (b) reading as knowledge of literacy forms; (c) reading as personal response; and (d) reading as critical literacy.

Research on Literature-Based Instruction

Literature-based instruction has the potential to help students develop their knowledge and skills to participate in a literary community when opportunities are created in the classroom for them to engage in aesthetic and hermeneutic reading of literary texts (Rosenblatt, 1978; Purves, 1993; Galda, 1998). The essence of aesthetic, hermeneutic readings is captured in the “grand conversations” over the literary texts, instead of “gentle inquisitions” (Eeds and Wells, 1989, p.4), when participants construct deeper meanings together. Their findings show that young children of varying abilities who participate in rich discussions of works of literature are capable of:

a) articulating their construction of simple meaning, but also changing it as they heard alternate views; b) sharing personal stories inspired by the reading or discussion, often in poignant and revealing ways which triggered identification by other group members; c) participating as active readers – predicting and hypothesizing and confirming or disconfirming their predictions as they read; d) showing that they had attained insights about how the author had communicated her message to them and supporting their evaluations of that communication with their interpretations of the text (p. 27).

Their analysis also shows that while engaging in the “grand conversation,” students constructed knowledge together and children with difficulties in reading were supported in their struggles to understand. They became full participating members of an “interpretive community” – a group which negotiate agreement

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about interpretation (Fish, 1980). In Eeds and Wells' literature study group, children developed their inquiry skills, learned to become collaborative, and created a learning community that encourage risk-taking and exploration behaviors. Eeds and Wells suggest that teachers become "not authorities on meaning, explicators of text, or sources of answers, but simply other readers with whom to talk" (p. 28), hence, to engage students in grand conversations about literature.

Bartley (1993) examines literature-based instruction for students who were classified as "language-deficient." These students, 44 sixth-graders of predominantly Filipino heritage, were chosen because of their poor score on grade-level comprehension tests. They either shifted from their primary language or had been exposed to inadequate English as their primary language. In an *ex post facto* descriptive study Bartley examines relationships between the teacher's instructional strategies and the students' growth in comprehension scores. Statistical analysis of the comprehension test scores indicates a significant gain after approximately 25 weeks of instruction using literature-based integrated language instruction. The students, who engaged in class discussions about what they read, read orally under the guidance of the teacher, and received direct instruction when needed, scored significantly higher in their comprehension tests than the students taught using other approaches.

Bottomley, Truscott, Marinak, and Henk (1999) investigate three different reading programs: the whole language instruction, the literature-based instruction,

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and the basal reader literacy instruction and gathered data from 396 children in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade from 28 classrooms. They explored how different programs influenced students affectively and used three affective measures, including *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (ERAS), *Reader Self-Perception Scale* (RSPS), and *Writer Self-Perception Scale* (WSPS). Their findings “suggest that a literature-based approach to reading and writing appears to exert superior impact on intermediate-aged children’s affective literacy orientations” (p. 115).

Challenges Facing Teachers in the Transition

However, it is no easy task for either teachers or students to shift from conventional basal to literature-based instruction; both have to learn new roles, which require them to accept either greater (for students) or less (for teachers) responsibility for the quality of the discussions (Johnston, Allington, Guice, & Brooks, 1998). Scharer (1992) documents not only the changes teachers need to make in their thinking and ways of organizing instruction but also the challenges and problems confronting the teachers during the transition to implementing a literature-based instruction. She finds that the four teachers in her study decreased their use of basal materials and increased the use of trade books “through read-aloud sessions, sustained silent reading, small and large group book discussions, and thematic planning” (p. 439). They also gave students more control over the books they read, assigned more group projects based on literature selections, and began to use informal assessments, such as running records, student-teacher conferences, observations, and portfolios. The challenges and problems reported

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by teachers include “a limited knowledge about literature and reading, a limited repertoire of organizational strategies, and difficulties documenting student progress in ways that would inform both grading decisions and instructional planning” (p. 439).

In an extension of this work, Scharer and Detwiler (1992) move beyond the most “observable” changes to considering changes in the students as well as the teacher’s attitudes and beliefs in a context in which they were sandwiched between the external pressures (the accountability of the district testing program) and the internal pressures (the teachers’ desire to plan the most effective lessons for their students with limited knowledge about literature and reading). They find that when students were allowed to choose their own books and projects, they became more motivated and, more importantly, more engaged in both the reading and writing assignments. They also began to share their readings in free discussion. The changes in students’ dispositions and behaviors prompted the teacher in their case study to reevaluate her teaching and her values of students as readers. Instead of tests, scores, and skills, the teacher began to value students’ attitude toward reading, their interactions with each other over books, their reading habits, and the connections they are making among the readings.

In a recent study, Scharer and Peters (1996) compare two teachers’ perceptions of book discussions and the ways students and teachers talk about books. They find that “both teachers indicated in their interviews that it was important for students to talk with each other and express thoughts and opinions.

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However, data analysis revealed few examples of students talking with each other. Teachers asked for students' opinions, but within a highly controlled, limited framework" (p. 46). In other words, in discussions, students were either engaging in "gentle inquisitions" or, at best, a dialogue with only the teacher instead of participating in a "grand conversation" in an interpretative community (Eeds & Wells, 1989).

The gap between teachers' beliefs and their practices is also revealed in the five-year multilevel project reported by Johnston, Allington, Guice and Brooks (1998). Johnston, et al. examine the transition from a basal-based instruction to a literature-based literacy curriculum in four high-poverty school districts over five years. Their study reveals a pessimistic picture with regard to what was going on in classrooms. They find that the test scores of students remained largely stable on average and very little change occurred in classroom instruction. They write, "What we saw, by and large, were literacy lessons in which the materials had changed but the time allocations, the teacher-child interactions, the assessment and evaluation practices, and the tasks children were given remained largely stable across the 5 years" (p. 88). Johnston, et al. attribute this lack of change to three factors. First in one school, the use of the basal is mandated. Second, many teachers still believe the basal represents official knowledge. Third, it is easy and safe to use a basal manual. In general, there does not seem to exist a safe and supportive environment for the teachers to take risks in changing their instructional practices. Johnston, et al. conclude that "unless there is radical

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change in the ways that administrators and policymakers view educational change, literacy instruction in the 21st century will remain much the same as it is now” (p. 82).

Looking across the array of scholarly efforts to understand and evaluate literature-based instruction, it appears that literature-based instruction is well framed within a theoretical and rhetorical framework that teachers can readily embrace. However, changes in practice do not come automatically with the change in rhetoric. To help teachers embrace literature-based instruction, more studies are needed to understand how it can be implemented, especially in the face of policy factors that work against its implementation. Such studies, in the aggregate, will have to look both inside and outside the classroom. Outside the classroom, we need to examine administrative practices and policies (e.g., assessments, mandated materials and instructional practices, and teacher evaluation practices) to determine the ways in which they support or block teacher implementation of reform practices such as literature-based reading. Inside the classroom, we need detailed descriptions of (a) how to establish a classroom community of learners in which students feel safe and supported, (b) how to engage students in rich and rigorous interrogations of texts and authors, and (c) how teachers move from the center to the periphery in facilitating student ownership and responsibility for learning. Longitudinal studies describing the literature-based instructional practices are especially needed to document the changes at different times of the school year. The current study undertakes this task.

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Book Club: Learning Community, Participation, And Development of Literacy Skills

What is Book Club?

The Book Club program, as a particular approach to literature-based instruction, was developed collaboratively by university researchers and school teacher researchers in the early 1990s (Raphael & Hiebert, 1996). The objective is to create an integrated literacy program in which students read, write, and talk about books in contexts that are meaningful to them. The program is based on the theoretical framework of social constructivism; as such, learning is viewed as embedded in social interactions with more knowledgeable others and mediated by language in meaningful contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Gee, 1992). Three assumptions guide the program: (a) language is fundamental in thinking, problem solving, and learning, (b) reading and writing are higher psychological processes, and (c) literacy learning occurs in social interactions with more knowledgeable others (Raphael & Hiebert, 1996).

Raphael and McMahon (1997) delineate the Book Club program as including four contexts for instruction and participation in language and literacy: community share, reading, writing, and book clubs¹, the last of which is the center of the program (see Table 1). According to the Book Club designers, “Fundamental to all four contexts is the instruction that helps students participate successfully with a repertoire of strategies. Thus, in the Book Club program,

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instruction is contextualized to meet the particular needs of students’ acquiring and developing literacy abilities (i.e., reading and writing) and oral language abilities (i.e., as speakers and listeners in meaningful discussion)” (Raphael & McMahon, 1997, p. xii).

Table 1

Four Contexts of the Book Club Program and Student Learning Opportunities

Context	Participants	Student Learning Opportunities
Community share	Whole class with the teacher	• To share ideas from their reading and small-group discussions; • To observe their teacher and peers in interactions around textual ideas; • To make connections across the texts in their lives.
Reading	Individually, with partners, or in small groups	• To apply skills and strategies for a) personal response b) building fluency c) comprehending d) interpreting e) critiquing the literature they read • To interact with a range of literary works over the academic year
Writing	Individually	• To engage in writing to support both reading and discussion • To write in response logs and in more structured "think-sheets" • To develop their ideas in more extended texts
Book clubs	In small groups of three to five students	• To discuss a common reading • To share their personal responses • To help one another clarify potentially confusing aspects of their reading • To create interpretations and critiques of their texts, • To discuss authors' intent

Note. Adapted from Raphael & McMahon, 1997, p. xii.

¹ I will follow McMahon and Raphael's use of *book clubs* without capitalization to refer to the small group discussion and of *Book Club* with capitalization to mean the whole Book Club program.

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Community, Participation, and Skills Development

The body of research on Book Club has made several observations that help generate a model of reading that puts interactions and participation as the most critical parts of learning to read (Gavelek & Raphael, 1996). The approach also calls for a “community of learners” environment in which students feel safe and valued to participate and explore ideas (Rogoff et al., 1996; Raphael & Goatley, 1997). Book Club provides students with the time and space, such as in group discussions (book clubs) and whole class discussions (community share), to share their developing thoughts, ask each other’s questions, and construct meanings of texts and their life experiences collaboratively (McMahon, et al., 1997; Raphael & Au, 1998). In discussions, students practice and develop their knowledge and skills needed in participating in conversations in a literary community. Book Club helps foster and extend students’ interpretation of and responses to texts (Brock & Gavelek, 1998). McMahon (1992) analyzes group discussions of 5 students over a ten-week period and evidence shows that students’ interaction patterns changed when they began to include all members to share in the group and value all ideas. They also discussed “individuals’ ideas and interpretations about text” (p. 337). Book Club opens possibilities for exploring new forms of assessment and evaluation that share responsibility with the students (Wong-Kam, 1998; Bisesi, et al., 1998; Bisesi, 1997). Finally, analysis of teacher’s role in Book Club reveals 5 forms of instruction on a continuum from teacher control high/student activity low to teacher control low/student activity high. These five teacher’s roles consist of

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explicit instruction, modeling, scaffolding, facilitating, and participating (Au & Raphael, 1998, p. 125).

Learning and Development of Diverse Students in Book Club

As a literature-based instructional program, Book Club creates opportunities for diverse students, including students with learning disabilities and ESL learners, to participate as knowledgeable members of the group due to each child's unique experiences (Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Goatley, 1997; Raphael & Brock, 1993; Brock, 1996).

Raphael and her colleagues also examine how students with learning disabilities and ESL learners participate in Book Club program (Goatley, et al., 1995). Goatley, et al. analyze the interactions in a diverse group of 5 fifth-grade students, three of whom were qualified for special services (i.e., Chapter 1, special education program, ESL service), as they engaged in student-led discussions on *Park's Quest* over three weeks in May. They find that Mei, an ESL learner, assumed leadership role frequently within the Book Club discussion due to her knowledge of Book Club and her unique experience of living in Vietnam. More importantly, her regular education peers supported her leadership role. Stark, a child with learning disabilities, was sometimes accepted as the authority on certain points of discussion. They also find that book club discussions created opportunities for diverse students to practice strategies for interpreting texts and constructing meaning, specifically clarifying confusions and eliciting information from sources.

Raphael and Brock (1993) document the literacy progress that Mei, who came from Vietnam, made during a period of three years in which she participated in Book Club. First, Mei increased both her participation in discussions and her self-confidence, each appearing to have a reciprocal effect on the other. She developed her skills in initiating new topics of conversations, reintroducing topics later when having no initial responses, and responding to others' questions in ways that extended the topics of discussion. She also developed strategies to gain the floor of conversation. Over time, Mei's comments demonstrate quantitative and qualitative changes in thinking and participation. She spoke more frequently. Her questions and comments initiated new topics, challenged other's ideas, and invited/commanded participation from others. Finally, interacting with others about books, Mei had the opportunity to use and develop her second language in meaningful contexts which in turn permitted her participation and promoted her self-efficacy.

Implementing Book Club

Wells (1997), after examining evidence on students' participation in Book Club discourse communities, asks the question: "How can teachers, with their students, create a community that engages with literature in a spirit of open-ended exploration and inquiry?" (p. 114). Rueda (1997) urges that we as the field need to know more about how responsive teachers, such as the ones in Book Club, monitor the ongoing classroom interactions with respect to their instruction and

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assessment, and what it might take to enable teachers to engage in this type of instruction.

Thus, more studies are needed especially to provide multiple thick descriptions of what happens when teachers are implementing Book Club. The teacher-readers can evaluate the case studies themselves, decide on what to try, anticipate the possible outcomes, and act as informed “risk takers” due to the particular needs of their students, their own personal characteristics, and perhaps the unique affordances and restrictions of their working environment. To this end, McMahon (1998) describes in detail what she and the teacher, Jacqueline, did to help Jacqueline’s students improve (a) the quality of their written response, and (b) the quality of their conversations in discussions. To help students with their log responses, they first established the reading/writing strategies and behaviors as explicit instructional goals, identified students’ existing writing patterns, planned the instruction accordingly, and finally implemented the instruction to change students’ writing patterns and appropriate assessment to document the changes. To help improve students’ conversations, they asked students to analyze first other students’ talk and later their own talk. In doing so, they helped students understand what it means to have a conversation about books, how it looks, what it sounds like, and what is being talked about. In thier case, it was a success story and it makes the teacher’s “spark ... a little brighter for teaching reading this [that] year” (p. 302). Also by depicting what happens with this particular teacher in her particular room, the rich description of their case enables the readers a vision of

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what could be done to help improve specific areas and what can happen in their own classrooms.

As a specific and well-documented approach to literature based instruction, Book Club appears to have great potential for (a) creating opportunities for students, including diverse learners, to participate in reading, writing, and talking about books, and (b) for helping teachers learn how to play multiple roles in apprenticing students into the discourse of a literary community. Though many of the studies come from projects that follow the teacher and the students for multiple years, few studies document the longitudinal changes over a school year and use the whole class as the unit of analysis. The case of Mei was followed for three years and data from multiple sources and occasions were collected. But due to the questions the researchers asked, three book clubs which the authors believed to be representative of the data set were selected for the in-depth analysis to document the changes in Mei's participation patterns in group discussions over the years (Raphael & Brock, 1993). Other studies focus data analysis on conversations in small groups or focus students for a shorter period of time (McMahon, 1992; Goatley et al., 1995; Brock, 1996; Goatley, 1997; Boyd, 1997; Highfield, 1998). Bisesi (1997) explores a performance-based assessment for Book Club program through analysis of written survey-responses, interviews and observations. As a result, there is a need for more studies on Book Club that provide detailed descriptions of the what teachers can do to support the development of the literary knowledge and discourse skills students need to engage in critical, reflective

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conversations about texts. To provide maximum assistance to teachers who may want to begin this journey, we need to know, first of all, whether the journey is worth the effort. If so, then we need to answer questions like, “How did the teachers and the students begin? What struggles did they have? What assistance did they get? How did changes occur?” The current study examines the changes in the teaching and learning that occur in a single classroom over a whole school year as a teacher struggles to engage a linguistically and culturally diverse group of students in a new set of literacy practices known as Book Club. The two research questions the study asks are:

1. What learning trajectory did a class of culturally and linguistically diverse students take to learn to participate in Book Club, a literature-based instructional program?
2. What learning opportunities were created for the students and how were they created?

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative, interpretive case study grounded in ethnographic perspective (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Stake, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I follow a classroom of culturally and linguistically diverse students over the course of a school year, observing their daily activities and their interactions with each other in their classroom. I hope to find out how the class develops a shared literacy practice and how the diverse students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the practice. I also explore this learning through examining the dynamic, on-going interactions among the participants over the school year, and identify patterns of interaction that help create learning opportunities for the diverse students. In this section, I briefly describe the setting, the participants, the process of data collection, and how the data is analyzed.

Participants and Setting

Ellen and her fourth/fifth grade students in an urban school at a Midwest city participated in the study. The school was founded as a Focus School in 1994 to meet the needs of the growing number of students who moved to this city with their newly arrived immigrant families and needed special instruction in English as a new language. A second major focus of the school was to provide instruction in world languages for the children of monolingual English-speaking families. At the time the study was conducted, the school was a 100% school of choice. Any family who wanted to enroll their child or children at the school could apply.

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Because of limited space, the school was not always able to enroll the children of all interested parents.

The school offered two types of classes. One type was general education that follows the school district curriculum. The other type was called DLP (developing language proficiency) classes. DLP classroom teachers also followed the district curriculum while focusing more intensively on language instruction to help students develop their basic speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. When these students' English became sufficiently well developed, (usually after no more than 2 years) they were recommended to the general education classrooms for the following school year. However, there was some movement of students from DLP to general education classes during the school year when newly arrived students enrolled. During the year this study was conducted, five students moved from the DLP into Ellen's general education classroom at different times of the year due to the arrival of new students who needed intensive English language instruction.

The school has a very diverse student population, consisting of 25% Hmong, 25% Vietnamese, 25% Latino, 13% Pan-African, and 12% Caucasian. Every year the students, staff and parents celebrate the anniversary of the school's founding and its diversity on Unity Day, October 12th. According to the principal, the school celebrates diversity not on special holidays, but in their daily curriculum and instruction (personal communication with the Principal). The school offered two world language courses: Spanish and French, and students

could use their home language at any time during the school day to communicate with others. The students' pledge for the year 1998-1999 reflected the school wide theme "RESPECT" and was prepared by a special group of parents and the school staff. The pledge went:

I will do my best to:
R – Respond Politely
E – Expect Respect from Myself and Others
S – Strive for Success
P – Problem-Solve
E – Encourage Others
C – Cooperate
T – Take Responsibility for My Choices
"R-E-S-P-E-C-T,
Ask Me What it Means To Me."

The goal of the school as stated in their mission statement was to "foster a climate of unity, mutual respect, cultural and linguistic dignity, and excellence in achievement" (School Staff handbook, 1998-1999).

Ellen, the teacher who participated in the study, was of Greek origin. She was taking her last course to complete her master degree in literacy instruction when the study began. She had been teaching at the current school for 4.5 years full time and it was her fourth year teaching Book Club. She believed that Book Club gave her students more opportunities to read and write. The summer before the study, she did an independent study course with a professor at MSU and wrote Book Club lesson plans for five books. She submitted the one for *The View From Saturday* to the Small Planet Communications, which has a website for Book Club community, and it was published online (Fitch, 1998). Ellen also expressed her

interest in creating a learning community in her room. She believed that Book Club, a literature-based language arts program, was a much better way to teach students to read and write than the skill-based instructional program using basal readers (interview, December 15, 1998). The class Ellen taught was a split fourth/fifth regular education class, consisting of 10 fifth graders and 15 fourth graders, 14 boys and 11 girls. The class had a very diverse student population. When the year began, there were 25 students in this class. Ethnically, 6 were Vietnamese, 4 Hmong, 4 multi-racial, 3 Caucasian, 3 Latino, 3 Haitian, 1 Somali and 1 Bosnian. Over the year, 3 students left for the fifth grade classroom and 3 new students joined the class. Two of them were from Somalia and 1 from Bosnia. Linguistically, more than half of the students came from homes in which a language other than English was spoken as the mother tongue. Over 90% of the students in this class had free or reduced payment for meals. Students were bussed to school from all over the town and some spent over an hour on the way to and from school.

Data Collection

Data were collected throughout the 1998-1999 school year (See Appendix A). I wanted to capture the dynamics of this class at the beginning of the year and then follow the class to see what changes, if any, took place over the year and how these changes occurred. In order to see how Ellen prepares for the school year, I was in the classroom for three mornings in August getting the room ready together with her. The school was also very supportive of my research and included me in

the school “family.” The principal invited me to attend the whole day staff get-together before the year began and I was with them each time there was a school wide event, such as the whole day district professional development event, school potluck, fund raising event, Unity Day celebration event, and end of the year staff get-together.

As a participant observer, I tried to make my presence as normal to the students as possible. First, I was there a lot, especially at the beginning of the year. Second, Ellen told the students on the first day of school who I was, why I was there, what help they could ask from me, and what questions they should not ask me. When Ellen was teaching, I would sit at the back of the room taking notes. When the students were working individually or in groups, I would walk around and students would ask me questions and I would help them. Sometimes I would just sit at their table and listen to them. Both the students and the teacher recognized me as part of their classroom community.

Data collection time was roughly divided into three intensive periods in order to capture the changes at different times over the year. Altogether I observed the students for 31 whole school days, 19 half days and 6 times when I went only for Book Club activities. I observed the class a lot at the beginning of the year. For the beginning 6 weeks, I was there in the classroom every day when school was in session. I usually arrived at the classroom before the students came in, and left after the school bus left. Then from mid January to early February, and in early May, I did my mid-year and end of the year intensive data collections. I took field

notes on my observation each time I was there, audio taped some of the class conversations, and video taped all the Book Club discussions and mini-lessons except of the first book. Besides observing what went on with the whole class, I also chose six students for convenience and focus of data collection as the class regrouped book clubs each time they had a new Book Club unit. With the six focus students, I could follow this small number of students more closely in their group discussions and Ellen always tried to put two and sometimes three focus students in one group. All of the six focus students were of Asian backgrounds. Four of them came from Vietnamese families and two were from Hmong families; three of them were boys and three girls; three were in the fourth grade and three in the fifth grade. I also collected their written responses for Book Club and some other writings they did, including their “ME poems”, and stories they entered for a writing contest. To measure students’ progress, I helped the teacher give the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) test, the Meta-comprehension strategy Index (MSI), and a reading and writing habits survey at the beginning and the end of the year.

Additionally, I interviewed Ellen formally 6 times during the school year, each interview lasting between 1 and 1.5 hours. The first two interviews focused more on understanding Ellen’s beliefs of diverse students, of their learning, and of her teaching. Questions included the following: “What strengths do you see your students have and what are some of their needs? What expectations do you have for your students? What roles do you see yourself playing in their learning? Why

do you implement the literature-based instruction, Book Club, as your literacy instruction? What kind of learning environment do you aim to create in your classroom? What kind of power relations do you want to establish between you and your students, and why?" Later interviews focused more on her instructional behaviors and decisions. Based on what I observed in the room, I asked Ellen why she was doing things the way she did and how she thought everything was going. At the same time, I had many informal talks and exchanges with Ellen during lunch breaks and sometimes after school about certain behaviors I noticed of the students. I also interviewed the 6 focus students both at the beginning and at the end of the year to get their background information and I also asked them what they thought about themselves, their class, their teacher, and their learning experiences, especially with Book Club.

Data Analysis

I wanted to know whether students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in this class would learn to participate in Book Club discourse or not and if so, how their learning was facilitated over the year. I wanted to find out what it was like at the beginning of the year; what the teacher did to try to create a learning community; how the students responded to the Book Club curriculum; how the teacher helped students develop the knowledge and skills needed to participate in reading, writing and talking about books; and how opportunities were created for the students to practice and learn to participate.

Different questions demanded different approaches to data collection and data analysis. At first I used a synchronous approach to analyze the data thematically. While I was still collecting data, I grouped my field notes and the teacher interviews respectively and coded them according to a long list of categories of teacher behavior, such as community building, valuing students' opinions, disciplining students, praising students, etc. Though coding the data helped me familiarize myself with the data, I did not seem to get anywhere with regard to pattern identification. I continued to interact with my dissertation directors and tried to find themes that would help me make sense of the data.

Then I turned to a developmental approach to examine the data across the whole school year, trying to identify interactional patterns between the teacher and students and among the students at different times. I focused on who was/were doing the talk and what they were talking about. Patterns began to emerge. For the early observations, massed at the beginning of the year, teacher telling and teacher frustration dominated my interpretive comments. For the mid year observations, the teacher talk switched from telling to modeling and scaffolding – she was trying to get students to talk to each other about the text and assisting them in doing so. Near the end of the year, the subjects and the contents of my comments focused predominantly on the students and what they were doing instead of the teacher. As it turned out, a straightforward, developmental lens proved the most useful approach to examining the data; this in turn helped to discern the patterns of change over the year even clearer.

Reflecting on this process, I also realize that as a researcher, I see different things even in the same piece of conversation at different times because of the mind-set and expectations I have at the moment. I remember that when I transcribed an early community share conversation from mid-November, I was really thrilled to see students' active participation after watching their struggles and the teacher's efforts in pushing the students to talk during their fishbowl discussions in September and October. The tallies of the number of times students talked and the number of students who participated in the discussion made me very excited. But looking back at this early piece of data and re-examining it after data collection ended at the end of the study and after having observed a year's worth of growth in students' participation, I noticed that underneath this high level of participation students shifted topics frequently, spoke across one another, and focused more on factual information in the text. It was not a bad conversation at all, but something was missing that should have been there to render it as a more thoughtful and expert-like piece of literary discourse. I was able to notice these things that I could not do six months earlier because seeing what students were able to do in their discussions at the end of the year gave me new reference points and my expectations of students' participation differed as a result. Together both sets of analysis helped to tell the story of change.

The process of data analysis for me was a continuous process of sense making and pattern identification. The data were rich and had so much to offer. The more I engaged with them, the better picture I was able to construct of how

this group of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learned and were assisted to join in the “grand conversations” about books. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) pointed out, qualitative data analysis is a process of engaging in constant comparative analysis, through which patterns of change emerge.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SHARED LITERACY PRACTICE

This study aims to explore the road traveled by Ellen, the teacher, and her linguistically diverse students in developing a particular approach to literature-based reading program, i.e., Book Club, over a school year. I examine the process in which this group of fourth/fifth graders learned to participate in reading, writing, and talking about books of quality literature, and the role the teacher played in facilitating their learning. This chapter focuses specifically on how students learned to acquire a literary discourse that enabled them to participate in Book Club discussions.

For purposes of analysis and reporting, the year divided itself conveniently into three stages (see Appendix A). The first stage was relatively brief and exploratory in nature. It began on the second school day when Book Club was first introduced to the students and ended on the day when the class had their first fishbowl discussion on September 22. In this stage, the class was introduced to the various Book Club learning activities while working with the book, *Stone Fox*. This exploratory stage evidenced both the teacher's and the students' initial efforts to construct the meaning and practices of Book Club. During the first stage, Book Club activities were dominated by teacher talk and teacher-led talk. The second stage lasted from late September to early February. This stage was marked by a big increase in the time allotted for student-centered talk and the creation of more public space for the teacher and the more knowledgeable peers to model and

scaffold literacy skills. The time and the space allowed the students the opportunities to observe, appropriate, practice, and develop their knowledge and skills needed for participation in the literary discourse. The third stage extended from mid-February to the end of the school year. It was characterized by a shift of power and control from the teacher to the students in leading the discussions as they gradually acquired the Book Club discussion genre. In reality, the three stages were not as clear-cut as my description implies. The students were engaging in Book Club discussions and practicing the knowledge and skills needed for participation long before they “took over” in February, while Ellen continued to model and scaffold ways of reading, writing, talking and thinking long after that takeover. The journey toward the development of a shared practice began with excitement, challenges, and resistance on the part of the students, and persistence on the part of the teacher. It ended with students’ increased expertise knowledge and skills in participating in a literary discourse about books.

In this chapter, I first describe briefly the Book Club practices in this classroom. Then I trace the route Ellen and her students took to develop a shared literary discourse as students shifted from being peripheral participants to more knowledgeable participants in discussions through the three stages: (a) teaching by telling in the first stage, (b) teaching by modeling and scaffolding in the second stage, and (c) learning by doing in the third stage. Finally I discuss what students learned beyond participation in discussions.

Book Club Implemented in Ellen's Classroom

Even though Book Club has a unified structure, not all teachers who practice Book Club follow exactly the same model. Some teachers have the whole class read and discuss the same book, while others have individual groups choose their own books to read and talk about. Some teachers ask students to write free responses from a list of prompt categories, and some give students the exact questions to respond to. Even the sequence of implementing the activities may be different. Some classes begin with reading the book, writing the response, discussing in groups and then moving to community share (see McMahon et al., 1997). Others, including Ellen, organize group and class discussions first, followed by mini-lesson, reading, and writing. In this section, I describe how Book Club was implemented in Ellen's classroom, including their daily schedules, books they read, and their five Book Club learning activities: book clubs, community share, mini-lesson, reading, and writing.

Ellen and her students engaged in Book Club every day except on half school days or when special events occurred. In Ellen's class, Book Club schedule changed over the year based on students' knowledge and skills in participating in Book Club activities. At the beginning of the year, students engaged in more whole class conversations about Book Club. Starting from their second Book Club unit, their schedule became routinized, beginning with fishbowl discussions followed by mini-lesson, group reading and individual writing. As students gained more participation skills, they began to include all students in small group

discussions, which they called “book clubs”. After that, the class convened for community share when all groups could share with the whole class what they had talked about. Table 2 outlines the Book Club schedule for the class on May 5, 1999. It more or less represents a typical day of Book Club from November to the end of the year.

Table 2

Sample Book Club Schedule

Time of Day	Activity
11:50	Ellen checked to see who were not prepared for Book Club.
11:53	Students got into book clubs and began sharing and discussing the reading in groups.
12:17	Students reassembled in whole-class community share.
12:27	Teacher conducted a mini-lesson and introduced the prompt questions.
12:40	Lunch break.
1:30	Students gathered in their usual study groups and began taking turns reading aloud today’s Book Club assignment. Some students listened to the chapter on tape. When they finished reading, students wrote their responses to the prompt questions individually.
2:15	Class stopped working on Book Club.

Note. Based on field notes for May 5, 1999.

A typical Book Club day began with discussions – first the small group discussion, followed by the whole class discussion. The mini-lesson was next, followed by group reading and ending with individual writing. The discussions and the mini-lesson usually lasted about 35 to 45 minutes. The reading and writing time varied depending on the agenda of the day. If students didn't finish writing their response to the prompt questions, they took it home to complete it.

At the beginning of the year, the class started Book Club at around 11:20 and finished by lunch break at 12:40. Later in the year, as in this sample, Ellen

changed to having book clubs and community share and, sometimes, conducting a mini lesson before lunch followed by group reading and individual response writing in the afternoon. Ellen felt that after the lunch break, students concentrated more on their tasks.

Materials Used

Over the school year, the class completed 9 Book Club units with 12 texts (see Table 3). Ellen chose all the books based on what she believed to be good books for Book Club, i.e., books that would support the various Book Club components, and her experiences with previous students she had taught. The most important criterion for Ellen in choosing a book was its potential to support rich conversation. For Ellen, this meant that the books should have appealing topics, rich context, and high interest potential. One common feature of the 12 texts was their literary quality. All of them were generally acknowledged as modern classics for young readers. Almost all books either won some literary award for children's literature or were written by authors whose other works had won some literary award.

Table 3

Books Read for Book Club

Author	Title	Award	Year
Gardiner, J. R.	<i>Stone Fox</i>	The Harper Trophy	1980
Naylor, P. R.	<i>Shiloh</i>	Newbery Medal ² (1992)	1991
Curtis, C. P.	<i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham: 1963</i>	Newbery Honor (1996)	1995
Lowry, L.	<i>Number the Stars</i>	Newbery Medal (1990)	1989
Konigsburg, E. L.	<i>The View from Saturday</i>	Newbery Medal (1997)	1996
Babbitt, N. ³	<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>	ALA Notable Book ⁴	1975
Taylor, M. ⁵	<i>Mississippi Bridge</i>		1990
	<i>Song of the Tree</i>		1975
	<i>The Friendship*</i>	The Coretta Scott King Award (1988)	1987
	<i>The Gold Cadillac*</i>	The Christopher Award (1988)	1987
Fenner, C.	<i>Yolonda's Genius</i>	Newbery Honor (1996)	1995
Creech, S.	<i>Walk Two Moons</i>	Newbery Medal (1995)	1994

* The class used a version that has both stories in one book.

Another important material artifact used in Book Club was a question sheet for each book unit, which consisted of a list of questions designed to elicit student daily responses. This sheet was referred to as a "prompt sheet" by the teacher and the students. Ellen prepared these prompts and gave them to the students on the first day they started reading a new book. The prompts were organized into lessons, and each lesson had a central theme with a cluster of questions on the chapter(s) students read for a particular day. Some of the prompts focused on helping students learn about the technical aspect of writing techniques; some prompts focused on techniques that would promote understanding of the text, and

² The Newbery award is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

³ Natalie Babbitt is the Newbery winning author for *Knee Knock Rise and the Search for Delicious*.

⁴ ALA Notables are given annually to books that are outstanding for that year by American Library Association.

⁵ Mildred Taylor is the Newbery winning author in 1977 for *Roll of Thunder: Hearing My Cry*.

some focused on interpreting the texts. Some other prompts required students to connect what they read to their own personal experiences and formulate their own views. Still other prompts aimed to help students develop critical thinking skills. Occasionally, students would get a free choice prompt.

Book Clubs (Group Discussion)

Book clubs (with small letters) refers to the small group discussions. These usually occurred the day after students had read the chapter(s) and written the response to the prompt questions. During book clubs, students gathered in small book club groups of four to six and shared their responses to the prompts for the day. They also asked each another questions and sometimes commented on what each had written down. Similar to Raphael and McMahon (1997), who viewed book clubs as "the center of the program", Ellen, the classroom teacher, valued this sharing and interacting time most among the various Book Club activities. She viewed it as a time when knowledge was constructed in a social setting and when the more knowledgeable students could model ways of comprehending and responding to texts. During the book club discussions, Ellen would sit with one small group of students for the entire time. Occasionally she would say something, but mostly she would just listen and jot down notes of evaluation or record interesting ideas as they emerged in the conversations. At the same time she kept an eye on the other book club discussions. Two minutes before the end time of the discussion, Ellen would tell the students to use the remaining two minutes to sum

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up what they had talked about in preparation for the community share discussions.

The group conversation was usually about 15 to 20 minutes long.

Each time the class began a new book unit, new groups (book clubs) were formed. Students were asked to write down the names of three people, but not their friends, whom they would like to be with in the new group, and then Ellen assigned students to groups. Asking students to recommend people for their group might create some trust among the members. If they ended with people they wished for, they were happy. If they didn't get the people they wanted, they still felt that the others in their group might have chosen them, which could support a positive feeling toward each other.

Community Share (Class Discussion)

After students discussed their responses to the prompts in book clubs, they convened into the large group referred to as Community Share. They sat at six round tables placed in the shape of a horse-shoe opening to face the teacher in the front. Occasionally, especially at the beginning of the year, Ellen would ask some students to adjust their chairs so that they would be able to see everybody in the room. Students were encouraged to speak without raising their hands, joining in conversation when they saw the other person had finished talking. During the community share, Ellen would make sure that each group was given a chance to share what they had talked about in their group. Sometimes students raised questions for the whole class; other times, students from other book club groups would ask them questions or offer their comments. It was a time when students

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could raise their own concerns to talk about. As the year progressed, students began to generate more questions for discussion during community share as they gained more knowledge and skills for effective participation and felt more comfortable raising questions and speaking out. Students responded to each other. Sometimes they built on each other's comments to construct meaning. At other times, they challenged one another's thinking and explored new ideas. During this time, Ellen usually acted as a coordinator, eliciting ideas from as many students as possible. She intervened only when she felt students had dwelt on one topic too long, or she needed to ask the student to elaborate or clarify a point. The class discussion usually lasted about 15 to 20 minutes.

Mini-Lesson

Mini-lessons took place immediately after community share. The length of the lesson varied, depending on the writing prompt for a particular day. If a new topic was presented or if students seemed to have difficulty with the topic previously presented, Ellen would spend more time talking about it; otherwise, the time spent on mini-lesson was usually short. During the mini-lesson, Ellen would introduce the topic of the day, for example, *Author's Craft*, or *Me and the Book*. She would make sure that the students understood the prompt. If it was hard, especially at the beginning of the year, she would ask other students to suggest, or sometimes suggested herself possible topic sentences or key words to be used in responding to the prompts. For example, they discussed about how to write *Compare and Contrast* using different graphic organizers and shared examples of

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comparing one's own life with the life of the character. Sometimes, the mini-lesson was used for discussing special features of the book, such as character development, story line, or themes of the book.

Group Reading

At the end of mini-lesson, students went back to their usual group to read the day's reading assignment. Ellen arranged these groups so that they would consist of both boys and girls, whose personality and temperament more or less matched each other and whose academic levels varied. Ellen intended that members of these groups would help and support each other in their daily learning. Sometimes they did group activities for science, math, or social studies. While new Book Club groups were formed for each book unit, these small groups remained stable all the year round unless Ellen felt the need to change someone occasionally. During group reading time, the four or five students who scored the lowest on the SORT test at the beginning of the year and had more difficulty in reading would go to listen to the story on tape. This group of "listeners" changed as new ESL students arrived and the year progressed. In the group reading, students took turns reading a page aloud before another student continued. When one student was reading, others would follow the lines silently. Sometimes if one didn't know how to read a word and stopped, somebody else in the group would read the word for him/her. When the chapters were too long, Ellen would have students listen to part of them on tape and read the rest in their groups. However, students always listened to the first chapter of a book on tape if Ellen had it

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available; otherwise, Ellen would read it out loud herself to the whole class. She wanted to use the opportunity to demonstrate to the students what good and fluent reading aloud was like. Students were encouraged to read and re-read the chapters themselves in completing their responses to the writing prompts. The students who listened to tapes in class could also borrow copies of the tape to listen to at home.

Individual Writing

When they finished reading for the day, students began to write to the prompt. Usually students were asked to write two to four paragraphs, each one addressing a question or a couple of questions in the prompt. The prompt consisted of open-ended questions, asking students to summarize what they read, to analyze it, to connect it to their own lives, or to formulate their own opinions about it. The prompt questions gave students the opportunities to think about what they had read, to connect their own experience and other texts, and to give supporting evidence for why they said what they had said. With some topics, such as *Me and the Book*, Ellen would give two prompts from which students could pick. Usually one of them was asking students to compare their own similar experiences with the character's experiences in the book, and the other would be putting themselves in the character's shoes and thinking about what they would do if they were in the character's situation. She provided students with the choice so that if a student did not have experiences similar to the characters in the book or if they didn't want to talk about their own life experiences, they would have other equally acceptable options available to them. Usually students were given about 10 to 25 minutes to

write their responses to the given prompt in class. If they didn't finish the writing, it became part of their homework for the day.

Teaching by Telling:

The First Stage of the Journey

The beginning of the school year is an important period of time to establish the routines and practices that the teacher and the students will follow in a classroom. In this classroom, Ellen employed mainly the method of telling, or explicit instruction, in helping the class learn the general rules to participate in Book Club activities at this beginning stage, though she also attempted to involve students in this telling process. In this section, I examine how Book Club was introduced, how the class experienced their first book unit, and what challenges the students were facing.

Introduction of Book Club

Book Club was introduced to the students at the beginning of the school year. In the introduction, Ellen provided three types of support to help make Book Club successful. First, she emphasized the importance of creating a classroom learning community in which students respected each other, shared with each other, and learned from each other. Second, Ellen made explicit to the students what her expectations of them were and encouraged the students to learn to be responsible for their own learning by having them evaluate their group discussions and their writing responses. Finally, she discussed with students how to ask “fat, juicy questions” and how to write for a “know-nothing audience”, two key skills to

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participate in Book Club. Discussions of all these issues helped students understand what Book Club was and how to participate in the learning activities. In this section, I discuss each of these three types of support.

Creating a Collaborative Learning Community

On the second school day Ellen spent about 40 minutes introducing what Book Club was and what students should do to participate. For Ellen, to make Book Club successful, creating a conducive learning environment was essential. Ellen also tried to help students see that talking to each other about books played an important role in their learning, that they all had different ideas, but their ideas were all valuable because they all came with different but unique experiences. In her introduction, Ellen also attempted to involve the students in the conversation.

In her first introduction to Book Club, Ellen emphasized the role of talking about books in learning. From the first day on, she tried to send the message that "talking about books" would be a big part of Book Club and that they could help and learn from each other through talking together about books. She also told the students that having something for them to talk about was one of the criteria by which she chose the books. She said to the students, "I'm going to choose a book that you're going to have something to talk about. I can guarantee you that all the books I've chosen will have lots and lots and lots to talk about."

To engage the students, Ellen asked them, "Why do you think I will give you time to talk about it when we read the book? What are the reasons for that?" One student said they would know what the book was about. Ellen challenged her,

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asking if they would know what it was about by just reading it themselves and without talking about it with others. She pushed the students to think the role of discussion in their learning.

- Ellen: What might I have learned from talking about the book that I would not learn if I'm not talking about the book? ... Question, why do we talk about it?
- Adeline: Sometimes you learn more stuff that we don't know.
- Ellen: How is that, Adeline?
- Adeline: ... [Inaudible.]
- Ellen: Who tells you or what tells you more?
- Adeline: Myself?
- Ellen: Yourself? While you're talking about it? Who do you talk with when you talk about it?"
- Adeline: Somebody.
- Ellen: Who might be helping you learn more stuff?
- Adeline: The book?
- Ellen: You and the book? Then why talk about it? Why take 15 or 20 minutes talking about it?
- (Transcript, September 1, 1998)

Adeline thought that through talking about the books, they might learn "more stuff" that they didn't know. However, Adeline seemed to focus on the reader herself and the book she was reading. She didn't seem to be ready to think in terms of other participants and how their interactions over the book would affect each other's learning. Ellen continued to push students to think about the importance of talking to each other. She said to the class, "If somebody else doesn't know, you might help them. So it is a two-way street here. [Writing on the board 'you ← book → others'.] Okay, you've got the book right here, and you help others and others talk to you." Ellen echoed what a student said when she repeated "you help others and others talk to you." (Transcript, September 1, 1998)

In order to create a learning environment in which students felt respected and comfortable sharing ideas and discussing issues of their own concern, Ellen tried to disabuse students of the idea that the teacher was the person who had the final, correct answers to all questions in their discussion. She tried to inculcate the idea that they all had unique life experiences and they could all learn from each other. She told the students, "You might know lots of things that I don't know. Okay, you have 23 different life experiences and I only have one. So your different life experiences may give you information to help your peers in your group better than I might be able to do by myself." (Transcript, September 1, 1998)

Ellen also made the point to the students that they might be different, but the difference didn't mean that one was right and the other was wrong. Ellen told the students that many times in their reading of the book, there would be no right answer; instead, there would be lots of answers. She said:

We're going to give you opportunities, when you're reading, to think about [issues], and I would like to give you a prompt which Tu might answer differently, Freddy might answer differently, and Hai might answer differently and Michael might answer differently. All four of you might have a different answer, but you all back up what you say. You can say, I think this is bla, bla, bla. You explain yourself. (Transcript, September 1, 1998)

She asked the students to think, "What if my answer and Rico's answer are completely different? Does it mean he's correct and I'm wrong or I'm right and he's wrong?" Ellen further explained that she tried to get away from using the word answer but response instead. "Usually with answer, people think as right or wrong.

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While with response, we can have different responses but we could all be right.”

(Transcript, September 1, 1998)

In the first introduction to Book Club, Ellen attempted to help her students understand that (a) they could help and learn from each other through talking about the books, (b) they, the students, might know more than the teacher as they all had different life experiences, and (c) people all have different opinions but there may be no wrong ideas to certain questions. These understandings helped create a supportive learning environment for these students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and made them feel safe to express their ideas in public.

Learning to be Responsible Learners

Ellen made explicit her expectations of students in Book Club and involved them in assessing themselves. On September 3 before they attempted their first group discussion (book clubs), Ellen handed out the “Student Self-Evaluation for Book Club Discussions” sheet to the students (see Appendix B). She asked the students to use the sheet to check their own behaviors during group discussions. The class spent about 25 minutes talking about the criteria and how to use the evaluation sheet. The sheet listed six categories, each being rated on a scale, and an additional checklist of five off-task behaviors. The class first talked briefly the meaning of evaluation and self-evaluation. They then went through the off-task behaviors, which included writing on the log, playing with pencil or other object, getting into other folders/work, talking with someone else in the group, not being

on topic, and getting out of the group to wander. They also had a discussion about why these behaviors were off-task and how they would impede their discussions. Some students said these were off-task behaviors because when one did these things, one was not listening and participating in the group discussions. Besides, some behaviors were also distracting others.

After that, the class discussed the six categories to be used to evaluate their participation in the discussions. These categories included (a) is prepared, (b) shares ideas, (c) listens and responds, (d) asks fat, juicy questions, (e) has positive attitude, and (f) off-task behavior. These were each rated in terms of evaluative symbols, such as plus (exceptional), check plus (very good), check (okay), check minus (not good), and minus (not participating). The class first talked briefly about the meaning of these evaluative symbols. Then they went through each of the categories one by one. Ellen told the students that the first criteria, being “prepared”, meant having read the assigned chapter(s), written the entry for the writing log and done a good job on it. She emphasized to the students that being prepared was very important and said that if they were not prepared, “you’re not going to be a very good participant in the discussion” (Transcript, September 3, 1998). From the very beginning of the school year, Ellen was trying to cultivate students’ commitment to their learning and their classroom learning community.

“Sharing ideas” also included listening and responding to other people’s responses. Ellen told the students, “To discuss is not just to share what you know, share my paper and move on. A discussion is when you listen to other people and

you respond to them whether it's a question or you agree or disagree." She also showed students specific things they could do or say in a discussion. She said to them, "If I give you a question response, or someone reads theirs, you listen to what they are saying and then you say something in response to them, not just say 'Okay, who's next?' You might ask some why-questions or say 'I thought about that too', or 'I agree with that because ...', or you say 'I disagree because ...'." Ellen also assured the students that they would get better at it as they kept practicing. She told the students, "I don't expect everyone to be perfect the first day or even the first book; but each book we read, I'm watching people to do better."

(Transcript, September 3, 1998)

The next category for the evaluation was asking "fat, juicy questions". As they had already had a big discussion on this two days earlier, Ellen reminded the students of the conversation they had and reiterated that "a fat, juicy question is a good question. It is open-ended. There's no one right answer. A lot of people can say a lot of other things about it" (Transcript, September 3, 1998). Introducing the next category, "positive attitude", Ellen told the students, "Positive attitude is very easy to see. You're participating; you're doing your part. You know, you're mad about something, you're forgetting you're mad about it, and you're participating in the discussion." She also shared with them the story of a couple of her previous year's students who, at the very beginning of the year, didn't like what was going on and they developed a bad attitude. But "by the end of the year, they said okay

and they thought about it and they joined their discussions. You know really it isn't worth it" (Transcript, September 13, 1998).

To summarize, the discussion on the student self-evaluation sheet gave the teacher and the students another opportunity to talk about and review some of the key elements that would enable students to experience more successful participation. On September 9, Ellen introduced the term "one-foot voice" right before they broke into groups, a term she referred to frequently later during the year. She told the students to keep their voices somewhat low so that they wouldn't interfere with other groups' discussions.

On this day, Ellen also shared with the students her scoring rubrics for the written responses. In order to get a 4.0 grade, the response entry should meet the following four criteria:

- Entry focuses on designated topic.
- Entry is written for a "know-nothing" audience.
- Entry provides at least three or more well-thought ideas from the text, real life, or other novels to support writing.
- Entry is titled and dated.

(Scoring Rubric Handout)

To Ellen, focusing on the topic, writing for a know-nothing audience, and making intertextual and personal connections were of primary importance. Getting the codes correct was secondary. She told the students, "My first priority is what you write. That's the most important thing. ... The next thing is: do you have complete sentences, punctuations, capital letters?" (Transcript, September 8, 1998). From the beginning of the year, Ellen tried to let the students know her

expectations of them and their work and attempted to involve them in meeting her expectations.

Asking Fat, Juicy Questions and Writing for a Know-Nothing Audience

Another support that Ellen gave to the students was to teach them the two important concepts and the practice that went with them, among other things. On the second day's introduction, Ellen discussed with the students how they should participate in Book Club. They brainstormed first and then Ellen showed them the transparencies she had prepared on how and what to share during Book Club discussions. The list of how to share included the following: keep conversation going; respond to questions; elaborate response; challenge interpretations; clarify ideas; include all members of the group; take turns; and stay on task. The list of what to share included: elaborate written response; formulate questions; share personal response or experience; constructing meaning evaluate text, move beyond literal interpretations; ask fat juicy questions.

However, there were two key skills in participating in Book Club: (a) asking fat, juicy questions and (b) writing for a know-nothing audience. Ellen introduced asking fat, juicy questions the first day she introduced Book Club. They held an extensive discussion on formulating questions and they made a distinction between fat, juicy questions and skinny/lean questions. Ellen introduced the concept of fat, juicy questions first:

Ellen: I have two types of questions that I'm going to talk about. One type of questions I call [writing the word "fat, juicy questions!" on overhead]. What do I call?

Students: Fat, juicy questions.

Ellen: Yes, they have a big, fat question mark, and I call them fat, juicy questions.

(Transcript, September 1, 1998)

Ellen then gave students several examples for them to evaluate whether they were fat, juicy questions, such as "What color is the boy's shirt?", "When was he coming home?", "Where is her mom at?", and "Why did he decide to cut his hair like that?". Though a few students first said that "Where is her mom at" was a fat juicy question because one had more to talk about, they thought that the last one was a fat, juicy question. Ellen then explained what fat, juicy questions were like. She said:

A fat, juicy question has no "yes/no" answer; no right answer.... A juicy question makes you think about the story, and the response to fat, juicy questions could be different, thinking of your group members. They are open-ended. In other words, you can't answer that in two or three words. There's no absolute answer to that. (Transcript, September 1, 1998)

She also told the students that fat, juicy questions will often begin with "how do you think" or "why do you think". In the following excerpt, Ellen not only told the students explicitly that she expected only fat, juicy questions for Book Club, she also showed the students more examples of the skinny type of questions and advised them to re-read the text themselves if they have these types of questions because they usually asked for specific information that can be located in the texts.

Ellen: I'm going to challenge you that when you ask questions, ask fat juicy questions when we do Book Club. I don't want any [pointing at the word "lean" on the overhead and asking the class], what's this word?

Several Students: Lean.

Ellen: I don't want any lean questions. ... There's nothing like having a discussion when somebody says, "How old is the boy?" and someone else says, "10". And someone else says, "What color is the shirt he was wearing?" "Red. Didn't you read? Didn't you see?" ... Those are what?

Several Students: lean questions.

Ellen: Those are all lean, boring questions. Now if you don't know or not sure [of the answers to those lean, boring questions], ... what should you do to find them out?

Several Students: Ask.

Ellen: Should you ask? What could you do? What would be a more direct way while you were reading it?

Kelsey: Go back.

Ellen: Yes, go back and re-read. ... We don't want to waste our discussion on these boring, thin questions.

(Transcript, September 1, 1998)

However as encouraging as she was for students to ask fat, juicy questions and to respond to each other and to the prompts according to what they thought, Ellen also cautioned them not to come up with unsupported ideas. She told the students the following. To make her point, she paused after each question for them to think.

Are you just coming up with some crazy, off the wall things? Are you thinking about what's happening in the text, in the book to make you think in certain way? Is it that you just come up with any odd ideas? Do you think about what you know about in your own life? And what's happened in the book so far? What do you consider? If I say, who is the man in the yellow suit? You say, he is just some crazy guy, I don't know. Is that a good response? (Transcript, September 1, 1998)

In addition to asking fat, juicy questions, students needed to learn a new genre in writing their response to the prompts as well. Ellen wanted the students to write for a "know-nothing audience". She introduced the concept as an audience who has not read the text and therefore knows nothing about the book. She put

writing samples on the overhead projector to let the students judge whether they were written for a know-nothing audience or not. She told the students that they needed to write for a know-nothing-audience for Book Club. However, she also pointed out to the students that writing in this way was not the only way to write. She listed times that it was okay not to give all the details such as when people wrote to their teachers, friends, or even themselves in forms of letters and diaries.

In order to write for a know nothing audience, Ellen expected students to provide evidence from the book or/and from their own experience to support their responses, and she also told them what elements to include in their responses. The latter was very important as many of these students were second language learners. She told the students:

Be specific ... about the plot, the characters, where it's taking place. ... When you do your responses, you shouldn't be starting your response with he, she or it. Why not? ... Yes, a know-nothing audience doesn't know who he/she/it is. ... When I give a prompt, I'll ask you why or why not. I'm going to say "support your response". I'm going to say "give evidence from the text to support what you say". ... Give examples to prove you're right. ... If I'm asking a question, you can't just give a one-sentence answer. Support what you say. ... You're going to say, "I know this because this is what happened in my life or in another book." Give three or four well-thought ideas from the text. ... Focus on the designated topic, and make sure you're writing for a know-nothing audience. (Transcript, September 8, 1998)

So within the first five school days of the year, the teacher introduced a new set of language and concepts, such as "fat, juicy questions", and "writing for a know-nothing audience" with the hope that as the year progressed, these terms and the practices they named would gradually become part of the students' vocabulary as they participated in Book Club activities. However important this introductory

step was, hearing these concepts being named and talked about would not be sufficient to make the students able to practice them. The journey towards developing a shared literary practice for this classroom community had just begun.

First Book Club Unit: *Stone Fox*

Concurrent with Book Club introduction, the class began their first book unit. From September 2 to September 18, the class experimented with their first book, *Stone Fox*. Ellen told the students that the book was chosen because "it is an excellent book, easy, plain, and simple, but it has a lot of stuff in it" (Field notes, September 3, 1998). This early stage of development of Book Club was characterized by three features: (a) the initial student resistance towards participating in Book Club, (b) the initial teacher's effort to meet the students' needs, and (c) the dominance of teacher or teacher-led talk in conversations about Book Club.

Initial Student Resistance

Book Club was a big challenge for these students. It placed new demands on their comprehension of the readings, their participation in discussions over texts, their ways of thinking, and their language in expressing themselves both orally and in writing. For example, in doing Book Club, students needed to develop a new way of thinking, such as what questions to ask, what information was considered important in a story line, what the key ideas of the story were, what message(s) the author was trying to send with his/her descriptions, etc.

On top of the cognitive challenges, second language learners also faced social and linguistic challenges. The learning in the Book Club program was based a lot on group and class discussions. Students constructed meanings of texts through sharing with each other their ideas, challenging each other's ideas, and exploring meanings together. This collaboration called for a new set of skills. Students needed to learn when to talk, with whom to talk to, and how to agree or disagree with others. They also needed to learn new concepts and language usage(s) for expressing their reasoning, providing support, and arguing their points.

However, none of Ellen's students had engaged in Book Club activities before they came to her class. They had no experience engaging in such intensive reading, writing, and talking about book as demanded by Book Club. Due to the challenges of Book Club, it became a source of frustration for the students and the teacher during this first stage of Book Club.

Right from the beginning, students expressed explicit and implicit resistance to Book Club activities. First they didn't finish their reading/writing assignments. Later as they experienced confusion with regard to writing response to the prompt questions, some of which was caused by the unfamiliar language structures, they started to ask questions about their confusion and made it known explicitly to the teacher that they didn't get it. Kelsey asked "What does it mean how you feel about him?", which was one of the prompt questions for the day (Field notes, September 10, 1998). Thi asked what "up against" in the prompt

meant and others complained that they “didn't get it” (Field notes, September 11, 1998).

How well students engaged in their thinking and writing over the readings and prompts played an important part in how well their conversation went in book clubs and community share. With many students not completing their reading and writing assignments, it was hard to carry on a conversation about the readings in the group and class discussions. Near the end of the second week, Ellen started to check with students to see if they were prepared before they went out for recess. If they were not, they were required to catch up with their work during recess time. In my field notes, I noted "in checking the writing responses, Ellen asked a lot of students to give more examples to support their arguments. Many students worked on their responses during the recess time" (Field notes, September 10, 1998). I also noted "Many students forgot. If they wrote, they wrote little" (Field notes, September 11, 1998). Getting students prepared for Book Club continued to be a major challenge for the teacher in the second stage of development of Book Club as well.

Close Observation of Group Discussion Demonstrations

Besides checking students' homework assignments and talking to them about the importance of being prepared to ensure productive discussion, Ellen made a series of efforts to help students overcome their initial difficulties and their resistance to Book Club. She discussed more extensively in mini-lessons how to write a response to the prompts. She tried to provide more assistance to students

on how answer directly to the prompt questions, how to pull out the evidence from the book to support their argument, and how to interact with each other in their small groups. Ellen also created opportunities for the students to observe what discussions about texts were like among more "expert-like" peers. She showed students a group discussion segment from the Book Club tape on Day Eight and invited some students from the previous year to demonstrate a group discussion on Day Nine.

The tape segment was only about two minutes long, but it was with real students talking in a real classroom. After the class viewed the group discussion in the tape, the teacher and the students discussed what they noticed in their observation. Ellen was trying to help the students see what would make a good group discussion.

Ellen: Were they going around the circle and say "Well, you go first and then I"?

Students: No.

... ..

Ellen: What else? Kelsey?

Kelsey: They were listening to each other.

Ellen: They were listening and responding. They were listening and responding. What else did you see? Thahn?

Thahn: They had positive attitude.

Ellen: They had very positive attitude. What else did you notice about the discussion? Uh, JR?

JR: They ask fat, juicy questions.

Ellen: Uh, They, they asked fat juicy questions. Yes, they did. Alicia?

Alicia: ... (inaudible)

Ellen: They, I don't think uh, they were using their own personal what?

Michael: Ideas.

Ellen: Own personal response, own personal opinion, own personal ideas. What else were they doing?

Michael: Sharing ideas.

Ellen: Sharing ideas, we've already said that. Anything else? Were they just going in the circle? Round robin? Uh, Thahn?

Thahn: ... (inaudible)

Ellen: Pardon me?

Thahn: They agree with each other.

Ellen: Okay, they agree with each other.

(Transcript, September 14, 1998)

In this discussion, students noticed several key elements necessary for a good group discussion, such as the group was listening and responding to each other; they had a positive attitude; they asked fat, juicy questions; they shared their own personal ideas and experiences; and they agreed with each other. At the same time, Ellen also directed students' attention to things that they didn't notice themselves. She questioned students whether it would "still be okay" to disagree with each other and then helped students understand that it would be okay so long as "they did in a positive way and they backed themselves up".

Ellen: Okay, they agree with each other. But what happens if they disagree, would that still be okay?

Students: Yeah. ...

Ellen: So long as they did what?

Student: ... [inaudible]

Ellen: Pardon me. I heard it but I don't know where it came from. Alicia?

Alicia: ... [inaudible]

Ellen: They did in a positive way and they backed themselves up. They didn't say, uh, one of the boys said, "that's stupid", he was talking about something in the uh ...

Students: Book,

Ellen: The book, he wasn't talking about someone else's idea. ... Okay, you are going to be having opportunities to do this.

Viewing the group discussion about a book on tape and talking about how the group members participated in the discussion seemed to have inspired Ellen's

students. When it was time to go home in the afternoon, almost all students took their Book Club folders with them.

The next day, Ellen invited four students from her previous year to come to demonstrate a fishbowl group discussion about the book they were reading in their class. These students continued to engage in Book Club this year with their fifth grade teacher. Ellen's students knew these guest discussants, with whom they mingled a lot on the play-ground and during various POD (Projects of Discovery) times – the school-wide learning activities/centers for students as alternatives to lunch recess. Their demonstration gave Ellen's students the opportunity to see directly what book discussion was like in action.

Before the fishbowl demonstration, students discussed what to watch for and included all the key ideas from their self-evaluation sheet. They decided they would observe to see if the discussants wrote for a know-nothing audience, if they would ask fat, juicy questions, and if they had positive attitude. They would also observe how the group would share with each other, and how they would listen and respond to each other. After the fishbowl demonstration, Ellen asked the group many questions so the discussants ended up sharing a lot with the class on how to respond to the writing prompts, and the importance of being prepared to have good discussions. They also shared with the class their favorite books and the fun they had in reading them, especially when they got into them. Ellen also pointed out to the students that the guest group discussants agreed and disagreed with each other on some of the things, but they approached them in a positive way

and by giving evidence from the book to support what they said. After the guest discussants left, Ellen continued to share with the students what she noticed of the discussion. She said that the group discussants could hear each other; that they all focused on the person who was speaking and no one was playing with pencils or folders; and that they were all prepared. One student raised the point that the group was confused over something in their discussion. Ellen thought that was when they disagreed whether there was a river or not, and she told the students this was exactly the purpose of Book Club discussion. She said, "I think they were trying to clarify. One person says 'no, there is not a river' and another person explains. So that is one purpose of a book club discussion, when you can't make ideas clear in your head" (Field notes, September 15, 1998).

Dominance of Teacher Talk and Teacher-Led Talk

The class worked on *Stone Fox* for 11 days in the first three weeks. This period was marked by a high percent of teacher talk or teacher-led talk about Book Club and how to participate in Book Club activities. There was very little student-centered discussion as in either book clubs or community share. During the 11 days when the class worked on *Stone Fox*, they spent an average of 71 minutes each day for Book Club. Most of the Book Club time was used by the teacher to introduce what Book Club was, to engage students in teacher-led talks on how students should participate in Book Club discussions, or to provide instruction on how to respond to the writing prompts. To be exact, these three types of teacher talk and teacher-led talk took up an average of 37 minutes each day while student

had only 3 minutes per day to talk or share among themselves (i.e., during book clubs and community share). The class time given to students to read the book and write the responses consisted of 31 minutes per day in average (see Table 4).

Table 4

Day by Day Count of the Time Spent on Book Club Activities in the First Stage

Date	Student-Centered Talk	Time (min.)	Teacher Talk/Teacher-Led Talk	Time (min.)	Student Reading & Writing	Time (min.)	Total (min.)
9-1			Introduction to Book Club	42			42
9-2			Mini lesson	24	Reading Writing	11 20	55
9-3	Book club Community share	9 3	Talking about self-evaluation sheet	26	Reading	12	76
9-8			Mini lesson Talking about writing for a know-nothing audience	20 47	Reading	26	83
9-9	Book clubs Community share	10 10	Mini-lesson Teacher talk Mini-lesson	15 20	Reading/ Writing	28	83
9-10			Teacher-led talk Mini-lesson	21 29	Reading/ Writing	35 (30)*	85 (30)
9-11			Teacher-led talk Mini-lesson	16 24	Reading/ Writing	35 (40)*	75 (40)
9-14			Watch and talk about the tape Mini-lesson	13 15	Reading/ Writing	52	80
9-15			Guest fishbowl and teacher-led talk Mini-lesson	20 7	Reading/ Writing	50	77

(table continues)

Table 4 (continued)

Date	Student-Centered Talk	Time (min.)	Teacher Talk/Teacher-Led Talk	Time (min.)	Student Reading & Writing	Time (min.)	Total (min.)
9-17			Teacher-led talk over the guest fishbowl	7	Writing	20	59
			Mini-lesson on Theme	32			
9-18			Teacher introducing self-evaluation	18	Students tidying up reading logs	50	68

Note. Based on field notes on the first Book Club unit.

* Time spent on writing Book Club responses during recess time.

Table 5

Average Time Per Day Spent on Book Club Activities in the First Stage

Student-Centered Talk (min.)		Teacher Talk/Teacher-Led Talk (min.)		Student Reading and Writing (min.)		Total Time (min.)	
Total 11 days	Average Per Day	Total 11 days	Average Per Day	Total 11 days	Average Per Day	Total 11 days	Average Per Day
32	3	406	37	339	31	783	71

Note. Based on field notes on the first Book Club unit.

Working with *Stone Fox* gave the teacher and the students an initial experience with Book Club. This was also an exploratory period for them to find out the expectations, the potentials, and the needs they had, as well as direction for what actions to take next. During this time, Ellen introduced students to the concepts and practices of participating in Book Club, and students had the opportunities to engage in all the Book Club activities, i.e., book clubs, community share, mini-lesson, reading the book, and writing responses to prompts. This stage was characterized by high teacher talk/teacher-led talk and

little student talk. When the class began the second book, they started to engage in student-centered talk everyday in the form of fishbowl discussions. Each day, one group would conduct a fishbowl group discussion when they shared their responses to the chapter(s) they read for the day and discussed about them. The fishbowl also provided Ellen another opportunity to model how to participate in talking about books in group.

Book Club Challenges

In this section, I discuss the challenges of Book Club faced by this group of diverse students at the beginning of the year by describing (a) the first fishbowl discussion, (b) the kind of questions students asked of each other, and (c) a specific example in which JR experienced great difficulty in expressing his view that was different from the majority view. Some evidence offered here to support my claims actually occurred in the beginning of the second stage. The two stages overlapped with each other because the criteria for distinguishing the second stage from the first one was how the teacher organized the learning activities and her teaching techniques. Though the teacher released the podium/floor to the students by having them engage in fishbowl discussions, it didn't mean that students knew how to take it automatically. During the first fishbowl discussion, no real communication took place except for deciding who should share next. Though Tu made one comment and asked one question, his peers didn't respond. Another difficulty posed for these students by Book Club was asking the right type of questions that would give students the opportunities to think and express their

ideas. The last piece of evidence documenting the challenge of Book Club was the difficulty they experienced in expressing opinions different from other members of the group.

First Fishbowl

The class had their own first fishbowl discussion on September 22. They were reading their second book, *Shiloh*. The fishbowl group was chosen by the teacher to engage in a live discussion while the rest of the class sat watching and evaluating them. Up to this time, the class had observed a book clubs discussion on tape and a fishbowl discussion by a group of students their teacher had taught the year before. The writing prompt the first fishbowl group responded to was:

Character Map Construct a character map for Marty. Remember to include how he thinks, feels, acts and his relationships with others.

The fishbowl group consisted of 4 students, two boys (Osman and Tu) and two girls (Rosie and Maria). Before the fishbowl started, Ellen gave the rest of the class each an evaluation sheet and asked them to grade how the people in the fishbowl participated in the discussion and how well they had prepared for the discussion. In my field notes, I noted the following about Tu's sharing in the first fishbowl:

Tu first shared his reading log. He was well prepared and wrote about all aspects of a character map explained the day before. When he finished, everybody sat quietly and looked at each other. Ellen tried to get some responses from the other members in the group. She asked, "Have you got some response to him? All three of you? Do you agree with everything? What specific thing do you agree with him? Or do you disagree with anything he has said?"

After each question, Ellen waited and there was a long silence. The three students in the group responded to the questions by looking at each other, sideways or down, and shaking their heads slightly. No one said anything. Finally Ellen told the group, "Remember this, you need to ask each other questions and think about what he's said." Then Rosie read her written response to the prompt and Tu suggested that she use the words *he* or *him* instead of Marty all the time. After that, Maria shared hers. No one said anything when she finished reading. They looked at each other for a while and finally Rosie gestured Osman to begin. Osman mumbled only one sentence, "Marty feels happy about Shiloh." Then Tu asked Osman how he felt about Marty and what he did to be nice to Shiloh. Osman looked at him but said nothing to respond to the questions.

At the first fishbowl, students didn't know what to say to each other and how to carry on a conversation about the book in a small group. They simply read what responses to the prompt each wrote and there were long pauses. They had difficulty in responding to each other's sharing, in elaborating on one's own ideas, and in managing the floor of conversation.

When the group finished their "discussion", Ellen first asked the audience to judge if the group were prepared or not, showing them each of their writings. Then she asked the class to comment on their performance. One student said that he could not hear what Osman was talking; another student asked why the group didn't ask each other questions, except for Tu. The teacher stressed again that they

needed to ask each other questions and respond to what other people said. She told the class that a discussion was different from sharing.

The Kind of Questions Students Asked at the Beginning of the Year

As evidenced in the first fishbowl discussion, one big difficulty that students had in engaging in conversations about books was that they didn't know how to respond to each other's sharing. Students didn't know what questions to ask, even though on the second school day, Ellen made a clear distinction between "skinny questions" and the "fat, juicy questions". When introducing Book Club, she showed the students examples of both types of questions and pointed out to the students that the former usually expect a right answer while the latter usually began with "What do you think about ...?" Or "Why do you think that ...?" Students seemed to understand the concept of "fat, juicy questions".

However, when they began their book clubs and community share, students didn't know what questions to ask and how to ask them. Even when they asked a question, they were not clear themselves why they asked the question they did and what to expect from the person who would respond to the question. The questions students asked or comments they made early in the school year fell into three types. The first type of questions focused on the form, such as the words they used, rather than the meanings they were making. For example, Tu suggested Rosie use some other words like he or him instead of the boy's name, Marty (Transcript, September 22, 1998). Michael pointed out to Tu the fact that he said something twice (Transcript, December 3, 1998). Adeline asked Kelsey where she

put the word weird on her comparison chart (Transcript, December 7, 1998). A second type of questions were "skinny questions", to borrow Ellen's term. For example, JR asked Shele, "Where did Judd kick Shiloh (a dog)?" and she answered, "On his bottom?" (Transcript, September 24, 1998). Alicia asked JR whether he said Judd, a character in the book *Shiloh*, killed the deer out of season or in the season (Transcript, September 24, 1998). When Emir asked Jessey, "How long would Marty work for Judd?", Ellen questioned, "Is it a fat, juicy question?" (Transcript, October 2, 1998). The third type of questions were fat, juicy questions starting with why. These questions were usually taken directly from the prompts. Sometimes students repeated or asked these questions, regardless of what the others had shared, or they didn't seem to care what the other person responded. Adeline asked Kelsey why the Watsons were weird, which was a question directly from the prompt, and Kelsey told her that she didn't think the Watsons were weird. Adeline seemed to be surprised to hear that, then she asked why she didn't think them weird but had no follow-up comments or questions (Transcript, October 8, 1998). Like Adeline, since students were mimicking only the form of the questions, they didn't know what to expect from the people who answered the questions. They accepted any answers from the respondents, regardless of whether these answers made sense to them or not. One explanation of this phenomenon is that in learning to ask the fat, juicy questions for a literary discourse, students first learn to say the questions before they could fully comprehend what was being

asked. Another explanation was that students didn't know how to listen in order to carry on a conversation.

The Challenge for JR to Express his Different Interpretations

Besides the challenge of identifying the right questions to ask, students also faced the task of exploring the meanings of the text, expressing their confident or tentative ideas, commenting on other people's opinions with appropriate support, and challenging each other's ideas in their discussions. These tasks proved equally as challenging as the question task. JR's struggle in sharing what he wrote at a fishbowl discussion demonstrates this challenge of sharing personal opinions, especially when these opinions were different from the majority views.

During the October 8th fishbowl discussion over whether the Watsons were weird or not, JR struggled hard to express his view, which was opposite to the views of other people in the group. There were four students in the group and JR was the last one to speak. Both Alicia and Kelsey who shared first said that they thought the Watsons were not weird; they were just different. They also cited examples of what the Watsons did.

Thahn, the third child who shared, began his sharing by agreeing with the two girls and said "I don't think the Watsons are weird because they are just like different people" (Transcript, October 8, 1998) though in his writing, the first sentence he wrote was "The Watson is funny because Byron he put his lips in the mirror and Kenny try to help him" (Thahn's Written Response, October 7, 1998). Thahn was thinking that the Watsons were funny, but he didn't dare, or didn't feel

comfortable to say that openly in the fishbowl discussion. He also had a hard time answering the questions from Michael.

Michael: Why do you think the Watsons are weird?

Thahn: ... My friends, when I go to my friends' house, and other friends come, we do different things.

Michael: Well, but, well, why do you think they're weird?

Thahn: Well, uhm, uhm, ...

Michael: [stood up and left the table]

(Transcript, October 8, 1998)

JR was the last and shared his response after questions for Thahn were over. The first sentence of his written response declared that "The Watsons are weird and funny" (JR's Written Response, October 7, 1998). However, seeing all his group members have an opposite view of his, he hesitated in sharing his ideas. His hesitation was demonstrated by the three unsuccessful starts he made to begin reading his response. It was with the help of the teacher that he was able to read his response.

JR: The Watsons are like a ... [stopping for a while and then asking Ellen very softly] just read what I wrote?

Ellen: Uh?

JR: Just read what I have?

Thahn: Yes.

JR: Some parts do not make any sense.

Thahn: SO?!

Ellen: You ought to be making sure your writing makes sense to you. If it doesn't make sense to you, who else does it make sense to?

Thahn: Just add something ... [inaudible].

Ellen: [sensing something] You think the Watsons are weird.

JR: No.

Ellen: Then read what you've got.

JR: [Reading] The Watsons are funny and ... I don't know. When Byron got his lips stuck on the mirror, I thought ...

Ellen: Could you speak louder please?

JR: When Byron got his lips stuck on the mirror, I thought ... [stopping again.]

Ellen: [walking up to JR] What have you got here? [reading from his paper slowly for JR to read along] The Watsons are weird and funny. The kids are...

JR: [Joining Ellen and reading] ... Smart. Byron is [Ellen stopped reading aloud] mean and not kind to his little brother and his little brother's friend. I think the Watsons are weird because Byron did tell dumb stories and he don't make sense when he is telling them. [Stopping. Thahn whispered to him, "come on."] I learned that Kenny is a smart boy and funny and his eyes is not good. I have learned about Byron is mean to his brother and I learned that Byron thinks he is a nice boy and learned a lesson not to kiss the mirror. Kenny and Byron don't get along with each other and next time I hope they get along.

(Transcript, October 8, 1998)

In the above scenario, JR was finding it very hard to tell his group that he thought the Watsons were weird and funny because the majority of the group stated that they were not weird, but only different. For several times, he tried to conform to what others said. When he shared his response, he skipped the word weird in the first sentence, he stuttered, he asked Ellen if he had to read what he wrote, he apologized that some part didn't make sense to himself, and he lowered his voice. Even when Ellen asked him explicitly whether he thought the Watsons were weird, he answered affirmatively, "No". Though Ellen constantly emphasized to the class that all ideas were valid as long as they had support, what JR tried to do, or what he tried not to do, showed that at the beginning of the year it was definitely not easy for students to express a different point of view.

Teaching by Modeling and Scaffolding:

The Second Stage of the Journey

The beginning of the second book, *Shiloh*, marked the opening of the second stage in the development of Book Club. With the implementation of fishbowl discussions, the teacher and the class shifted from talking about what Book Club should look like to the actual enactment of Book Club. More time was given to students to engage in talks about books among themselves, first through fishbowls and later through book clubs and community share. Teacher-led conversations about Book Club gradually gave way to student-centered discussions about books. Through first observing and experimenting with fishbowls and later participating in book clubs and community share discussions and other Book Club activities, students learned to read the books, write the responses, ask fat, juicy questions, and respond to each other's ideas; they became more comfortable talking about their ideas and more interested in what others had to say as they continued to engage in the discussions. Also, in this process, students gradually gave up their resistance to Book Club and began to participate in Book Club learning activities.

The teacher played an important role in facilitating this transitional process that led to more students' taking responsibility for their own learning. During this stage, Ellen adopted a pedagogy of explicit and exploratory approaches and engaged students' learning in their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). In this second stage, the Book Club activity structure, especially fishbowls,

allowed Ellen, as well as the more knowledgeable peers, to model and scaffold the skills necessary to participate in talking and writing about books. In February, as students began to feel more comfortable and more knowledgeable with the book discussion genre, Ellen challenged students' "outlandish ideas", i.e., ideas that were not supported by evidence from the text, and helped move the discussion to a higher level.

In this section, I first describe the two mediating tools, including the fishbowl discussion as a structural tool and the prompt questions as an instrumental tool and how they helped mediate students' learning. Next, I examine the changes in activity structure that allowed for more student-talk time and the changes in the participation patterns of Ellen and the students and in their conversations. Finally, I discuss the different moves the teacher adopted in facilitating the students' learning.

Mediating Tools

All learning and thinking are mediated by tools. Fishbowl discussion as a structural tool created a space for the following to occur: (a) for the teacher and the more knowledgeable peers to model asking questions, giving feedback to each other's sharing, and interacting with each other; (b) for the teacher to scaffold students' participating skills; (c) for the group members and anybody from the audience to come and practice participating in discussions; and (d) for all the other students in the audience to observe and possibly internalize the practice. Prompt

questions as an instrumental tool helped students focus on certain issues, practice and develop specific literary skills.

Fishbowl as a Structural Tool to Mediate Students' Learning

The second stage began with the implementation of the fishbowl discussions. The Book Club groups took turns in conducting a fishbowl discussion each day when they were reading *Shiloh* and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham: 1963* from late September to late October. Later on December 3, they had a volunteer fishbowl discussion. Though the first fishbowl showed that students didn't know what to say to each other and how to carry on a conversation about text in a small group, fishbowl discussions helped create a public space where ways of responding, thinking and talking about texts could be demonstrated and observed. Starting with the second fishbowl, Ellen also added two extra chairs at the fishbowl table for anybody in the audience to join the group discussion to ask questions or to make comments. This public space, especially the two extra chairs, gave Ellen another opportunity to model and scaffold students' knowledge and skills needed in participating in group discussions and community share, such as what questions to ask, how to ask them, how to listen and respond to each other, and what language to use in a group discussion. The fishbowl with two extra chairs also enabled the more knowledgeable peers in the class to try out and practice what they learned and the students in the audience to observe book discussions in action as well. In this section, I use only the second fishbowl discussion to show how students' learning was mediated. At the beginning of the

discussion, Ellen modeled how to ask questions and she then encouraged other students to come ask questions. Later the fishbowl conversation took up its own momentum with members in the group and the “visiting” students who made use of the two extra chairs.

The second fishbowl discussion took place on September 23, when Ellen put two extra chairs around the discussion group table for the first time. The discussion group had four students, Alicia, Michael, JR, and Shele. The prompt questions for the group were, "What do Marty's words and actions tell you about him? What do Judd's words and actions reveal about him? Support your response with specific examples from the text." As soon as Alicia, the first student, finished sharing her response to the prompt, Michael started to read his response right away. Ellen interrupted Michael and walked to the empty chair, "Wait, I have a question for you." She then modeled asking a question.

- Ellen: You said that Marty is a very determined boy. I'd like to know what type of things he did that showed he is determined.
- Alicia: He tried...
- Ellen: Louder, talk to the whole group.
- Alicia: He wants the dog. Shiloh is the one he wants. He tried to get ...
- Ellen: What kinds of words did he say that tells that he is determined?
- JR: He does not use bad language?
- Ellen: Does that tell you that he is determined?
- Alicia: He said, "Shiloh, I'll never let anybody mistreat you and kick you again."
- Ellen: Thank you. [to the group] The rest of you, think what Alicia said and you need to ask her questions. Tell her that you agree or disagree.

(Transcript, September 23, 1998)

In this excerpt, Ellen modeled asking questions – “I’d like to know what type of things he did that showed he is determined” and scaffolded Alicia in answering it – “What kinds of words did he say that tells that he is determined?”. When Michael finished sharing his response, Ellen said to the class, "There's something in there. The chairs are open and you can go." When Thahn indicated and asked if he could go, Ellen waved her hand and said "go". Thahn was the first student to sit on the extra chair and asked a question.

Thahn: Why do you think Marty likes Shiloh?

Michael: Because in the book it says that he likes Shiloh more than his mom.

Thahn didn't think that Marty loved Shiloh more than he loved his mom, but he could not convince Michael. Noticing that Freddy wanted to join the discussion from his seat, Ellen waved her hand to signal him to join the group and said, "Go, go, go up there!" Freddy came and clarified that the book said Marty loved Shiloh as much as he loved his mom. That satisfied all in the discussion. Afterwards, students asked Michael a couple of more questions. JR, another member of the group, wondered why Judd put Shiloh on a chain and asked Michael whether he would mistreat Shiloh if he were Judd. Freddy challenged Michael and asked "What if he [Judd] thought he was helping the dog [when he was mistreating Shiloh]?"

JR shared his response next. The following conversation took place after JR finished sharing. Students either questioned him or commented on what he said after Ellen called on them.

Ellen: Okay, any questions for JR?
 Michael: How do you know he killed the dog?
 JR: Because he said that one of his dogs was killed.
 Alicia: Did you say that he killed the deer out of season or in the season?
 JR: Out of the season.
 Ellen: How do you know it was Judd who kill the dog? I don't think Marty knows.
 JR: Because Judd don't like his dogs. Could that be the reason?
 Ellen: [Looking around the group] Anyone else?
 Alicia: Is it because that he does not like his dog? He may like them and he may not.
 JR: Because his dogs wander too much.
 [Ellen pointed at the empty chair and encouraged other students to come. She stood up and left. Adeline and Jessey joined the group.]
 Jessey: Only Shiloh is the dog that wanders off, the other dogs stay. They know him and stay with him. Shiloh is the one who wanders.
 Michael: Because Shiloh is the new one; he's just got him.
 (Transcript, September 23, 1998)

Here the participants were questioning JR on what he said and why he said certain things. At the same time, they were also constructing meanings together on how Judd treated his dog and why he acted so, and why Shiloh wandered away. Ellen played two roles in this situation. First she was a participant, asking questions that she wanted to find out when she reiterate Michael's question. Second, she played the role of a facilitator, inviting the audience to participate in the discussion through her verbal and body languages. By directing JR's question at her to the group and saying "Anyone else?" and then leaving the group, Ellen sent the students the message "I'm a participant. I'm not a judge." All this took place while the rest of the class were observing.

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Prompts as an Instrumental Tool to Mediate Students' Learning

Another tool Ellen used in Book Club to help mediate students learning is the written prompts. The prompts were open-ended questions in different categories grouped around a specific topic in the chapter(s) students were reading. During the mini-lesson, Ellen would teach the category for the day and then introduce the prompt questions (see Table 6). The categories of these questions covered a wide range and they included Author's Craft, Character Development, Story Graph, Questioning, Summary, Character Map, Picture, Compare and Contrast, Interpretation, Theme, Intertextuality, Prediction, Personal Response, Me and the Book, Feelings, Favorite/Least Favorite Part/Character, Point of View, Critique, and Author's Purpose. The prompts aimed to help students acquire the knowledge and skills to engage in talks about books both orally and in written form in a literary discourse community. The open-ended questions provided students the opportunities to practice and develop their knowledge and skills for effective participation.

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Table 6

Sample Prompts

Book	Prompt items
<i>Shiloh</i>	Lesson 3: Read chapters 5-6. <u>Me and the book</u> What does Marty do against his parent's wishes? Why did he feel it was so important to do? If you were Marty would you have done it too? Why or Why not? Support your response. <u>Or</u> Have you ever done something that you know has gone directly against your parents or some other adult's wishes but felt that you <i>had</i> to do. What did you do and why did you feel so strongly that you had to do it? Support your response!
<i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963</i>	<u>Lesson #12</u> : Theme Assigned Reading: Chapter 15 Writing Prompt: Identify one of the themes in this book. Describe at least two situations in that illustrate the theme that you have chosen.
<i>The view from Saturday</i>	Lesson 3: Point of View Assigned Reading: pp. 21-40 Writing Prompt: How does Noah describe Alan? How does he feel about him? How does Nadia describe Alan? How does she feel about him? (are there any specific words or things they say about him? Why might they use these words?) How are their descriptions different? Does Nadia's description tell us something that Noah's doesn't (or vice versa?) Why do you think this is so? Support your response.
<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>	Lesson 16: Character Development Assigned Reading: Chapter 23 Writing Prompt: Using a graphic organizer, or paragraph method describe how Winnie has changed. You must clearly describe how she was in the beginning of the story, the middle, and now near the end.
<i>Walk Two Moons</i>	Lesson 9: Interpretation Assigned Reading: Chapters 19-20 (pp. 114-128) Writing Prompt: What does Sal's dad mean when he says she is trying to "Catch a fish in the air?" What is Sal trying to do that could help explain what this expression might mean? Have you ever felt as if you were trying to "catch a fish in the air?" Write about a specific experience in your own life.

Note. From the students' prompt sheet Handouts.

The prompt questions forced students to think over serious issues and to practice special techniques in making sense of the texts they read as well as the

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world around them. In responding to the prompt questions, the students learned to analyze the text, synthesize it, interpret it, make personal and intertextual connections with the text, articulate their own ideas, and provide support or evidences to their arguments. Students also learned about writing techniques, such as ways of organizing and presenting ideas and ways of arguing one's point.

In addition, students' written responses to the prompts became the sources of their conversation during book clubs and community share. In sharing their responses to these questions and interacting with each other over them, students were exposed to other people's interpretations, which opened opportunities for them to challenge one another's ideas, and clarify, evaluate, and revise their own thinking in the process. Through the process of reading, writing, and talking about books, students developed their literary skills and ways of thinking and viewing the world. Prompts, as an instrumental tool, helped mediate students learning of the literary knowledge and skills.

A Shift from Teacher/Teacher-Led Talk to Student-Centered Talk

Besides the change from talking about Book Club to implementing Book Club, there are quantitative and qualitative differences in the content and the participation patterns of their discussions that distinguish the second stage from the first stage. In the second stage, students were given the time to engage in small group and whole class discussions. The participants began to listen to each other and the conversations gradually became more focused. The teacher retreated from being the key speaker to playing the role of a facilitator and occasionally a

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participant. In this section, I summarize the time allotted to teacher and student talks, and analyze the changes in the participation patterns and their conversations.

Increased Student-Talk Time

In the first stage of the development of Book Club, Ellen played a central role in telling students what Book Club was, what kind of responses they should write, and how they should participate in Book Club discussions. Ellen tried to disabuse students of the notion that the teacher was the authoritative figure in discussions and engage students in talking directly to each other. She encouraged students to show respect and value each other's ideas. In the second stage, the class began to conduct fishbowl discussions. Opportunities were created for fishbowl members as well as the audience to engage in conversations with each other on books. Fishbowls also gave Ellen the opportunities to model how to ask questions and to respond others, and scaffold students' skills through her questions and comments. Starting from *Number the Stars* in early November, the class began book clubs and community share, and with these even more space was created for students to engage in discussions about books. Tables 7 and 8 show that student-centered talk occupied 32 minutes average per day, compared to an average of 3 minutes per day in stage one (see Table 4 & Table 5). Teacher talk decreased to an average of 21 minutes per day from the 37 minutes per day average of stage one (see Table 4 & Table 5).

Table 7

Day by Day Count of the Time Spent on Book Club Activities in the Second Stage

Date	Student-Centered Talk	Time (min.)	Teacher Talk/Teacher-Led Talk	Time (min.)	Student Reading and Writing	Time (min.)	Total Time (min.)
1-28	Book clubs	22	Checking if	5	Reading and	23	80
	Community share	13	students were prepared	17	writing		
			Mini-lesson on symbols and what they meant				
2-1	Book clubs	20	Checking if	2	Group reading	18	111
	Community share	10	students were prepared	48	Listening to last two chapters on tape	16	
			Mini-lesson on conflict and solution				
2-2*	Book clubs	20	Transition	4	Reading and	N/A	N/A
	Community share	10	Mini-lesson	N/A	writing		
2-4	Book clubs	26	Transition	5	Reading and	45	95
	Community share	11	Mini-lesson on personal response	8	writing		
2-5	Book clubs	23	Transition	3	Reading and	50	90
	Community share	9	Mini-lesson on story graph	5	writing		
2-9*	Book clubs	15	Mini-lesson on	11	Reading and	N/A	N/A
	Community share	15	revision and editing		writing		

* Data not complete.

Table 8

Average Time Per Day Spent on Book Club Activities in the Second Stage

Student-Centered Talk (min.)		Teacher Talk/Teacher-Led Talk (min.)		Student Reading & Writing (min.)		Total Time (min.)	
Total 6 days	Average Per Day	Total 5 days	Average Per Day	Total 4 days	Average Per Day	Total 4 days	Average Per Day
194	32	104	21	152	38	376	94

Note. Based on field notes On January 28, February 1, 2, 4, 5, and 9, 1999.

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Participation Pattern of Book Club Discussions

In the second stage of the development of Book Club, Ellen moved into an activity structure that offered students more opportunities to participate in conversations about books. This section explore the following questions: What were these conversations like? What were the teacher and the students talking about? Who was saying what to whom for how long? What roles did the teacher and the students play in these conversations? In this part, I analyze one of the early community share conversations in mid-November and one book clubs (small group) conversation in February to shed some light on the above questions.

During their November 18 community share, the class were working on Author's Craft and the prompt questions were:

What kind of mood did you feel that this chapter had? What were the specific events that happened that created this mood for you? (Prompt sheet for *Number the Stars*)

Their conversation over the prompt questions were marked by two features. First, the conversation looked pretty engaging and involved more than half of the class members. In addition to the twelve students who were identified among a total of 24 students in this class, other students also participated at the seven turns when several students were talking all at the same time. Second, there was a high frequency of turn switching. Within a 12-minute community share, there were 83 turn changes. Thirty-two of them were taken by the teacher and 51 by the students. Ten students spoke three or more times.

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Table 9

Talking Turns Taken by the Teacher and the Students During the 12-minute Community Share

Teacher Turns	Student Turns	Total Turns
32	51	83
	Percentage	
39%	61%	100%

Teacher talk.

Functions of teacher talk were analyzed into 7 different categories. A frequency count showed that one major function of teacher talk (29%) was to ask students open-ended questions around the prompts, such as: “What kind of mood did you guys talk about?” or “What do you think?” The teacher also pushed students to provide specific evidence to support what they said (17%). The other major function of teacher talk was for gate-keeping purposes (34%), such as signaling students to speak or stop talking, asking students to speak louder, advising students to talk to the whole class, or checking discipline. (see Table 10)

Table 10

Functions of Teacher Talk and their Frequencies

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gate-keeping	12	34%
Open-ended questions	10	29%
Asking students to provide specific information	6	17%
Modeling	3	9%
Clarifying confusion	3	9%
Self-reflection	1	3%
Total:	35	~100%

Note. Based on transcript of Community Share on November 18, 1998.

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Near the end of the conversation, Ellen told the students that she now understand what they meant by saying there was a happy mood in the room: the relief point. In doing so, Ellen accomplished two instructional goals. First, she showed the students that she was not the authoritarian person in the discussion but an equal participant as they were, trying to understand what everyone else was saying. Second, her action also modeled to the students what a reflective learner was doing in making sense of the class conversation. After that, she tried to share and make students see what she had come to understand of what some students were meant by “a happy mood”. However, because she moved right into the next activity, it was not clear whether students followed her point or not.

Ellen: In fact, I didn't think about relief, the relief point, when you were talking about being happy. Now I think you were more talking about relief. If the soldiers had opened the casket and found what?

Students: Clothes.

Ellen: Then they would be in real trouble, wouldn't they? So today, we will ...

(Transcript, November 18, 1998)

Student talk.

As students were learning to participate, to ask questions and to follow up on each other's comments, their conversation at this early time of the second stage seemed to be choppy and the conversation span over one line of thought was short. When they focused, they seemed to focus on the factual information in the book. In the following conversation, though the class was “talking” to each other, it was hard to tell where the conversation was leading. The teacher first questioned Hai

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about the mood of the chapter and Hai said it was “scared and fear” because “no one was talking and, and doing nothing”. Instead of discussing further evidence to support or dispute Hai’s assertion of the kind of mood of the chapter, Adeline digressed the conversation by asking him how he knew “there was nobody talking”. Immediately after, the class began to focus on what characters were doing and saying as described in the book and made no effort to connect the information they were trying to clarify and the assertion to make about the mood of the chapter, which was their discussion question. The teacher’s end-of-conversation self-reflection, as mentioned above, didn’t seem to follow upon what went before in the conversation either.

Ellen: What do you say, Hai?

Hai: I say it as scared and fear,

Ellen: Because...?

Hai: Because no one was talking and, and doing nothing.

Adeline: How do you know that there was nobody talking?

Hai: Because ...

[Four or five voices were talking at the same time. Inaudible.]

Thi: They didn’t bring food or anything.

Freddy: But Peter was reading the bible.

Thi/Hai: Yes/yeah.

Freddy: That was one talks.

Hai: I know.

[Several students murmured something, occasionally. Inaudible.]

Hai: There was no fighting.

Ellen: Okay, okay.

Michael: I think that was fast thinking, because mama didn’t say ...

Ellen: Wait, wait, wait,

Michael: ... Birte died of sickness, they will open it and may find out the clothes and stuff.

Ellen: What word were you using, Michael?

Michael: Sickness?

Ellen: No, no. You said you thought it was?

Michael: Fast thinking.

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Ellen: Fast thinking?
 Andy: No, she didn't say that. Annemarie said that the doctor said
 Michael/several other voices: No, Mama said that.
 [Several people tried at the same time to reason whom they thought said that.
 Inaudible.]
 Rico: I thought Mama said that. Mama said that, that's why, that's why she
 got slapped. Because she didn't want ... [Inaudible.]
 Ellen: In fact, I didn't think about relief, the relief point, when you were
 talking about being happy. Now I think you were more talking about
 relief. If the soldiers had opened the casket and found what?
 Students: Clothes.
 Ellen: Then they would be in real trouble, wouldn't they? So today, we
 will ...
 (Transcript, November 18, 1998)

Their conversation showed that students had not grasped the Book Club discussion genre yet. It was a challenge for them to make a point and then provide support for it. In the next excerpt which occurred before the previous excerpt, Thi made several attempts to explain that Mama would be in trouble if the German soldiers opened the casket. Although Andy summarized Thi's point, it was not clear whether other students were following her arguments. Rico interpreted the text literally and didn't seem to see the connection between the German soldiers opening the casket and Mama and others getting into trouble.

Ellen: Tu said that this chapter has a happy and sad mood. So could you
 expand what you just said about not having a happy mood? Talk
 more about that. It didn't have a happy mood, because...
 Thi: Because they were scared. They were scared because ... [Silence for
 6 seconds]
 Ellen: Anyone else in the room can help out?
 [Tu said something, too soft. Andy raised his hand and looked at Ellen.]
 Ellen: Don't look at me, I am not calling on you.
 Thi: Mama said that, uh, that, ... if the German soldiers opened the
 casket, mama would be in trouble. ... [Ellen was silent. She looked at
 students at Table One. Andy seemed to be confused.]
 Ellen: Don't talk to me, look at the rest.

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Andy: Did you say that if they opened the casket, they would be in trouble?
Thi: Mama said that in the casket is someone died and she had germs.
Rico: It was just an excuse, because there was no lady in the casket.
[Several people talked, overlapping each other.]
Thi: If they opened it and there's nobody in it, then mama would be in trouble, because they would know she, she was lying.
[Few seconds of silence]
Ellen: Anybody else who has not been in the discussion?
(Transcript, November 18, 1998)

In the second stage, students were given the opportunities to talk about the book. As indicated in this early community share conversation, students were active in participating and speaking, but they didn't know how to present their ideas and how to follow up on what others said. They were also having problems interpreting events and connecting ideas. Their conversation was choppy and unfocused. At the same time, the teacher played a big part in leading the conversation, taking almost 40% of the turns. She asked students questions, pushed them to provide details, and kept their attention and the conversation focused.

However, toward the end of the second stage, students seemed to have developed some sense of the book-discussion genre. They began to talk to each other and their conversations started to focus on shared topics. The teacher began to release her leading role in conversation to the students, and she continued to take a detached stance with regard to ideas students shared and exchanged, and reserve her evaluative comments. When she spoke, she asked students to elaborate on their ideas or to provide more support to their argument. In the following part, I describe a small group discussion ten weeks further into the school year, which

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demonstrated a very different participation pattern with regard to teacher and student talk.

The book clubs on February 4 lasted 27 minutes from 12:04 to 12:31. Ellen sat with a small group consisted of 5 students: Tu, Dang, Thi, Ia, and Kelsey. The group discussed about character development and the prompt questions for the day were: "Using a graphic organizer, or paragraph method to describe how Winnie has changed. You must clearly describe how she was in the beginning of the story, the middle, and now near the end." First, Kelsey shared her response. She described how Winnie felt at the beginning, middle, and near the end. She said that Winnie was happy and fell in love with Jessie, and that Winnie was also sad because she didn't want Mae to go to jail. After Kelsey finished reading her response, the group had a short discussion on whether Winnie fell in love with Jessie or not. Everyone in the group, except for Tu, had something to say. Tu, for whatever reason, changed the topic and asked Kelsey about Winnie's other feelings.

Thi: Why Winnie felt happy when she fell in love?

Ia: When you say Winnie fell in love with Jessie, she just like Jessie, she didn't fall in love with Jessie.

Kelsey: Yeah, because she said he was beautiful [She and several others giggled].

Ia: Winnie just like him.

Dang: Winnie just want to be friend.

Thi: Winnie just want to be friend with Jessie, but Jessie thinks differently.

Dang: Did he want to marry Winnie?

Tu: [Asking a question that changed the topic.] What are other feelings of Winnie besides happy in the middle [of the story]?

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Kelsey: [Thinking] Mm, afraid, because when she got kidnapped by the Tucks, she didn't know what they would do to her.
(Transcript, February 4, 1999)

The role of the teacher also changed dramatically in this group discussion as compared with the community share discussion ten weeks earlier. During the whole 27-minute discussion from 12:04 to 12:31, Ellen used once body-language to urge Kelsey to participate in the discussion and asked four verbal questions near the end. Two of the questions were functional, one requesting a student to speak louder and the other asking a student to repeat his question. The third question helped clarify a point when the conversation seemed to get stuck. The last question brought students back to focus on a thought-provoking question Thi raised. In the beginning 16 minutes, Ellen simply sat listening and taking notes. All this time the students were taking turns sharing their responses, and responding to each other's responses by raising questions and clarifying confusion. I cite the two content-related questions Ellen asked during this book clubs discussion. Ellen spoke for the first time at 12:21 when she tried to direct students to think in a different direction. Here is the excerpt of the conversation beginning with Kelsey asking a question after Ellen tugged her shoulder:

Kelsey: [Asking a question] Thi, why do you think she [Winnie] feels happy when she went home, because when the stranger was going to try to take her home, she didn't want to go.
Thi: Because she missed her family.
Tu: But then she'll miss the Tucks, Mae and others.
Kelsey: Because when the stranger tried to take her, she didn't want to go with the stranger.
Thi: She miss her family, but ...
Kelsey: But why didn't she go if she misses her family so much?

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Thi: She had to. Who's got to stop that?
 Kelsey: Stop what?
 Thi: Stop her from going home.
 Ellen: Did Winnie really know that she was going to be taken home by the stranger?
 Several Students: No.
 Dang: Maybe she freezes, never want to walk with the stranger.
 Kelsey: Maybe she had a feeling that he can do something bad, like the spring, how he had found out about the spring.
 Ia: Yeah, like he would ... [inaudible]
 (Transcript, February 4, 1999)

As shown in this conversation, Ellen's question directed students to think in a different perspective. Instead of putting Thi on the spot to come up with an answer to why Winnie didn't want to go home with the stranger, the whole group began to offer ideas to this question. The second time the teacher spoke, she repeated Thi's question on why Tuck took Winnie to fishing, and brought students back to explore further this thought-provoking question.

Thi: Do you think the Tuck took her to fishing and to the water, uh, is it for some reason? Or they were just nice?
 Ia: They were nice and they wanted to tell her about the spring.
 Kelsey: Maybe since she met the Tucks, the Tucks didn't want others to know their names and they didn't want anybody to find out about them.
 Ia: But the stranger know who was their names.
 Kelsey: Yes, I know. But I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about mom and dad.
 Ellen: Could you talk a little more about that? ... [To class: excuse me, a little bit too loud. One foot voice.] Why the Tucks took her to the spring? What is the reason? Why?
 Ia: Because they want Winnie to keep the secret that no one says anything about the spring and knows about it, because if they know it, they want to spoil it.
 Kelsey: Why did they take her to the spring? She didn't know about it in the first place. Why didn't they just let her go?
 Thi: The Tucks want to tell her about the life cycle and the wheel.
 Ia: If she drinks the water, the world wouldn't go.

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Tu: The Tucks took her to the water, to spring, because if she was thirsty at that time, she probably would drink the water.
(Transcript, February 4, 1999)

In this conversation, students dominated the talk. However, by repeating Thi's question, the teacher helped students focus on the issue that required them to think more in depth. Looking across the conversations on November 18, 1998 and on February 4, 1999, we see different participation patterns with regard to who controlled the floor of conversation, what they were talking about, and how they were interacting with each other on these topics. In the conversation on November 18, 1998, the teacher played a leading part by asking students questions and keeping the conversation focused. In their conversation on February 4, 1999, the students were interacting among themselves. Besides, the first conversation seemed choppy and unfocused while the second conversation was more fluid – students began to listen and talk to each other, and their conversations started to focus on shared topics. These changes set the second stage apart from the first stage.

Teacher Moves: Multiple Instructional Strategies

The changes in the second stage characterized the second stage as a transitional stage in which students were gradually acquiring the Book Club discussion genre. Like in the first stage, Ellen continued to play an active role in helping students develop the knowledge and skills needed to participate in Book Club discussions. However, instead of telling, a teaching mode dominant in the first stage, Ellen now combined the explicit instruction with an exploratory

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approach. On the one hand, she continued to provide specific instructions on how to read, write responses, and talk about books. Some of these instructions were planned ahead of time, like the showing of students' writing response to the prompts and many mini lectures during the mini-lessons. Others were carried out spontaneously in the moment-to-moment interactions between Ellen and her students during the learning activities. On the other hand, Ellen saw students as knowledgeable beings with prior experience and knowledge, and she believed that learning occurred in interactions with each other while participating in the communal practices. She provided time for students to practice talking with each other about books. She encouraged students to construct meanings of the texts and explore their own self-identity and world views. She helped students make connections between the new skills and concepts to what they already knew. She also created opportunities for the more knowledgeable peers in the class to model their thinking and reasoning when responding to books. She herself employed multiple moves, especially modeling and scaffolding at this stage to help students acquire the skills. In this section, I discuss the different moves she adopted in facilitating students to acquire the literacy knowledge and skills in participating in Book Club activities. These moves consist of (a) building on students' prior knowledge, (b) using peer knowledge, (c) modeling, and (d) scaffolding/challenging students thinking and participation.

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Building New Knowledge on What Students Already Know

In her teaching, Ellen tried to create the zone of proximal development in which students could make that leap from what they had already known to the new learning. Every day's mini-lesson was a time designed for many planned direct instruction to take place. Ellen used the time to introduce new literary concepts, analyze the characters and character development, and model ways of thinking and writing in the expected genres. The prompts for writing response became a place to begin such instructions. Students read the prompts; they figured out what the prompts were asking; and they discussed what format they could use to respond to the prompts. In explaining new and difficult concepts, Ellen first asked students questions or engaged students in tasks they already knew or were familiar with. She then helped students make the connection between what they knew and the new knowledge. Also when introducing a new task or concept, Ellen would do it first in class, a public space, where all students could observe, participate, and ask questions before they tried it themselves and the more knowledgeable peers could model. Here are a few examples. When the class made the character map for the first time, Ellen developed a character map in class, using the main character in the class reading-aloud book, before asking the students to complete individually their own first character map with Willy in *Stone Fox* (Field notes, September 8, 1998). For another example, from her previous year experiences, Ellen knew that making a story graph was a challenging task for students. When time came for the class to

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draw one, Ellen and the students mapped a story graph together in class for *Little Red Ridinghood*, a story that many students knew (Field notes, February 5, 1999).

Sometimes Ellen used characters and events that were easy for students to understand as examples for them to practice thinking over more complex characters and events. When writing to the prompt question, "What do you feel about the tax collector?", many students didn't know how to respond to it. Noticing this, Ellen asked students what they felt about Grandpa first. Grandpa with his relationship to Little Willy was a simpler character for the students to comprehend and relate to. After seeing the connections between their feelings about Grandpa and the reasons to feel so, students were able to tackle the more complex character in the book (Field notes, September 10, 1998).

In explaining the concept of "point of view", Ellen used the fight the class had on the soccer ground with another class the day before as an example to show students that the story they told about the fight was different from the story told by the students from the other class. She explained that this was so because they all had a different personal point of view. In this way, students understood "point of view" with little difficulty (Field notes, September 14, 1998). In fact, when they were making a story graph for *Tuck Everlasting*, Freddy asked whose point of view they should take, indicating a transfer of learning (Field notes, February 5, 1999).

Another example was when Ellen tried to illustrate the point of "going beyond literal interpretations". She first asked the students what Charlotte's Web

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was about, knowing that they had all read it the previous year. A student said it was about a pig and a spider. Ellen affirmed that it was right but she continued to point out that this was a very literal interpretation. Another student said the book was about friendship. Ellen juxtaposed the two views and explained that the second view went beyond the literal interpretation. Seeing the differences of the two interpretations about the book they were familiar with, students began to understand what literal interpretations were and what it meant to go beyond literal interpretations.

Creating an Environment in Which Students Could Teach and Learn from Each

Other

Besides helping students see the connections between what they already knew and the new knowledge, Ellen also tried to create an environment in which the knowledge and skills of the more knowledgeable students in class would become public knowledge. There were four ways in which Ellen used to share with the class what the more knowledgeable students knew. First, Ellen drew the class attention to how these students respond to texts and interact with each other after the class had witnessed their performances. Second, Ellen sometimes asked the more knowledgeable students questions purposefully so that they demonstrated how to think, talk, or approach the questions in action for the class. Third, Ellen invited the more knowledgeable students to share what they knew with the class, especially at times when new students joined the class. Finally, Ellen shared what the more knowledgeable students wrote as model responses with the whole class.

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First, when someone said or performed something that promoted collaboration or group discussion, Ellen would point that out to the whole class. Near the end of their first community share after a group discussion on character map, Ellen pointed out to the whole class how Maria invited another student in her group to participate and emphasized that it was very important to invite everyone in the group to the discussion. She said:

Maria turned to Osman and said, "you need to say something." ... One of the nice things is that Maria said it very nicely to him. She didn't say "Share", she didn't even say, "You have to say something" [Ellen mimicked]. She was very nice in her tone. So it was not taken offensively. So Osman listened to her, and he made some sort of attempt to guess on her picture. It's very important as a group that you include everyone. ... This person said something to encourage others to join in. (Transcript, September 3, 1998)

In the volunteer fishbowl discussion on *Views from Saturday*, both Michael and Thahn tried to help another person clarify his/her ideas. After the discussion, Ellen pointed this out and she praised Michael and Thahn for helping create the opportunity for the other person to say something. She told the class:

Okay, I want to let you know a few things that I noticed. I really like and I think it's really good. I notice that Thahn, Michael, and how people, when someone asked a question and someone was not able to respond to it. ... When some people say what do you mean and some people were not able to respond, I noticed a few times I heard people say, "I think what she means is ..., or I think what he means is ..." It sounds like that you're clarifying that and there's an opportunity for the other person to say, "Yeah, yeah." or "No, that's not what I mean." So that's really good. (Transcript, December 3, 1998)

Second, when introducing tasks requiring cognitive skills that might be a challenge for students, Ellen would ask the more knowledgeable students to model

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first so that they demonstrated how to think, talk, or approach the questions for the class. Many prompt questions required students to provide specific evidence or support to what they said, but many students found this a challenge. To illustrate what she meant by providing support, Ellen asked the class a question on the book *The View from Saturday*, "Do you think Ms. Olinski thought it was Julian who wrote the word 'cripple' on the board? Why OR why not?" Then she called on several students that she knew would be able to give evidence from the text to support what they said. These students gave different evidence from the book to support their opinions (Field notes, December 9, 1998). In having the more knowledgeable students demonstrate their thinking and reasoning in the public space created the opportunities for the less knowledgeable others to observe and possibly to appropriate and internalize these skills gradually (Vygotsky, 1978).

Third, when new students joined the class, Ellen would invite the "veterans" to share with the new students what they knew about Book Club and how they should participate in Book Club. Several times during the year, newcomers from the DLP (developing language proficiency) classroom joined Ellen's class. These students were ESL learners and usually needed special help in reading and writing. When Munira joined the class on December 9, 1998, Ellen used the opportunity for the whole class to tell her about Book Club. First, Alicia told Munira, "What we do in Book Club is we read the book and we write down the prompts. Then the next day we'll discuss it and we'll have the whole class discussion." Then Ellen asked the class to explain to Munira why they did group

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and class discussions. Some students said that if people didn't understand the book, they could ask the people in their group, so it was a time for them to clarify confusion. However, Dang, who joined the class three weeks earlier, said that they could find out who were doing the work and who were not. Ellen repeated what Dang said to the class, and asked for their responses. Finally the class also discussed about the importance of being prepared, a problem still facing some students at this time. Ellen asked students what would happen if people were not prepared and several students responded saying that they would have "bad discussion", "boring discussion" or the discussion "gets ruined" – languages that their teacher used in similar situations. Ellen also seized the opportunity to suggest to the students that they should give each other pressure to get prepared, and she said, "If someone in my group who is not prepared, I'll tell them, 'You guys ruin our discussion'" (Transcript, December 9, 1998).

Aweiss and Hussain joined the class a week into the spring semester. To help them participate in Book Club, the class again reviewed what their Book Club was like. They also went through again the four lessons on *Tuck Everlasting* with Aweiss and Hussain and showed them the process of reading, writing to the prompts, and discussing the book.

By having the class share their communal practice with the novice participants, students had an opportunity to articulate what it was and to reflect on it as well. They considered not only what their practice was but also the objectives of the practice and the essential features to make it a success. Besides, by sharing

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with the new students, the class conversation had an authentic audience. Students' answers were addressed not just to Ellen, but mostly to the newcomers. At these times, instead of evaluating what the students said, Ellen would help elaborate it.

Fourth, Ellen also shared what the more knowledgeable students wrote as model responses with the whole class. Writing responses to the prompt questions was a big challenge for the students. In spite of the fact that Ellen had spent time explaining how to write responses to each prompt during the daily mini-lesson and in individual conversations with the students, and that students had listened to each other's responses in fishbowl discussions, many students still had difficulty addressing the prompt questions directly and providing specific support. To help these students, Ellen picked up one or two sample responses from students' writings on *Stone Fox* for each prompt category and showed them to the students (Field notes, October 15, 1998). She read the prompt category and questions first, showed the sample writing, and then pointed out the strengths of each writing. She emphasized the importance of understanding what the prompt questions were asking and addressing the questions directly. Many times the prompt consisted of multiple questions and Ellen would locate the appropriate part in the sample response to show the class how the sample responded to all aspects of the prompt. Sometimes, Ellen pointed out places that the authors could improve and she would say things like "One thing he or she could have done here is to explain why," or "They should also put capital letters or periods at where they belonged." While pointing out the strengths of each response, Ellen also said that those sample

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responses were not perfect. However, she told the students that she was not expecting perfect writing from them at this time either, but she expected to see their writing improving over time.

Showing students' own sample responses gave Ellen an opportunity to help students acquire the techniques in writing this type of genre. Reading and hearing these samples allowed students to see what a comparatively good response would look and sound like. Discussing about responses by their fellow students made it easy for the students to relate to and see possible things they could do to change or improve their own writing.

Telling/Modeling

In teaching, direct instruction is sometimes necessary (Fradd & Lee, 1999; Roehler & Duffy, 1986). Ellen gave much planned, direct instruction when she introduced Book Club at the beginning of the school year. Though she continued to do so in the second stage, modeling and scaffolding became major modes of her teaching. In this section, I cite some examples when Ellen was trying to tell and to model what language to use and how to participate in discussions. In the next section, I'll focus on evidence of her scaffolding.

One extreme example of Ellen's telling was captured by the camera and occurred when Thi's group had their first turn at the fishbowl discussion. Seeing the group sitting there not knowing what questions to ask, Ellen came and squatted beside Thi, and then whispered a question into Thi's ear. Thi looked back at Ellen and didn't seem to get what she wanted. Ellen spoke into Thi's ear again and there

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was no reaction. But a little while later, Thi asked Long, the person who shared his response, "What made you think that his secret is like a time bomb?" Though the question was a direct quote from the prompt, it was now asked by Thi. She also added a follow-up question of "Why?" When the next person in the group shared, Thi asked him the same question without the prompt from Ellen, "Why do you think his secret is like a time bomb?" (Field notes, September 28, 1998) Thi was from Vietnam and this was the second year of her stay in the United States, and the first year for her to be in a general education classroom. She was a quiet and shy girl, and she seldom spoke in class. By giving her the question and encouraging her to ask it, Ellen helped reduce her anxiety in speaking up and drew her into the group discussion.

In helping students enlarge their active sentence structures in expressing themselves, Ellen was also explicit. Sometimes in mini-lesson, Ellen would write down the exact sentence structure or the topic sentence(s) of the paragraph to show the students how to directly address the prompt questions. When the class worked on the prompt questions on interpretation and theme of the book for the first time, students collaboratively generated two themes that could be applied to the book, which Ellen recorded on the board. Then she summarized the discussion and explained to students how they could incorporate their class discussion about the themes into their written responses. In my field notes, I noticed, "Ellen almost told them [students] word by word what to say in their paragraph." However, though she gave students specific directions on how to write their responses, Ellen

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told the students that these two themes were not the only ones of this book (Field notes, September 17, 1998).

As the year progressed, some students learned to respond to other's sharing by saying "You said that ... Why?" and they used this response frequently. Ellen noticed it and in the volunteer fishbowl in early December, she pointed this out and asked the students not to begin their comment with "You said that ... ". She suggested they ask questions and use "When you talked about this and this, were you talking about Izzy or Allen?" She explained to them that instead of assuming what the others said, this question opened up for them to elaborate and clarify. At the same time, she reaffirmed that "it is okay you see things differently. The purpose of Book Club is to share how you would perceive and how others would or wouldn't." Ellen also told the students to avoid the "you did – I didn't" type of argument in their discussion (Field notes, December 3, 1998).

In many of the Book Club conversations, students challenged each other's ideas and learned to begin their questions with "Why do you think ..." or "What makes you think" These questions acted as a tool to help students ask "fat, juicy" questions and think about complex issues. As the year progressed, students used these questions all the time in their discussions. However effective these questions were, Ellen felt that students needed to develop more expressions at their disposal. Once when Tu, a vocal student, challenged the prediction by students in another group in community share and asked "What makes you think that Mrs. Cadaver will kill everyone?", Ellen seized the opportunity. She first

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reaffirmed Tu that it was a good question, but then modeled a different way of beginning the same question. She said "What evidence in the book that tells you ...?" She then asked Tu to repeat his question, beginning with "what evidence" instead of "what makes you" (Field notes, May 7, 1999). At another time, Ellen felt that students were using the phrases I like and I don't like too often. She talked with them about other possible ways of expressing the similar ideas in a mini-lesson (Conversation with Ellen, January 22, 1999). In giving students the exact language to use or questions to ask helped these second language learners enhance their language ability and build their confidence to participate in discussions.

One other example of modeling collaboratively by Ellen and her students occurred when she and the whole class modeled how to read a text, respond to it, and discuss about it to the two newcomers, Aweiss and Hussain. This happened at the beginning of the second semester when the class knew a lot about Book Club already. On January 14, 1999, after the class introduced to Aweiss and Hussain what Book Club was like and why it was like that, the class went through the four lessons again. They began by reading the book, *Tuck Everlasting*, and then practicing writing response to and talking about the prompt questions. Led by the teacher, the class read the story together section by section and responded to the prompt questions. They first picked up the expressions and words the author used to describe the month of August and the roads when it belonged to the cows and later to the people. Next, they identified three events that happened on this

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particular hot summer day and they generated a list of question around those three events, which, Ellen told them, they would find the answers as they read along the book. In their discussion, Ellen highlighted some reading strategies for students to use, such as following the story when others were reading, and re-reading when no pictures were formed in mind after first reading.

The review of the four lessons gave Aweiss and Hussain the opportunity to witness how the "veteran" Book Club members would read, think, and respond to books and at the same time, they also had the opportunity to actually join their more knowledgeable peers and practice these acts. For the rest of the class, they reviewed their work and came to a better understanding of the book as Ellen highlighted the key elements in the story when they went through the lessons for the second time.

Scaffolding/Challenging

Besides direct instruction, Ellen also engaged scaffolding and challenging techniques as well in facilitating students' learning. One of the big challenges for the students to participate in Book Club was to understand what the prompts asked and to write responses directly to the prompt questions. In early fishbowl discussions, Ellen would go to sit on the extra chair and ask students to elaborate on what they had said. Many of the questions she asked were questions directly taken from the prompts. In their third fishbowl discussion, Ellen asked Vinnie three questions and afterwards she explained to the students that they were the

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exact questions from the prompt. In doing so, Ellen tried to scaffold students into responding directly to the prompt questions.

- Ellen: What did Marty do directly against his parents' wishes? ... In this last chapter, what did he end up doing against his parents' wishes?
- Vinnie: He ended up keeping Shiloh.
- Ellen: More. Anyone else can join in.
- Thahn: He hid it on top of the hill. He collected cans to keep Shiloh.
- Kelsey: Because he would eat later and took some for Shiloh, like water.
- Vinnie: He said if I find him in the woods, I'll bring to him.
- Ellen: Why was it so important that, why did Marty feel so strongly that he had to keep the dog and not return it?
- Vinnie: Because he kick him and the stuff.
- Kelsey: Because Judd said, if he found the dog, he would break his leg.
- Vinnie: He said if he had no leg, he wouldn't be a dog to Judd.
- Ellen: If you were Marty, do you take the dog?
- Vinnie: Yeah. ... Because it wouldn't be nice to kick the dog.
- Ellen: Okay, I just have asked you the three prompts that were on the prompt sheet.
- Thahn: Because dog is living thing, you can't let a living thing die.
- Ellen: Okay, do you see how you need to respond directly to what the prompts ask you?
- (Transcript, September 24, 1998)

In the following excerpt, Ellen was trying to help Andy to articulate why he thought a touch-me-not appearance house was white. She pushed him to think further, asked him to think on his own feet, and also provided him with hint to guide his thinking. Also evident in this excerpt is the helpful role Andy' peers played in shaping his thinking.

- Ellen: What would a touch-me-not appearance house have in it? What does it look like? Andy?
- Andy: Maybe white, uh,
- Ellen: Maybe white?
- Andy: Yeah.
- Ellen: Why white?
- Andy: Because, because, ...
- Ellen: Why do you think white?

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Andy: Because if it's uh, it's black ...
 Student: (inaudible)
 Andy: Yeah, better ...
 Ellen: Use your own thinking; don't use his thinking. I think you were coming toward it, just keep going.
 Andy: Because, uhm, because, maybe, maybe
 Ellen: What's touch-me-not mean?
 Student: Don't touch me.
 Andy: OH, because it is white, if you touch it, it'll get dirty.
 (Transcript, January 14, 1999)

One effort Ellen constantly made was to help students think from different perspectives and develop their understanding of the differences between themselves and others. In the fishbowl discussion on *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, Michael said that he thought the way Ruffus said "you all" was funny. In the following excerpt, Ellen challenged this idea by showing the students that people had different accents and that people in the south might think them funny for the same reason they found the southern accent funny.

Ellen: What was so funny about him saying "Hello, you'all"?
 Michael: Because how he said it, that was funny.
 Ellen: I am confused as to what about it that was funny.
 Michael: (silence.)
 Freddy: (sitting at another table) His accent? (Ellen gestured him to come to join the group and he complied.)
 Michael: How he said it and his accent?
 Freddy: That's the country accent. Maybe that's the one that was funny?
 Ellen: If you went down, down south and you said, "Hello", and people would say "Hello", would that be funny? Because that would be an accent too. That'll be the northern accent. You know that?
 Michael: Yeah.
 (Transcript, October 12, 1998)

On another occasion, Ellen was trying to make the students see that the same thing might be viewed differently by people with different perspectives.

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When they were reading *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963*, one of the early prompt questions asked students if they thought what they had read was funny or not. Michael and a couple of others said that they thought it was funny when Kenny, an eight-year-old boy in the book, was beaten up. Ellen tried to help them see the event from multiple perspectives by first suggesting students put themselves in the position of Kenny, then sharing what she would feel if she were Kenny, and finally citing examples of how the students themselves behaved in class to show how people from different perspectives would see the same thing differently.

Michael: Every time it says Kenny gets beaten up.

Ellen: Is that funny?

Rico: The way he says it.

Ellen: Are you talking about the survival of the blizzard?

Michael: No. It's when the kids beat him up.

...

Ellen: ... Okay, ... This one is a good example if you think about what happened that could be funny. What happens if you, you were Kenny, how many people think it will still be as funny? If it were you who was getting thrown, and hurt, and wanting to cry? ... I'm going to be real honest with myself and looking at the whole story. ... I know if it were me, I wouldn't want that to happen to me and I don't think it would be funny. I think if you are being real honest with yourself, if you were that person, it probably won't be as funny. I know this because if that was the case, I would never hear anyone in this class saying, "Mrs. Fitch, so and so is doing something I don't like."

(Transcript, October 8, 1998)

But Michael argued that it was funny because Kenny started laughing when he got knocked down. The complex situation in which Kenny felt the need and pride to hang out with his brother's friend, "Bup-Head", who was a bully at the

school, and at the same time Kenny became a victim of Bup-Head's "tricks" might be beyond the comprehension by students of this age. However, Ellen pointed out to the students that "the survival of the blizzard part one is a very good example of how the situation is humorous if you look at it in one way and, but it's not so humorous in another way" (Transcript, October 8, 1998).

Another example of Ellen's scaffolding was when she tried to make students realize that whenever they asked a question in discussions, they should have a point to make. During the volunteer fishbowl in early December, Ellen warned the students not to pick at each other. However, Michael still commented that Tu said "Allan was too young to live in the Century Village" two times. It was not clear to Tu and others why Michael was saying this. Through interactions with Michael during the fishbowl discussion and the reflective talk afterward, Ellen tried to make her point to the class, i.e., "When you ask a question, you need to have a point to make" (Transcript, December 3, 1998). In the following excerpt, Ellen put Michael on the spot to think hard about why he made the comment.

Ellen: [To the whole class] I want you to keep in mind something I want to add, ... I like how some people are responding, but I'd like you to remember that your questions should be focused on something, good questions that you want to know more. Don't pick. Don't say, "you said this, you said this." Ask a question.

Michael: [Joining the fishbowl group. To Tu.] You said "Allan was too young to live in the Century Village" two times.

Ellen: Can you explain that, Michael?

Michael: He said that two times.

Ellen: Michael, why you are saying that? [Michael was silent.] What's the significance of that statement?

Michael: ... [inaudible]

[Tu looked at his writing and found that he did say that at two different places.]

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Ellen: Michael, what's your point? He said that two times. Is there something wrong about the Century Village? Explain your point.
Michael: Noah said that Allan was too young to live in the Century Village. That was what he thought.
Ellen: Who is he?
Michael: Noah, [Ellen: Okay.] and he wrote that two times.
Ellen: And?
Michael: I don't know.
(Transcript, December 3, 1998)

As shown in the excerpt, Michael was stating the fact, but he was not clear of the point he wanted to make or if he was, he didn't know how to articulate it. In the debriefing after the fishbowl, Ellen brought up this issue of making a point again after she praised the students in the fishbowl group for helping each other to clarify ideas. She tried to make Michael and other students see the reasons for asking questions.

Ellen: ... Michael, I'm not picking you in particular but for example, you went up to Tu and said, "Why did you say it twice?" Is that what your main point? What's your point when you're asking that? ... For example, you could go up and said, "Is it your point that he doesn't live in Century Village?" Or is it your point that Tu said twice instead of just once?
Michael: I didn't really understand it.
Ellen: Well, to do that you say "I'm confused about what you meant about him being too young to stay in the Century Village. So you're giving Tu the opportunity to clarify it. Then we know your point is that you're confused about it. Instead when you come up and say, "You said so and so." That really doesn't tell the person whom you're talking to what your point is.
(Transcript, December 3, 1998)

By pushing Michael to think hard about his reasons for making the comment, Ellen tried to make him understand that in a real discussion, people did not ask questions only for the sake of asking them, but rather we want to

communicate something and have a point to make. As this happened while the whole class was observing, the point was also taken by other students.

One other technique Ellen used to scaffold students' thinking about books was to end discussions by asking students some questions on issues raised during the discussions. She asked them to think further, "I want you to keep thinking about it as you read. You don't have to answer it now" (Field notes, December 9, 1998; Field notes, January 15, 1999).

Learning by Doing:

The Third Stage of the Journey

The third stage of the development of Book Club differed from the second stage in that now students played a more important role in leading discussion than they did in the second stage. The "no outlandish ideas" event in February marked the beginning of the third stage. In the second stage, Ellen focused her efforts continuously on getting students to participate in discussions, to share their thoughts about the books and to respond to each other's sharing. With the no-outlandish-ideas event, Ellen began to help students participate in Book Club conversations at a higher level: it was not enough for the students to speak up their thoughts; their thoughts needed to be reasonable and grounded in evidence from the text and their own experiences.

In the third stage, more opportunities were created for students to practice and develop their cognitive skills, social skills and linguistic skills needed to participate in a literary discourse. Students became more interested in the books

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and they learned to comprehend the books better; they learned to express their ideas and support their opinions. Students became more interested in learning about each other's thinking. They learned to share sometimes their different and tentative ideas. They learned to interact with each other, asking questions and listening to each other's opinions. They learned to uptake other's ideas and keep discussions focused and going. Students also developed a perspective towards differences and diversity. They began to see that people had different ideas and learned to see things from other people's perspectives. At the same time, students learned to function in multiple activity structures and cope with the authority and freedom of speech in a structured, democratic community.

In short, students in Ellen's room were practicing and developing their literary knowledge and skills necessary to participate in conversations about books in a literary discourse community. At the same time, through working with literary texts, these students were also forming personal world views and developing traits that would help guide them in a diverse, democratic society. In this section, I first examine how Ellen helped students realize that outlandish ideas would ruin their discussions and they should learn to engage in talks at a higher cognitive level. Then I discuss opportunities created at this stage for students to practice and develop their cognitive, social, and linguistic skills.

Learning to Engage in Book Discussions at a Higher Level: “Outlandish Ideas
Need to Stay Out of the Discussion!”

When the class engaged in book clubs and community share discussions at the beginning of the year, students didn't know how to respond to each other. Long pauses were common. As students became more comfortable in their community and learned the language and skills for participation, they were eager to share their thoughts on what they read, not even hesitating in expressing purely imaginative ideas. While they were reading the end of the book, *Tuck Everlasting*, students were fascinated by the magic water. When Mae Tuck, a key character, was put into jail, students were concerned that the secret of the magic water might be revealed because she was not able to die. In one discussion, the topic became how to help Mae escape from jail. One student suggested that she could pretend to be dead, and another said that she could ask to use the lady's room and then run away (February 2, 1999). In another discussion, students expressed that Winnie was made of water and the teacher thought the discussion was sidetracked (Field notes, February 5, 1999). Finally on February 9, the class read the epilogue of the book and knew Winnie, the main character, died at the age of 78. In the following excerpt, students were attempting to figure out why Winnie didn't drink the magic water.

Ellen: Okay, Group Two, what did you talk about?

Andy: We talked why didn't Winnie drink the water? JR said maybe because she hit her head something and then she couldn't remember the spring and anything that happened.

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Rico: What do you mean by something hitting her head? When the
lightening ...[inaudible]
Michael: Maybe something like she hit her head on the door something.
Ellen: I want to stop you at this point. What happened in the story that
made you think of that?
(Transcript, February 9, 1999)

Ellen wanted the students to stop at this point because there was no evidence in the book that suggested the students' configuration. However, the students were interested in talking about Winnie's death. In the next excerpt, a couple of students thought that Winnie was hit by a tree at the age of 78 when she went to look for the spring. At this point, Ellen not only pointed out that the idea was outlandish, she also tried to make the students see why it was outlandish. She asked students how realistic their idea was and told them to examine evidence from the book to support their ideas. She told the students that she was "all for coming up with ideas, but it needs to be well supported".

Andy: Alicia said that maybe the reason they came up with is that the tree fell and there was no spring. But she was 78 at that time.
Michael: Maybe it's been a long time since she met Jessie and she just remembered the spring and she's like, "oh, yeah."
Freddy: Wouldn't it be so weird? You can't remember it?
Ellen: Okay, realistically, would she, at 78 years old, go to look for the spring and have the tree fall down on her?
Students: No.
Ellen: That's another outlandish idea. Remember it's good to be thinking but you want to be using evidence from the text to support what you're saying. Okay, what would it be more likely to happen at 78 years old, the tree fell on you and you die or you die of old age?
Students: Old age.
Ellen: When was she supposed to drink the spring?
Students: 17.
Ellen: Okay, how many years apart from 78 to 17?
Students: ...

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Ellen: 60 years? So how realistic is this idea of a tree fall on her head? I don't like to sit and direct the discussion, but you need to keep in mind the outlandish ideas need to stay out of the discussion. Okay, ... Using evidence from the text, how realistic that a tree fell on her head? [Silence. Someone said "not very"]. I said it before: it ruins the discussion. I'm all for coming up with ideas but it needs to be well supported. It's not going to be outlandish. You all know what I mean by outlandish? Ridiculous. This is a fantasy, but there's nothing in the story that leads us to believe that a tree fell on her head. Why did the author tell, inform the tree is no longer there? What does it mean? The tree is not there, so the spring is not there.
(Transcript, February 9, 1999)

In discussions on these three days, Ellen tried to make students see that in discussions, claims needed to be supported by evidence from the books, even at the risk of shutting the students up. The teacher and the class had come a long way to reach this point. At the beginning of the year, Ellen tried different efforts to "turn on" students' conversation; now she was trying to "turn off" their talking. Ellen dared to challenge students' outlandish ideas at this time because the class had created a comfortable environment for participants to share ideas and explore meanings. "No-outlandish-ideas" would not stop students from sharing opinions with each other. Rather, it guided students to developing ways of talking and thinking at a higher level that accorded with the norms and values of the larger literary community, such as using logical reasoning and presenting well-supported arguments.

Book Club Discussions Created Learning Opportunities for Students

Engaging with books through reading, writing, and talking about them in a literary discourse community creates learning opportunities for students to develop

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their literacy, social, and linguistic skills. While reading and talking about the literary texts, students go through a vicarious and "aesthetic" experience in a "second world" (Benton 1985; Rosenblatt 1978). Students also have opportunities to reflect on their own experiences while trying to make sense of the second world and their real world. In addition, the process of learning to participate in the discourse of a literary community is also a process for students to learn to develop their literacy, social, and language skills that are needed to participate in the cultural practices of a diverse and democratic society. In this section, I first describe the activity structure that allows time and space for students to engage in talks among themselves. Then, I examine the opportunities created for students to construct knowledge and develop skills collaboratively.

Activity Structure

Like the end of the second stage, the third stage continued to see students enjoy a reasonable amount of time to share their understanding and responses to the books in small group and in whole class discussions. Instead of the extended planned direct instruction witnessed a lot in the first stage, the planned instruction in the third stage was brief. Table 11 and Table 12 show the different amounts of time the class spent on various Book Club activities.

Table 11

Day by Day Count of the Time Spent on Book Club Activities in the Third Stage

Date	Student-Centered Talk	Time (min.)	Teacher Talk/ Teacher-Led Talk	Time (min.)	Student Reading/ Writing	Time (min.)	Total Time (min.)
5-3	Book clubs	23	Transition and	5	Reading	45	96
	Community share	13	checking to see if students were prepared	10	and writing		
			Mini-lesson on "me and the book"				
5-5	Book clubs	21	Transition and	5	Reading	45	92
	Community share	10	checking to see if students were prepared	11	and writing		
			Mini-lesson on "prediction"				
5-7	Book clubs	17	Transition and	2	Reading	48	91
	Community share	16	checking to see if students were prepared	8	and writing		
			Mini-lesson on "personal response"				
5-10	Book clubs	20	Transition and	3	Reading	N/A	N/A
	Community share	17	checking to see if students were prepared		and writing		
			Mini-lesson	N/A			

Note. Based on field notes on May 3, 5, 7, and 10, 1999.

Table 12

Average Time Per Day Spent on Book Club Activities in the Third Stage

Student-Centered Talk (min.)		Teacher Talk/ Teacher-Led Talk (min.)		Student Reading and Writing (min.)		Total Time (min.)	
Total 4 days	Average Per Day	Total 3 days	Average Per Day	Total 3 days	Average Per Day	Total 3 days	Average Per Day
137	34	41	14	138	46	279	93

Note. Based on field notes on May 3, 5, 7, and 10, 1999.

Opportunities for the Development of Literacy Skills

Opportunities for literacy development derive from the nature of the Book Club tasks. Students were required to use evidence from the books and their own experiences to support their ideas in both their written responses and their discussions. They were also expected to ask each other fat, juicy questions. Participating in Book Club activities, students began to (a) make intertextual and personal connections; (b) develop an aesthetic appreciation of literary texts; (c) approach a situation or problem from multiple perspectives; and (d) formulate their own world-view.

Making connections.

Reading and discussing texts in Book Club gave students the opportunity to learn to make connections between what they read in the book and what they experienced in their world. Sometimes the connection was made because the prompt questions required the students to do so; some other times, students made the connections because they wanted to use the examples to support their opinions. In the discussion of *Walk Two Moons* on May 7, Thahn thought Mrs. Cadaver killed people. When challenged, he asked, "Why did the author say she came back late [if she didn't kill people]?" Andy used his own uncle and aunt as an example to explain to Thahn that doctors and nurses usually worked late hours, and since Mrs. Cadaver was a nurse, it was not abnormal for her to come home late (Field notes, May 7, 1999).

Sometimes, the prompt questions asked the students to make the connection. On May 5, students were given the opportunity to share and chat about their own schooling experiences. In their book clubs, they were asked to compare Mr. Birkway, a teacher in *Walk Two Moons*, with their previous teachers. In this particular group, Thi went to school in Vietnam for three years and Andy went to kindergarten and third grade in Ecuador. Though the other two members of the group, Tu and Vong, both went to school in the United States, Tu was Vietnamese and Vong was Hmong. In their discussion, Thi shared with the group that she had a teacher in Vietnam just like Mr. Birkway. She described both teachers using the same language such as "excellent" and they both patted students on the back. Yet, her teacher in Vietnam would whip students if they didn't do their homework. She told the group that she didn't like that teacher, nor teachers like him.

The following conversation occurred after Thi finished sharing. Two features marked the conversation. First, the conversation was focused around schooling experience and whipping in specific. More information was presented. Andy shared the story his third grade teacher in Ecuador told him, saying that "when you did a very bad job and you didn't bring homework, they whip you" with "this cable with open wires". Thi added that in Vietnam if students didn't know how to do math problems, the teacher would whip them. Tu described what it was like when the teacher whipped a student. Thi also compared teachers in Vietnam and in the United States: "... in here, if the teacher whip the students they

can't teach no more; but in Vietnam, it's different." Second, the atmosphere was relaxed. Students had a genuine interest in each other and they asked Thi and Andy if they got whipped, "Did the teacher whip you?" They also related what they hear to themselves and to others in their class. For example, Tu commented that "It's a good thing that I didn't went [sic] to school in Vietnam." Andy suggested that one student in their class might be whipped for she seldom finished her homework.

- Tu: Did you say that the Vietnamese teachers, they whip you?
Andy: Did the teacher whip you?
Thi: Yeah.
Tu: [laying his palms on the table] Yeah, they whip you, they use a stick and whip on your hands.
Thi: Yeah, the principal, it's like, in here, if the teacher whip the students they can't teach no more but in Vietnam, it's different.
Andy: I know, my mom, in south America, my teacher, you know I went for one year to Ecuador in third grade, because my mom want me to learn more Spanish. My teacher in recess, she told all of us when she was little, it was bad because whenever, they had this cable with open wires, when you did a very bad job and you didn't bring homework, they whip you with that and it hurts. You got to carry something like this [gesture having a bag on back] and they whip you like this [gesture].
Tu: Did they whip YOU?
Andy: No, my teacher.
Tu: It's a good thing that I didn't went to school in Vietnam.
Andy: Can you imagine they had Jessey and they had Book Club, Jessey, she would be just like, oh, man! [They all giggled a little]
Thi: See, if you go in front of the class and if you do some math and you do wrong, he told you to do it again and if you get it wrong again and he would whip you. He told you to lie on the table.
Vong: [unbelievably, his eyes wide open] If you do it wrong, they whip you?
Thi: mm.
(Transcript, May 5, 1999)

Comparing the teacher in the book and the teachers students had created opportunities for these students with diverse backgrounds to bring in their rich prior cultural knowledge while constructing new knowledge. The opportunity also enabled students to practice interactive skills in conversations. They shared personal information, asked each other for clarification, and offered comments and extension of other's story. At the same time, learning about the differences in teaching practices may make students appreciate more what they had currently.

Developing an aesthetic appreciation of books.

As students in this class developed a relationship of mutual respect, members of the group began to feel comfortable sharing ideas, and conversations about books became entertaining to students as well. As we have already read about it, when Thi shared that teachers in Vietnam would whip students if they didn't do their homework on time, Andy asked his group to imagine what could happen to Jessey, a student in their class who seldom finished her homework on time. He commented, "Can you imagine they had Jessey and they had Book Club? Jessey, uh, she would be just like, oh, man!" (Transcript, May 5, 1999)

Sometimes the relaxed atmosphere in group discussions led to more appreciation of the book they read. They had an audience who were interested in each other's ideas, they felt free to express whatever their imagination took them, and they enjoyed each other's conversation about books as well. On June 2, students were critiquing *Walk Two Moons* in book clubs. When My Linh finished sharing her written response, Tu asked My Linh what she thought the author could

do to improve Sal, the main character. In the following excerpt, the idea of turning the main female character into a male character amused the group and the laughter showed that they were having fun.

- Tu: What do you think the author can do to improve Sal?
My Linh: [Thoughtfully] They can write more about what is going to happen to Sal's father and Margaret.
Tu: What about turning her to a boy?" [All laughed.] That'll be better.
Hussain: No, because ...
Thi: I don't think that's necessary,
Andy: I know, because only girls' stories are sad. Boys' stories are "lived happily ever after."
Tu: That's right, that's right.
(Transcript, June 2, 1999)

Developing multiple perspectives.

In book discussions, students learned to provide support from the chapters they read and from their own experiences to warrant whatever claims they made. For example, during the community share on January 14, the class discussed what a house that had a touch-me-not appearance looked like. Two opposite interpretations of the color of the house were presented. Quite a few students suggested that it was white because dirt would show out easily on white. A couple of others thought the house was black and shining. Finally, Ellen summarized that they could imagine it to be however they wanted as long as they could support their interpretations.

- Ellen: What would a touch-me-not appearance house have in it? What does it look like? Andy?
.....
Andy: OH, because it is white, if you touch it, it'll get dirty.

Ellen: YEAH, that's what I am thinking. That might be right or there might be something else. Anyone else has any ideas of what, what this touch-me-not house might look like?

Kelsey: It might be nice and shining and they don't want to get anybody's finger prints on it.

Ellen: Okay, no finger prints on it. Very, very what?

Several students: Clean.

Ellen: Clean and, Rico?

Rico: Tidy.

Ellen: They're tidy and orderly. Anyone else ... Aweiss?

Aweiss: If it is tidy, if you touch it, it won't shine.

Ellen: It won't shine anymore. Okay, So this house...

Aweiss: If you touch it, it won't, you won't see, it won't be white.

Ellen: Okay. (to Hussain) Yes?

Hussain: If you have mud in you hand and you touch the house, it ...

Ellen: But the house says touch me not. Don't touch me, because I'm very clean, I don't want your dirty prints on. Don't come around me. Touch me not, touch me not, touch me not. (to Rico) Yes?

Rico: It might be black. Because it's black and shining and the appearance ... (inaudible)

Ellen: Maybe, That's possible. My picture in my head was white. Your picture in your head could be black. Does the author tell us what color the house was?

Several students: No.

Ellen: No, so you can imagine it how you want to, but you need to support it. Okay? (to Andy) yes.

Andy: I don't think the owner likes it black, because, because if someone sees it, he might think uh, they come to a house black, becuz, uh, they have a lot of dirt, and they touch the house uh, it won't show.

(Transcript, January 14, 1999)

Engaging with literary texts, students also learned to take different personal, cultural, and historical perspectives. The book, *View from Saturday* told the story from the perspectives of five different people. Reading and talking about especially this book helped students develop different perspectives. Also many prompt questions required students to take a different character's point of view. The following are two brief examples that demonstrate students' ability to begin

viewing things in more complex ways. On February 2, the class discussed what Mae Tuck could do to escape from prison and some suggested that she could pretended to be dead and would be taken to the hospital. Thi questioned if they, in the early 1800's, had hospitals like we have today. This historical perspective was picked up again in their discussion on February 5 when Rico asked if they had the same court system at that time as we have today.

Rico: I mean to get her out, was it like that you can pay a fine so you can bail him out? Was it like that way back in the 1800s? To bail him out? Are you sure? I don't think so.

Freddy: Why not?

...

Freddy: Why couldn't they bail him out?

Rico: I don't know maybe it wasn't like that, say maybe it was not like ours to pay to bail him out.

(Transcript, February 5, 1999)

Developing a personal world view.

The book clubs and the community share provided students opportunities to interact with the teacher and each other, to share their tentative understanding of the book, to explore the connections between the text they read and their real life, and to formulate their own world view. These were all attributes that would help students participate in a diverse, democratic society. In their conversations, complicated issues were brought up either by the prompts or by the students themselves. Discussions of these issues helped students explore and develop their own world-views and value systems. Some of these complex issues included the meanings of life, the meanings of friendship, the meanings of stealing, the meanings of law and responsibility, personal views of what was right and what

was wrong, etc. Some of the conversations were deep, and some were not.

However, they all forced the students to think about real issues in life and this helped students think independently and make their judgments and choices based on reasons.

During one discussion on the book *Walk Two Moons*, Andy said that he thought Grandma and Grandpa were crazy because they stole a tire from a Senator's car in Washington. Tu challenged his assumption and said they were only borrowing. In the following conversation, though they didn't come to agreement on whether Grandma and Grandpa were "stealing" or "borrowing", two different perspectives were presented in public. Besides, students were also trying to provide support for their opinions.

Tu: How are they crazy?
Andy: Of course they are crazy, because only crazy persons are going to go to rob tires from a [Senator].
Tu: They didn't rob it.
Andy: Yes they did. They stole it.
Tu: They borrowed it to them.
Andy: SO, they stole them.
Vong: That's the kind of borrowing.
Andy: So I go and steal someone's video games and I'm just borrowing them?!
Tu: To them they are borrowing and to other people they are stealing.
(Transcript, May 3, 1999)

During the community share on May 10, the class was discussing the prompt question: What do you think the message "Don't judge a person until you walk two moons in his moccasins" means? In the following excerpt, both Tu and Andy shared examples of how their moms judged people especially teenagers by

their appearances. While Tu disagreed with what his mom said and Andy partially agreed, Ia stated that she thought their moms were right.

Tu: Sometimes I heard some sayings that I don't agree.

Ellen: Say it louder, I don't think anyone here could hear you, Tu.

....

Tu: Some sayings I think are impossible or untrue. Like my mom says that when you comb your hair like in the middle, like on the two sides [gesturing], she said if you comb your hair like that, you would be bad. She said that people who do that are bad.

Andy: Oh yeah, my mother says, you know how, that teenage boys dye their hair? She says that, my mom says, whenever she sees one of the people like that, (gesturing hair brushed towards back), they dye their hair, she thinks they are bad kids. Like some have tattoos in their arm, she thinks they are bad. [Class laugh]

Ia: I think your mom's right. Because no ordinary people comb their hair in the middle and dye their hair.

[Some students tried to quiet the noise down, for Ia always spoke in a soft voice.]

Ellen: Ia, what did you say? Did you ask a question? Yes? Can you repeat it a little bit louder?

Ia: I think your moms is right. Because most of the people, like in middle school, some people like comb their hair in the middle of their head, and they dye their hair like in different kinds color, they need to do like other people.

Tu: It depends. My mom is judging someone from his appearance.

Andy: It just gives you a bad impression. Like someone dyes his hair way yellow it gives you a bad impression

Ia: Most people dye their hair yellow the most.

Tu: I have a friend who is bigger than me, he is in high school or something, he dyes his hair way yellow and combed it in the middle and he's still good.

Andy: It gives you a bad impression.

Rico: Andy, you know your mom says about people who have tattoo. Not necessarily. My mom has a tattoo and she is not a bad woman.

Andy: You know my friend. He dyes his hair a little bit, just a little bit, because it matches his hair and it looks good, but my mom, it looks , really good, but my mom says it's still bad to dye your hair. I go like, "it's nice".

(Transcript, May 10, 1999)

In this discussion, three views were presented. One was that we should not judge people from their appearance; another was that some appearance gave other people a bad impression; and the other thought that an appearance different from that of most people was bad. Both Tu and Rico employed specific examples to support their point of view. Though no particular conclusion was reached, the process of discussing these thorny issues was more important in helping students develop their own thinking. The earlier discussion between Tu and Andy on whether the act of taking the tires was borrowing or stealing was another example. Still another example was the conversation they had over *Walk Two Moons*. In the book, Sal's mother left home and died in a traffic accident. Andy and Thi wondered why she went away by herself.

- Andy: Vong, it's not about your paper, but why do you think Sal's mom went away?
Tu: How about she went for a vacation?
Thi: Why do you think that she left her children and go on a vacation?
Andy: I think she wanted to visit relatives. [He later elaborated on what relative, a cousin, in Idaho.]
Tu: ... By herself.
Thi: I don't know. Maybe not.
(Field notes, June 2, 1999)

The students appeared to be comfortable leaving complex issues at a standstill. This was no surprise, as Ellen quite often asked the students to think further about issues raised during the discussions without coming up with a definite answer: "I want you to keep thinking about it. You don't have to answer it now". (Field notes, December 9, 1998 & January 15, 1999).

Opportunities for the Development of Social Skills

Book Club activities provide students lots of opportunities to interact with each other. With the guidance of the teacher, students gradually developed their social skills to engage in book discussions. They learned to monitor the group discussions, challenging each other's thinking and sharing different and sometimes only tentative ideas.

Monitoring group discussions.

Small group and class discussions are important components of Book Club. During those discussions, students learned how to engage in conversations with their peers over literary texts. They learned to talk to each other and listen to each other; they learned to monitor and maintain their conversations, including bidding for the floor, inviting others to talk, asking for clarification, and requesting others to speak louder; they learned to express and accept different opinions; they learned to challenge each other's ideas as well.

In their small group discussions, students also learned to direct their own conversations. They learned to say "I can't hear you. Could you speak louder please?"; "You should listen to him."; "Do you have any questions for him?"; "Could you do it slowly so we can answer your questions?" (Transcript, November 2, 1998); "Can I ask a question?" (Transcript, April 15, 1999); "... I know what you mean, but I want you to be specific ..." (Transcript, December 3, 1998). Through engaging in discussions, students learned to monitor their own conversations.

Challenging each other and sharing different and tentative ideas.

In the discussions, students learned to ask and think about fat, juicy questions. During book clubs, students constantly asked each other questions like "Why do you think ...?"; or "What made you think...?"; or "Can you give an example?" These question structures gave students a tool to frame their thinking. Hussain came to this class from the DLP class (developing language proficiency) in January. On June 2, Hussain shared his response to *Walk Two Moons* and said that he felt the ending was sad, because Sal's mother and grandmother all died. He also compared his prediction of the story with the ending of the book, saying that he thought that Sal would be crashing in the end. Andy asked him, "Why do you think that? Could you support that?" Hearing Hussain say "no", Tu asked, "Why do you say that if you can't support that?" Being a novice of the Book Club practices, Hussain answered, "I don't know. I just liked it."

In discussions, students also learned to explore how to go about challenging other people's views and expressing different opinions. In the following two occasions, Thi was trying to find a way to challenge what other group members were saying. In one of their book clubs over the book *Tuck Everlasting*, the group had a very heated conversation over whether Winnie would drink the magic water or not. Later the conversation turned to how Winnie could tell her family about the magic water. Thi believed that Winnie would not tell the secret. Period. At an earlier point, she reminded the group, "But that's the secret." However, nobody paid any attention to her remark and they continued to discuss how Winnie might

share about the water with her family so that they would believe her. Finally, instead of saying that she thought Winnie would not tell her family about the water, she asked her group members, "But do you think that Winnie will break the secret or what?" A couple of others said "no". Then Thi asked again, "Then how can the family know about the water?" (Transcript, February 4, 1999).

On another occasion, Thi asked the people in her group to explore deeper meanings behind the literal language. In the book *Walk Two Moons*, Grandma constantly mispronounced Sal's friend's name, Phoebe. Thi wondered if it was done on purpose.

Thi: What do you think of Grandma when she says /'pi:bi:/? What do you think of her?

Vong: I think [being cut short].

Tu: I think she is crazy. She doesn't listen, maybe.

Thi: Do you think she try to be humorous sometimes?

Tu/Andy: NO.

Andy: (acting) Just like that, "Peebee, what happened to Peebee?"

Tu: I think it's funny. They are goofy, they're goofy, man.

(Transcript, May 3, 1999)

Opportunities for the Development of Language Skills

Most of Ellen's students were second language learners, who spoke a home language other than English. Thus participating in the reading, writing and discussion of literary texts with an authentic audience provided the students with the opportunities to develop their linguistic skills in meaningful contexts. Students acquired the skills to express their ideas in a way that other people could understand them. They learned to use appropriate language to elicit other people's ideas, to provide uptake to their thinking, and to challenge them. Besides, the

Book Club vocabulary work asked students to figure out the meaning of words within context. Students could also ask questions on word meanings in their discussion groups. Thi once asked "What does 'up against' mean?" (Transcript, September 11, 1998). In the following conversation, Andy, Thahn, and Michael explained the meaning of the word "divorce" upon Thi's request. They told her: "you marry someone" first; when you don't want to be married and "you sign paper" to "get divorced" and become only "friends"; in other words, "you dump them" (Transcript, December 3, 1998). It is also an example of how group members listened to each other, built on each other's ideas, and collaboratively helped one group member understand the meaning of a word.

Thi: What does divorce mean?
Andy: When you marry someone and you want to marry
Thahn: And then you don't want to marry them and you sign paper
Andy: Then you get divorced and you can only be friends.
Thahn: You divorce.
Michael: You dump them. [laughter and smiles from all group members]
(Transcript, December 3, 1998)

As students engaged in writing responses to the prompts and talking in their discussions, they learned to use more appropriate language to speak to an audience. Some language usage, which was not heard in the first stage, began to appear regularly in their discussions as the year progressed. Students started to quote from the book to support their views, such as "Ethan told us in the book that ..." (Field notes, December 3, 1998). They learned to acknowledge a classmate's views while giving their own, such as "Like Alicia said that ...". They also presented different points of views when reporting group discussions during

community share time, such as "Some of us think that ... and some of us don't" (Field notes, February 5, 1999).

What is Learned Beyond Talk in Book Club Discussions

The school year witnessed the changes in students' participation patterns in Book Club discussions as they gradually acquired the literary discourse and formed a literary community in the classroom. Are these changes related to students' learning in reading and writing? Evidence from the data shows that students also increased their vocabulary and they became more metacognitively strategic in reading. Students also improved their writing skills, as their written responses became longer and demonstrated more analytical and reflective thinking towards the end of the year.

In this section, I analyze students' literacy development as demonstrated in their sight word gains measured by Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) (Slosson, 1963), their increased awareness of meta-comprehension strategies in reading shown by the Metacomprehension Strategies Index (MSI) (Schmitt, 1990), and their Book Club written responses over the year – focusing on Thi's writing samples. Finally, I discuss briefly students' self-appraisals on the changes in their reading and writing over the year.

Slosson Oral Reading Test

At the beginning and the end of the school year, students were tested on the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT). SORT is a test of word recognition. The word list consists of 10 groups of twenty words each, which correspond to grades primer

through high school. A conversion table provides an estimated grade reading level based on the number of words a student can recognize. According to Erickson, Silberg, Rutter, Simonoff, Meyer, and Eaves (1996), “the SORT raw scores have been reported to have high concurrent validity (correlations of .88 or greater) with other widely used reading tests (e.g. Brown, 1976; Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; Nicholson, 1988, cited by Slosson Educational Publications, Inc., in Slosson, 1963)” (p. 428). Data collected for each student consist a raw score of words he/she read correctly and a calculated equivalent grade level.

Scores from 19 students in Ellen’s class were complete and used for analysis. As shown in Table 13, their average pre-test raw score is 86.4 and their average post-test raw score is 123.5. The gain in raw score is 37.2 words, which is equivalent to 1.8 years of growth. The average increase for the students from the beginning to the end of the year is 43%. Almost 95% of the students gain more than one year of growth in reading vocabulary. The one student who fails to achieve one year’s gain achieves an increase of 36.7% between her pre- and post-tests.

Table 13

Students' Gains from Pre to Post SORT Test Scores (N = 19)

	Pre-SORT Test			Post-SORT Test		Gains		Increase
Name	Grade Level	Raw Score*	Reading Grade Level	Raw Score*	Reading Grade Level	Raw Score*	Reading Grade Level	Percent %
Thi	5	80	4	143	7.1	63	3.1	78.8%
Rico	4	90	4.5	152	7.6	62	3.1	68.9%
Osman	5	82	4.1	142	7.1	60	3	73.2%
Kelsey	4	77	3.8	129	6.4	52	2.6	67.5%
Adeline	4	50	2.5	98	4.9	48	2.4	96.0%
Rosie	4	90	4.5	133	6.6	43	2.1	47.8%
Vinnie	4	84	4.2	123	6.1	39	1.9	46.4%
Thahn	4	61	3	99	4.9	38	1.9	62.3%
Vong	5	64	3.2	100	5	36	1.8	56.3%
Xa	5	69	3.4	105	5.2	36	1.8	52.2%
Jessey	4	125	6.2	157	7.8	32	1.6	25.6%
My Linh	5	50	2.5	79	3.8	29	1.3	58.0%
Shele	5	45	2.2	72	3.6	27	1.4	60.0%
Maria	4	138	6.9	165	8.2	27	1.3	19.6%
Alicia	4	136	6.8	162	8.1	26	1.3	19.1%
Tu	4	149	7.4	174	8.7	25	1.3	16.8%
Michael	4	139	6.9	162	8.1	23	1.2	16.5%
JR	5	63	3.1	85	4.2	22	1.1	34.9%
Ia	4	49	2.4	67	3.3	18	0.9	36.7%
Total		1641	81.6	2347	116.7	706	35.1	
Average		86.4	4.3	123.5	6.1	37.2	1.8	43.0%

*Raw score = the count of actual words students could recognize.

Meta-comprehension Strategy Index (MSI)

At the beginning and the end of the year, the Meta-comprehension Strategy Index (MSI) (Schmitt, 1990) was given to students to measure their awareness of the strategic reading process. The questionnaire has 25-items with each consisting 4 multiple choices, one of which indicates metacomprehension strategy awareness. The questions ask students to choose what they believe to be a good thing to do to help them understand a story better *before*, *during*, and *after* they read it.

According to Schmitt (1990), the MSI assesses students' awareness of a variety of meta-comprehension behaviors that fit within six broad categories: (a) predicting and verifying, (b) previewing, (c) purpose setting, (d) self questioning, (e) drawing from background knowledge, and (f) summarizing and applying fix-strategies.

The MSI has been shown to be a reliable measure of metacomprehension strategy awareness (Schmitt, 1990). Lonberger (1998) reported an MSI internal consistency value of .87 using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. Schmitt (1988) compared the MSI with The Index of Reading Awareness (IRA) (Paris, Cross, & Lipson; 1984; Paris & Jacobs, 1984). A statistically significant correlation was found between the MSI and the IRA ($r = .48$, $p < .001$), suggesting both instruments are measuring similar constructs. Schmitt (1988) also compared the relationship between the performance on the MSI and other tasks (error detection, cloze) commonly used to measure students' metacomprehension ability and found statistically significant correlations between them.

Throughout the year, Ellen never engaged any formal instruction on these strategies, except for a couple of times at the beginning of the year when she was introducing a new book, she asked students what she should do before she began reading it. She then modeled examining the book covers and predicting the story. The majority of students scored higher in the post-test than in the pre-test (see Table 14).

Table 14

The Differences Between Students' Pre and Post Scores in MSI (N =20)

Name	Pre score*	Post score*	Differences: (post score – pre score)
Osman	7	2	-5
Jessey	7	5	-2
Vinnie	11	11	0
JR	9	10	1
Kelsey	15	17	2
Shele	8	10	2
Alicia	10	13	3
Vong	7	11	4
Maria	6	11	5
Rosie	6	11	5
My Linh	11	17	6
Tu	17	23	6
Ia	6	12	6
Adeline	7	15	8
Michael	8	18	10
Xa Yang	4	14	10
Thi	10	21	11
Rico	3	15	12
Thahn	8	20	12
Andy	2	16	14

* Scores = number of correct answer out of a total of 25 questions.

Table 14 shows that the difference between individual student's total pre- and post-scores of MSI varies a lot. Two students score lower (2 and 5 points each) in their post survey than in their pre-survey. One student made no change. The rest improved from 1 to 14 points respectively. A t-test has been conducted at the confidence interval of .05 and the result shows that the differences between the pre- and the post-scores (see Table 15) are statistically significant, suggesting that students became more aware of and used more of these reading comprehension strategies in their reading at the end of the year as compared with the beginning of

the year. Further analysis of the paired mean differences of the six categories shows that after one full year of participating in Book Club, students improve their strategy use especially in self questioning, drawing from background knowledge, summarizing and applying fix-strategies, and predicting and verifying (see Table 15).

Table 15

Analysis of Paired Mean Differences for Pre and Post Scores in MSI (N = 20)

	Mean Differences	Standard Error
Pair 1	1.45**	.4838
Predicting and Verifying (7 questions)		
Pair 2	.40*	.1835
Previewing (2 questions)		
Pair 3	.60*	.2847
Purpose Setting (3 questions)		
Pair 4	1.05**	.2348
Self Questioning (3 questions)		
Pair 5	1.15**	.3574
Drawing from Background Knowledge (6 questions)		
Pair 6	.85**	.2741
Summarizing and Applying Fix-Strategies (4 questions)		
Total (25 questions)	5.50**	1.1251

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Book Club Written Responses

As an integrated approach to literacy instruction, Book Club aims to create opportunities for students to engage in reading, writing, and talking about quality children's literature. In Ellen's class, the writing component is in the form of responses to books. Each book unit consists of a number of lessons, such as *Character Map*, *Me and the Book*, and *Themes*, and for each lesson, Ellen

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generates a group of questions, known to students as the writing prompts. Certain prompts consist of two optional questions and students can pick one to write about. Occasionally there is a free choice prompt when students decide what to write. Each book unit consists an average of 13.6 prompts, the shortest containing 8 prompts and the longest 19 prompts. Over the school year, students wrote responses to a total of 122 prompts for the 9 book units (see Table 16).

Table 16

Book Club Units and Number of Prompts

Book Unit	Number of Prompts
<i>Stone Fox</i>	9
<i>Shiloh</i>	8
<i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963</i>	13
<i>Number the Stars</i>	15
<i>View from Saturday</i>	14
<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>	19
<i>Mildred Taylor Unit</i>	12
<i>Yolonda's Genius</i>	13
<i>Walk Two Moons</i>	19
Total prompts	122
Average prompts per book unit	13.6

Each time students read a chapter(s) for Book Club, they responded to a prompt question(s). They then share their written responses in small group discussions the next day. At the beginning of the year, students were given the Scoring Rubric for evaluating the written responses. To earn a 4 point, the writing should (1) focus on designated topic, (2) be written for a “know-nothing” audience, (3) provide at least three or more well-thought ideas from the text, real life, or other novels to support writing, and (4) be titled and dated. At the end of

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each book unit, students were given the End-of-Book Self-Assessment sheet and they evaluated the book and their own work according to nine questions (see Appendix D). They also chose a best entry for each book and explained its strengths. After the teacher graded their written responses (see Appendix E), students filled a Reaction and Goal-Setting form in response to the teacher's evaluation (see Appendix F).

A complete collection of the written responses to seven book units (out of nine) was collected for the six focus students. For the first book unit on *Stone Fox*, only their best entries were collected. The intern teacher taught the book unit *Yolonda's Genius*, the written data of which were not collected. In this section, I analyze the two sample responses by Thi, one of the six focus students. I first describe Thi briefly, then quote her "ME Poem", which she wrote in late March, 1999, and finally analyze her two writing samples. One was written for the first book unit in the beginning of the year and the other was for the last book unit.

Thi was a fifth grader. She came to the United States from Vietnam in 1997 and she had been in the United States for only one year when the current study began. The year before, she was in the DLP classroom because she needed intensive English language instruction. At the beginning of the year, she was quiet and seldom spoke either in her group or in class. She also appeared constantly confused and didn't seem to know what she was expected to do. At the end-of-year interview, she commented that she initially hated Book Club because she "didn't get it" (interview of Thi, June 8, 1999). However, she was a diligent

student and eager to learn. The teacher also tried to accommodate her needs. In one of the fish-bowl discussions, Ellen squatted beside her, told her the question, and urged her to ask(say) the question to another student in her group. Towards the end of the year, Thi was active in small group discussions and spoke up occasionally during community share. Thi was an active listener. She shared at the end-of-year interview that she liked community share and enjoyed listening to different ideas and opinions from her classmates. Thi described herself in her “ME Poem”, which depicts a unique and at the same time common adolescent girl. She loves nature, cares for her family and friends, feels sad to have moved away from her country, values education and cooperation with others, longs for happiness, looks forward to seeing another part of the world and her future, and feels scared of bad things. Above all, she values and longs to see a world where “everyone respect to each other”. This is demonstrated by her use of the word *respect* four times in this 84-word poem. She also mentions that she “fears fighting” and feels “frustrated when someone bothers me”. The following is Thi’s “ME Poem”.

“Thi
Truthful, cheerful and respect.
Daughter of Duc and Nao.
Lover of nature, happiness, family and friendship.
Who feels sad to move away from my country, scared to go home by
myself at midnight, frustrated when someone bothers me.
Who needs respect, education and a happy life.
Who gives respect, help and cooperation to others.
Who fears fighting, when someone dies and something bad happening.
Who would like to see another part of the world, my future and everyone
respect to each other.
Nguyen.”

Quiet, introverted, and eager to learn, Thi began the year of Book Club with limited English proficiency. From all the 9 responses in *Stone Fox*, Thi chose “Prediction” as her best entry. She explained: “I think predition [sic] is the best because is specaily [sic] and is short and is important thing in the book. And is easy to answer” (Reading logs for *Stone Fox*). Here are the prompt questions and her response:

The prompt:

Lesson 5: Read chapters 5-6: Prediction What is little Willy up against? Do you think he has a chance at winning the race, or is he just wasting his money? Support your response. (from Prompt Sheet for *Stone Fox*)

Thi’s response (see Appendix C):

Lesson 5 Predition Thi N. 9/11/98

Little Willy is up against winning the race so willy can make money to help his grandfather And I think Willy has a great chance of winning the race and Willy is not going to waste his money. I know that because Willy looks really smarts and his face tell me that Willy is going to win. That is my Predition for chapter 6-7...

This response contains 64 words. Each sentence answers directly to one of the prompt questions. Thi provides two supports to her judgment that Little Willy has a great chance of winning the race and he is not going to waste his money. Thi also adds one reason why Little Willy decides to compete in the race and has a concluding sentence at the end. However, Thi provides little elaboration to what she says. A know-nothing reader is left wondering about what race he will be in, who is the opponent he is going to compete against, and what has happened to his grandfather. Besides, Thi’s support to her judgment, which is based on Little Willy’s looks, is not enough to convince the reader either. In conclusion, Thi’s

response addresses the prompt questions stringently, and it lacks the details for a know-nothing audience to follow the story. Technically, Thi answered all the questions using the language directly from the prompts, which is a result of pattern drill training popularly used by ESL teachers. Her response also shows a lack of confidence and her inability to express ideas freely.

However, Thi's "Prediction" response to the last book, *Walk Two Moons*, witnesses some improvement with regard to the content employed and the language used. This prompt was chosen from the last book unit because it shared the same topic, prediction. Similar to the prompt for the first book unit, this prompt also asked the students to support their ideas with evidence from the reading. Here are the prompt questions and Thi's response:

The prompt:

Lesson 7: Prediction

Assigned Reading: Chapters 14-15 (p. 84-97)

Writing Prompt: What is your own theory about Mrs. Cadaver? Be specific and NO outlandish ideas!!!!!! Predict what you think will happen next in the story. Why do you think this? Be prepared to support whatever you say with evidence from the reading.

Thi's Response (see Appendix C):

Walk Two Moon

Prediction Thi N. 5/6/99

My own theory about Mrs. Cadaver is that Mrs. Cadaver isn't a killer like what Phoebe think. Phoebe just have an stronge imaginary about a character, about how Mrs. Cadaver chopped her husband and bury him. But I think even Mrs. Cadever doesn't chopped her husband and bury him. I think something is hiding under the bush because, if it just only that she was replanted the tree. Than why would she need to be hurry back, when Mr. Birkway was there. I also think Mrs. Cadaver isn't a normal person because,

why would dad been really sad when he wasn't at Marrgret house. Sal dad were much sadder when he isn't at Marrgret house, than his wife left him.

I think what will happen next is that, Sal will end up to like Marrgret, because she will learn more about Marrgret, and how Mrs. Cadaver react to her. I think Sal mother would come back to live with her dad and Sal when they go visited her mother at her birthday. And I think the boy like Sal because of her long black hair.

I think Sal mom would come back and live with her family because Sal mom would might feel that her family is care about her because her family had travel a long way for her birthday. I think the boy like Sal because when Sal said that she's going to cut her hair and that boy told her not to cut. And he also said she like Sal hair.

Thi's response to *Walk Two Moons* is composed of 254 words as compared with her 64 word response to *Stone Fox* at the beginning of the year. Instead of answering each question with one sentence, Thi responds to each question with a paragraph. In the first paragraph, she offers her reading of Mrs. Cadaver. She first states that Mrs. Cadaver "isn't a killer" even though Phoebe, another character in the book, believed she killer her husband. She then explains why she disagrees with Phoebe because "Phoebe just have an stronge [sic] imaginary about a character, about how Mrs. Cadaver chopped [sic] her husband and bury him". However, Thi does not end it here. She continues to raise another belief of hers: that though Mrs. Cadaver doesn't kill her husband and bury him, she "isn't a normal person" either. Thi gives two specific pieces of evidence from the text to support her opinion. One is the fact that Mrs. Cadaver hurries back when Mr. Birkway is there, and the second is that Sal's Dad is really sad when he is not at Margaret's (Mrs. Cadaver) house. Thi presents Mrs. Cadaver as a more complex character compared with Little Willy in *Stone Fox*.

In the second paragraph, Thi predicts what will come next in the book. She anticipates that Sal will end up liking Margaret, that Sal's mother will come back, and that the boy will like Sal. Though she enlists a couple of supports from the book for her predictions in the second paragraph, Thi gives more specific evidence in the third paragraph. She believes that Sal will end up liking Margaret, because Sal will learn more about Margaret and because of "how Margaret will react to her". Thi also explains why she believes that Sal's mom will come to live with Sal and her father, because "she might feel that her family is [sic] care about her" as they "travel a long way for her birthday". Thi explains that the boy likes Sal because he likes "her long black hair" and "told her not to cut" it.

To summarize, compared to her response to *Stone Fox*, Thi's writing for *Walk Two Moons* demonstrates that she has a better understanding of the book she is reading and that she has much more to say. She learns to support her claims by citing the appropriate information from the text as well as using her prior knowledge. She also begins to think more analytically. She asks herself questions: "Why would she need to be [sic] hurry back, when Mr. Birkway was there? ...And why would dad been [sic] really sad when he wasn't at Margaret house?"

Though Thi is still making many errors in her use of conventional spelling and grammar, she is not letting this improficiency prevent her from revealing her feelings. In her written responses, we see an assertive, confident, and fluent writer who has a lot to say about the prompt questions as compared with the author of her first response who sounds timid and struggling.

Students’ Self-Evaluation of Their Progress Made in Reading and Writing

What do students think themselves about their literacy learning? At the end of the year, students were asked to comment briefly in writing on the changes that occurred in their reading and writing during the year. Analysis of their comments shows that students believe that they became better readers and writers after the year’s practice. Students’ actual writing of the comments also demonstrates that they have learned to use support and specific examples to illustrate the points they are trying to make. Table 17 summarizes their comments.

Table 17

Summary of Students’ Self-Appraisal on Changes in Their Reading and Writing

Performance over the Year

	Number of mentions
Explicitly stating he/she is a better reader and/or writer at the end of the year	14
Listing specific improvements in their reading and writing	15
Commenting on how the improvements occurred	4
Other	5

A total of 23 students responded to the question. No students remark that he/she has not changed for the better. Nineteen of the 23 students either comment explicitly that they become better readers and/or writers at the end of the year or/and list specific areas of improvements. For example, Alicia comments that she makes “her writing clearer”. Thi believes that she is better at reading and writing, because “in reading I understand the book better than I have. And in writing I learn to support what I said and what I have write about.” Tu also describes the

changes in his reading and writing: “I understand what I read and I give specific examples in Book Club.” Kelsey explains why her writing improves, “I think this is because I write more and I think more about what I’m going to write. I became better because I done it a lot through the year in school.” Andy becomes more reader-oriented and he comments that he makes his writing clearer because “I want someone who reads my writing to understand.” Xa describes the strategy he uses when he writes his responses, “When I’m going to write I think first and not just write.”

Among the four students who did not say explicitly that they have improved their reading and writing, one comments on the change of his attitude towards reading: “... in the beginning of the year, I didn’t like to read that much. In the end of the year, I like to read more and more about different things.” Another says that she had no time to read and write before and now “I’ve been reading and writing at school and at home too.”

It is also very interesting to note that many students employed the language frequently used by the teacher and in the prompt questions in describing the changes, such as “support what you say and what you write”, “give specific examples”, and “think before you write”. The teacher and the students developed a shared language and a shared literacy practice over the school year. Students’ comments not only provide us with a venue to see how students evaluate their own learning, they are also demonstration of their learning of the writing practice. Students comment explicitly on the changes they have made in their reading and

writing, support their claims with specific examples, and some even explain how the changes happened.

Over the school year, students developed their ability to read, write and talk about books through engaging in Book Club. They learned to participate in discussions about books, increased their vocabulary, became more metacognitively strategic in their reading and began to write longer and more analytical responses. As students comprehended the texts better and engaged more analytically and reflectively with the texts in their written responses, students were able to generate more ideas to share in their discussions and their conversations about texts became more lively and experience-related. Reciprocally, book discussions exposed individual students to a variety of ideas and ways of thinking of their peers, which in turn enabled them to be more thoughtful in their written responses. The development of students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and talking about books suggests a reciprocal relation among these literacy practices and points to creating an integrated approach to literacy instruction (Raphael & Hiebert, 1996; Morrow, Smith, & Wilkinson, 1994).

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Analysis of data delineates the road the teacher and her class of culturally and linguistically diverse students traveled in learning to engage in the literary discourse in a community of learners. It is a success story, but not without struggles and frustrations. What pulled them through were the teacher's unwavering belief in the students that "they would do it" and her persistence in continuing to push the students and providing them with support. In this chapter, I summarize the evidence to answer the two research questions the study set to explore.

Research Question 1: What learning trajectory did a class of diverse students take to learn to participate in Book Club, a literature-based instructional program?

The learning trajectory of the students in this classroom progressed through three stages, though they are not as clear-cut as the three distinct categories might suggest; rather they overlap with each other substantially. Over the year, there was a gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) from the teacher to the students in their small group and whole class discussions and in their reading and writing tasks. Students became apprenticed into Book Club practices. At the beginning of the year, the teacher engaged in a lot of direct telling. As time went on, the teacher became less dominant in the conversations and by the end of the year, the teacher played the role as a facilitator and a participant as the students

took up the responsibility of discussing issues in small groups and during community share time. By the end of the year, students were performing tasks performed exclusively by the teacher at the start of the year, such as initiating topics, asking each other questions, and commenting on each other's ideas.

Stage One is labeled as "Teaching by Telling" as teacher and teacher-led talk dominated the discourse at this stage. During this time, the teacher introduced to students, sometimes through didactic conversations, what Book Club was and how they should participate in the Book Club activities. She discussed with students the importance of talking with each other about books they read. She told them to ask "fat, juicy questions", to comment on each other's responses, and to write responses to a know-nothing audience. She also introduced how to self evaluate their performance in group and whole class discussions and showed students the rubrics for grading their own written responses. Apart from telling the students what they were expected to do to participate in Book Club, the teacher also tried to cultivate the idea in the students that they were a classroom learning community. She told the students that they all had unique experiences to contribute to their group and class discussions and, because of that, they could all learn from each other. She made it clear to students that it was okay to have different opinions and many times there would be no right or wrong answers to Book Club questions.

Another marked feature of this stage was students' resistance. Book Club required students to read the book, to write responses to the prompt questions, to

share their responses, to ask each other questions, and to make comments on each other's responses. As this was the first time for these students to engage in this type of literacy activities, many of them didn't know how to participate. Many came to the classroom having not finished reading the book, nor writing the responses. They also complained openly to the teacher that they "didn't get it". Book Club was a challenge to these students cognitively and socially. Because of the challenges, students were given very little opportunity to engage in student-centered talk in this first stage.

The second stage began on September 22 as the class embarked on the book, *Shiloh*, and fishbowl discussions. At this stage, students began to play a more active role. They acted as discussants in the fishbowl, or they were "teachers" who evaluated the discussants. But before they began their own fishbowl discussions, the teacher prepared the students by showing them a video clip of a group discussion on tape and conducting a discussion on how the discussants interacted with each other in the discussion. The teacher also invited a group of her previous year students to demonstrate a fishbowl discussion for the class, and used the opportunity to engage the class on discussions about what the group shared and how they talked to each other. Students made observations and comments, and asked questions. After students observed and discussed their observations, they began their own fishbowls. All six groups took at least 2 turns as the fishbowl group. The first fishbowl demonstrated little exchange among the members, a fact that was noticed and commented by the "teachers", i.e., the rest of

the class. Starting from the second fishbowl, the teacher added two extra chairs to invite anybody from the audience to enter the conversation, to ask a question or make a comment. This also gave the teacher the opportunities to model what questions to ask and how to make sense of the text, and question students to scaffold their thinking. Fishbowl created opportunities for students to observe, learn, and practice talking about books. With the two extra chairs, fishbowl became not just a space for the focus group members to demonstrate how well they could discuss the day's reading, but also a space for the more knowledgeable peers, including the teacher, to join the collective construction of book meanings and to demonstrate that process to all members of the community. Evidence from the early community share conversations in mid-November shows that after the fishbowl practices, students knew they had to participate and say something in the discussions, even though their conversations were choppy and information oriented. After the fishbowl discussion period, the class began the full cycle of Book Club including book clubs, community share, mini lesson, reading, and writing. When community share was added to Book Club, students were given even more time to engage in talks about books among themselves, which was essential for them to develop participation skills. So the key distinction between the first stage and the second stage was the amount of student-centered talk. With the fishbowl discussions, and later community share, time and space were allotted to students to engage in conversations of their own and the teacher was joining them, as compared with the dominant teacher/teacher-led talk in the first stage.

The distinction between second and the third stages is the quality of student-centered conversations. Evidence shows that over the school year, student conversations became more “expert like”. Students learned to “speak” to one another, asking each other questions and sharing thoughts on the common topic; and their conversations became more focused. They learned to engage in talks about texts critically and reflectively; their conversations shifted from focusing on factual information to focusing on more in-depth meaning making of the texts and of their own life experiences. They learned to appreciate the literary texts and enjoy conversing with each other as well; conversations seemed to become enjoyable for them.

The changes in the student participation over the three stages in this one school year depict the road trotted by the students on their way to learn to participate in literary discourse. At the same time, the analysis of the pre and post test scores of the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) shows greater than normal increases (an average of 1.8 years of growth), suggesting that students increased their vocabulary through reading, writing, and talking about good quality literature. The differences between the pre and post results of the Meta-comprehension Strategy Inventory (MSI) (Schmitt, 1990) are statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that students became more metacognitively strategic in their reading at the end of the year.

Research Question 2: What learning opportunities were created for the students in doing Book Club and how were they created?

Data analysis shows that Book Club created learning opportunities for students to practice and develop their cognitive, social, and language skills needed to participate in conversations about books. They learned to make sense of texts by using clues from contexts and connecting to their own experiences; they learned to enjoy good literature; they learned to develop different perspectives and a personal world view. They also learned to communicate with each other, such as sharing different and tentative thoughts, engaging each other in conversations, and challenging each other's ideas. They increased their sight word capacity and employed more meta-cognitive strategies in reading.

Analysis of the changes over the year shows that learning opportunities in Book Club were created for culturally and linguistically diverse students due to the following features of Book Club implemented in this classroom.

- (a) The teacher believed that all students bring with them rich experiences and knowledge to contribute to the discussions and tried to cultivate this belief among students to create a community of learners.
- (b) Students were given the time and space to share with each other their responses to quality literature, and they were encouraged to construct meanings collaboratively.
- (c) Students were pushed to think critically and reflectively about what they read by writing responses to high level thinking questions.

- (d) The teacher employed multiple modes of teaching, from telling, modeling, scaffolding, facilitating student discussions, and participating as a member (Au & Raphael, 1998).
- (e) The teacher persisted in challenging the students and maintained high expectations of the students.

These findings on creating learning opportunities agree with many of what Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole (1999) summarized as elements of effective instruction and culturally responsive teaching, including (a) encouraging a community of learners, (b) treating students as competent and believing they can succeed, (c) keeping a balanced instruction and providing explicit modeling and scaffolding, (d) high pupil engagement and much time spent in reading/language arts activities, (e) organizing appropriate, meaningful, and challenging activities that extend students' thinking, (f) high pupil expectations, (g) helping students make connections between community, nation, world, and self (p. 22).

Lessons Learned from the Study

In this section, I discuss what we can learn from this study with regard to learning/development and teaching, especially in the context of teaching students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Finally, I raise some potential questions for further study.

On Learning and Development

According to Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspectives, learning and development is a process of socialization/enculturation and it occurs in

interactions with other members of the community in meaningful contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). Students' acquisition of a literary discourse is facilitated by more knowledgeable members of the discourse community while they participate in the communal practices. The current case study of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learning to participate in Book Club demonstrates this process. In this classroom, opportunities were created for students to participate in reading, writing, and talking about literary texts. Knowledge of participation norms and new understandings of the texts were constructed as different ideas were shared, challenged, probed, and examined in their book clubs (small groups) and community share (whole class) discussions. Internalization of cultural practices occurred as members of this classroom community created the learning space or, as Vygotsky (1978) called it, the zone of proximal development (zpd). Students learned and developed literary skills in their interactions with each other over the books. In this process, not only the teacher but also the students became more knowledgeable others to other students' learning. Like Mei and her peers in Raphael and her colleagues' study, (Goatley, et al., 1995; Raphael & Brock, 1993), each child's unique experience and understanding of the text and the community practices positioned them as more knowledgeable members of the community in specific situations.

Evidence from this study also helps to explain the process through which learners internalize the meaning of the practices of a literary community.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the development of all higher order psychological processes occurs at two levels: first, on the social/public level, and later on the individual/private level (Gavelek & Raphael 1996). Vygotsky terms this transition from social arena to individual psychological sphere as internalization. According to Kozulin (1994), though Vygotsky did not have time to elaborate on this internalization process, he was interested in the problem of internalization of psychological tools that required two different forms: the “external actions” of using the tools and the internal understanding of their “psychological functions”. Internalization is “the process of transformation of external actions into internal psychological functions” (p. xxvi). Basically, what this means is that children begin to engage in an activity before they fully understand its communicative function. Kozulin uses an example of how Vygotsky thought about the development of the grasping gesture to illustrate this sequence. At the “gesture-in-itself” stage, the grasping movement is a random gesture from a child. When mother comes to the aid of the child, she interprets his grasping movement as an indicative gesture. At this stage, the grasping movement is a “gesture-for-others”. Only afterward does the child become aware of the communicative power of his movement and the gesture becomes a “gesture-for-oneself” (Kozulin, 1994, p.xxvii). Vygotsky’s gesture example illustrates the process of internalization of higher order psychological processes from the social level to the individual level as learners associate/assign the psychological functions to external actions.

Evidence from this case study demonstrates this internalization process. Students first performed the external actions before they came to understand their functions. For example, when students first began to ask fat, juicy questions, they didn't seem to know what responses to expect. They asked those questions for the sake of asking them, because their teacher modeled how to ask the questions and expected them to do so. Even though they learned to perform the action, i.e., asking the questions, these questions didn't seem to carry the same meanings to them at the beginning stage as they did at the later stage. In other words, an understanding of the psychological functions of the action of asking fat, juicy questions did not occur to the students even when they could perform the action at the initial stage. This internalization process from being able to perform the external action (asking fat, juicy questions) to understanding the psychological meaning(s) of the action has important implications for our understanding of teacher's roles and explicit instruction. These issues will be discussed further in the next section on teaching.

On Teaching, Especially in the Context of Teaching Students with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Employ Multiple Instructional Strategies to Create ZPD for Students with Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds

The analysis of this case study reveals a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the students (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The shift went through several stages. First, at the very beginning, students didn't know what

questions to ask and how to respond to each other's ideas. Soon as being instructed and modeled, they realized that they were expected to TALK about the part of the book they had read and they began to participate. They repeated the questions modeled by the teacher or from the prompt sheets, but they didn't care what answers they received, for they might not have understood the psychological functions of asking these questions. Another example indicating this lack of understanding of the psychological functions of "talking" was the community share discussion they engaged in October when more than half of the class spoke in one way or another, but the conversation was choppy and unfocused. In early February, the teacher faced another challenge when she tried adamantly to stop students from sharing "outlandish ideas" and make them realize that they needed to support their opinions. However, towards the end of the year, not only students' conversations became more focused and coherent with questions and uptakes around a shared topic, their conversations also demonstrated a stronger voice of their own as they became more confident in their ideas and learned to support their opinions with evidence from the text and their own experiences.

This learning trajectory suggests that learning occurs at different levels. Changes in external actions do not always bring understanding of the psychological and cultural functions of the actions. Emergence of the use of language comes before the appreciation of the concepts the language represents, especially for students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Asking or saying the fat, juicy questions in this case becomes an important step en route to

understanding of what the action means. The action of talking to each other about text leads to understanding of what it means to be an expert participant of a discourse community. This internalization from the external actions to psychological functions calls for explicit instruction especially at the beginning stage of learning something new. However, in this case, the explicit instruction was given in meaningful and authentic contexts, i.e., the students were sharing their understanding and interpretation of literary texts. The imitation of the external actions were not only “gestures-in-itself” but also “gestures-for-others”, before they became “gestures-for-oneself”. Learning to “talk-the-talk” did not happen in an isolated skill setting but within a meaningful context.

In addition to explicit instruction as carried out through modeling, Ellen employed other instructional strategies to create instructional opportunities that allow students to work within their zpd as they learn to participate in reading, writing, and talking about literary texts. She scaffolded students’ participation through teacher-led talk, as well as students’ initiated talk; she acted as a facilitator in discussions and sometimes she participated as one of the participants, reflecting on her own learning (Field notes, October, 1998) and asking real questions. As Gee (1992) suggests, the teacher in this class “supplied rich, interactive apprenticeships in Discourses” to her students and she also knew “where and how to say ‘look at that’ at the right time and place” (p. 137). For example, based on her observation of students’ level of development, she whispered a question into

the ear of an ESL child for her to repeat, and she “picked on” Michael for not making a point when asking questions.

However, two practices of explicit instruction that Ellen utilized may worth of further thought. They are (a) the use of written prompts all through the year, and (b) the effort Ellen made in stopping students from sharing outlandish ideas. In this class, students wrote responses to prompt questions and used their responses as the basis to begin their book clubs and community share discussions. Prompt questions seemed to function as a mediational tool to push students to focus on and think more deeply about certain issues. Evidence from the discussions near the end of the year shows that students did not seem to stick to the prompt questions but instead took the space opened up by the prompts to initiate issues of their own concern for discussion. For example, the prompts for discussion on May 10, 1999 asked students to comment on the message “Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins” and to make connection with their own life. Tu initiated the discussion by saying “Sometimes I heard some sayings that I don’t agree” (Transcript, May 10, 1999). Students also asked their own questions as they were responding to each other’s sharing. For example, Tu responded to what Andy said, “How are they crazy?” (May 3, 1999), and on another occasion, he asked My Linh after she shared her ideas on what the author did well with the book(?) “What do you think the author can do to improve Sal?” (June 2, 1999). Sometimes, students asked each other questions not directly in response to their sharing. For example, Andy asked Vong after he finished

sharing, “Vong, it's not about your paper, but why do you think Sal's mom went away?” (June 2, 1999). Thi, in the following conversation, really wanted to find out why Grandma called Sal's friend, Pheebee, /'pi:bi:/.

Thi: What do you think of Grandma when she says /'pi:bi:/? What do you think of her?

Vong: I think ... (he was cut short).

Tu: I think she is crazy. She doesn't listen, maybe.

Thi: Do you think she try to be humorous sometimes?

(Transcript, May 3, 1999)

This evidence suggests that though students had the prompt questions, their discussions were not limited only by the questions. There seemed to be transfer of learning from responding to the prompts to generating questions of their own concern. One example of this kind of transfer occurred when Freddy asked the teacher “Whose point of view” they should take in making a story graph for the book *Tuck Everlasting* (Field notes, February 5, 1999). Another piece of evidence came from the brief conversation over what response they should write on Jan. 15, 1999 when they had the first *Free Choice* as a prompt. Michael asked if they could do *Vocabulary* and received a “no” answer. Others suggested they could respond to *Character Map*, or *Point of View*, or *Prediction*, etc. Instead of asking what questions they should respond to, students were using Book Club language and thinking in terms of response categories. This example also indicates that although prompts dictated students to answer specific questions, they transformed the assignment into a more general task, i.e., to develop questions that fit into the

taxonomy of literary tasks that Ellen had used to frame the questions. In other words, the questions were offered as prompts but received and used as tools.

However, because these students were not given many free choices, it still leaves us wonder what it would be like if students were taught only the tools, the kind of responses they could write, and then they decided on what to respond and what tool to use. What would the students' responses and conversations in discussions be like?

The other practice that I count as an instance of explicit instruction is the teacher's direct confrontation with students' outlandish ideas. For three days in a run, Ellen was trying to stop the students from sharing their outlandish ideas (see discussion about the beginning of the third stage in Chapter 4). There are two alternative ways to handle this situation: (a) to encourage students to further explore their imagination; and (b) to leave it as it was without saying or doing anything. However, Ellen had a very clear teaching objective and she wanted the students to learn the ways of participation in a literary discourse of the "culture of power". Namely, she told the students to stop sharing outlandish ideas and to provide support to what they said with evidence from the text or from their own experiences. The teacher's intervention raises two pedagogical dilemmas: (a) the balance between valuing students own ideas and valuing the larger discourse community's accepted ways of thinking and acting; and (b) the balance between exploratory and explicit instructions. Ellen's intervention in this case raises a serious pedagogical question: Are there conditions to the pedagogical principle that

teachers should value students' own ideas and thinking? Does it mean that we should only value and encourage students to express their own ideas to the extent that they do not violate the norms and values of our larger community – in this case that ideas must be logically reasoned and supported by evidence? If it does, at the practical level, how much exploratory room should students have and how much explicit instruction would be required to allow students to balance their own creative thinking with the skills and knowledge required within the discourse community? At what time should the teacher intervene with student-generated ideas and re-direct them so that they are consistent with the socially "appropriate" genres or ways of thinking and talking?

Create a Classroom Learning Community for Students with Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds

A tenet of socio-cultural theory of learning and development is that learning occurs in interactions with more knowledgeable members of a community in meaningful contexts. Studies of literacy classroom instruction have also shown that when teachers turn their classrooms into learning communities in which students prior experiences and knowledge are valued, more learning opportunities are created for the students to participate in literacy learning and to develop their skills. In this case study, one of the teachers' goals was to create a classroom learning community. The teacher had high expectations of the students. She believed that all her students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds were capable of learning to participate in Book Club discourse no matter how

challenging the task was for them at the beginning of the year. She also believed that all students with their unique experiences and knowledge would be able to contribute to each other's learning. On the first day of school, she told the students that they all had different experiences and hence, they could all teach each other. She organized community building activities for students to engage to understand the importance of collaboration. In introducing Book Club, she told students that for many of the discussion questions, there was no one right answer. They might come up with different answers and they could all be right. She also modeled and scaffolded students on how to ask questions and how to respond to each other's sharing. At the same time, students were asked to pick up names of three people (definitely not their friends) they would like to work with each time they formed new book clubs.

In addition to creating a classroom learning community, the teacher continued to push the students to engage in the challenging tasks of Book Club and to provide them with the assistance they needed. Holding high expectations for her students and believing that they would be able to learn to engage in Book Club discourse like the students from previous years, the teacher persisted in Book Club instruction even in face of strong resistance from the students at the beginning of the year. This study shows that sometimes "persistence pays" (Teacher's words, 1998).

Use Book Club to Promote the Literacy Skills of Students with Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds

This study demonstrates that as a literature-based instructional program, Book Club has the potential to engage students with diverse backgrounds in reading, writing, and talking about texts at a high psychological level. It helps create a classroom learning community and the time and space for its members to participate in the practices of a literary community. Because Book Club engages students with quality literature and emphasizes interactions with more knowledgeable members of the community in meaningful contexts (Raphael & Hiebert, 1996), participation in the discourse over a secondary world created by the book (Benton, 1983) – in relation to students' real world – becomes the end as well as the means of learning. The process of participation or the transformation of participation helps to empower the students with diverse backgrounds as they learn from appreciating written texts to formulating their beliefs of the real world while practicing and developing their analytical, critical, and reflective thinking skills.

What happens in this classroom shows that Book Club helps create opportunities for students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to practice and develop skills that are necessary to participate in the literary discourse of a classroom learning community, even though these students made lots of grammatical errors, exhibited limited vocabulary, and spoke with heavy accents. Students in this class learned to make sense of the text and of their own

experiences, to respond to and converse with each other over the texts, and to construct their own understanding of the word and the world through the teacher's assistance and interactions with peers. They also developed their sight word recognition ability, became more metacognitively aware of the comprehension strategies they used, and wrote longer responses with a stronger voice of their own.

The current case study is a story of how a teacher and her fourth/fifth grade students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learned to participate in Book Club over a school year. Though diverse students were the focus participants of the study, this is not a direct study of diversity. My purpose in conducting this study is not to explore the different communication and learning styles of students from diverse backgrounds, though I believe it is of great importance for teachers to be aware that different students learn and communicate differently and to adjust their teaching styles accordingly. However, I also share the concern by Cazden (1999) when she cautions us that emphasizing how one group of students learn and act differently may reinforce the bias towards that group. Besides, the classroom in this case was a multi-cultural and multi-lingual classroom and children came from all over the world. I observed how this class developed a shared literacy practice among its members over the school year and here is the story.

Two features of instruction in this classroom help make it an encouraging story: (a) teacher's creation of a classroom learning community; (b) teacher's

implementation of multiple instructional strategies based on students' needs at different times of the year. The real story in this study is about the unwavering beliefs of the classroom teacher. She believes that students are knowledgeable beings, that learning occurs through participation, that instruction must be based on students' needs, and that if she, as a teacher, is as persistent in challenging students as she is supportive in helping them meet her challenges, there is no limit to what they can learn.

Questions for Further Research

This study was conducted in one unique classroom, with a unique teacher and a unique group of students. Many students in this class came from Asian family backgrounds. They responded to the teacher's instruction and her style, and they worked hard to please her. The teacher had taught Book Club for three years before the study began, and her previous experience told her that these students were capable of engaging in the "grand conversations" about books.

I wonder:

- What if Book Club was implemented in an ESL class with a large percentage of students coming from other cultural traditions instead of Asian family background? Would students react and respond to the teacher the same way or differently and how would that affect students' learning as a whole?
- What if I had studied a teacher who was implementing Book Club for the first year? In what ways would it be different or similar to what has happened in this classroom?

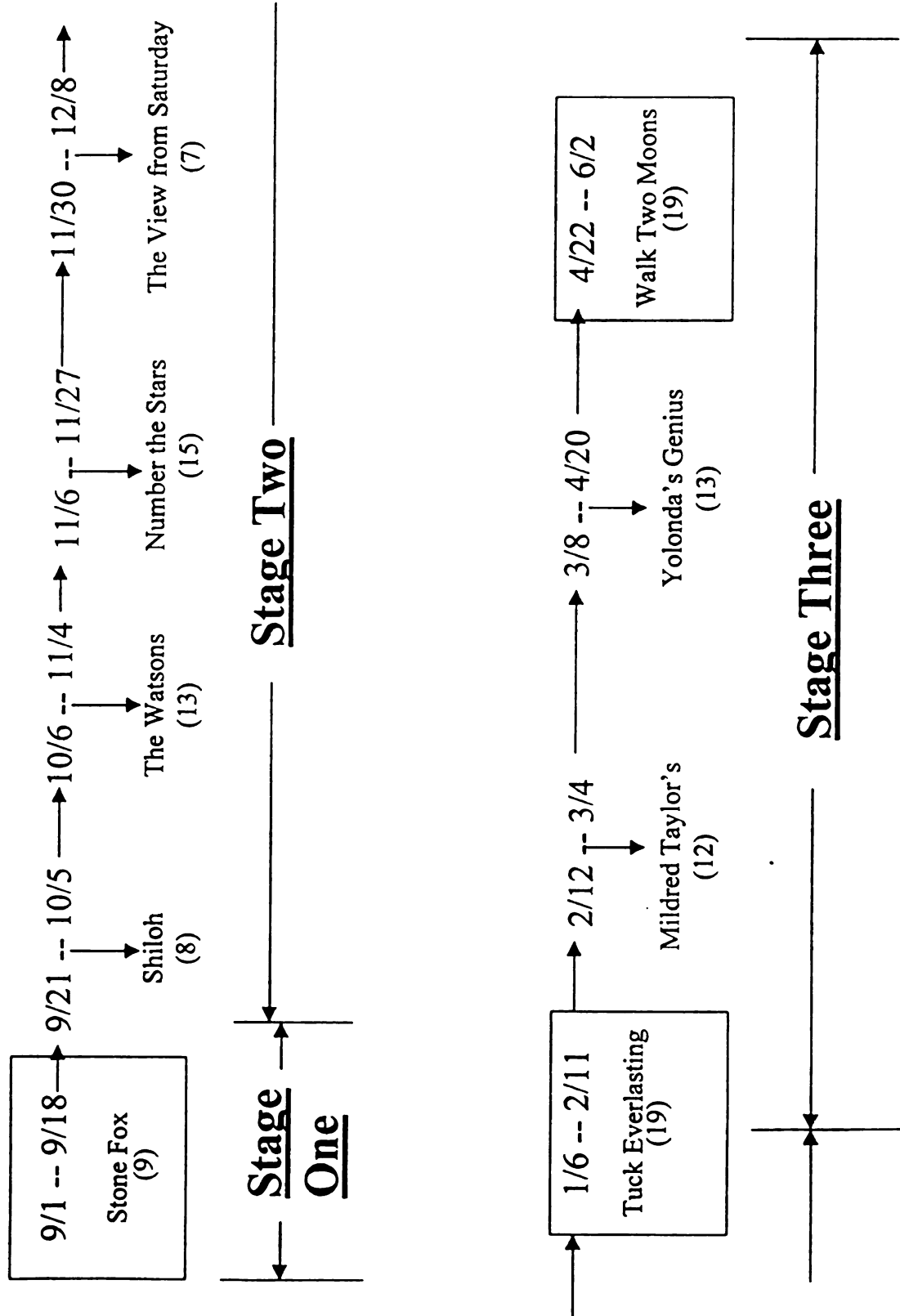


I also wonder:

- What would their conversations be like if students read more books by minority authors and about the growing-up experiences of minority children that were closer to their experiences?
- What would their writing be like if students could respond to texts in whatever way they wanted, unencumbered by prompt questions? How would they be different?
- How would reading different books, selected either by the teacher or students or collaboratively, affect how students read and how they participate in class discussions instead of everyone reading the same book at the same time?
- How does participating in Book Club affect how students read and write in other genres or types of texts? Would participating in Book Club affect how students learn other school subjects?

APPENDIX A: TIME-LINE

Timeline



APPENDIX B: STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

FOR BOOK CLUB DISCUSSIONS

Student Self-Evaluation for Book Club Discussions

Grading Scale

- + exceptional
- ✓+ very good
- ✓ okay
- ✓- not good
- not participating
- A absent

Off Task Behaviors

- 1) Writing in log.
- 2) Playing with pencil or other object
- 3) Into other folders/work.
- 4) Talking with someone else in group; not on topic.
- 5) Getting out of group to wander.

Week of _____ Book Title _____ Name _____

<i>Day of Week</i>	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Shares Ideas</i>	<i>Listens and Responds</i>	<i>Fat, juicy Questions</i>	<i>Positive Attitude</i>	<i>Off Task Behaviors</i>
<i>Monday</i>						
<i>Tuesday</i>						
<i>Wednesday</i>						
<i>Thursday</i>						
<i>Friday</i>						

Notes or comments to the teacher:

Week of _____ Book Title _____ Name _____

<i>Day of Week</i>	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Shares Ideas</i>	<i>Listens and Responds</i>	<i>Fat, juicy Questions</i>	<i>Positive Attitude</i>	<i>Off Task Behaviors</i>
<i>Monday</i>						
<i>Tuesday</i>						
<i>Wednesday</i>						
<i>Thursday</i>						
<i>Friday</i>						

Notes or comments to the teacher:

APPENDIX C: THI'S WRITTEN RESPONSES

Thi's Response to *Stone Fox Book Club Unit*

Stone Fox

(13)

9/11/98

Lesson 5 prediction

Little Willy is up against winning the race
So Willy can make money to help his grandfather
And I think Willy has a great chance of
winning the race and Willy is not going to
waste his money. I know that because
Willy looks really smart and his face
tell me that Willy is going to win. That
is my Prediction for chapter 6-7...

Thi's Response to *Walk Two Moons* Book Club Unit

Walk Two Moons

113

5/6/99

Prediction

My own theory about Mrs. Cadaver is that Mrs. Cadaver isn't a killer like what Phoebe thinks. Phoebe just has an strange imaginary about a character, about how Mrs. Cadaver chopped her husband and bury him. But I think even Mrs. Cadaver doesn't chopped her husband and bury him. I think something is hiding under the bush because if it just only that she was replanted the tree. Then why would she need to be hurry back when Mr. Birkway was there. I also thinks Mrs. Cadaver isn't a normal person because why would dad been really said when he wasn't at Margaret house. Sal dad were much sadder when he isn't at Margaret house than his wife left him.

I think what will happen next is that Sal will end up to like Margaret because she will learn more about Margaret and how Mrs. Cadaver react to her. I think Sal mother would come back to live with her dad and Sal when they go visited her mother at her birthday. And I think the boy like Sal because of her long black hair.

I think Sal mom would come back and live with her family because Sal mom would might feel that her family is care about her because her family had travel a long way for her birthday. I think the boy like Sal because when Sal said that she's going to cut her hair and that boy told her not to cut. And he also said she like Sal hair.

APPENDIX D: END-OF-BOOK SELF-ASSESSMENT



Name _____

Date 9/17/98

Book Stone Fox

End-of-Book Self-Assessment

1. Did you like this book? Yes No Why or why not?

yes because it is short and not too hard to do

2. When you were reading the book silently, how did you find the reading?

Easy

Just right

A little hard

Too hard

3. What is your favorite part of Book Club?

Reading

Writing

Book clubs

Community share

4. What has been your favorite book this year?

It has been my favorite book this year on the side.

5. I will soon be determining new groups. List, in order of preference, school, the three people you would most likely be able to work well with. I will try to give you one of your three choices.

1. Minh-Ha 2. Chelsea 3. Tong

6. Look through your log. Find the best entry you did. Write me a sticky note on that page, telling me why it is your best.

7. What is one thing you will do differently in your log next time? Why?

one thing that I will do differently is to write more
is dry to understand more

8. What grade do you think you deserve for group cooperation, sharing, and participation? Why?

I because I am not understand very much

9. What was the best thing about doing Book Club with this book?

The best thing is write about something
that is special and important in this book.

APPENDIX E: TEACHER'S GRADING SHEET



Name _____

Date Sept 1998

Book _____

Stone Fox

Book Club Evaluation: Reading Log

You are graded in two areas—Quantity and Quality.

Quantity. During this book, you needed to demonstrate mastery of the following skills and strategies. You have demonstrated the ones I have highlighted. Others either were not attempted or were not mastered.

Prediction	Character Map	Picture	Questions
Summary	Favorite/Least Favorite	Feelings	Point of View
Sequence	Wonderful Words	Me & the Book	Title Explanation
Vocabulary	Compare/Contrast	Intertextuality	Critique
Author's Craft	Special Story Part	Author's Purpose	Interpretation

Personal Resp. Theme

You have accomplished 4 skills and strategies out of a total of 8.
This is equivalent to a grade of ✓.

Quality. The quality of your reading log was determined by assigning a grade to the first 10 entries in your log. They were graded on completeness and accuracy of information, as well as length and amount of detail provided. They were not graded on spelling, mechanics, etc. I numbered them as I read them. Here is a record of your grades.

Excellent	Average	Unacceptable
	<u>✓3</u>	
	<u>✓2</u>	
	<u>✓2</u>	
	<u>✓3</u>	

Excellent	Average	Unacceptable
	<u>✓3</u>	
<u>✓4</u>		
	<u>✓2</u>	
	<u>✓2</u>	

These ten grades average out to a grade of ✓+.

Overall Reading Log Grade. Your reading log grade is half quantity ✓+ and half quality ✓. This gives you an overall reading log grade of B-.

Suggestions for improving your reading log:

Thank you, Please if you don't understand what a prompt is asking - Please ask. You did a beautiful job on the prompts. You seemed to understand - especially Point of View!

APPENDIX F: STUDENTS' REACTION AND GOAL-SETTING FORM



Name _____

Date 10/15/98

Book

Stone Fox

Reaction and Goal-Setting Sheet

I received the following grades for my performance during this book:

B- Reading log ☒ quality and quantity of responses

_____ Group sharing and community share participation

How do you feel about these marks? Why?

I feel the B- mark is ok because
first time doing clubs is hard for
me to get A but I try my best.

What will you do differently next time to improve your grades? Please list specific goals you have set for yourself, in both writing and talking.

Next time I do differently in my log
is to understand what it asking
and how to write better and tell
more about the point.

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