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DISCUSSION AS EXPLORATION AND ITS
EFFECTS IN AN ELEMENTARY
READING CLASS

by

Michael E. Cena

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Education

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1995

ABSTRACT

Discussion as Exploration and Its Effects in an
Elementary Reading Class

by

Michael E. Cena, Doctor of Philosophy
Utah State University, 1995

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Department: Elementary Education

Discussion as exploration has been proposed as an instructional paradigm for use in high-school literature instruction. Its proponents have explained that using it fosters an aesthetic literary environment. For the purpose of study, the paradigm was modified for use in an elementary fifth-grade reading class. A month-long investigation was conducted to explore the effects of using the paradigm, concerns an elementary teacher had as she implemented it, and its effects on participating students' literary stances. Research methodology included participant-observation, surveys, and a single-subject phase withdrawal component. Results of the study confirmed that (a) students were capable of using discussion as exploration, (b) using the paradigm led to movement among students' literary stances, and (c) discussion as exploration engaged groups of students in literature reflection.

(214 pages)

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Michael E. Cena

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CHAPTER 1
AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction and Nature of the Problem

The whole language movement of the 1980s has encouraged many elementary educators to use increased amounts of literature in their reading programs. This infusion of literature, consisting of poetry, information books, stories, and novels, has led many reading teachers to inquire and to explore various methods of literary instruction. To help meet the needs of these teachers, editors of reading journals for both researchers and practitioners have published numerous articles and studies related to instructional practice and research in the teaching of literature. Unfortunately, many of the methods used for literature instruction by elementary teachers remain tied to past beliefs and practices (DeLawter, 1992). Current research encourages and supports the use of literature in elementary reading programs and the use of newer models of literature instruction (Langer, 1991a).

Of special importance to elementary educators interested in teaching literature is the research being done by colleagues interested in teaching high-school or college English. Although most elementary educators have become interested in literature instruction because of the whole language movement, high-school and college English researchers have studied literature instruction during the greater part of this century. Louise Rosenblatt's

Literature as Exploration, originally written in 1938 and consistently revised, has been the seminal work that provided the philosophical and teaching base favored by many of today's English teachers. However, for a substantial number of elementary teachers, Rosenblatt's work is still largely unknown (DeLawter, 1992).

Literature as Exploration also provided literature teachers with added insight into the reading comprehension process. Rosenblatt (1983) described reading comprehension as a transaction between readers and text. In this view of reading comprehension, the information embedded in the text interacts with the reader's prior knowledge, enabling construction of meaning. This cognitive view of reading comprehension emphasizes that meanings and messages of the text are constantly being created in the mind of the reader. Consequently, each time a text is read, an interpretation of that text is created. Rereading a piece of text over and over may create different, credible, defensible interpretations of the same text. Literature teachers aware of the constructive nature of comprehension know that they may guide and lead discussions about literature. Meaning, however, does not reside in either the reader or in the text, but rather in the *transaction* that occurs as the reader interacts with the text (Dias, 1992). Applebee (1992) recommended that traditional pedagogy associated with literature instruction needs to be examined to determine congruency with Rosenblatt's transactional theory.

DeLawter (1992) and Dias (1992) stated that elementary teachers, particularly those interested in literature instruction, need to become familiar with Rosenblatt's transaction theory. Elementary teachers also need appropriate methodology for teaching pieces of literature, such as novels, which is based on the constructive view of reading comprehension. DeLawter (1992) found that although many teachers now use literature in their classrooms, their instructional methods remain tied to suggestions in teacher's manuals and guides, which reflect traditional basal reading approaches. She suggested that many elementary teachers are often socialized into basal reading approaches early in their careers. This socialization process would help explain why Reutzel and Cooter (1992) found that elementary teachers who move to incorporate more literature instruction in their reading program simply substitute a piece of literature or a novel for a basal reading selection.

Teaching literature from a basal reading approach is inappropriate because many traditional basal reading programs typically reflect the notion that the teacher's responsibility is to question students, after they have read a selection, so as to elicit specific appropriate answers (National Council of the Teachers of English, 1988). And, the types of questions in basal reading programs encourage low-level, literal interpretations, which Beck and McKeown (1981) found often lead the reader away from the central themes and characters of a story. A perusal of directions found in the teacher's

editions of three current basal reading programs (D. C. Heath, Scholastic, and Scott-Foresman) confirmed that teachers were still being directed to use low-level, text-explicit questions with reading selections, even though those reading selections reflected the publishers' attempts to include literature in the basal reading selections.

The tendency to rely on low-level types of comprehension questions is not limited to basal reading programs. Brody, DeMilo, and Purves (1989) reported that analysis of commercial reading comprehension tests used for state assessments also showed concentration on relatively low-level types of questions, again suggesting the powerful socialization force of traditional reading approaches.

As more elementary teachers become interested in teaching with literature, publishing companies respond with claims of literature-based reading programs. Professional journals also contain more information about teaching with literature. A perusal of the teacher's editions of three basal reading programs (D. C. Heath, Scholastic, and Scott-Foresman) indicated that elementary teachers were being provided with strategies for teaching short stories, novels, and poetry in their basal reading series. The large number of advertisements in *The Reading Teacher*, an International Reading Association journal for reading practitioners, indicated that educational publishers have commercial interests in publishing literature study guides written for elementary teachers. These guides normally focus on

characterization, plot units, structure of specific novels, and enrichment activities. Unfortunately, most, if not all of these guides consistently reflect the notion that there are only specific correct interpretations of the novel (Applebee, 1992). These correct interpretations also tend to be literal comprehension responses. Again, a reading teacher with knowledge of the constructive nature of comprehension would understand that students' prior knowledge may often lead them away from the specific interpretations recommended by the guides.

Current Research in the Study of Literature Instruction

Judith Langer, Arthur Applebee, and Alan Purves are researchers at the National Center for the Study of Literature (State University of New York, Albany) who use Louise Rosenblatt's work as their philosophical base for creating literature teaching models based on constructive views of reading. For teachers, the work of these researchers is valuable in providing information and models of teaching for use in reading classes where the focus is on literature instruction.

Langer (1991b) proposed using discussion as a paradigm for exploring literature. Readers engaged in discussion are able to use personal knowledge, beliefs, and histories as means for arriving at defensible meanings and refining them as well as considering the validity of other responses. In Langer's paradigm of literature instruction, the teacher is a facilitator of

learning, rather than a repository of knowledge. To facilitate discussion, students are placed in learning communities where there is emphasis on conversing, rereading, and interpreting literary works. Another central component of the paradigm is the use of literature response logs where students write, clarify, and defend their literary interpretations.

Langer's paradigm of literature instruction may provide elementary teachers with an option more compatible with theory than is presently being used in many reading classes. Unfortunately, there is a discrepancy between the theory and research related to teaching literature and current instructional practices in many elementary reading classes (Applebee, 1992).

This discrepancy between research and theory in the teaching of literature and elementary teaching practices may be reconciled by further investigations concerning literature instruction from high-school English perspectives. Elementary teachers familiar with basal reading approaches need to align their literature instruction with current views about the constructive nature of comprehension and the aesthetic nature of the literary experience (DeLawter, 1992).

Discussion as Exploration: A Paradigm for Literature Instruction

Discussion as exploration is a paradigm for literature instruction that represents a culmination of the work of Judith Langer. It is based on her views concerning literary understandings and contemporary issues in

literature instruction. Above all, it is an attempt to align contemporary literature instruction with the work of key theorists whose ideas and beliefs about pedagogy have influenced many educational practices. A rationale for using the paradigm comes from the sociocognitive learning theories of Lev Vygotsky (1962 & 1978) and Louise Rosenblatt's (1983) transactional view of comprehension. Several guiding principles from Vygotsky and Rosenblatt govern the paradigm: (a) learning is socially based, (b) cognition grows out of social experiences, and (c) as children learn to control and manipulate language and communication skills, they are able to think, reason, and structure their thoughts in more complex ways.

Although discussion as exploration was proposed as a method of instruction for high-school English classes, for this study, the paradigm was adapted for use in an elementary reading class. A brief overview of the paradigm is presented below. Additional information about the paradigm's instructional component is provided in Chapter 3 (Methodology).

Implementation procedures entailed:

1. Placing students into small literature discussion groups meeting simultaneously for purposes of discussing, reflecting, and questioning assigned readings. These literature discussion groups were referred to as learning communities.

2. Designing instructional elements to reflect an emphasis on getting students to explain, discuss, and clarify their literary interpretations. The most

prevalent instructional element used broad initiating questions to facilitate conversation. Initiating questions were developed by creating a story map of the literature.

3. Defining the role of the teacher-participant observer as a facilitator to foster students' exploration of the literary text, rather than looking for literal comprehension-type answers to predetermined teacher-selected questions.

4. Providing writing assignments, in the form of literature reflection logs, encouraging students to respond to the issues and ideas raised during their literary discussions.

5. Planning and teaching literary lessons that were based on the overall theory of discussion as exploration with the researcher-participant observer (RPO) and the teacher-participant observer (TPO) working together as co-partners in implementing the paradigm.

These implementing procedures are in alignment with proponents of using discussion as a constructive process that changes, modifies, and redefines initial interpretations based on rereadings, peer discussions, and additional information provided by continued reading of longer selections of text (see Langer, 1991b; Rosenblatt, 1983; Spiro, Bruce, & Brewer, 1980).

In summary, discussion as exploration has been proposed by Judith Langer (1991b) as a paradigm for high-school literature instruction. The goals of using the paradigm are to enable the construction of meaning and to foster

the aesthetic literary experience. Components of the paradigm include (a) students reflecting and responding to literature in small group settings, (b) the teacher's role being defined as a facilitator of conversations, and (c) using writing prompts as an aide in responding to reading and conversations.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of using discussion as exploration as a paradigm for literature instruction in a fifth-grade elementary school setting. An instructional model congruent with the paradigm was implemented in a fifth-grade reading class during March and April of 1995. During implementation the teacher participant-observer and the researcher participant-observer worked as copartners to teach, discuss, and observe what was occurring during literature instruction.

Four guiding questions focused the study: (a) what events are happening as the teacher moves to incorporate discussion as exploration while teaching a class novel, (b) how does implementing discussion as exploration provide a sound aesthetic literary experience in the elementary classroom on an individual basis, (c) how does implementing discussion as exploration lead to more movement among dimensions of reading comprehension as identified by Langer's literary stances than does traditional instruction, and (d) what instructional concerns does the teacher have as she/he attempts to implement the paradigm?

The overall objectives of the study were (a) to determine if an instructional model, based on discussion as exploration, could be developed for use by elementary teachers and (b) to determine if that instructional model fostered an aesthetic experience with literature within small group settings. Information from this study will aid other elementary teachers as they look for research-based methods of literature instruction.

Design of the Study

For purposes of studying discussion as exploration in an elementary school setting, a study was conducted during March and April 1995. Because older elementary-grade students are at the threshold of acquiring literary understandings, the decision was made to examine discussion as exploration in the context of a fifth-grade classroom. Other reasons for selecting fifth graders were (a) although most students have achieved fluency in basic reading ability, many students still benefit from scaffolded literature instruction, (b) the reading ability of the students lends itself to using longer pieces of text, such as a novel, and (c) having taught fifth grade for 17 years, the researcher participant-observer was familiar with student abilities and common classroom teaching practices. The novel used for literature instruction was *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (Königsburg, 1967).

The study, itself, contained three essential research components. The first component, a simple phase withdrawal A|B|A|B design, provided the actual sequence of instructional events. This A|B|A|B phase withdrawal design allowed the author to investigate the differences between traditional instruction and discussion as exploration with the same students in the same classroom with the same teacher. Although traditional single-subject designs typically rely on specific intervals of time for data collection (Kratowill & Levin, 1992), this investigation used a novel segmented by chapters as the instructional text. Intervals for data collection were based on four phases of instructional periods.

During A¹ and A² phases, students were taught the novel using suggestions and ideas recommended by the D. C. Heath study guide written for it with the teacher using traditional forms of direct instruction. During B¹ and B² phases, students were also taught the novel; however, discussion as exploration was used as a paradigm for instruction. Discussion as exploration entailed the introduction of three central components: (a) small groups of students discussing and responding to the reading selection in learning communities, (b) the teacher's role being defined as a facilitator of learning rather than an repository of knowledge, and (c) the use of writing assignments as a reflection tool. The following chapter divisions constituted individual instructional phases: A¹: Chapters 1, 2, and 3; B¹: Chapters 4, 5, and 6; A²: Chapters 7 and 8; and B²: Chapters 9 and 10.

Another component of this study was the use of survey instruments including (a) student and teacher profiles similar to case study models, (b) teacher pre and postquestionnaires measuring theoretical orientations toward reading, and (c) interviews with the teacher and five participating students designed to elicit their feelings about working with literature and instructional models associated with literature teaching.

The third component of the study was the use of qualitative data from researcher, teacher, and student participant observers. Ethnographic data were generated from an analysis of (a) researcher-participant observer fieldnotes, (b) teacher-participant observer journal entries, (c) student quickwrites, and (d) videotapes of selected instructional segments. Conversations between the researcher and teacher provided additional qualitative data concerning the effects of the intervention.

Rationale for the Study

For many elementary educators, the whole language movement has caused a rethinking of reading instruction. Old notions about the roles of teachers and students have been redefined. Reading pedagogy has moved from an emphasis from decoding and skills instruction to construction of meaning (Cooper, 1993). Newer reading programs reflect the importance of teacher and student choice in selection of reading materials rather than the

teacher proof basal reading series of the past (Reutzel & Cooter, 1992). In the recent past, traditional approaches to reading instruction viewed teachers as knowledge brokers. They were the repositories of correct answers and true interpretations. Teachers planned and executed reading instruction based on the scope and sequence of the basal reading series. The basal teacher's edition containing lesson plans, skills instruction, and directed reading lessons was the authority on what needed to be taught and learned in the reading class. Little attention was paid to individual student needs and interests (Strickland, 1994/95).

Current views of elementary reading instruction place greater emphasis on using literature for reading texts. Teachers are seen more as facilitators in the construction of meaning (Cooper, 1993). There is an infusion of activities designed to promote higher order thought processes on the part of students. Teachers are asked to differentiate instruction to meet the increasingly diverse demands of our linguistic and culturally diverse society (Strickland, 1994/95). And, traditional assessment procedures have been broadened to newer techniques that seek to gather more information about the achievements, abilities, and limitations of readers (Farr, 1992). A perusal of three current elementary reading series (D. C. Heath, Scholastic, and Scott-Foresman) indicates traditional instructional forms of teacher-directed questions and reliance on low-level types of comprehension questions are still prevalent approaches.

In short, elementary reading theory has changed drastically over the last 10 to 15 years. Instructional components of contemporary literature programs, such as the role of discussion, have been studied more frequently by researchers interested in college or high-school teaching, than by those with elementary backgrounds (Rosenblatt, 1994). It is important that researchers interested in improving elementary reading instruction design models that reflect scholarly knowledge and beliefs about literary pedagogy and that promote the aesthetic literary experience. These models also need to be investigated and tested in naturalistic settings, including elementary reading classes. Results of investigations need to be shared and publicized through practitioner journals and local reading conferences where elementary teachers will have access to these models of literature instruction.

Theoretical Orientation of the Study

The study relied on the work of three well-respected scholars to provide a philosophical base and theoretical orientation for the investigation. The Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky's writings on the social and personal nature of learning processes served to provide sound philosophical theory and rationale for using group discussions and peer-interaction activities. His social learning theory's basic premise was that individuals gain knowledge through social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). And his notion of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962) enabled the description of the

reading instructor's job as an individual who created and used instructional practices that built upon students' prior knowledge, experiences, and beliefs while providing enough support and scaffolding to lead them to more sophisticated levels of understanding and interpretation.

Louise Rosenblatt's (1983) seminal work, *Literature as Exploration*, provided descriptions of the aesthetic literary experience many literature teachers hope to foster. Instructional elements such as small-group instruction, peer discussion, rethinking, and reflection time were also delineated in her work. In addition, Rosenblatt described how individual readings and understandings of a literary work may be approached from a constructive view.

Although Judith Langer's paradigm of instruction, discussion as exploration, served as the instructional model investigated in this study, much of her other work focuses on additional elements of literature teaching. It might be said that discussion as exploration represents the culmination of her beliefs and understanding concerning literature instruction. Her other writings, particularly her work on literary stances, served to provide a framework for studying dimensions of students' literary understanding.

In Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), an examination of the writings of the above-mentioned theorists, their work, and the work of other researchers as they build, refine, and explore those theories in classroom environments is presented in greater depth. Remarkably, Vygotsky, Rosenblatt, and Langer

share a common vision of classroom instruction—students engaged in meaningful social activities, facilitated by the teacher.

Importance of the Study

Discussion as exploration, a paradigm of literature instruction, has been proposed as a teaching model that provides an aesthetic literary experience for high-school students. This study provides an elementary perspective as to the efficacy of the paradigm. Given the prevalence of literature in today's elementary classroom, better models of literature instruction, particularly those which focus on creating literary experiences, are deemed highly important. Eeds and Wells (1989) argued that attitudes and values regarding literature, which are developed during early years, have profound impact on interest and appreciation of literature instruction during secondary years. This study adds to the body of professional literature with an investigation concerning the role of discussion from an elementary reading perspective.

Elementary educators presented with such a model of literary instruction acknowledging the constructive nature of reading comprehension may become more attuned to the notion that literary meanings and interpretations lie within the transactions between the reader and text, rather than with teacher-directed lessons. Such a transactional view encourages readers to become active thinkers who monitor their own thought processes,

and who can defend their views and interpretations based on what they have read and internalize as embedded in the text.

This view of the literary experience allows all students, including those from diverse and multicultural backgrounds, the opportunity to become intimately involved with literature. Participation in the literary experience allows unique understandings, perceptions, and personal interpretations to be shared and acknowledged. Discussion as exploration holds great promise as one such paradigm that promotes the aesthetic literary experience for both elementary and secondary students. This investigation provided another perspective as to its efficacy in literature instruction.

Definition of Terms

Creswell (1994) suggested that terms relating to the theoretical base, literature review, and methodology of an investigation be defined. To facilitate readers' understanding of the study, a definition of terms is supplied:

1. Discussion as exploration. A paradigm of secondary literature instruction advocated by Judith Langer. Central components of the paradigm include the use of student literature discussion groups, reflection writing, and the role of the teacher being defined as a facilitator of knowledge. Discussion as exploration attempts to provide literature teachers with a model of literary instruction based on the theories of Louise Rosenblatt.

2. Literature discussion groups. A component of literature instruction where students are placed in small groups for the purpose of responding, discussing, and reflecting on assigned readings. For the purpose of this investigation, students were placed in literature discussion groups during certain phases of literature discussion. During the A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component, these phases were identified as instructional phases B¹ and B². For more information about instructional phases, see Chapter 3 (Methodology).

3. The aesthetic literary experience. A central theory of Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration*. Rosenblatt (1983) wrote that teachers must seek to create contexts where readers may experience the aesthetic literary experience—rich, stimulating, powerful, emotional reactions.

4. Participant-observation. An ethnographic research tool enabling the researcher to study the phenomenon under investigation from what is termed the "emic" (insider) perspective. To do this, the researcher works alongside other participants in the study.

5. Teacher participant-observer. The research role assigned to the teacher in this study. Because the teacher is part of the "emic" perspective, his/her observations, insights, and perspectives provide valuable data along with the researcher's.

6. Student and teacher profiles. Descriptions of participants based on Bromley's (1986) protocols for case study. Information gathered by student and teacher profiles is reported in Chapter 4 (Findings).

7. A|B|A|B phase withdrawal design. A research component of this study. For the purpose of organizing literature instruction, two instructional phases were used. The first, or A phase, relied on traditional methods of literature instruction including use of direct instruction, vocabulary instruction, and literal recall questioning. The second, or B phase, entailed implementation of discussion as exploration. For more information about the A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component of the study, see Chapter 3 (Methodology).

8. Constructive nature of comprehension. A cognitive view of reading comprehension where the reader's prior knowledge about the content of the text interacts with the author's intended message enabling the construction of meaning in the mind of the reader.

9. Literary stances. Categories of students' literary understandings. For the purpose of this study, five selected students' literary stances were plotted on an A|B|A|B visual array. More information about the actual arrays and interpretation of them is provided in Chapter 4 (Findings).

10. Whole language approach. A contemporary view of elementary reading and writing instruction emphasizing the use of children's literature (poetry, picture books, stories, information books, and novels) for reading

texts. Whole language tends to be more of a philosophy of teaching reading, rather than a specific model of instruction. Favorite teaching methods of whole-language teachers include shared reading/writing experiences, language experience approaches, thematic units, and literature study circles.

11. Basal reading approach. The traditional method of reading instruction in the elementary reading program. Basal reading programs are supposed to provide all that is necessary for reading instruction. Common instructional components of basal readers: (a) introduce select vocabulary words, (b) teach reading skills, (c) set a purposes for reading selections of text, and (d) probe students' comprehension with questions after reading.

12. Zone of proximal development. One of the most important theories of Lev Vygotsky. The zone is described as the difference between the student's unaided performance and that performance of which he is capable with support from more proficient others. Vygotsky felt that in order to lead students to higher levels of achievement, teachers needed to teach and structure learning activities in students' individual zones of proximal development. More information about Vygotsky and his learning theories is presented in Chapter 2 (Review of Literature).

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation follows the traditional five-chapter format. Chapter 1 (a) introduces the problem, (b) defines the purpose and objectives of the

study, and (c) provides a rationale for the importance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews (a) the literature associated with three key cognitive theorists, (b) their philosophies and learning theories, and (c) writings and studies of other scholars as they relate to the work of the three theorists. Contributions of other researchers interested in literature instruction and improvement of literature teaching are also reviewed. Chapter 3 presents methods and procedures used to (a) identify the problem, (b) design the study, (c) create instructional plans, and (d) select participants and the site for the study. Chapter 4 contains the results and findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the implication of the results of the study as well as further recommendations for research into the role of literature instruction.

Summary

There is a lack of fit between current knowledge about literature instruction and many elementary teaching practices. Elementary teachers would benefit by having a literature instruction model based on cognitive views of the constructive nature of reading comprehension and the role of discussion as a means of fostering the aesthetic literary experience.

Discussion as exploration, a paradigm for high-school literature instruction, had been proposed as an effective instructional tool allowing participants an opportunity to have an aesthetic literary experience with

literature in small group settings. For the purpose of study, the paradigm was adapted for elementary-level instruction and implemented in a fifth-grade classroom during March and April 1995 to investigate the efficacy of using it in a different classroom context.

An exploratory study with an A|B|A|B phase withdrawal design was used to investigate the effects of the paradigm during literature instruction in the fifth-grade class. Data collection measures included survey items such as pre- and postquestionnaires and profiles of participants, and ethnographic research via teacher and researcher-participant observation.

The theoretical orientation of this study was supported by the work of three scholars. Lev Vygotsky's views on the social nature of learning and the zone of proximal development provided support for placing students in small literature response groups with conversational questions initiated by the teacher. Judith Langer's discussion as exploration provided a paradigm of literature instruction incorporating Louise Rosenblatt's transaction theory of comprehension and the aesthetic nature of the literary experience.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Educators are fortunate to have an abundance of theory and research relating to the role of literature teachers and the issue of effective literature instruction. In this review of literature, important scholarly perspectives and theories relating to research and understanding of the literary experience are presented. The review is divided into five sections.

First, the sociohistoric theories of Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist, relating to the social nature of learning, the zone of proximal development, and scaffolding of instruction are reviewed. These Vygotskian ideas have provided contemporary scholars with basic theory and rationale for their ideas concerning literature instruction. Included in this section is the work of other researchers who have used Vygotskian theory to improve various aspects of instruction. And, in the last part of the section, critical elements of this study are reviewed from a Vygotskian perspective.

In the second section of this chapter, the work of Louise Rosenblatt is reviewed. Her writings about aesthetic literary experiences have become rallying points for many of today's literacy educators. Rosenblatt's work forms the central theoretical core of this study.

Section three of the review describes Judith Langer's paradigm of literature instruction, referred to as discussion as exploration. Her paradigm has provided a model for current application of many of Rosenblatt's ideas concerning literature instruction and the aesthetics of reading for enjoyment. As part of her paradigm for helping teachers to implement Rosenblatt's theories in today's literature classes, Langer identified instructional conversations as crucial elements to nurture aesthetic reading. The work of other scholars who have investigated instructional conversation is also discussed at the conclusion of this section.

A method for assisting teachers in creating guiding questions about literature, via story mapping, is presented in the fourth section of the review. Story mapping was used in this study to develop discussion prompts for facilitating student literary discussions. And fifth, the use of literary stances as a means of exploring students' dimensions of literary understanding is discussed. A literary stance has been defined by Many (1991) as the ways in which the reader relates to the text. An analysis of literary stances was an important component of assessment for this study. Additional information about literary stances is presented in Chapter 3 (Methodology).

Lev Vygotsky and the Sociohistoric Theory of
Psychological Development

Cole and Scribner (1978) in their introduction to *Mind and Society* (Vygotsky, 1978) furnish background information about the life and work of Lev A. Vygotsky. Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist who sought to develop a unified Marxist theory of human intellect. Some of his contributions to psychology include (a) investigating societal influences in behavior development, (b) providing theories explaining how individuals learn through social context rather than through maturity alone, and (c) advocating that psychological functions are products of brain activity, which theoretically melded cognitive psychology with neurology and physiology into a unified behavioral science.

Vygotsky searched for a comprehensive view of psychology that would make possible descriptions and explanations of higher psychological functions of logical memory, conceptual thinking, and the self-regulation of learning (Gredler, 1992). He was in agreement with writers from the Gestalt movement who were dissatisfied with what they considered to be the psychological atomization of behaviorists who sought to reduce all phenomena into a set of observable, discrete behaviors.

His probing into explanations of human thought, language use, and cognitive development were greatly influenced by his teacher, Wilhelm Wundt (Cole & Scribner, 1978). Wundt taught that higher psychological

processes could only be investigated by historical studies of cultural artifacts such as folktales, folklore, customs, and languages. From Karl Marx, Vygotsky borrowed the notion that nothing is permanent—phenomena need to be studied as processes in motion and in change. Vygotsky (1962) developed the notion of language, writing, and numbering systems as tools created by human societies for purposes of transforming and promoting individual and cultural development. In other words, throughout history, cultures have developed a series of signs and symbols that aid in the development and functioning of higher cognitive abilities of each generation. For example, human thought is shaped and formed through societal and historical development. In order to communicate those tools from one generation to the next, parents and other adults need to have social interactions with children. Wertsch (1981) noted that a key concept concerning Vygotsky's ideas on the importance of social interaction is that it provided a means, usually through speech, where a child used and internalized problem solving and memory.

Vygotsky's views on the social nature of learning had strong influence on this study. To facilitate instructional conversations during discussion as exploration, students were placed in learning communities where they could talk about and explore literature in group settings.

The Zone of Proximal Development

For many of today's educators, Vygotsky's name is most associated with the zone of proximal development. In *Mind and Society* (Vygotsky, 1978) he clearly described his views concerning learning and development. To him, the mind is not a complex network of general capabilities such as observation, attention, memory, and judgment, but a set of specific capabilities. These capabilities develop independently—learning is the ability to think and to apply specialized processes for specific situations. Further, learning and development are interrelated from the child's very first day of life.

Vygotsky (1978) created a new term, the zone of proximal development, to explain his theory about social interactions and the nature of learning. The zone was described 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 believed that instruction should take place within the zone with substantial amounts of interaction and communication between adults (or more capable peers) and learners.

Vygotsky's writings about the zone of proximal development has also given educators a rationale for why children need social interaction. Bruner (1962) remarked that "Vygotsky's view of development is at the same time a theory of education" (p. v). In addition, Vygotsky's writings, concerning the

social nature of learning, has provided theory used by modern neo-Vygotskians to explain models of instruction based on interaction between individuals (see Clay, 1991; Goodman & Goodman, 1990; McLane, 1990; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993; Wells, 1990). The term *scaffolding* has been used by these scholars to describe Vygotsky's notion that adults (or more capable peers) can support and help students with learning, until students become more capable.

Clay's Application of Vygotskian Theory

Vygotsky (1978) suggested that any type of learning a child does in school already has had a previous history; those involved with schooling must be aware of this learning and build upon it. Marie Clay (1991) described the importance of educators recognizing the type, format, and amount of pre-formal school learning that takes place. She depicted how many young learners frequently have experienced holistic types of learning prior to schooling. For many youngsters, entrance into formal schooling is traumatic because of an abrupt change in learning conditions and environments. Clay encouraged educators to consider the holistic nature of learning prior to schooling and to provide formal school and classroom activities which make a smoother transition for the learner. Her writings have acknowledged Vygotsky's (1978) statement, "It goes without saying that learning as it occurs in the preschool years differs markedly from school learning" (p. 84).

Reading Recovery (Clay, 1979) was an early intervention program for poor readers which owed much of its basic theory to Vygotsky. Clay and Casden (1990) have suggested a Vygotskian interpretation of Reading Recovery as a system of social interactions organized around the comprehension of texts which allow for greater cognitive activity by the child. Central to Reading Recovery is the one-to-one interaction between student and teacher. The teacher's role is to provide interactional support, often in the form of dialogue, for the student. Zones of proximal development are established during frequent tutoring sessions. In the broader sense, the teacher is also working with the student to promote greater competency of symbolic (tool) uses of language via reading and writing.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory also was helpful in providing a reason for encouraging student interactions during implementation of discussion as exploration. During oral reading segments and discussion times, more capable peers assisted less capable ones as they read and talked about individual interpretations of their reading. Another reason for encouraging student-led discussions was that the classroom teacher was free to help less able students with their reading on a one-to-one basis.

Whole Language and Vygotskian Theory

Other contemporary scholars have also been heavily influenced by Vygotsky's view and theories. Goodman and Goodman (1990) explained that Vygotskian theory enabled whole-language teachers to articulate the

principles and beliefs underlying the whole-language movement. Key elements of whole-language philosophy concerning social contexts, literacy development, and learning in and out of school draw heavily on Vygotskian thought.

For instructional purposes, whole-language teachers frequently use a variety of student groupings designed to facilitate construction of meaning and give ownership over tasks at hand. "A basic tenet of whole language is that kids learn when they are in control of their learning and know that they are in control" (Goodman & Goodman, 1990, p. 226). Clearly, the notion of students learning by engaging in meaningful conversations about language can be supported by the Vygotskian view that learning is based on social interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978).

The whole-language view of literacy development asserts that language processes are most easily learned in the context of use. Children growing up in literate societies are surrounded by print and become aware of the functions of written language long before they enter school. The whole-language teacher's job is to assess what knowledge the child has about print. Once this knowledge is identified, the teacher can teach new language concepts that build upon those already learned. "The teacher invites the participation of the learners and supports their transactions with language and the world" (Goodman & Goodman, 1990, p. 225). This position fully articulates the role of the teacher during discussion as exploration.

Children's Play as a Springboard for Writing

In *Mind and Society* Vygotsky (1978) explored the nature of children's play. In play, children exercise their imaginations and explore roles common to adult society. Vygotskian theory suggests that play, itself, mediates the learning of children. "In social play, children transact with each other, mediating each other's learning. They learn to understand the meanings of the world as they play with their representations of the world" (Goodman & Goodman, 1990, p. 228).

McLane (1990) described how children's natural playful experiences turned writing into a social experience. She stated that the teaching of writing should be done in such a way that the student sees writing as necessary for communication. Vygotsky, she pointed out, was highly critical of teaching writing as a set of mechanical and technical skills.

McLane looked at young children in a variety of social settings and considered their writing as an element of play. She was especially interested in exploring the Vygotskian idea that make-believe play, drawing, and writing could be viewed as different moments in an essentially unified process of development of written language.

During initial stages of her research, McLane established writing activities that engaged students' interests by helping them see how writing could serve their needs. She found her students increasingly willing to write if they were allowed to control their own subject matter and write about it as

they wished, and if an adult were available for encouragement and support while they wrote. It was especially necessary for adults to be accepting of the (a) students' choice of topic, (b) messy handwriting, (c) inventive spellings, and (d) unconventional use of grammar and punctuation.

McLane found that writing and play are linked for young children. Frequently, her students would draw pictures and then write about those pictures. Often, pictures and conventional print would be used in combination to produce the writer's unique mixed medium. After experimenting with nonconventional forms, many students began to use more conventional forms of pictures, with captions for those pictures—demonstrating knowledge about conventional forms of print and illustrations. Eventually, the students used their writing "as a means of exploring, testing, conducting, and commenting on their social relationships" (McLane, 1990, p. 312).

McLane's work illustrates application of several of Vygotsky's theories. First, scaffolding was used to support students' writing experiences. Second, students were allowed to talk to themselves, each other, and adults in acknowledgment of the social nature of learning. This built a sense of community in the writers. "Students reacted to each other's writing with interest, enthusiasm, amusement and sometimes outrage" (p. 315). Third, the tool uses of formal written language were viewed as highly demanding activities requiring sociocultural knowledge to master conventional uses of

print. Young writers, McLane found, needed lots of practice in playful kinds of writing and experimentation with nonconventional forms in order to master and understand standard writing forms.

As with McLane's study, implementation of discussion as exploration in this study, created a social context where participants used language skills as tools. The fifth-grade participants in this author's investigation were required to listen, discuss, and disagree with each other as they formed interpretations of text. They were also engaged in using language (speaking, listening, and writing) as a tool to improve their literary conversations.

Reciprocal Teaching in the Zone of Proximal Development

Another example of scholars using Vygotskian theory as a basis for applied research is Palincsar's and Brown's (1984) research on a teaching model embedding strategic elements of (a) prediction, (b) question generation, (c) summarization, and (d) clarification within a small-group setting. They referred to their model as reciprocal teaching in acknowledgment of the interactions which occurred between individuals as they responded or reacted during instruction. An important component of the model was the role of dialogue between the teacher and students, and students to students as peer tutor/tutees. Palincsar (1986) stated, "Reciprocal teaching is best represented as a dialogue between teachers and students in which participants take turn assuming the role of teacher" (p. 77). Results of their initial study showed (a)

junior high students' ability to summarize, predict, question, and clarify were improved, (b) there were large, reliable, and durable gains on comprehension measures, and (c) use of the strategies generalized to other classroom settings and instructional tasks.

Palincsar (1986) sought to explore the role of dialogue as a means of scaffolding instruction in peer interaction models such as reciprocal teaching. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) described scaffolding as "a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). The central goal of scaffolding is to move students to less structured contexts requiring less aid. Scaffolding is a direct teaching application of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Palincsar (1986) described dialogue, which places students in the "teaching-learning process" (p. 75), as an aide to higher thought processes. The very act of having to converse, explain, and respond engaged students in problem solving behaviors. Palincsar stated the best way to teach students about the role of dialogue was to engage them in a peer interaction model such as reciprocal teaching where the teacher first modeled the behavior, thought aloud about her mental process, and gave students time to practice and polish their own interactions based on the notion of scaffolding.

Furthering their research on reciprocal teaching, Palincsar, Brown, and Martin (1987) studied peer interaction during instruction on reading comprehension. Specifically, they wanted to investigate "reciprocal teaching

in the context of peer tutoring" (p. 232). In order to most effectively teach knowledge about predicting, question generating, summarizing, and clarifying, the teacher engaged students in dialogue about these reading comprehension processes. Again, Vygotskian thought provided much of the theoretical base for why reciprocal teaching would be a sound instructional model. Students who acted as tutors were selected because they were more capable. In Vygotskian context, they became "helpful others" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Both tutors and tutees continued to move to higher zones of proximal development as their abilities increased.

In discussing the findings of their investigation, Palincsar et al. (1987) report their work was quite successful. Possible reasons for this were (a) the high amount of student engagement during peer interaction, (b) joint discussions between tutors and tutees enabled a joint construction of meaning—"a direct application of Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of individual cognition," (p. 249)—and (c) students being able to positively interact with each other during class time. Lysynchuk, Pressley, and Vye (1990) sought to replicate findings using an empirically designed study. Their findings found similar standardized effects.

The work of Palincsar and Brown helped to describe and articulate an application of the zone of proximal development theory. Peers helping other

peers also became a key theoretical principle guiding the implementation of discussion as exploration.

The Nature of Talk in the Zone of Proximal Development

Smagorinsky and Fly (1993) asserted that many reading and language arts scholars interested in improving reading and language arts instruction, via small group discussions, have relied on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development as the theoretical base for their work. They suggested that small group discussion enabled students to rely on personal knowledge and experience to provide a context for reading. Personal knowledge and experience also expedited the use of question-generation strategies, initially taught by the teacher, which were crucial to deeper understanding of the text. Their exploratory study examined the importance of talk as a means of providing scaffolding.

During their study, four groups of students participated in teacher-directed discussions. The purpose of these discussions was to enable teachers to model for their students how to analyze a short story. Analysis of transcripts of the taped settings indicated that when teachers actively engaged students in teacher-led analysis of a short story, students' ability to analyze other stories transferred to different settings. Conversely, when teachers failed to engage students in teacher-led analysis, students were unable to transfer that analysis strategy to other group discussions. This study suggested that

teachers who want to initiate group discussions in their classrooms must be engaging students with traditional instructional methods and then model for students the procedures of group discussion.

Smagorinsky and Fly's study was important in providing a guiding principle for this author's investigation. Student participants needed to be engaged in traditional forms of literature teaching before any attempt was made to model discussion as exploration.

Literacy and Cultural Apprenticeship

Wells (1990) described literacy learning as a cultural apprenticeship. He relied on Vygotsky's sociohistoric theory to provide descriptions of how reading skills were transmitted through cultural means. Reading, a symbolic act, requires readers to engage with written forms of language. Wells identified five modes of engaging with written text: (a) physical form—reading to decode printed text, (b) functional reading—reading to gain information embedded explicitly in the text, (c) informational reading—reading to gain information about a topic, (d) recreational reading—reading for the sheer pleasure of reading, and (e) epistemic reading—reading to establish truth about the reliability of the author's work. In epistemic reading, readers realize that when one reads a piece of text someone else has written, one must consider alternative interpretations and look for internal (text implicit) sources of evidence to support the interpretation.

Wells argued that epistemic reading fully exploited the potential of literacy to empower the thinking of those who use it. He described cultural apprenticeship, through discussion, as an effective means to encourage epistemic reading. According to Wells, forms of discussion such as (a) teacher-talk about the text being read, (b) shared readings, (c) oral presentations, and (d) brainstorming were applications of Vygotskian theory. These discussions were highly interactive elements of a reading program utilizing cultural apprenticeship.

Wells' description of the forms of discussion illustrates the application of Vygotskian theory for the author's study. Discussion as exploration provided a forum for student participants to engage in shared readings, student/teacher talk, and brainstorming about possible interpretations about text. Discussion as exploration is an illustration of cultural apprenticeship.

Discussion as Exploration in Light of Vygotsky

In reviewing the literature associated with contemporary scholars who use Vygotsky's sociohistoric theory as a theoretical orientation for their work, one is struck by the diverse backgrounds of those who cite Vygotsky. Interestingly, Louise Rosenblatt probably was not familiar with Vygotsky's work when *Literature as Exploration* was first published in 1938. Indeed, *Thought and Language* was first translated in English in 1962, and *Mind in Society* in 1978. Although many of today's educators are familiar with these

two seminal works, one notes that they only scratch the surface of Vygotsky's labor, and that of his followers.

Judith Langer does cite Vygotsky in her writings. To her, Vygotskian theory provides a rationale for placing students in small literature response groups to facilitate sociocognitive learning. She also described literature learning as a "cognitive apprenticeship" (Langer, 1991a, p. 2). In seeking to implement Langer's (1991b) discussion as exploration in an elementary classroom, this study relied heavily on Vygotsky's views on the social nature of learning. Also, his beliefs concerning how instruction should take place in students' individual zones of proximal development provided theoretical support for more capable peers leading less capable ones to higher levels of literary understandings through literature discussion.

Summary

Lev Vygotsky's sociohistoric approach to psychology has provided educators with a theoretical orientation for many contemporary instructional practices and beliefs. Some of these include (a) placing students in small groups thus creating learning communities whose members probe, discuss, and clarify their understandings; (b) using more capable peers for instructing, supporting, and helping less capable ones; (c) recognizing that children's playful activity can be used with writing experiences to promote individual understandings and meanings of complex adult society; and (d) realizing that all children approach schooling with historic-cultural perspectives taught to

them by significant others in their lives. This study relied heavily on Vygotsky's work as a theoretical perspective supporting the use of discussion with elementary-age students.

Louise Rosenblatt and the Aesthetic

Literary Experience

Literature as Exploration (Rosenblatt, 1983) is the seminal work defining the role of discussion in literature learning, the role of the instructor in the literature class, and reading as a transaction between the reader and text. Central to the understanding of Rosenblatt's work is the literary experience.

To Rosenblatt, literary experiences are transactions of knowledge between readers and printed texts. A novel, poem, or short story will remain inkblots on a page until given life and meaning by readers. The understanding, background knowledge, insight, and perceptions of readers act as filters contributing to understandings and interpretations of text. The literature teacher's job is to create an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of ideas and to improve readers' capacity to evoke meaning from text. The realization of a literary work (creation of meaning in the mind of the reader) depends on an active reader who builds and creates meaning. Readers must be actively exploring, questioning, interpreting, and defending their interpretations from the moment they begin to read. This transactional view

of reading also acknowledges that different readings in different settings may also produce different interpretations of the same text. Thus, any rereading of the text will serve to enhance an individual's perception and understanding.

In no way does transaction theory state that the individual's interpretation of the text is always appropriate or correct. Rosenblatt suggested that there are, indeed, certain passages of text with which the reader must remain faithful to standard interpretation. Naive interpretations may serve as primary frameworks where teachers may induce students to reexamine an interpretation, defend it, or foster additional readings to clarify their interpretation. Nevertheless, many great works of literature have text which permit a wide-range of interpretation.

Because the reader's role is an active, not passive, constructor of meaning, assignments such as reflective writing serve to help refine and clarify interpretation. Literature as exploration encourages readers to become reflective writers. Literature response logs are one way to promote student reflection after group discussion.

Rosenblatt (1983) explained that readers may read text for two purposes, efferent and aesthetic. Efferent reading describes that which the reader takes away from the text. Often efferent reading is used to extract literal meanings or specific knowledge embedded in the text. A teacher who gives students assignments hoping to elicit a specific response or interpretation of the text is engaging students in efferent reading. Aesthetic reading, on the other hand,

refers to the thoughts, feelings, images, and associations the reader has. It is the affective side of the literary experience. Because many of our reading teachers focus on efferent reading, Rosenblatt believes that we do our students great injustice by not also providing reading instruction so as to promote the aesthetic reading experience. Too often, readers miss the aesthetic experience of literature in order to outguess the instructor. The role of the literature teacher is to break the artificial barrier between students and the literary experience. The classroom should reflect a learning community where friendly informal exchange is fostered and students are encouraged to explore interpretations, to make value judgments, and reveal depth of emotions.

Literature as exploration and the aesthetic literary experience stand in contrast to what has been termed the new critical theory. This theory calls for a close reading of the text, with particular emphasis on the narrator, the point of view, and the *correct interpretation*. Early proponents of critical theory (Brooks, 1947; Welleck & Warren, 1940) suggested that the literary work itself exists apart from the reader. The classroom teacher becomes the scholarly interpreter of the text. Thus, interpretation involves careful textual analyses based on scholarly study where the message of a text is carefully extracted by the reader. To Rosenblatt (1994), this is an efferent reading activity; students

may miss the aesthetics during such an activity. Unfortunately, critical theory remains a dominant force in literary instruction today (Langer, 1991b).

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory

Rosenblatt (1994) described how a decade of teaching college students about how readers make meanings out of novels led her to discover that she had developed a new theoretical model to describe reading comprehension. Her view of reading comprehension as a transaction between readers and text is in contrast to a positivist view of how individuals relate to the world around them. This positivist view, espoused by Descartes three hundred years ago and still with us, sees the individual self as separate from the objective world perceived. Instead, Rosenblatt believed, human beings are part of nature, continuously in transaction with the environment. Human activities are, therefore, transactions in which individuals and social elements fuse with cultural and natural elements. Language, which used to be viewed as a self-contained system or code, is now regarded as a tool used by human beings transacting within particular environments. "We make sense of a new situation or transaction and make new meanings by applying, reorganizing, revising, or extending elements selected from our personal linguistic experiential reservoirs" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 1061).

Face-to-face conversations are temporary activities where each speaker draws on a particular linguistic-experiential reservoir. In addition, specific situations, settings, and occasions provide clues for conversational

boundaries or general frameworks. Reading may also be thought of as a face-to-face conversation. In this case, though, reading is a conversation between the author (via printed text) and the reader (the constructor of meaning) in a given situation (the context of the reading). "The reader focuses attention on and transacts with an element in the environment, namely the signs on the page, the text" (p. 1061). Every act of reading involves a new context and a new transaction between readers and text. Hence, rereading a selection involves the creation of a new transaction.

Galda (1988) has been heavily influenced by Rosenblatt's transactional theory of comprehension as a vehicle for literary exploration and discussion. To her, responding to literature is a highly complex act involving readers, texts, and contexts. How one responds to literature, making the text personal and giving the reader a sense of satisfaction, is influenced by many factors.

Readers often approach text with a variety of personal experience—knowledge about various topics, where they have been, people they know, and attitudes they have formed. These interact with various aspects of the text being read. If text is easy and tends to present literal information, even diverse readers will be consistent in their interpretations of that text. However, most texts have subtleties and nuances which lend to a variety of interpretations and understandings. Almost all good literature uses figurative, descriptive, and imaginative language which promotes inferencing on the part of the reader. Additionally, the transaction that occurs

between the reader and the text takes place in contextual settings, often in formal school settings guided by teachers. Classrooms where teachers provide safe environments for discussion, collaboration, and encouragement promote feelings of community among readers. When such a feeling of community is present, readers can explore and contrast various interpretations of text to gain deeper understandings and literature.

Unfortunately, teachers often seem most interested in *effere*nt reading (reading as a means of taking information from text), rather than *aesthetic* reading (reading as a personal and emotional reaction to text). If teachers continually ask closed-convergent types of questions about students' reading, Galda hypothesized that this leads students to believe that reading literature is *effere*nt in nature, rather than aesthetic. In addition, the common act of providing students with guiding questions, prior to reading, to set purpose and focus student attention often interferes with the aesthetic experience many teachers desire to foster.

As noted, the construction of meaning is a complex act between the reader, the text, and the context of reading. Galda believed that while teachers may unintentionally limit student responses, they may also extend opportunities for response and reflection by (a) providing an environment filled with opportunities to read, reflect, and respond to literature; (b) promoting a safe, secure environment where readers understand and appreciate individual differences and want to explore and compare responses;

and (c) providing time and encouragement for responding to literature in a variety of creative ways such as small-group discussion, reflection writing, art, and drama.

Galda (1988) stated, "No longer is it enough to discuss literature as though one were on a treasure hunt, a hunt for an author's or teachers' intended meaning" (p. 100). Teachers must be sensitive to the needs of readers and the structures of texts within various classroom contexts.

Aligning Rosenblatt's Theories with Current Practice

While Rosenblatt's work has had a profound impact on the teaching of literature in the secondary schools, Dias (1992) suggested that Rosenblatt's work needs to be realigned with current classroom practices and constraints. School culture and organizational patterns may, in fact, work against the development of autonomous readers and subvert the aesthetic reading experience. For example, the organizational pattern of literature classes where discussion takes place in relatively set blocks of time may convince readers that reflection on readings is largely a school assignment rather than a real-world type of reading activity. In addition, teachers faced with several periods of literature instruction, lack of materials, overcrowded classrooms, and other perennial school problems may choose to teach correct answers rather than spending time on reflective assignments. Dias further stated that the whole-class method of instruction is a format detrimental to individual

understanding and interpretation of text. Because readers' expectations act as powerful filters to the learning process, students faced with large, impersonal grouping patterns in the literature class may regard such classrooms as inhospitable to deep, personal, and aesthetic experiences.

Dias sought to align Rosenblatt's theories with current instructional practices in the elementary school. He proposed that literature instruction follow these four principles: (a) using talk as a valuable means of articulating and developing one's response, (b) using collaborative exchange within a small group helps readers to refine and clarify their responses, (c) the teacher ought to withdraw from the forefront of classroom activity and assign students responsibility for constructing meanings and acknowledging contributions of others, and (d) meaning is a dynamic entity that shifts with newer readings and contributions of others.

In proposing these four principles, Dias has not detailed a specific model of literary instruction. Rather, these principles provide teachers with a conceptual framework for organizing instruction. This framework relied on the theoretical writings of Vygotsky discussed earlier in this review.

Summary

Louise Rosenblatt's seminal work, *Literature as Exploration*, has encouraged contemporary scholars interested in literature instruction to consider reading comprehension as a transaction between the reader and text. Her description of literature learning as being aesthetic in nature, rather than

efferent, has encouraged the use of literary teaching models that seek to promote the aesthetic experience within small group discussions.

The theories of Rosenblatt (1983; 1994), Dias (1992), and Galda (1988) have provided a strong rationale and a theoretical base for this study. Elementary teachers often speak of the twin goals of reading instruction as (a) providing students with the ability to use reading as a functional tool for every day life and (b) developing a love for reading, which fosters life-long literacy (Searfoss & Readance, 1994). Rosenblatt wrote that too often teachers are concerned with only efferent (functional) aspects of reading. This study sought to explore a model of literature instruction designed to promote an aesthetic literary experience which is so necessary to develop a life-long love of reading. In the following section, the work of contemporary scholars investigating various aspects of literature instruction pertaining to the aesthetic literary experience is reviewed.

Discussion as a Means for Exploring Literature

Judith Langer at the National Research Center for Literature Teaching and Learning at the State University of New York at Albany is a researcher interested in improving literature instruction by redefining theories related to teaching and instructional processes. Her work, primarily involving secondary language arts instruction, provides valuable insight into literature instructional processes which may be highly useful for elementary teachers.

Langer (1991b) stated that most literature instructional models still follow the new critical theory. She explains that this theory of literature instruction is text-based with the teacher serving as knowledge holder, monitor, and evaluator. She believes instead that newer models of literature instruction need to be based on cognitive views that meaning resides in interactions between text and reader. In this perspective, readers become active constructors of meaning with personal knowledge, beliefs, and histories, which affect responses and interpretations. This view allows readers to create many different defensible interpretations of the text, all of which may be appropriate.

Langer described key principles that will foster a learning environment that encourages thinking about literature: (a) students must be treated as thinkers and seen as active makers of meaning, (b) the understanding of a piece of literature involves raising of questions, (c) students' knowledge about the content of the literature needs to be tapped to prompt extended language and thought, (d) class meetings and discussions are time to support the process of understanding and the building of personal interpretations, (e) instruction must be scaffolded to students' levels of understanding, (f) there must be a transfer of control from teachers to students, and (g) grouping patterns from whole-class to small groups need to encourage interaction and collaboration.

An elementary teacher who wants to teach a novel using a constructivist model as the basis for instruction will find Langer's research valuable in articulating key principles underlying literature instruction. These principles can also be taught in methods courses and can become frameworks that teachers internalize and use to make daily decision about their own literature teaching.

To implement the instructional principles presented above, Langer promoted the use of discussion as a means of exploring literature. Gilles (1989) also felt that discussion is a catalyst which will encourage students, particularly adolescents, to delve deeper into personal meanings. She stated that for many students school is an intensely social experience where students need to talk to their peers. Yet in many classrooms teachers demand silence. Gilles argued that students need to be invited to discuss their reading seriously, tie it into their personal life-experiences, and take charge of analyzing, criticizing, and making meaning from reading assignments. A perusal of the literature confirmed that other researchers are also keenly interested in instructional conversations or discussions.

Grand Conversations

Eeds and Wells (1989) explored how children constructed meaning from novels in the context of literature study groups. They used the term grand conversations to describe their ideal of student-led discussion. Rosenblatt's transactional theory, cited above, provided the theoretical base

for their study. They were particularly interested in shifting the role of the teacher from gentle inquisitor to grand conversation facilitator. In this naturalistic study, groups of fifth and sixth graders were placed in literature response groups led by 17 college undergraduate students participating in reading methods courses. Student participants were allowed to select which literature study group to join and then were given 2 days per week, 30 minutes per day, for the purpose of discussing their reading. The college students, acting as discussion facilitators, were trained for one quarter in their methods courses how to promote discussion among participants, rather than being monitors of reading comprehension. Data collection relied on researcher fieldnotes, transcripts of taped sessions, and teacher journals.

The transcripts of taped sessions totaled 225 typewritten pages. After extensive analysis, five qualitative categories of conversations emerged: (a) conversation maintenance, those remarks which initiated conversation, or which kept conversation going, (b) involvement, those remarks in which participants indicated a personal association or response to text, (c) literal comprehension, those comments involving literal retellings, descriptions, and reiterated facts, (d) inference, those comments which seemed to require elaboration of participants, and (e) evaluation, those comments which expressed judgment on the part of the readers. Detailed analysis of the transcripts showed many interesting patterns among participants as to which conversational groups were successful and which were not. Analysis also

revealed that when the college facilitators did not promote dialogue designed to monitor comprehension, students frequently reacted as though they did; a possible result of past socialization patterns of elementary reading instruction. Eeds and Wells noted that the mere quantification of their data "does not address the essence of what occurred in these literature study groups" (p. 14).

The essence that emerged to the researchers was that even very young elementary-age children were capable of (a) articulating their opinions and beliefs about the meaning of texts, (b) sharing personal stories, or personally identifying with themes, characters, or plots of novels, (c) participating as active readers by predicting, hypothesizing, and readjusting those predictions and hypotheses when pertinent information is presented from the text, and (d) showing that they had gained insights about how authors communicate messages via text. Eeds and Wells felt their study confirmed the notion that talk helps to confirm, extend, and modify individual interpretations of text when presented with differing views or insights.

Making Connections Through Text Sets

Short (1991) described a curricular strategy that encourages readers to make connections across literature and life with text sets (groups of books clustered around authors, themes, or related ideas). The use of text sets, she asserted, enables readers to search for connections and develop deeper

understandings about a group of books while engaging in student-led discussions.

To investigate these claims, Short and two classroom teachers sought to explore the types of student dialogue that took place as students read and discussed their text sets. During their study, two groups of students (from the third and sixth grades) selected text sets which interested them. The teachers and researcher acted together in designing, implementing, collecting data, and completing analysis of what occurred.

In reporting the effects of using text sets in third-grade and sixth-grade classrooms, Short and her colleagues noted that student-led discussions allowed for a greater range of interpretations of literature and fostered student pride and ownership of those interpretations. Indeed, students frequently would become experts on the theme, or related ideas, of the text set. When students were engaged in discussing text sets, they focused on making connections with the sets by (a) looking at elements of the story, (b) discussing illustrations, (c) investigating the life or the work of the authors, (d) connecting personal life-experiences with the texts, and (e) discussing new ideas and experiences described in the texts.

After discussions were finished, readers presented their ideas and interpretations of texts, as well as how they personally connected with themes, ideas, or messages in them. The text set approach promoted student choice, both in selecting and responding to books. Additionally, the

discussional nature of the activity promoted learning in social contexts. Long-term effects of the strategy included student awareness of the need to make connections between themes and ideas of related texts.

Discussion and the Construction of Meaning

Leal (1992) investigated how children in first, third, and fifth grades constructed meaning with various types of text. The purpose of her exploratory study was to examine the nature of children's discussion as they interacted with story books, information books, and informational story books in a collaborative setting. All children bring to the reading event knowledge about the topic of the text being read and knowledge about text structure. Leal was concerned with what types of prior knowledge and sources of information children use in constructing meaning. In addition, she felt that placing students in peer groupings where they examined, expressed, and discussed interpretations also would influence the construction of meaning.

For the purpose of study, Leal placed students in small peer discussion groups, presented three different texts described above, and asked students to talk and discuss their ideas about each of the stories. Qualitative analysis of children's talk in peer response groups showed that older students were better at (a) using multiple sources of information to make judgments about the text, (b) maintaining conversations focusing on topics related to text, (c) acknowledging contributions made by others in the group, and (d) making

more explanations and speculations about the text. Interestingly, of the three types of books used (story books, information books, and informational story books), students at all three grade levels delved deeper into conversations when informational story books were used for text. Leal speculated that this was due to the presentation of factual information in a story setting. For many elementary-age readers this mixing of genres causes uncertainty concerning the organization of the text and the accuracy of information presented. She concluded her study with a recommendation that more informational story books be included in reading instruction to help older students deal with textual ambiguity.

Instructional Conversations

Goldenberg (1992/1993) wrote that real teaching involves helping students think, reason, comprehend, and understand important ideas. To him, instructional conversations are tools thoughtful teachers will use to stimulate children to think, reexamine, and reflect on learning. Goldenberg stated that instructional conversations are notable not only for their desirable attributes, but also for their rarity. High quality conversations may appear deceptively simple on the surface.

Instructional conversations need to be interesting and engaging, have meaning and relevance for students, have a central theme or focus, and instill a high level of student participation (Eeds & Wells, 1989). Additionally, students who engage in frequent instructional conversations are more likely

to speak more often, more spontaneously, interrupt each other, and be more likely to disagree with their teacher's interpretation of text (Goldenberg & Patthey-Chavez, in press). The role of the teacher is a facilitator designing classroom instruction which encourages students to decide upon discussion topics, develop and elaborate thoughts and ideas, and promote reflection time. To do this, sometimes the teacher questions, probes, challenges, coaxes, or keeps quiet. Goldenberg (1992/1993) focused on two key elements of conversations (a) instructional components, and (b) conversational components.

Instructional elements involve (a) thematic focus, (b) activation and use of background schemata, (c) direct teaching, (d) promotion of more complex language and expressions, and (e) elicitation of bases for statements or positions. Conversational elements include (a) fewer known-answer questions; (b) responsive to student contribution; (c) connected discourse; (d) challenging, but non threatening atmosphere; and (e) general participation including self-selected turns. Goldenberg and Patthey-Chavez (in press) further delineated that some conversational elements (e.g., thematic focus and activation and use of background schemata) need to take place prior to reading, and other elements need to take place after reading (elicitation of bases for statements or positions).

Goldenberg (1992/1993) provided elementary literature teachers with a type of framework for structuring literature classes to promote better

discussion. This is important because while discussion as exploration encourages teachers to shift the responsibility of literary interpretation to the student via discussion, Langer (1991a) has not detailed precisely what the precise instructional components of discussion as exploration are.

A Strategy for Implementing Newer Models of Literacy Instruction

Matlin and Short (1991) described a strategy for helping teachers implement new reading instructional models such as grand conversations. Their strategy involved getting teachers to participate in teacher study groups. These groups enabled teachers to have an opportunity to think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify professional and personal needs, as well as develop literacy innovations for their classrooms.

To get the groups going, school principals interested in changing literacy programs facilitated biweekly meeting times throughout the school year. Teachers set agendas, helped each other plan lesson materials, and supported each other as they implemented newer forms of literacy instruction. Analysis of one of the teacher study groups showed that teachers were able to identify conflicts about literacy learning within their own belief systems and develop alternative strategies to deal with those conflicts. One teacher described it thus, "We're changing our basic ways of thinking, not just

adding a new activity. This is the scariest and most exciting thinking I have ever done" (p. 68).

In conclusion, scholars interested in literacy learning have emphasized the use of student-led conversations, reflection writing, and teacher support of the process. Because the scholars interested in investigating conversations have not detailed discussion prompts, or precisely described what teachers ought to do to get the process started, a strategy for identifying discussion prompts via story mapping is presented in the next section of the literature review.

Story Mapping as a Means of Initiating Conversations

Beck and McKeown (1981) described a method for developing questions to focus discussion on key elements of stories. Although their research in the early 1980s correlated to structural approaches to reading via story grammars, their analysis of short stories also provided a framework for analysis of important key elements of longer units of text, such as a novel. Once the teacher has determined key elements and turning points of the narrative, focus questions may be developed for initiating student conversations, which focus on important elements they may miss.

The procedure for identifying key elements of a story is to create a story map. The map serves to provide the teacher with a unified representation of

a text based on the logical organization of events, ideas of central importance, and interrelationships of these events and ideas. To start a map, teachers need to define, based on intuition as a mature readers, the starting point of a story. Then, they list the major events and ideas that constitute the plot or gist of the story. Major emphasis must then be placed on the links between events and ideas that unify the narrative. Finally, the teacher must generate questions which elicit the information presented at key points during the narrative. After the story map has been created and questions generated, the teacher can facilitate conversations with broad-based questions which create contexts for interpreting ideals, exploring general themes, or probing students to reread and develop further understandings of the narrative.

In seeking to promote better literature conversations, teachers can use Beck and McKeown's story map as an aide in generating initial questions for the beginning of students' literary conferences. It is also important that teachers have some help in interpreting and understanding the various written responses generated by students during their reflective writing assignments. The use of literary stances as means of understanding students literary understanding is presented in the next section.

Literary Stances and Student Interpretations of Text

Currently, many scholars interested in literature research are investigating the sophistication of students' interpretations of text via what is

termed literary stances. A literary stance was defined by Many (1991) as the ways in which the reader relates to the text.

Cox and Many (1989) analyzed the written responses of 38 above-average fifth grade students. They found that there is a significant relationship between which stance a reader is in, and the level of understanding that reader has after reading a literary selection. The highest levels of understanding were achieved with students who were engaged in aesthetic reading.

Langer (1990) has also investigated literary stances taken by secondary students. In a study of the free recalls of 36 secondary readers, 216 protocols were collected and analyzed revealing that four distinct, reoccurring stances were present. These four stances represent different dimensions of literary understanding. They are (a) being out and stepping into an envisionment, (b) being in and moving through an envisionment, (c) stepping back and rethinking what one knows, and (d) stepping out and objectifying the experience.

Stance (a), being out and stepping into an envisionment, refers to the reader's attempt to understand the text by using prior knowledge and surface features to identify essential elements: genre, structure, content and language. At this level, readers are attempting to build the world of the narrative.

Stance (b), being in and moving through an envisionment, refers to readers who are immersed in their own understandings using previously

constructed envisionments to further their creation of meaning. As they read, readers are caught up in the narrative of the story continuing to build envisionments and personal knowledge.

Stance (c), stepping back and rethinking what one knows, refers to readers who compare their initial envisionments to new information in the text and who rethink previously held ideas and beliefs. At this point readers decide if their initial perspective holds true with additional information presented in the narrative.

Stance (d), stepping out and objectifying the experience, refers to readers distancing themselves from the text to analyze their feelings about the narrative or reading experience. Typically, readers make value judgments about the work, the author, or the reading experience. Langer's research on stances provides a structure for examining students' literary understandings.

Summary

The work of Lev Vygotsky, Louise Rosenblatt, and Judith Langer has provided this study with firm theoretical orientation as to the appropriateness of using discussion as exploration as a paradigm for elementary literature instruction. The work of these scholars, as well as other current researchers, has been reviewed relating to rationale for using peer discussion, reflection writing, and teacher acting as facilitator for literature instruction. In addition, a strategy for initiating students' literary discussion

via story mapping; and a way of examining dimensions of students' literary understandings with investigation of literary stances was described.

The sociohistoric theory of Lev Vygotsky described (a) the social nature of learning, (b) the prehistory of students' preformal schooling, (c) a theory of instruction (the zone of proximal development), and (d) the role of children's play in developing understanding of the adult world. Clay and Casden (1990), Goodman and Goodman (1990), McLane (1990), Palincsar and Brown (1984), and Smagorinsky and Fly (1993) provided examples of current application of Vygotskian theory.

Louise Rosenblatt's seminal work, *Literature as Exploration*, which provides much of the basic theory and rationale for today's literature instructional models, was reviewed. This work, along with her transactional theory of reading comprehension, laid the foundation for many contemporary scholarly views of reading instruction. The work of Dias (1992) and Galda (1988), who attempted to align and conceptualize teaching methods based on Rosenblatt's theories, was also reviewed.

Judith Langer's paradigm of literature instruction, discussion as exploration, was described. This paradigm provided instructional components of this study. Key elements of the paradigm include (a) placing students in literature response groups, (b) using reflection writing as a way of responding to literature, and (c) redefining the teacher's role to be a facilitator of instructional conversations. Finally, Langer's description of literary stances

was reviewed. Her four stances were used in this study to investigate the sophistication of students' literary understanding.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Several research methods were used to investigate the effects of incorporating a secondary English teaching paradigm, discussion as exploration, in an elementary school setting. For the purpose of study, a fifth-grade class in a school located in the Rocky Mountain Region of the United States was selected as the research site. Twenty-five regularly assigned students constituted subjects for this investigation. The researcher and the students' classroom teacher acted as coparticipant observers who made pedagogical decisions, classroom observations, and interpretations of the data recorded. The investigation took place from mid-March to the middle of April 1995.

Design of the Study

The study was designed to gather data using a combination of qualitative, experimental, and survey research methods. Qualitative data were collected by ethnographic participant observation. Experimental research was used to investigate students' literary stances by embedding an A|B|A|B single-subject phase withdrawal component. And, several surveys were used to gather additional data about participants. It was felt that by using a variety

of research methods, the researcher could gain added insight and understanding about what was occurring during implementation of discussion as exploration. In the Design Rationale section, additional reasons for using these research methods are discussed. Each of the research methods used in this study is presented and described below.

As identified earlier, four guiding questions were used to focus the investigation: (a) what events are happening as the teacher incorporates discussion as exploration while using a class novel, (b) how does implementing discussion as exploration provide a sound aesthetic experience in the elementary classroom on an individual basis, (c) does implementing discussion as exploration lead to more movement among dimensions of reading comprehension as identified by Langer's literary stances than does traditional instruction, and (d) what instructional concerns does a teacher have as she/he attempts to implement the paradigm? To explore questions (a), (b), and (d), participant observation was used for the purpose of gathering ethnographic data. Additional data describing opinions and feelings of student and teacher participants as they participated in implementation of the paradigm were collected with several survey tools. Survey instruments included student and teacher profiles following Bromley's (1986) protocols for case study, administration of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) to students, and administration of the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Process (TORP) to the teacher. Question (c) was investigated

through an analysis of student reflection logs and comparison of those analyses with Langer's literary stances in the single-subject A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component of the study. Figure 1 shows the study's four guiding questions, the nine data collection measures used, and a matrix displaying research questions and data collection measures.

Design Rationale

Many current researchers investigating literature instruction models, literary stances, and reader responses have designed their investigations using qualitative research paradigms (see Applebee, 1978; Brody et al. 1989; DeLawter, 1992; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Hickman, 1983; Langer, 1990; Langer, 1992; Scharer, 1992). A possible reason for this is that the aesthetic literary experience, which is at the heart of many literature instruction models, is a construct difficult to measure with traditional empirical research tools and models. In addition, subtle nuances and small details that enable researchers to gain added insight into the nature of the phenomena being studied are not measured by traditional experimental instruments. These two reasons offer an explanation for the popularity of qualitative research designs among those investigating literary instructional models (Short, 1995). Initially, qualitative research enables the researcher to investigate a phenomenon about which little is yet known. Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with one another, and the researcher investigates those critical

Guiding Questions:

Guiding Question (a) What events are happening as the teacher incorporates discussion as exploration while using a class novel?

Guiding Question (b) How does implementing discussion as exploration provide a sound aesthetic literary experience in the elementary classroom on an individual basis?

Guiding Question (c) Does implementing discussion as exploration lead to more movement among dimensions of reading comprehension as identified by Langer's literary stances than does traditional instruction?

Guiding Question (d) What instructional concerns does a teacher have as she attempts to implement the paradigm?

Research Methods:

1. Student profiles from (survey method)
2. Teacher profile (survey method)
3. Teacher's TORP and Students' ERAS (survey method)
4. Weekly video taping (participant observation)
5. Students literary stances plotted on a visual array (A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component)
6. Researcher-participant observer fieldnotes (participant observation)
7. Teacher-participant observer daily journal (participant observation)
8. Student literature reflection logs (participant observation)
9. Quickwrites

Guiding Questions/Research Methods Matrix

Methods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Question A	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Question B	X					X	X	X	X
Question C					X			X	
Question D			X	X		X	X		

Figure 1. Research methodology.

elements which emerge based on observation, insight, and study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Eventually, data are transformed as they are condensed, clustered, sorted, and linked over time (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Finally, crystallizations appear. They are those elements that as a result of convergence of similarities strike the researcher as relevant or important to the study (Fetterman, 1989).

Proponents of exploring of literature via student discussion (see Eeds & Wells, 1989; Langer, 1991b; Short, 1991) feel the highly personal aesthetic literary experience must be fostered on an individual basis within small-group settings. Therefore, the aesthetic experience itself is a construct best investigated by examining individual participants, not by group measures that do not and cannot deal with highly personal responses. At the same time, qualitative and experimental elements can be used together to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon considered and to enable researchers to better understand concepts being tested or explored (Creswell, 1994). Hence, for this investigation, several research methods were used: (a) participant observation, (b) survey research, and (c) empirical data generated by a single-subject phase withdrawal component. Participant observation constituted a qualitative measure, while the single-subject phase withdrawal component constituted an experimental measure. The single-subject phase

withdrawal component provided additional data about individual participants in a more experimental mode.

Creswell (1994) stated that there is an on-going debate about using a combination of research methods. Purists insist that research methods should not be mixed; situationalists believe certain methods are appropriate for specific situations; and pragmatists feel that researchers should use a variety of methods which will gather the most data. Gogolin and Swartz (1992) investigated college students' attitudes toward science by combining qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Their study demonstrated that research methods can be mixed. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) asserted that "mixed-method designs remain largely uncharted territory" (p. 255). In a review of 57 evaluation studies conducted between 1980 and 1988, they identified several purposes for combining studies including (a) creating triangulation by convergence of results, (b) overlapping complementary facets of the phenomenon, and (c) expanding the scope and breadth of the study.

Gay (1992) outlined reasons why researchers generally use single-subject designs (a) if the size of the population is too small to permit formation of control/experimental groups, (b) in clinical settings where the primary emphasis is on therapeutic values of the intervention, not in improving research bases, and (c) to address concerns about ethics of not allowing a control group to receive the treatment. Gay also provided

important insight into whether or not researchers should use a group design or a single subject one: "If your concern is with improving the functioning of an individual, a group design is not going to be appropriate" (p. 335).

Because the study used a combination of qualitative and experimental methods, the philosophy supporting each of the two methods is supplied. An understanding of the philosophy behind the two paradigms provides direction for researchers (Creswell, 1994). Table 1 shows Guba and Lincoln's (1988) comparison of the philosophical assumptions of both paradigms.

Research Methods Used During the Study

Ethnography

Fetterman (1989) defined ethnography as the art and science of describing a group or culture. That group or culture may be a description of a group in an exotic land, or as common as a middle-class suburban classroom. Wherever the group setting, the process of collecting, interpreting, and reporting data remains similar. Ethnographers typically write about common experiences of the culture focusing on routine patterns, thought processes, and behaviors. The creation of guiding questions is the first step in all ethnographic research. Eventually, those questions will become more specific and refined. Even so, ethnographers must enter cultures with open minds aware of biases and preconceived notions about what the culture is about. Approaching cultures from the emic (insider's) perspective is central to all

ethnographic research. Ethnographers must be a part of the culture, and at the same time, keep apart from it. Field work, and the taking of fieldnotes, is at the heart of ethnographic research.

Table 1

A Comparison Between Quantitative and Qualitative Philosophical Assumptions

<i>Assumptions</i>	<i>Quantitative Paradigm</i>	<i>Qualitative Paradigm</i>
Ontology—What is the nature of reality?	Reality is objective and singular	Reality is subjective and multiple
Epistemology—What is the relationship of the observer to the phenomenon?	Researcher is unbiased and independent from the phenomenon	Researcher interacts with the environment and phenomenon
Axiology—What is the role of values?	Value free and unbiased	Value-laden and biased
Rhetoric—What language does the researcher use?	Formal Based on set definitions Third person voice	Informal Personal voice
Methodology—How is the phenomenon studied?	Deductive Process Cause and Effect Fixed design	Inductive process Emerging design Pattern generation
Generalizability—How applicable are the findings to other contexts?	Context-free Leads to prediction, explanation, and understanding	Context-bound Theories developed for understanding Accurate and reliable through verification

Based on Creswell (1994) and Guba and Lincoln (1988).

Spradley (1980) gave a detailed description of the ethnographic research cycle. Part one of the cycle begins as ethnographers must choose a research problem. Most ethnography is usually done with a single problem in mind—to discover cultural knowledge people use to organize behavior and interpret life experiences. The research problem also focuses attention on the type of methodology ethnographers will use for investigation purposes. Such methodology may involve a variety of measures (a) surveys, (b) experimental research, (c) participant observation, (d) qualitative inquiry, (e) case study, and (f) responsive evaluation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The selection of the problem or topic of interest guides the entire research endeavor.

Part two of the cycle begins in the field as the researcher begins asking ethnographic questions. Initially, questions reflect edic (outsider's) perspectives. Gradually, the ethnographer discovers questions that have answers in social situations being studied. It is at this time, that the ethnographer begins to enter emic (insider's) perspectives. Questions will continue to arise as the ethnographer continues through the ethnographic research cycle. Broad descriptive questions such as "What people are involved in the culture?" "What is going on in the culture?" and "What is the social setting of the culture?" act as primary frameworks leading to more specific questions based on the ethnographer's greater understanding of the culture under investigation. Creation of initiating questions, refinement of

those questions, and generation of more in-depth insightful questions leads the researcher through the investigation (Spradley, 1980).

Part three of the research cycle is characterized by doing field work. "Fieldwork is the most characteristic element of any ethnographic research design" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 18). As the ethnographer continues to watch and participate in the daily lives of those in the culture, he/she takes extensive fieldnotes about what is seen and heard. Initially, fieldnotes focus on broad descriptive observations. As the ethnographer begins to notice patterns, he/she forms newer, more precise questions. At this time, analysis of fieldnotes helps to focus observations. The most important element of fieldwork is observing, asking questions, and writing down what is seen and heard. The fourth part of the process, making an ethnographic record, takes place as the researcher writes down fieldnotes, or makes some other record (often, audio or videotapes) of what is occurring.

Analyzing ethnographic data is the fifth part of the cycle. "Analysis is a process of question-discovery" (Spradley, 1980, p. 33). The ethnographer analyzed each part of the fieldnotes or other records compiled by participant observation or other field method. Finally, after the ethnographer is convinced that enough fieldnotes, artifacts, and other records are collected that he/she begins to see patterns and trends, the ethnographer begins to write the ethnography. This is the final part of the cycle. However, as the researcher begins to write, other questions pop into his/her mind. Those

questions begin the research cycle anew. In a sense, an ethnography is similar to painting the Golden Gate Bridge—the cycle goes on and on.

Participant Observation

Participant observation, a form of ethnography, was used by the researcher and participating teacher to observe, record, and gather data on opinions, feelings, and concerns of participants. To do this, the researcher visited the classroom for 2 hours at a time on a daily basis for a month. Working in the classroom in close connection with student and teacher participants insured that the researcher investigated the phenomenon from what is termed the emic, or insider's, perspective.

Fetterman (1989) explained that field work is at the heart of participant observation. In this mode, the researcher is interested in understanding and describing a social and cultural scene with all its richness and untapped sources of data not mapped out in the research design.

Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) have described the following features as they relate to participant observation:

1. There is emphasis on exploring the nature of the phenomena, rather than testing hypotheses. This results in quantification of data and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role in the study, if used at all.
2. There is investigation of a small number of individual cases with collection of unstructured data (data which are not coded to a predetermined set of analytic categories).

3. The explanations of human actions are recorded in fieldnotes, in the form of verbal descriptions and explanations.

4. Reports provide description of the researcher's role and position in the culture—how much is known about him or her, what sort of activities he or she participates in, and how conscientious the researcher is of his or her place in the culture and of the culture's influence in interpretation of the phenomenon.

In this study, both the researcher and classroom teacher assumed the role of participant observers. Journal keeping became a daily activity for both the teacher and researcher. For clarification purposes, in this study, the author is referred to as researcher participant-observer and the classroom teacher is referred to as teacher participant-observer.

In planning daily instruction and in implementing the paradigm, discussion as exploration, the researcher participant-observer and the teacher participant-observer acted as partners. Pedagogical concerns and issues were discussed each day by both observers. The researcher participant-observer kept daily fieldnotes over his classroom observations and a daily journal; the teacher participant-observer kept a daily journal recording her feelings, observations, and concerns during the course of the study. Additionally, one class session per week, lasting 45 minutes, was videotaped. The researcher participant-observer and the teacher participant-observer watched the

videotaped sessions and recorded their thoughts and feelings about what was occurring at that time in the classroom.

Survey Measures

Survey measures included (a) student and teacher profiles following Bromley's (1986) organization and characteristics of case study (see Appendix A for examples), (b) administration of the DeFord Theoretical Orientation Profile (TORP) to the teacher before the intervention to gather additional data about her orientation toward reading instruction, and (c) quickwrites—a researcher-directed writing prompt designed to get students to record their thoughts about literature instruction.

McKenna and Kear's (1990) Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) was used to gather information about student attitudes toward reading. It was featured in the May 1990 issue of *The Reading Teacher*. Norms for the instrument were created by administering the survey to 18,183 students in grades first through sixth. A number of steps were taken to insure a stratified sample indicative of the U.S. elementary school population as a whole. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the attitude scales for each grade level for both subscales and composite scores. Reported coefficients were .80 or higher. Evidence of construct validity was gathered by several means including (a) comparison of different groups using library resources and corresponding reported recreational reading scores on the survey, (b) a comparison of scores between reading achievement and

the survey, (b) a comparison of scores between reading achievement and reported attitudes toward academic reading, and (c) factor analysis, which supported the claims of the authors that the survey's two subscales reflect discrete aspects of reading attitude. The ERAS was used to survey students' feelings about reading before and after the study.

The DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading (DeFord, 1985) appeared in the Spring 1985 issue of *Reading Research Quarterly*. It is an instrument for identifying a teacher's theoretical orientation to reading instruction. The TORP uses a Likert-type scale response system to determine teacher beliefs about practices in reading. DeFord reported that three forms of data collection were utilized to evaluate the reliability and validity of the TORP. Through use of descriptive data via teacher response statements, factor analysis, and discriminate analysis the TORP was found to be a reliable, valid instrument. Data from the TORP allowed the researcher to more accurately describe the participating teacher's beliefs about reading instruction which may have influenced her literature teaching.

Quickwrites (researcher-directed writing prompts) enabled all students to express opinions they held about each day's literature instruction. Reasons for using quickwrites were to gather as much student-generated data concerning their perceptions of what was occurring during the study.

To begin a quickwrite, a writing prompt was given to the whole class. Two minutes were provided for students to record their thoughts and feelings. After the 2 minutes were up, the researcher collected that day's quickwrites. Most of the prompts for quickwrites emerged from analysis of the researcher's fieldnotes. As part of the ethnographic cycle identified earlier, analysis of fieldnotes typically leads researchers to ask additional questions. When such questions could best be answered by students, the researcher gave a directed writing prompt to students. Information from the quickwrites proved valuable in enabling the researcher and participating teacher to survey student opinion concerning class grouping patterns, method of reading the literature selection, and favorite modes of instruction.

Single-Subject A|B|A|B Phase Withdrawal Design

A simple phase withdrawal A|B|A|B single-subject type of design enabled the researcher to investigate the differences between traditional instruction and discussion as exploration with the same students in the same classroom with the same teacher. Single-subject designs typically rely on specific intervals of time for data collection (Kratochwill & Levin, 1992). However, because this investigation used a novel segmented by chapters, intervals for data collection were based on four phases of instruction. An instructional phase is described as a unit of analysis with a summary measure by Busk and Marascuilo (1992).

During A¹ and A² phases, students were taught the novel using suggestions and ideas recommended by the D. C. Heath study guide written for it with the teacher using traditional forms of direct instruction. During B¹ and B² phases, students were also to read the same novel; however, discussion as exploration was used as a paradigm for instruction: (a) students were placed in small groups for conversational purposes, (b) the teacher's role was redefined as a facilitator of student conversations, and (c) writing prompts were more open-ended. The following chapter divisions constituted individual instructional phases: A¹: Chapters 1, 2, and 3; B¹: Chapters 4, 5, and 6; A²: Chapters 7 and 8; and B²: Chapters 9 and 10.

Students were asked to keep literature reflection logs as a record of personal reactions to, questions about, and responses concerning what they have read during all A and B phases of instruction. Fifteen minutes each day were set aside for the students to record their thoughts, feelings, and overall impressions of the novel. These literature reflection logs provided raw data for single-subject analysis. Even though all students participated in written reflection assignments via learning logs, only the literature learning logs of five average writing ability fifth graders were selected for analysis. Additional information about procedures for selection of the five students is presented in the section on Participants below. To minimize the possibility of researcher bias, a graduate assistant who was unfamiliar with the study analyzed and coded the five selected students' written responses from the learning logs

coded the five selected students' written responses from the learning logs according to Langer's four literary stances every day during the course of instruction (see Figure 2 for an example of Langer's literary stances). Data points were assigned to individual stances.

The number of data points per phase was determined by the amount of stances identified in students' written responses. Individual student profiles concerning movement among the literary stances were generated and graphed on a simple A|B|A|B array. Parsonson and Baer (1992) provided a case for visual display of data on a simple matrix—visual data in a simple array allows viewers to draw reasonable conclusions or make reasonable hypotheses based on visual inspection of the data sets. As anticipated, students' responses moved in and out of the various stances during each reflection period. The visual display of students' literary stances enabled the researcher participant-observer and the teacher participant-observer to determine if one or both types of instruction (traditional and discussion as exploration) facilitate students moving in and out of various literary stances. A complete discussion of what types of movement occurred and the significance of movement is presented in Chapter 4 (Findings).

Setting and Participants

A suburban school district in the Rocky Mountain region of the American West was selected for the research site. The community's socio-

Stance 1—Being Out and Stepping Into an Envisionment. Readers begin to construct meaning of the text by using prior knowledge, experiences, and surface features of the text to identify genre, content, and structure:

"The soft knock—which means maybe he's not a mean person, a soft person."

"Obviously there's something going on, because Mr. Ramirez got arrested."

Stance 2—Being In and Moving Through an Envisionment. Readers are immersed in their own understandings of the story. They are caught up in the narrative and are carried along by the argument of the text:

"No, he wouldn't be staying at Mrs. O'Brian's house if he were a drug smuggler because she doesn't like dirty things in the house, he's obviously an illegal alien."

"The only time he shows affection is when he says thank you."

Stance 3—Stepping Back and Rethinking What One Knows. Readers use their envisionments to reflect on their own personal knowledge or experiences:

"I hate policemen...Not that I've dealt with them many times in my life, but what they're doing to Mr. Ramirez makes me not trust them..."

"Last week in Washington I didn't want to come back. Now I know why."

Stance 4—Stepping Out and Objectifying the Experience. Readers distance themselves from their envisionments. They reflect and react to the content of the text or the reading experience itself:

"The whole story is very sad."

"I still don't know what relationship they have."

Figure 2. Examples of four literary stances (Langer 1991a).

economic standard ranges from middle, to upper-middle class. Many of the district's patrons are well-educated, professional people with a high degree of interest in the local schools. The school itself has a diversified student population due to its close proximity to a major Air Force facility. District testing profiles indicate that the school is at, or slightly above or below district averages in various reading and language arts subtests. Students in the district consistently meet or achieve higher scores than national averages on standardized tests.

For the selection of participants in the study, the researcher conferred with the school's principal to select a fifth-grade teacher who would be willing to participate in the research study, and who was classified as a good teacher by the principal. Students regularly assigned to the teacher served as subjects for investigation. The school's principal felt that the selected fifth-grade participants were indicative of the school's student population.

Key reasons for selecting fifth graders were (a) although most students have achieved fluency in basic reading ability, many students still benefit from scaffolding literature instruction, (b) the reading ability of the students lends itself to using longer pieces of text, such as novels, and (c) the researcher was familiar with student abilities and common classroom teaching practices.

Instructional Components

The novel *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (Konigsburg, 1967) served as the text for student assigned readings. Two distinct instructional components were featured during two separate phases constituting traditional instruction and discussion as exploration. During A (traditional) phases, teacher-directed lessons followed a commercial literature study guide for this novel available from the D. C. Heath Company. Lessons focused on learning vocabulary, identifying what happened in each chapter, instruction on the structure of the novel, and enrichment activities. Traditional lessons typically relied on convergent, literal interpretation types of questions.

During the intervention phase (Phase B) students were organized into literature discussion groups. Each group was presented with an initial response question, generated by constructing a story map of the novel, designed to get the students to discuss and interact. A second response question that was more open-ended was also presented to further encourage discussion. During this time, the teacher participant-observer moved from group to group acting as a facilitator to promote discussion, reflection, and motivation. A journal writing prompt was also presented to students to facilitate reflective writing. Table 2 shows a comparison between traditional and discussion as exploration lessons. It was important to remember that

Table 2

Examples of Traditional and Discussion as Exploration Lessons

	<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Discussion as Exploration</i>
<i>Typical Teacher Talk</i>	What can you tell me about this book from its cover picture and title? What do you think the title means?	What can you tell me about this book from its cover picture and title? What do you think the title means?
<i>Typical Assignments</i>	Read aloud the letter Mrs. Frankweiler writes to her lawyer, inform students that the characters in the story try to solve a mystery. Encourage them to record the important events as they read.	Read aloud the letter Mrs. Frankweiler writes to her lawyer, inform students that the characters in the story try to solve a mystery. Encourage them to record the important events as they read.
<i>Purpose for Reading</i>	Why does Claudia run away from home? What preparations does she make for the venture?	As you read the selection, think about any key events, characters, or anything else you would like to discuss with your group after you read the selection.
<i>Typical Class Discussion</i>	Where and when does this story take place? What kind of person is Claudia? How does the author let you know? How does Konigsburg create suspense that makes you want to read on to find out what happens?	Your assignment is to discuss your reading with the other members of your team. To get your discussion going, try talking about this: Tell me something about the characters in the story, what's happening to them?
<i>Writing Prompts</i>	Claudia deliberately selects Jamie as her partner. How well do you think she would manage without him? Give reasons for your opinion. In what ways are you similar to or different from Claudia and/or Jamie?	Write in your journal your feelings and thoughts about your reading and the conversation you had with other group members.

while discussion as exploration has been described by a number of researchers (Dias, 1992; Langer, 1991a; and Rosenblatt, 1983) as an interactive paradigm of

instruction where the teacher serves as a facilitator, rather than an imparter of knowledge, proponents have not described the paradigm as a precise teaching model where single instructional steps were specified. Rather, individual teachers were left to implement this holistic paradigm of literature instruction based on the dynamics of the individual classroom. To clearly, definitively define instructional tasks or teaching steps is to defeat the whole purpose of the paradigm and its philosophy, which states that construction of meaning is based on interactions between readers and the text. Hence, the teacher and researcher participant observers worked together creating and discussing lesson elements, and deciding how to implement each others' suggestions and what to do with key focus questions generated by the story map.

The Role of the Teacher in Facilitating Conversations

During traditional literature instruction phases (A phases), the teacher followed a commercial literature study guide written for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (Konigsburg, 1967) published by the D. C. Heath Company. Directions in the study guide called for the teacher to introduce and set purposes for reading, activate students' background knowledge, introduce key vocabulary words, and check students' reading

comprehension with group discussion or questioning. These teacher-directed activities encouraged students to find correct responses embedded in the text.

Discussion as exploration phases (B phases) called for a redefining of the teacher's role. Unlike traditional instruction where correct interpretations resided with the teacher, the use of discussion as exploration encouraged students to converse with one another to help construct meaning and clarify interpretations. The teacher's role was defined as a facilitator of instruction, transferring control from herself to her students. To shift control, students had to be viewed as capable of taking charge of their own literary discussions; and had to be provided with instruction which encouraged them to generate questions about reading, think for themselves, and work with others (Langer, 1992). The participating teacher and the researcher had to devise a plan to transfer the control and ownership of literature lessons to students.

To accomplish this plan, students first had to be taught how to work in groups. The teacher presented a lesson on group work and assigned each student a job related to group discussion. For example, students were assigned to be discussion leaders, recorders, task-masters, and suppliers. These jobs encouraged students to take charge and have ownership of their groups. The second part of the plan called for students to be instructed in how to converse. Initially, the teacher and researcher modeled for students how to go about discussing and clarifying personal interpretations of text. To further student interaction, general discussion prompts were created by the teacher and

researcher, following the story map procedure described by Beck and McKeown (1981). Prompts were given to students as they began their group work. The students assigned to be discussion leaders were given the task of beginning and encouraging discussion in their groups with the general prompts. During discussion time, the teacher walked around the room and also facilitated discussion with prompts such as: "What did you think of the chapter?" or "What happened in the story today?" After students began to reply, the teacher encouraged students to continue discussing among themselves. See appendix C for examples of journal and discussion prompts.

Ethical Concerns

Spradley (1980) described ethical considerations ethnographic participant-observers must be aware of when conducting field work. Above all, they must remember that subjects (informants) are human beings with problems, concerns, and interests that may not necessarily coincide with those of researchers. Ethnographers must recognize and anticipate those problems, concerns, and interests and plan to resolve them in such a way as to do no damage to those whom they study, nor to the scholarly community. With this in mind, participant observers must:

1. Consider the subjects first. The ethnographer's first concern is to the welfare of those studied. The dignity and privacy of subjects must be respected.

2. Safeguard subjects' rights, interests, and sensitivities. This is essential to doing research from the emic (insider's) perspective. The researcher must examine the implication of the research from the subjects' vantage points to make sure any untoward consequences are predicted and avoided.

3. Communicate research objectives. Subjects have a right to know the ethnographer's aims. Often, the aims are unfolded to subjects rather than a cursory once-and-for-all declaration.

4. Protect the privacy of subjects. Informants have a right to remain anonymous. Subjects can ask that they not be videotaped, photographed, etc. Ethnographers must accept this right.

5. Protect against the exploitation of subjects. Ethnographers should not exploit subjects for personal or scholarly gain.

6. Make reports about the subjects available for them to read. In elementary classroom, participating teachers and the school principal are likely readers of the ethnography keeping in mind the needs of subjects delineated above.

Table 3 presents a matrix detailing how each of these ethical considerations was addressed in the context of this investigation. Additional safeguards to participants included the collaborative nature of the study where the teacher and researcher worked closely making pedagogical

Table 3

Ethical Considerations of the Study

<i>Ethical Consideration</i>	<i>Incorporation in This Study</i>
1. Consider informants first	1. The instructional elements constituted accepted practices in the field of literature instruction. The regularly assigned classroom teacher provided instruction in the students' regularly assigned classroom.
2. Safeguard subjects' rights, interests, and sensitivities	2. Both the teacher and researcher were committed to respecting the rights of students. At all times, decisions were made on the basis of what would be the most interesting and pedagogically sound instruction for the students.
3. Communicate research objectives	3. Students were informed by the teacher of impending visits by the researcher. The researcher explain in very basic terms the objectives of the study. Students were encouraged to ask questions about what the researcher was doing, what types of data he was collecting, and what he was going to doing with it.
4. Protect the privacy of informants	4. All participants were given pseudonyms. The site of the study was undisclosed.
5. Protect informants from exploitation	5. As a way of thanking participants for letting him observe in their classroom, the researcher present the classroom teacher with two sets of novels appropriate for fifth graders.
6. Make reports available	6. The findings of the study were presented to the classroom teacher and the school principal. A journal article reporting results of the study has been prepared for anticipated publication.

decisions based on student needs. Also, informed consent procedures involving the school district, school principal, and classroom teacher were

reviewed by a university human subjects research board to insure the appropriateness of the study and the safety and welfare of participants.

The Role of the Researcher

Initially, the role of the researcher was to gain entry into a fifth-grade classroom and to gather information about discussion as exploration. To gain entry, the researcher approached the assistant superintendent of the participating school district to request permission to do field work. At that time, a discussion took place identifying possible sites for investigation. The actual site of the study was selected because of its diverse student population.

After selection of the school had been made, the researcher met with the building principal to explain the study and gain his approval. The principal agreed to support the study and recommend a teacher who would be interested in working with the researcher. The recommended teacher agreed to act as a participant observer and to work collaboratively with the researcher.

A week before implementation of the study, the researcher met with the teacher to familiarize her with discussion as exploration, gain her trust, and to plan literature instruction. The teacher agreed to read about the paradigm, work in close collaboration with the researcher, and help plan lessons for traditional and discussion as exploration phases.

Because the researcher presented the teacher with the initial idea of trying discussion as exploration as a literature teaching paradigm during the initial planning of the study, he was not a neutral participant observer in the truest sense of the word. However, once the teacher was familiar with the model and agreed to implement it, the researcher moved toward being a neutral observer. All instructional decision was made in collaboration with the teacher taking the lead for instruction.

During the first day of implementation, the researcher made a 20-minute presentation to student participants, explaining his purpose for being in their classroom, the objectives of his study, and what students could expect to see him doing during their literature study. The students were then given time to ask questions about the researcher, his purpose for being there, and his instructional background.

As the study was implemented, the researcher worked alongside the teacher in planning lessons, creating discussion prompts, and defining journal assignments. Twenty minutes each day were allotted for the teacher and researcher to discuss and plan the next day's instruction.

As a participant observer, the researcher recorded his observations about what was occurring in his fieldnotes. Reflections about possible interpretations of observations and additional questions that arose were also recorded in his daily journal.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected beginning March 14, 1995 and concluding April 9, 1995 during the students' regularly scheduled period of reading instruction from 10:45 to 12:15 p.m. daily. The researcher participant-observer kept a daily journal and extensive fieldnotes during reading instruction. At the end of each day, fieldnotes were edited, coded, and interpreted as part of the ethnographic research cycle.

The teacher participant-observer was asked to keep a daily journal detailing her feelings, questions, concerns, and positive reactions to what was occurring. At the end of the data collection period, the teacher participant-observer and the researcher participant-observer discussed, analyzed, and coded the journal. Additional information about the teacher's theoretical orientation toward reading was gained from an analysis of the TORP administered before the data collection period. The teacher and researcher discussed the findings of the TORP and how the teacher's theoretical orientation helped influence her interpretation of what was occurring during instruction. A profile of the teacher was created using Bromley's (1986) organization and characteristics of case study (see Appendix A).

Although 25 fifth graders participated in the journal writing activity during both traditional and discussion as exploration phases of the study, only the journals of five students were selected for single-subject A|B|A|B analysis. To determine which five students would be selected, the teacher

participant-observer made a list of the students in her room she considered would be able to generate at least one-half page of journal writing each day. From that list five students were randomly selected to have their journals analyzed. A graduate assistant not familiar with the project analyzed and coded the data according to Langer's literary stances. Additional data about the five students' attitudes toward reading was collected from the ERAS administered to the students before and after the literature instruction. Finally, profiles for each of the five students were created using Bromley's (1986) organization and characteristics of case study.

Videotaping was used to gather additional data about what was occurring during literature instruction. Three times during the study, two discussion as exploration sessions and one traditional session were recorded. After class, the teacher and researcher viewed the videotape discussion and recorded their reactions to what was occurring.

Data Reduction

As described earlier, three categories of research methods were used for data collection: (a) ethnographic participant observation, (b) survey research, and (c) an embedded A | B | A | B single-subject phase withdrawal. These methods enabled the researcher to collect large sums of data during the study. To make sense of large amounts of data, systems of data reduction need to be employed by the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Below, various

methods of reducing data for each data collection measure are presented. The actual findings and conclusions from these data are presented in Chapter 4 (Findings) and Chapter 5 (Discussion).

The first category of research methods involved ethnographic participant observation. Two forms of ethnographic data were collected: (a) researcher fieldnotes and (b) researcher journal entries. A form for organizing fieldnotes was created with Filemaker® Pro—a database for the Macintosh™ computer platform. (See Appendix B for sample field note form and Appendix C for samples of fieldnotes collected for actual instructional phases.) Using the form with a computer database program allowed the researcher to type fieldnotes from direct classroom observations and to organize them into categories related to contributions to (a) methodology, (b) theory, and (c) personal interpretation. Each night of the study, the researcher examined his fieldnotes to look for patterns and similarities within the data. This constituted a data reduction technique (see Figure 3 for an example of the taxonomic analytic scheme used). Patterns discovered within the data were coded into how they related to literature instruction methodology or how they related to literature instruction theory. A place was also provided for the researcher to make interpretation of what he felt the data meant. As the researcher continued to analyze his fieldnotes, additional guiding questions arose from rereading fieldnotes. These questions were recorded in the researcher's daily journal. As crystallizations occurred during the study,

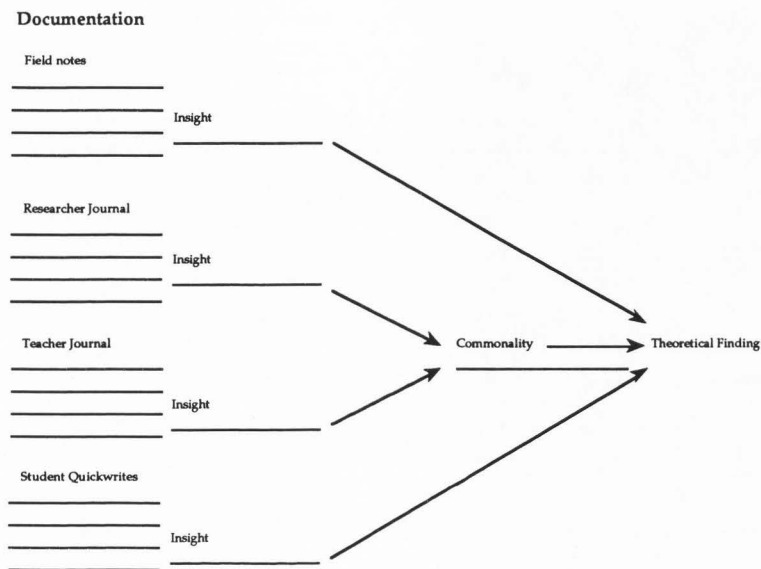


Figure 3. Taxonomic analytic scheme used for data reduction.

they were also recorded in the researcher's journal. The journal itself was reread after the conclusion of the study. Central themes, crystallizations, and additional research questions were noted. These additional questions, central themes, and crystallizations as recorded in fieldnotes, journals, and discussions are reported in depth in Chapter 4 (Findings).

The second research method involved survey data. Three forms of surveys were used (a) student attitudes toward reading as measured by the ERAS, (b) the teacher's theoretical view of reading instruction as measured by the TORP, and (c) researcher-directed quickwrites surveying students' perception of what was occurring during the study. The ERAS was administered to students as a pretest and posttest. At the conclusion of the study, raw scores for students' ERAS were tabulated. Both one-tailed and two-tailed *t* tests across independent means were used to determine any significant difference between students' pretests and posttests measuring attitudes toward reading. Additionally, mean scores for participating student pretests were compared to normed scores provided by the ERAS author. The teacher was given the TORP survey before the study began to identify her current views of reading processes. The teacher's TORP was scored after the conclusion of the study according to directions from its author. The teacher's total score was then compared to normed scores provided by the TORP. Researcher-directed quickwrites entailed giving students an impromptu writing prompt designed to gather data about their feelings toward the literature instruction used. The quickwrites were read by the researcher and classroom teacher. Each opinion described by students was put on an index card. Index cards were then clustered according to opinions on them. The classroom teacher and the researcher identified and categorized the opinions around key themes. These themes allowed the teacher and researcher to

determine student opinions and concerns during the phases of literature instruction.

The third research method, an A|B|A|B single-subject phase withdrawal component, required analysis of five selected student learning logs according to Langer's Four Literary stances. The analyses constituted a form of data reduction—student stances were assigned data points on a simple visual array.

Report of Findings

Results of the study are reported in Chapter 4 (Findings). Implications and limitations of the study are presented in Chapter 5 (Discussion). Qualitative research perspectives stress that researchers should try to look at the data from a variety of viewpoints. In reporting the findings of this study three views are utilized. First, a description of key participants and a case scenario describing typical instructional periods is given. Second, analysis of data from each research procedure is presented. Third, the four guiding questions are considered in light of data collected during the study. Congruent with qualitative research style, Chapter 4 is written in first person voice.

Issues of Validity and Rigor

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described four questions that qualitative researchers must address to establish "truth value" (p. 290) of a study:

1. How truthful are the particular findings of the study? By what criteria can we judge them?
2. How applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?
3. How can we be reasonable sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?
4. How can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself rather than the product of the researcher's biases or prejudices?

The establishment of truth value is important because qualitative research does not have the general acceptance that quantitative paradigms have, and researchers must present sound rationale for their use (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). To address these issues of truth value, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have described four alternative naturalistic constructs that they compared to the more conventional reliability and validity issues of experimental research. These constructs, they feel, more accurately reflect assumptions of qualitative research. Table 4 presents a comparison between Lincoln and Guba's naturalistic constructs, traditional positivist paradigms, and how these issues were addressed in this study.

Summary

A study was conducted during March and April of 1995 to investigate the effects of incorporating a secondary model of literature instruction, discussion as exploration, in an elementary reading class. During the course of the study, 25 fifth graders participated in reading and discussing a classroom novel, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Two distinct phases of literature instruction were used—traditional instruction and discussion as exploration. Three research methods were used for data collection purposes. These included (a) ethnographic fieldnotes, (b) survey instruments and procedures, and (c) a single-subject A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component. The design of the study incorporating these elements was presented along with rationale for using such a design.

Methods of data reduction and presentation were also presented. A report of the findings of the study is contained in the next chapter (Discussion).

Table 4
Issues of Validity and Rigor

<i>Concerns</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Positivist Paradigm</i>	<i>Qualitative Paradigm</i>	<i>Actions Taken to Reduce Concerns</i>
Truth Value	How can one establish confidence in the findings of a particular inquiry in the context in which it was carried out?	Internal Validity	Credibility	Teacher participant-observer verification. Triangulation of data sources: teacher and researcher journals, and student quickwrites. Debriefing with teacher and student participants.
Applicability	How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other respondents?	External Validity (Generalizability)	Transferability	Description of contexts and participants. Survey items compared to national norms.
Consistency	How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) respondents?	Reliability (Replicability)	Dependability	Audit trail supplied for field notes, journals, and taped sessions. Printed copies of researcher field notes available.
Neutrality	How can one establish which findings of an inquiry are a function solely of the conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer?	Objectivity	Confirmability	Triangulation by combined qualitative and experimental research methods. Verification by participants. Debriefing of participants. Taxonomic Analytic Schemas and Card Sorts used.

Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1986).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of the study are described in this chapter. First, survey information measuring student attitudes about reading and the teacher's theoretical orientation toward reading are furnished. Second, profiles of five selected students, the teacher, and the researcher are presented. Included with student profiles are visual arrays mapping students' literary stances. Third, two case scenarios describing typical literature lessons for both traditional and discussion as exploration methods are generated to establish the context of the classroom for readers. And fourth, analyses of methods and important findings that emerged from researcher fieldnotes, journal entries, and student quickwrites are reported. Implications of findings, suggestions for further research, and limitations of the study are described in Chapter 5 (Discussion).

Survey Methods

Several survey methods were used for data collection, which included (a) the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), (b) the DeFord Theoretical Orientation toward Reading Processes (TORP), and (c) profiles of participants following Bromley's (1986) protocols for case study. Also included with student profiles are arrays of their literary stances with interpretations

for each array. These survey measures insured adequate description of participants, their feelings about reading instruction, and a precise description of their literary stances.

A Profile of the Fifth Grade Participants as a Group

Data about participating students were gathered by using two survey techniques. One technique, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), was administered as a pretest before literature discussion began and as a posttest at the conclusion of literature discussion. The purpose of administering the survey this way was to determine if the process of studying literature had an effect on student attitudes toward enjoyment of reading. After students' raw scores were tabulated, two comparisons were made: (a) student pretest mean scores compared to normed national mean scores and (b) student pretest mean scores compared to posttest mean scores.

To create norms for the ERAS, a large-scale study was conducted with 18,138 elementary students in grades 1-6 (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The group of fifth-grade participants in the norming process had a pretest mean score of 54 on the survey. The 22 fifth graders who acted as subjects in my study (3 students left the classroom for the resource program) had a pretest group mean score of 54.6. The closeness of these two mean scores indicated that the 22 students who participated in my study had similar attitudes toward reading as did their national peers.

The ERAS was also used as a pre/posttest with the 22 student participants to see if literature instruction, in general, changed any attitudes toward reading. The group mean score for the pretest was 54.6. The group mean score for the posttest was 54.9. Both one-tailed and two-tailed *t* tests across independent means were used to determine any statistical significance differences between the two mean scores. The one-tailed test revealed a *t*-score of 1.7207 with $p < 0.4146$, indicating that there was no significant difference between students' pretest and posttest scores on the ERAS. The two-tailed test with a *t*-score of 2.0796 and $p < 0.8292$ also confirmed no significant difference in pretest and posttest scores. In other words, literature study, in general, did not significantly change participating student attitudes toward reading as measured by the ERAS.

Profiles of five selected students were collected using protocols established by Bromley (1986). These profiles are presented below to give readers an understanding of what these fifth-grade participants were like. Additionally, a profile of the participating teacher is also provided. Pseudonyms are used to ensure complete student anonymity.

A Profile of "George"

George is a student who enjoys art, physical education, and spelling. His least favorite activities in school involve mathematics and social studies. George is an avid reader. He loves to read at home and in his spare time. His

favorite literary genre is adventure stories with mysteries and sports books close runners-up. Typically of the age, he has three very close friends in this class. George frequently assumes a leadership role when he works with others. During group work, he will gravitate toward his friends. His teacher describes George as being academically talented, likable, and a well-behaved student with good leadership skills.

During literature instruction, George frequently contributed to group discussions. His comments reflected thorough understanding of the events and characters of the narrative. When instruction shifted to discussion as exploration, George's leadership ability was evident to his peers—he was selected as discussion leader. During his turns at reading, George read fluently and effortlessly as his peers followed along.

As described in Chapter 3 (Methodology), George's literature reflection log was analyzed according to Langer's four literary stances. Data points associated with the literary stances are presented in Figure 4. A visual inspection of data indicated that George had relatively little movement among the literary stances during A (traditional phases) of literature instruction. More movement among the literary stances occurred during B (discussion as exploration) phases.

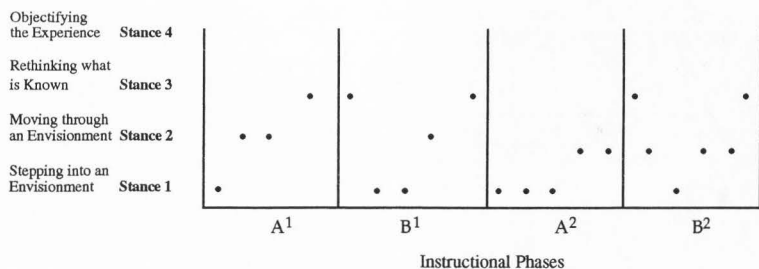


Figure 4. Array of literary stances for George

A Profile of "Sally"

Sally is a fifth grader who enjoys mathematics, art, and spelling. Her least favorite subjects in school are social studies and science. She describes reading as an "okay" activity. When she reads, she prefers to read stories about children similar to her. She has one close friend in the class and will pair up with her during group work. She prefers to work with this friend rather than with a group of students. Sally is described as a somewhat shy student by her teacher. She is quiet and cooperative in class and rarely causes trouble.

During whole-class instruction, Sally did not volunteer any comments, although she remained on-task listening to her teacher. When Sally was given a chance to work with other students, she paired with her close friend,

and the two of them joined a group with two other girls. During discussion times, Sally talked with other students in her group discussing events of the story.

A visual inspection of data points assigned to her literary stances indicated that Sally moved among three of the stances during A phases of literature instruction (see Figure 5). However, during B phases, Sally had movement among all four of the stances.

A Profile of "Sam"

Sam likes the subjects of mathematics and physical education. His least favorite activities are those related to art, reading, or language arts. He likes to read somewhat when he has choice in reading material. His preferred genres involve sports and mysteries. He has a lot of friends in class, excels in sports.

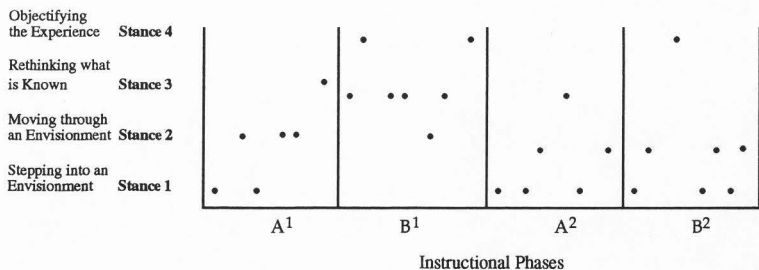


Figure 5. Array of literary stances for Sally.

and is very well-liked. His teacher describes him as a natural leader admired by other students.

Sam made frequent comments during whole-group instruction. His comments reflected deep understanding of the novel. When other students were unable to answer their teacher's direct questioning, Sam raised his hand and volunteered answers. During discussion times, Sam volunteered interpretations of the narrative. He also allowed others to discuss their interpretations of the story. At all times, he appeared to be actively engaged in the instructional process.

Data points assigned to Sam's literary stances are displayed in Figure 6. Inspection of data points indicated that Sam moved among the literary stances during both A and B phases of literature instruction. However, as with Sally, Sam moved into the fourth stance during a B phase only.

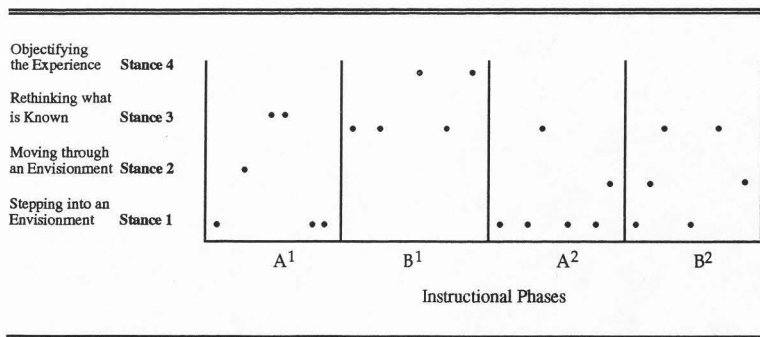


Figure 6. Array of literary stances for Sam

A Profile of "Gena"

Gena enjoys the academic subjects of reading, mathematics, spelling, and language arts. She dislikes science and social studies. She likes to read stories involving period pieces such as the *Little House on the Prairie* series. She is very popular with students and has a lot of friends in class. Her teacher describes her as being very sociable and occasionally getting in trouble because of talking too much. When given a choice, Gena prefers to work in groups.

During whole-group instruction, Gena talked to neighboring students and then focused on her teacher's instruction. She volunteered answers to questions that her teacher accepted as appropriate. During discussion phases, Gena was visibly excited to have the chance to be with her friends and talk about the narrative. At times, her group was busy talking about things not related to the story; however, the group did resume discussion when the teacher walked by.

Data points for Gena's literary stances are reported in Figure 7. An inspection of data points indicated that Gena had some movement among stances during the initial A phase of instruction. During the second A phase, movement remained relatively stable. Gena's moved among three of the stances during the first B phase, and moved into the fourth stance during the second B phase.

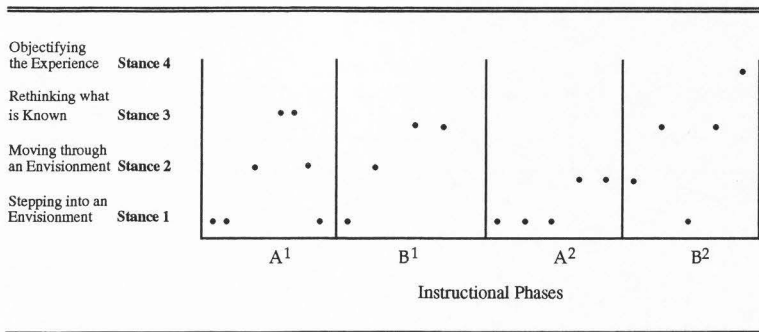


Figure 7. Array of literary stances for Gena

A Profile of "Fred"

Fred enjoys mathematics, physical education, and science. His least favorite subjects involve reading and social studies. Fred likes to read adventure stories and mysteries. He has a couple of friends in the class, and yet is somewhat quiet. His teacher describes him as an average student.

Fred would occasionally volunteer answers during whole-group instruction. His comments were brief and without elaboration. Fred joined a group of boys for the purpose of discussing the novel. As was the case with whole-group instruction, he occasionally volunteered his interpretations, but would let others do most of the talking.

An inspection of data points for Fred's literary stances (Figure 8) showed that Fred had relatively stable movement in A phases with more

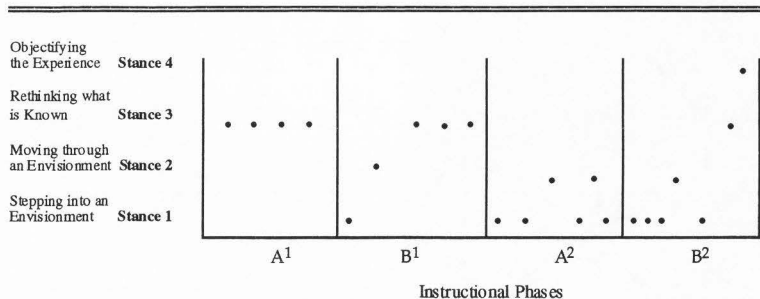


Figure 8. Array of literary stances for Fred

movement during B phases. As with other students, Fred moved into the fourth stance during B phases only.

An inspection of all five arrays revealed that as a whole, the five selected students had greater movement among Langer's literary stances during B (discussion as exploration) phases of instruction. Also, the five students moved into the fourth stance during B phases only. A frequency count for the five students' literary stances for the four phases of instruction is presented in Table 5.

A possible interpretation of this data is that because discussion as exploration provided a vehicle for students to talk about their various interpretations of text, students became more aware of personal reactions and interpretations of the reading than they did during traditional instruction.

Table 5

A Frequency Count for Five Students' Literary Stances

<i>Stance</i>	Phase A ¹	Phase B ¹	Phase A ²	Phase B ²
4	0	7	0	4
3	10	11	2	8
2	8	4	9	8
1	9	4	17	11

These personal interpretations, representing nuances and diversity of meaning, were recorded in their literature logs. Analyses of the logs revealed greater movement among the stances, including the fourth stance after discussion as exploration. Discussion as exploration, as supported by these arrays of data, facilitated student responses which led to more movement among literary stances.

An examination of the number of shifts (movement among various stances in contrast to stable stance reporting) also indicated greater movement during B (discussion as exploration) phases. The number of shifts during A phases (traditional instruction) totaled 26. During B phases (discussion as exploration) the number of shifts was 37. Table 6 provides a frequency count of the number of shifts occurring during each instructional phase.

Table 6

Frequency Count of the Number of Shifts Per Instructional Stance

<i>Student</i>	Phase A1	Phase B1	Phase A2	Phase B2
George	2	3	1	4
Sally	4	5	4	6
Sam	3	3	3	5
Gena	4	2	1	4
Fred	0	1	4	4
Totals:	13	14	13	23

An alternative interpretation of the visual arrays might conclude that as students became more familiar with the novel, they internalized and personalized the narrative. This personalization and familiarity with the novel might, itself, lead to more movement among the literary stance. If this interpretation were accurate, one would expect to see a crescendo of movement in later phases of the study.

A close inspection of A² phases indicates relatively stable movement among stances. If this alternative explanation were true, one would expect to see greater movement during this phase. Indeed, the visual arrays should display stable movement during A¹ and B¹ phases, with greater movement

during the A² phase, and the most movement during the B² phase. This was not the case. Instead, the frequency count for both A¹ and A² was the same. A steady crescendo of movement did not occur as the students became familiar with the novel.

A Profile of the Classroom Teacher "Evelyn"

The DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) was administered prior to the study to determine Evelyn's overall orientation to reading. The TORP uses a Likert-type scale to record reactions to specific statements about reading instruction. Various statements are given different weights and a total score is tabulated. Three categories of reading orientation are identified: (a) decoding perspective, (b) skills perspective, and (c) whole language perspective. The participating teacher, Evelyn, scored 110 on the TORP. This score indicates that she has both a skills and whole language orientation to reading. A teacher with a whole-language orientation would be open to using literature in her classroom with nontraditional instructional approaches. Her skills orientation would suggest that she would also be comfortable using teacher-directed skills lessons. The TORP profile confirmed my feelings about working with Evelyn—she liked using literature in her reading program, and liked trying discussion as exploration.

Additional information about Evelyn was gathered using protocols described by Bromley (1986). She has taught for 13 years in fourth and fifth

grades. She completed a master's degree in 1994 with an emphasis in outdoor education. Her favorite subjects to teach are reading and art. Science is among her least preferred subjects to teach.

During reading instruction, Evelyn prefers to use such teaching methods as word walls to introduce new vocabulary and teach word identification skills. Journal entries, shared readings, whole-class discussion, and reading with partners are core components of her reading program. She also enjoys using language arts in conjunction with content areas via thematic units.

Evelyn is aware of current trends in education involving cooperative learning. She has had some training with a structures approach, but prefers to do occasional group work rather than structuring her classroom in cooperative learning communities. When I probed her further on this issue, she explained that although she liked students working in groups, she was concerned about the amount of noise and the tendency for some students to get off-task during group work.

The school's principal describes Evelyn as a leader in the school and popular with members of the community. She has a reputation of being an excellent teacher. She works well with students, faculty, and parents. The principal sees Evelyn's instructional style as being fairly traditional but open and willing to try new teaching methods.

The proceeding information portrays Evelyn as an effective instructor who uses different models of instruction in her teaching although she is still comfortable with traditional reading skills instruction. During reading class, she uses a combination of group work, reflection writing with journal assignments, and cooperative reading. She is open to new ideas, yet feels traditional modes of instruction are also important in the elementary reading class. Evelyn worked in close collaboration with me as she planned, implemented, and made pedagogical decisions about her instruction.

"George Washington
Elementary School"

George Washington Elementary School is a year-round school located in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States. The school has a student population of 937 students, kindergarten through sixth grade. The community's socioeconomic class ranges between middle and upper-middle class. Because of close proximity to a large Air Force facility, Washington Elementary has a more diversified student body than most schools in its district. The school's principal describes the school's patrons as being well-educated, concerned with the welfare of their children, and supportive of teachers.

Because of its large student population, the school has been on a year-round schedule for the last 5 years and has four portable classrooms due to overcrowding. Evelyn's classroom was in one of these portables.

The physical facilities of the portable were comfortable. It was carpeted, heated, and air conditioned. Evelyn had decorated the classroom with student art work and bulletin boards based on what students were studying. Student desks were arranged side-by-side in rows facing the main chalkboard. Toward the back corner of the room a large grow box contained plants the students were studying in science. The classroom also had two computers, a television, videotape recorder, and cassette player. During the course of study, I sat with my laptop computer at a large table in the back of the classroom.

A Profile of the Researcher

I have spent 17 years as an elementary school teacher. Although I have taught fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students, my favorite grade to teach is fifth. I enjoy working with fifth graders because they have more maturity than fourth graders without the behavioral problems associated with sixth graders.

I became interested in the use of literature for reading instruction during my student-teaching experience. After graduation, I was hired to teach fifth grade. Plays, poems, short stories, novels, and newspapers were used in my classroom to supplement the basal reading text. Of course, I taught literature the way I had been taught to teach reading—start by introducing vocabulary, set the purpose for reading, have students read the selection, and then ask questions after reading to check comprehension. It was not until I began my doctoral studies that I become familiar with the research generated

by my colleagues from high-school and college English perspectives.

Rosenblatt's (1983) *Literature as Exploration* introduced me to the possibilities of aesthetic reading.

My educational background included coursework in elementary education, music education, the humanities, as well as a master's degree in elementary curriculum and instruction. After 17 years as an elementary teacher, I became a staff developer, working to improve reading and language arts in my school district. Currently, I am an assistant professor of literacy education at a medium-sized state university.

At this point, readers may wonder if my educational career has biased my feelings concerning literature instruction. It has. Scholars (Guba & Lincoln, 1988) have acknowledged that qualitative research is value-laden and biased. It is necessary for researchers to explain their biases and forecast possible effects those biases may have had on their investigations as well as steps taken to minimize those effects. With this in mind, I have identified biases that may have colored my interpretation of events.

The first is my view of literature instruction. Eeds and Wells (1989), Langer (1991b), and Rosenblatt (1983) have strongly influenced my perceptions about literature teaching, methodology, and the teacher's role in fostering aesthetic reading. I believe the methods and theories of these scholars need to be shared with other elementary teachers and implemented in reading classes where literature is used. In order to minimize the possible

effects of this bias, I worked in close collaboration with Evelyn who, initially, was unfamiliar with discussion as exploration. Evelyn's collaboration in designing instruction, making observations, and identifying concerns allowed me to record what was occurring during the study without assuming an instructional role. At the conclusion of the study, I shared my fieldnotes and personal journal with Evelyn to gain feedback about the trustworthiness of my observations. She confirmed that my observations did indeed describe what she felt occurred during the study.

The second bias concerns my belief that scholars often describe positive effects of methods and philosophies without addressing real-world concerns of teachers. For example, Eeds and Wells (1989) in their seminal article on grand conversations described what went well and worked in two of their literary discussion groups. Unfortunately, a complete picture of what did not work or the anticipated problems a typical teacher might expect to face when implementing literature discussion was not presented. Certainly, in my 17 years as an elementary teacher unexpected or unanticipated things happened during instruction. Being in Evelyn's classroom reminded me of the demanding tasks teachers face every day when working with elementary students. Elementary teachers must make split-second decisions about such things as whether or not students can use the restroom, whether or not students are on-task, or whether or not students are ready to move on to

other assignments. To make sure I had described a complete picture of what occurred during the study, I again relied on Evelyn to judge the trustworthiness of my data. Together we discussed my fieldnotes and interpretations of events recorded in my reflection journal. Evelyn confirmed that I had specifically identified a complete picture of what occurred during the study as well as her concerns regarding the quality of discussions and management concerns when using the paradigm.

Whenever researchers come into close contact with subjects, there is the possibility of contamination and/or confounding of data. The possibility of this bias was most probable during the analysis of students' literature reflection logs. To control for this bias, I asked a graduate student unfamiliar with the study and blind to the instructional phases to analyze and code the literature logs. In this way, I distanced myself from analyzing and coding a segment of data. Data points were assigned based on the graduate student's analysis.

Congruent with Guba and Lincoln (1988), I have identified three biases that may have colored my research and possible safeguards I took to minimize the effects of these biases. To provide readers with the context in which the study took place, two case scenarios—one for traditional instruction and one for discussion as exploration—are now presented.

Case Scenarios

To give readers a glimpse into what occurred during the course of the study, I have created two case scenarios. Each case scenario is based on analysis of my ethnographic fieldnotes and from watching what occurred as captured by videotaping.

The first scenario, a traditional literature lesson, presents instruction as it took place during A phases of instruction. Traditional instructional elements such as (a) teacher-directed questioning, (b) vocabulary discussion, (c) comprehension assessment via questions, and (d) specific journal writing prompts are described.

The second scenario, a discussion as exploration lesson, provides a view of instruction as it took place during implementation of discussion as exploration (B phases). Discussion as exploration elements included (a) placing students in learning communities, (b) open-ended prompts to encourage discussion, (c) open-ended journal reflection writing, and (d) the teacher acting as a facilitator of discussion.

Traditional Literature Lesson

It is eleven o'clock. "Okay, students," the teacher's voice intones, "today we are going to begin to read a new novel." She shows students *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. "Listen as I read this letter from

Mrs. Frankweiler to her lawyer Saxonberg. As you listen to this letter, try to figure out what this story is about."

Twenty-two students follow along as their teacher reads the letter to Saxonberg, which forms the preface to the novel. The teacher finishes the letter and asks, "What is a last will and testament?" Four eager hands shoot up. "Yes, T. J."

"It's the thing a lawyer writes telling who's going to get what when a person dies."

"That's correct. Good thinking."

Student hands go down as three boys get up to leave the classroom. They will spend the next 45 minutes in the resource room rather than participating in literature study. The teacher and other students do not notice their departure. The teacher describes the character Claudia, "Our main character in this story is Claudia. She uses a word a lot in this first chapter, suburb. Who can tell me what a suburb is?"

"It's when you live in a city."

"Sort of, but a suburb is a little bit different."

"It's kind of close to a city, but not in it."

"Excellent, good for you! Just as Alice said, a suburb is not in the city, but is a close distance to it. Many times people commute from suburbs to cities to go to work. How many of you have parents who drive from — to

—to go to work?" About half of the students' hands go up. Four students are decorating folders, and coloring papers around their desks.

The teacher continues, "This is how Claudia feels about her life: injustice. Who would like to look it up in the dictionary for us? While George is looking it up, let's see if I can find where Claudia uses it. Oh, I had better not read that, it might give the secret away."

George goes and gets a dictionary, looks up the word, but is kept waiting as the teacher momentarily forgets him. She continues, "Does anyone know what the word means?" No one answers or raises their hands. "Okay, how about justice. What does justice mean?"

"When things are fair."

"Great, so what would the opposite of justice be?"

"When things are not fair."

"Super! So Claudia feels that things are not fair in her life. Most fifth graders feel that there is a lot of injustice in their lives." Students giggle. During this discussion there is a lot of leg swinging and restlessness. The teacher remembers George who has been keeping his hand raised. "Oh, George, go ahead and read us the definition." George reads it. "Thank you."

The teacher continues, "Here's a new word, monotony. Does anyone know what monotony means? Maybe you can figure it out by context." She reads the word in context. No hands go up. "All right, who would like to look it up?" Frank volunteers. "While Frank is looking it up, let me show you

what New York looks like on a map. New York is the big city Claudia is going to run away to from her home in the suburbs." She goes to the chalkboard, most students focus on her. "This is what Manhattan Island looks like from the air. How many of you knew that New York was on an island?" Two students hands go up.

"My aunt lives near there, we visited her last year," a student replies.

"I saw it on *Home Alone 2*," the other student answers.

"Great," the teacher continues. "Let me show you how the street system works. The streets are numbered going North and South. The avenues run East to West. So, the whole island is laid out on a grid system. It's easy to find directions. For example, the Empire State Building is found at 34th Street and Fifth Avenue. That would be about here," she says as she points to a hand-drawn map on the chalkboard. "During the story, Claudia and Jamie are going to run away to a special place. It's found on about 88th Street and Fifth Avenue. That's right about here. Do you remember the park where Kevin was in *Home Alone 2*? That's Central Park. It's at the back of this special place."

Frank is ready with the dictionary definition, "Monotony means a lack of variety or being bored."

The proceeding lessons have taken 20 minutes. "Thanks," the teacher replies. "Today, you can choose to read the first chapter alone or with a buddy." Students move. "Freeze!" the teacher demands. "After you are

through with reading the selection, I have a question sheet for you. Place it in your folder. Also, look at the journal prompt that I will put on the board. Make sure you make a journal entry after you have read the selection. You may unfreeze and start."

The students scatter around the room. Seven students choose to remain at their desks and read the selection alone. One student sits at his desk staring off, not reading. The rest of the class takes a few minutes to decide where to sit, who will begin reading, and then gets started. Eventually, the boy staring off makes a half-hearted attempt to read the selection. He is a student with Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome (ADDS). During the course of traditional lessons, he frequently will read a little and then stare off in space. The teacher notices him, and gives encouragement to him, "Let's go, Jeff. Get your reading done."

The students are reading the assigned selection. They remain on-task, some of them pausing from the reading to discuss their interpretations of what they read. The teacher places the journal prompt on the chalkboard: *Claudia deliberately selects her brother Jamie as her partner. How well do you think she would manage without him? Give reasons for your opinion. In what ways are you similar to or different from Claudia and/or Jamie?* She also places assignments on the blackboard and requires students to respond via writing to them. Assignments include (a) using a character chart, list

characteristics of Jamie and Claudia, (b) making a list of possessions you would take with you if you were running away from home, and (c) rereading a selection of text where an important bit of information about Claudia's character is presented.

For the next 25 minutes, the teacher walks around the room observing and encouraging students. Two boys, in a group of five readers, begin to giggle. The teacher walks over to them. She comments with a knowing look, "What's so funny?" The boys do not answer her, but instead continue reading. There is a quiet buzz in the room as students are reading to each other. The seven students reading alone at their desks remain focused on doing the reading. Jeff, the ADDS student, sometimes appears to be reading the chapter, and then stares off. After the 25 minutes allotted for reading time, he will close his book and begin the journal assignments with the rest of the class.

All but two students at the back of the room have finished the reading part of their assignment. The teacher directs these two students to go back to their seats. She tells them that they can finish the reading for homework or during any free time the rest of the school day. She reminds all students to make sure they do the journal writing. Tomorrow, the class will discuss their journal writing with her as a way of discussing what they read today. Students

quietly write their responses in their journals. There is a quiet silence as students concentrate on making their journal entries.

Discussion as Exploration Lesson

At eleven o'clock, 22 fifth graders enter their classroom. They have just returned from recess. Typical of the age, they are animated and good-natured as they settle in at their seats. The last 5 days they have been reading the novel *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* as a class. During this time, their teacher used traditional instructional practices with them. Today, however, their teacher will try implementing a newer instructional method. This method is designed to get students to explore what they have been reading by discussing their thoughts and opinions with others.

"Thanks for being settled," the teacher compliments students. "Please take out your copy of the *Mixed-Up Files*. Who can give me a 'Reader's Digest' version of what has happened in the story?"

Several hands shoot up. The teacher calls on Mary who answers her question, "Claudia and Jamie live in a suburb. Claudia decides to run away to New York and take her brother Jamie with her because he has so much money. They hide their clothes in their music cases and decide to run away on Wednesday when they are supposed to have music lessons."

Another student, Mark, joins in, "Yeah, Jamie remembered to take his BVDs." Class giggles.

The teacher questions, "And just what are BVDs?"

Mark answers her, "Underwear!"

The teacher continues, "Why did Claudia want to run away from home?"

"Because she felt her life was unfair."

"So where was she running away to?"

"She wanted to go to a museum because it was so elegant."

The preceding has taken 10 minutes. Now the teacher praises, "Great responses! Today, we're going to try something new. Instead of me talking about new vocabulary and asking you to write answers to questions on the board, I'm going to set aside time where you can read the chapter with a group of friends and then discuss what you have read. There will be a journal assignment, but the majority of your time needs to be spend reading and talking about what you have read."

A student interrupts, "Can we choose our friends to read with?"

"No. However, I will assign you to a group with input from you. If a group of friends wants to be together and I feel they can work well together, I will assign them to the same group." Students begin to chatter among themselves.

"Before we begin, I must tell you about the rules for doing your work this way. To begin with, we must have people assigned to different jobs in your groups. These people will have various assignments to keep the group

moving." She writes the following on the chalkboard: taskmaster, recorder, leader, supplier.

She continues by describing the responsibility of each job. "Okay, the taskmaster should be a good student who will work hard to make sure everyone stays on-task during reading and discussing times. Members of the groups must listen to the taskmaster and get back on-task when reminded to do so by him or her. Each group will choose its own taskmaster. If the taskmaster has a member of the group who just will not stay on-task, he or she should come and get me. All right?"

There are quiet conversations going on in the classroom. The teacher continues, "The next job is that of recorder. The recorder's job is to keep a record of what the group talked about. It will help if the recorder puts down the names of the people in the group and what things they contributed to the discussion. It's important that *everyone* in the group have a chance to talk. So recorders, if someone in your group hasn't had a chance to speak, invite them to do so."

She continues with the next role, "The leader's job is to start the conversations going, or when the conversations break down to get them started again. To help the leaders get things going, I'm going to put a general discussion prompt on the board. The leader may either talk about his or her reaction to the prompt, or invite a group member to share his or her reaction to it."

"Finally," the teacher concludes, "the role of supplier is to be the person responsible for getting paper and supplies to the group. The supplier will also hand in assignments to me. Are there any questions?" There are none. "Okay, I'm going to pass out a sheet of paper to you. I would like the names of people you would like to work with in your group." It has taken 10 minutes to explain the roles students will assume during literature discussion.

As the teacher passes out papers, students look at and point to their friends as if to say, I want you in my group. After a minute or so, the teacher collects the papers. She advises students, "Please take two minutes to review your journal writings about the novel. While you are doing that, I'm going to be assigning groups. When I have made the groups, I will read them out loud to you." The students do what she asks. After a few minutes she reads the names of the groups to students. The word *yes!* is audible from students who like the make-up of their groups. Most of the groups reflect student desire to be with members of the same gender.

After the groups have been assigned the teacher says, "You have two minutes to get together as a group, find a place to work, and begin reading Chapter four. Are there any questions?" The students ignore her last comments as they scurry off to claim their places in the classroom. Many students like meeting under the large table along the sides of the classroom, a few prefer to move their desks into clusters. Unlike what occurred during

traditional instruction, all students are participating in reading the chapter together during this phase of instruction. Forty-five minutes of reading and discussion time is allotted. The extra time is necessary so student have adequate time to reading and discuss.

The teacher puts the discussion prompt on the chalkboard: *Talk about some of the things Jamie and Claudia saw in the museum. After you have talked about that, you need to discuss other things you found interesting in the chapter.*

As students are reading the chapter out loud, they engage in discussion about what they are reading. Some of the students' hands go up. The teacher walks over to a couple of students. After a moment of conversation, she makes an announcement to the class, "If any of you find new words in the story that you cannot figure out from context, please raise your hand and I will come over to you."

A student raises her hand, "What's an acquisition?"

"It's something that someone or something just bought," the teacher replies.

Another hand goes up, "What's a sarcophagus?"

The teacher answers, "It's a type of coffin. Ancient people used to mummify bodies and put them into wooden coffins. Those wooden coffins were then put into an outer coffin called a sarcophagus. Sometimes the

sarcophagus was decorated to look like the person. Have you ever seen King Tut's golden sarcophagus?"

"Yeah, it's made of gold."

"His mummy was placed in an inner coffin and then that inner coffin was placed in a sarcophagus."

After about 20 minutes, some students are beginning to finish reading the chapter. The teacher gives these directions, "Leaders, please make sure that everyone in your group has a chance to talk about their reading. I am going to give you 20 minutes to discuss this chapter. Please do not start writing the journal assignment until everyone feels that they have had time to discuss."

Although naturalistic discussion has taken place during reading time, some students are having trouble getting the discussion phase started. Indeed, two groups of students have actually begun to write in their journals. In one of the groups, students are writing down their definitions of vocabulary words, ignoring the discussion prompt.

Three groups of students are following the discussion prompt. An interesting discussion is taking place in one of these groups:

First student comments, "I don't get it. What's a cupid?"

A peer answers, "Just like it says, it's a pagan angel."

"Okay, so what's a pagan?"

"I don't know."

A new student enters the discussion, "I think it's someone who worships idols, like in the Bible. Let's ask the teacher." Students' hands go up. The teacher walks over to the group. The student begins to talk with her, "Is a pagan someone who worships idols?"

"Yes," the teacher responds. "What word is causing trouble for you?"

"Cupid," a student answers.

The teacher asks, "How is Cupid used in the book?"

"Claudia and Jamie are discussing whether or not 'Angel' is a cupid."

"Cupid was the Greek god of love. In mythology, Cupid would shoot arrows of gold for love, or arrows of brass for hate."

"Is he the guy with the wings at Valentine's day?"

"You've got it!" the teacher replies with enthusiasm. She listens in to the rest of the conversation and then leaves to monitor other group discussion.

A group member continues, "So, Claudia and Jamie are trying to see if 'Angel' is a real angel, or a cupid with arrows and wings."

Another group member, "I think 'Angel' is really an angel. 'Cause Michelangelo would have made an angel for a church, not a cupid."

The group agrees, "Yeah." They continue reading the rest of the chapter.

The classroom teacher notices that a couple of groups are not on task. She raises her hand, a signal to tune-in to her. She reminds students, "Some

of you are not discussing your reading. Please make sure that you look at the discussion prompt and discuss before going on further. Taskmasters, please keep your group on task and get the discussion started. You have ten more minutes before you need to begin writing in your journals."

Students in the two groups who have begun reflective writing in their journals pause. The taskmasters read the journal writing prompt. They briefly lead a discussion quickly making the motion that they are engaged in meaningful conversations; however, after about 3 minutes they go back to their seats to begin journal writing. When the teacher asks whether or not they have discussed their writing, the students respond in the affirmative. They continue working on what, it appears, they believe to be the real task at hand, to make an entry in their journals. After 12 minutes, all students have concluded their discussions and are settled into journal writing.

Analysis of Fieldnotes

As a researcher participant-observer, I kept two types of ethnographic notes. First, daily fieldnotes were collected electronically using a data collection template created with Filemaker® Pro. Data were analyzed and coded each night after daily participant-observation. Second, I wrote my reflections concerning the analyzed fieldnotes in my daily journal. In this section, I report the five central themes and trends of the data as identified in my fieldnotes. In the following section, my reflections concerning my fieldnotes as recorded in my participant-observer journal are reported.

The first theme that emerged from my fieldnotes concerned the abundance of literal-level, closed-convergent type of questions asked by the teacher during whole group discussion. Indeed, a substantial portion of my notes is recordings of this type of teacher-student interaction:

What museums have you been to in —? They are a lot smaller than those in New York, and the New York museums have a lot of priceless works of art. What does priceless mean? So if there are a lot of priceless works of art, the museum must put what around them? Good, what are the guards looking for? (Fieldnotes 3-20-95)

What does cheapskate mean? Is it a compliment? So, it's someone who is cheap with money? (Fieldnotes 3-21-95)

Another theme that emerged in my fieldnotes was a description of the restlessness and lack of attention some students showed during traditional literary discussion. At any given time during traditional instruction, two to four students could be found off-task, staring off, or not paying attention to the teacher. And, because the teacher was engaged in a variety of tasks, she was often unaware of this behavior:

As the teacher reads from the novel, three students are playing with objects in their desks, several students are swinging their legs, the teacher continues to read without noticing. (Fieldnotes 3-20-95)

A student is standing with his hand raised waiting to tell the teacher meaning of a word (monotony). He continues with his hand raised for about three minutes. (Fieldnotes 3-21-95)

A group of four students are finished with the reading assignment, they are sitting quietly at their desks not sure what to do next. About five minutes pass. The teacher walks over and tells them to begin the journal assignment. (Fieldnotes 3-22-95)

The teacher comments during whole class discussion: "Pencils down, we're not decorating folders right now!" (Fieldnotes 3-22-95)

Because this initial theme was prevalent early in the study, a new question emerged—are more students engaged and do they stay on-task and listen better during discussion as exploration? Analysis of my fieldnotes indicated that as a whole, students were more likely to interact with others and stay on-task during the discussion as exploration phase; however, there were times when groups of students, rather than just individuals, also got off-task:

Two minutes were given for students to quickly move into groups. They did this rather quickly. Within five minutes, all students are engaged and reading the chapter. With two exceptions, all students are actively involved with reading and discussing. (Fieldnotes 3-23-95)

Group of students giggle at the story. Taskmaster advises, "Get back on task!" Students resume reading and discussing. (Fieldnotes 3-23-95)

Two students normally easily distracted are discussing the book with each other. One student labeled as having Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome (ADDS) is listening to others in his group read the story. (Fieldnotes 3-27-95)

There is a quiet hum in the room as the students are all actively engaged in reading or discussing their readings. (Fieldnotes 3-27-95)

I am concerned that some students don't seem to be using their discussion time to best advantage. Three groups are thoroughly engaged in talking about what they have read, but two groups are not discussing anything. (Fieldnotes 3-28-95)

Today, there is less off-task talking going on. Students are more settled into the roles we've assigned them. (Fieldnotes 3-28-95)

Discussion as exploration worked well most of the time with most students.

One idea the teacher and I explored was perhaps we could encourage students to use their discussion time better if we randomly organized discussion

groups. Analysis of fieldnotes indicated that this did not work as well as letting students choose their own groups:

Changing groups has had two effects. First, not all students in the new [randomly assigned] groups have chosen to read with others in the group. Second, students are pairing on gender lines while reading. In other words, each group now has two subgroups based on gender. (Fieldnotes 4-3-95)

The new groups do not discuss the story with all members as well as the old [student choice] groups did. (Fieldnotes 4-4-95)

A very important item that emerged from my fieldnotes concerned how to make discussion seem like a real assignment. At times, when students were presented with discussion prompts they glossed over them because they wanted to begin the journal assignment. The importance of establishing discussion as a real assignment was made:

Teacher to students, "Today, I would like you to consider discussion as an important assignment. I'm not going to give you a journal prompt until you have spent at least 20 minutes discussing." (Fieldnotes 3-28-95)

Students are engaged in discussion as well as responding to the journal prompt. (Fieldnotes 3-28-95)

When students saw discussion as an important assignment, they were able to actively engage in it:

Even though students don't always seem to stay on-task, they are discussing the book, as evidenced by so much talking about the story line. And, as judging from listening to the conversations today, students are actively engaged in interpreting what's going on during the narrative. (Fieldnotes 4-4-95)

During discussion, some students are arguing over what has happened in the story. Others are going back to the text to see what it says. Students are better at settling down and discussing what happened. (Fieldnotes 4-6-95)

This active engagement was best fostered when students were encouraged to discuss as they read rather than waiting until they finished the reading to begin discussing:

Discussing is working with five of the six groups when we tell them to discuss as they read. Seemingly, because students know what is of interest to them and what they want to discuss. (Fieldnotes 4-4-95)

It does not work to have students read and then try to discuss; students finish at different times and have to either rush to finish, or wait for others to be done. (Fieldnotes 4-5-95)

In conclusion, analysis of fieldnotes indicated several prevalent themes that emerged. These are (a) students being restless and off-task during whole-class discussion in traditional phases, (b) discussion as exploration engaged more students in reading and discussing, (c) randomly assigning students to discussion groups did not work as well as student-selected groups, (d) discussing needed to be perceived by students as an important assignment, and (e) elementary-age students are more engaged in discussing when they are taught to discuss as they read aloud, rather than reading a selection and then being asked to discuss it. This is possibly due to their inexperience with using discussion. Table 7 presents a frequency count of these observations as captured in my fieldnotes. See appendix C for examples of fieldnotes collected during traditional and discussion as exploration lessons.

Researcher Participant-Observers Journal

As described earlier, each evening of the study I analyzed my participant-observer fieldnotes and recorded my reflections on them in my

Table 7

Frequency Count of Fieldnote Observations

Students are restless or off-task during traditional instruction	Discussion as exploration engaged more student in reading and discussing	Random assignment to discussion groups did not work	Discussing needs to be perceived as being as important as journal writing	Students are more engaged in discussion as they read and discuss
5	7	3	3	4

daily journal. In this section, I report central themes and issues identified by my reflection writing. See Appendix E for examples of my journal entries.

As the study began, I found myself wondering if I was doing participant-observation correctly. I was reassured by continued professional reading in Spradley (1980) and Miles and Huberman (1994) that I was following correct procedures. Indeed, Miles and Huberman gave advice to doctoral students such as myself, "Learn by doing...the biggest enemy of your learning is the gnawing worry that you're not doing it right" (p. 14). Indeed, after approximately 5 days of data collecting, I began to see patterns within my fieldnotes. And, as typical of the ethnographic research cycle, more specific research questions began to emerge as I studied the patterns in my fieldnotes.

The first few days, I recorded in my journal feelings I was getting from the cooperating teacher and her students about my presence. Initially, both students and their teacher were a little on edge due to my presence in the

room. Within a couple a sessions, the students and their teacher began to get used to my presence. Initially, I wondered if the students would be on best behavior due to a researcher present. If their best behavior was present, it did not take long for it to wear off! Typical questions that emerged initially in my journal were centered around getting a feel for students and their teacher.

Examples of these questions included:

What is the teacher's preferred teaching style? (Researcher Journal 3-20-95)

How does the teacher feel about using small groups for literature study? (Researcher Journal 3-20-95)

Are these students' academic performances typical of most fifth graders? (Researcher Journal 3-21-95)

Does this class of fifth graders contain high, medium, low profiles of students typical in most heterogeneous classrooms? (Researcher Journal 3-21-95)

The teacher told me about her fears concerning unstructured group work. Is this a commonly held fear of other teachers who don't do a lot of cooperative learning? (Researcher Journal 3-21-95)

As we progress through the study, I recorded in my journal key patterns that were emerging from my fieldnotes. For example, I noted:

I'm starting to notice several students consistently off-task during such activities as vocabulary instruction. Also, only about half of the class wants to work with each other in a collaborative style of learning. Evelyn told me to watch one boy in particular. He is an ADDS student. His form of ADDS is passive-aggressive. Normally, he has trouble staying on-task. Remarkably, he interacted with others in his group in an acceptable manner. Another girl who was one of those frequently off-task stayed with the reading and discussing done by her group. (Researcher Journal 3-24-95)

After much consideration, Evelyn and I have decided that we need to determine in students' eyes what the real assignment is. By giving students a journal prompt to complete after discussing, we focused the real task on it, rather than talking about the reading selection. (Researcher Journal 3-27-95)

Sometimes, discussion as exploration worked well; other times it did not. My journal was a place to record my feelings, positive and negative:

Students enjoyed being given permission to actually talk to each other. They are more on-task during their reading, and they seem to be discussing the information presented in the readings. (Researcher Journal 3-23-95)

Today, some students sat around either listening, or not listening to others. I would estimate that it took a lot less time to read the assignment when students read silently alone versus in groups. (Researcher Journal 3-28-95)

Things really did not work well today. First the students rushed through their conversations, yet they said they thoroughly discussed their reading. When we asked them what they read, students are able to tell us interesting details! (Researcher Journal 4-3-95)

I am getting a little depressed that discussion is not going as well as I had hoped. And I am wondering if students are enjoying the experience. (Researcher Journal 4-5-95)

Discussion is working a lot better today. The reason is that we asked students to discuss while they read rather than waiting to do it after. When they do this naturalistic discussing, they don't seem to need a discussion prompt. (Researcher Journal 4-6-95)

Gradually, my journal recorded issues that were emerging from my fieldnotes including:

Students don't seem to mind going back to traditional forms of literature instruction after several days of discussion as exploration. (Researcher Journal 3-30-95)

Discussion does work as a literature exploration tool with elementary age students. (Researcher Journal 3-30-95)

Interestingly, more students choose to read with partners now that they have participated in discussion as exploration. (Researcher Journal 3-31-95)

Things are working out much better with having discussion during the course of reading versus reading the novel and then attempting to discuss. (Researcher Journal 4-6-95)

As I watched these kids working it impressed me that the key to using discussion with fifth graders is to have them discuss as they read the text, rather than reading and then discussing. I am quite pleased with the overall results. (Researcher Journal 4-7-95)

My journal became the place I engaged in formal interpretation of my fieldnotes. In the next section, I report the teacher's interpretation of what was occurring as recorded in her journal.

Teacher Participant-Observer Journal

During the course of the study, I encouraged the teacher participant-observer to keep a daily journal recording her reactions to what was occurring in class. Unfortunately, the teacher did not do as instructed and made sporadic entries. Those entries, however, do provide additional information about the effects of using discussion. Initially, the teacher expressed concern that all students did not listen and participate during traditional instruction:

I feel a little bit frustrated in that I'm having a hard time keeping them with me when I'm discussing up front. (Teacher Journal 3-21-95)

John and Carson's group tends to discuss while they read. Yet, during whole-group discussing, they do not raise their hand much. (Teacher Journal 3-23-95)

As the study moved into the discussion as exploration phase, the teacher noticed that her students were capable of discussing while reading:

Most of the kids enjoyed reading in groups. (Teacher Journal 3-24-95)

Many of the students who had read alone, enjoyed reading in groups. For the most part, they were on-task. (Teacher Journal 3-27-95)

As students continued to participate in discussion, the teacher's journal began to reflect her concerns about using discussion:

A few students [reading and then discussing] were frustrated because they couldn't read as fast in group, while one group felt that they could read faster as a group. (Teacher Journal 3-24-95)

When asked to discuss, students seemed somewhat hesitant and uncomfortable. I didn't witness any lengthy, in-depth discussions. (Teacher Journal 4-5-95)

The students participated in discussion with teacher-appointed groups. They did not enjoy working with the groups in which they were placed. (Teacher Journal 3-28-95)

Toward the end of the teacher's journal a crystallization about her feelings concerning instruction appeared:

They [students] seem to work best and enjoy a variety of teaching methods, i.e. direct-instruction, discussing, and activities which involve them, rather than strictly relying on discussion. (Teacher Journal 4-7-95)

These students do not have enough prior knowledge or discussion experience to pull-off [sic] doing it on their own. Discussion prompts need to be more specific and used with other teaching ideas. (Teacher Journal 4-7-95)

In conclusion, the sporadic journal entries of the classroom teacher provided an additional view concerning literature instruction. In general, the teacher

felt that discussion did work at times. She also felt that fifth graders needed more narrow discussion prompts than what we provided. And, she felt strongly that discussion as exploration was a viable strategy when used with a combination of traditional literature instruction elements designed to engage students in enjoyable literary activities.

Videotaping

Three 45-minute instructional sessions were videotaped, one traditional and two discussion as exploration. We videotaped the traditional lesson on March 23, 1995; discussion as exploration lessons were taped on March 28 and April 7, 1995. At the conclusion of each videotaped session the classroom teacher and I watched and recorded our reactions to what we saw. We made no attempt to transcribe verbatim dialogue. At times, all student voices were audible; however, sometimes it was impossible to hear all conversation. The videotapes allowed us to observe holistically what occurred during instruction.

The videotaped traditional instruction session featured whole class discussion, teacher-led vocabulary instruction, and teacher-directed questioning. Other teacher-directed activities such as presenting history lessons, guided art activities, and semantic mapping of new concepts were not videotaped during this session. Most students actively participated and listened to the teacher during such instruction. However, between two to four students, not always the same ones, were not paying attention to the teacher

during group instruction. These students were engaged in a variety of activities, including talking with neighboring students, playing with scissors or other desk materials, or doing other class assignments.

Students who were actively participating were rather enthusiastic about raising their hands and answering questions. Although this mode of instruction was comfortable for both students and their teacher, large group discussions often turned into direct dialogue between a single student and the teacher. During this dialogue, other class members were expected to sit quietly and listen to the discussion. Students who wanted to add a thought or another bit of information to the dialogue were encouraged to do so. Unfortunately, they had to compete with others for the teacher's attention.

When Evelyn and I watched her teaching, she commented on how sometimes she felt awkward instructing in such a traditional mode. Vocabulary instruction, focusing on having students define words, was particularly annoying to her. During her regular teaching, she uses semantic webbing to teach vocabulary. Evelyn noticed that a couple of students were always off-task during whole group instruction. Also, she commented that she had forgotten to call on the student whom she had asked to look up a word. Even so, Evelyn did remark that whole group discussion did keep students with the teacher during instruction. Also she liked that it was easy to manage student behavior when she was at the front of the classroom instructing.

On the whole, traditional literature instruction worked rather well with this group of students. Eventually, even those off-task joined the rest of the class in participating. Students seemed comfortable with the instructional methods, the flow of instruction, and knowledge of what their roles as students were supposed to be.

The first videotaped session of discussion as exploration captured student behaviors as they attempted to engage in student-led discussion during completion of the required reading. A student-selected leader was given the task of initiating conversations and keeping the flow going. Initially, students simply read to each other out loud. Evelyn and I commented that we felt there were Hawthorne effects present during videotaping. For example, during the previous day's discussion, this group of boys were quite animated with their interactions. During this taped session, the boys scarcely looked up. They read and spoke in quiet voices. After the session was over, the teacher asked them why they were so quiet, and the boys responded that they thought that's what she wanted them to be.

As the students tried to engage in dialogue, we noticed that they had very limited conversational skills. This was evident by students sitting in a circle looking at each other not saying anything. Evelyn noted that students' limited prior knowledge about central themes of the novel, such as Renaissance history, might also have contributed to lack of in-depth

discussion. After a cursory attempt at engaging in dialogue, they disbanded and worked on the journal assignment.

The third videotaped session also involved discussion as exploration. However, during this session, students were encouraged to read and discuss as they went along, rather than finishing the reading and then discussing it. Students were more engaged in discussing during this phase than in the previous discussion as exploration session. The classroom teacher and I felt that encouraging students to discuss as they read built upon students' natural desire to orally respond to what they were reading. This approach avoided student awkwardness in not knowing how to converse.

Another positive result of using discussion as exploration in this manner was that students had a greater chance of participating in dialogue. In contrast to traditional large group discussion where individual students had to wait and then compete for the teacher's attention, small student-led groups encouraged students to stop reading and talk about important points, key events, or questions.

Although we videotaped three sessions, Evelyn and I felt that nothing new about the effects of paradigm were revealed by watching the videotapes. Perhaps, if we had kept the videotape recorder running during all of literature instruction, students would have reacted more comfortably when the camera was focused on them.

Student Quickwrites

Student quickwrites provided valuable data concerning student feelings and perceptions during the course of the study. Most of the time, student perceptions were similar to what the teacher and I recorded in our journals. As described in Chapter 3 (Methodology), a writing prompt was given to all students asking for feedback concerning literature instruction. After 2 minutes, the students quickwrites were collected. A card sort was then used to cluster student responses and develop headings for the clusters. Six major categories of student responses were identified. They are (a) perceptions about traditional instruction, (b) perceptions about discussion as exploration, (c) feelings about going back to traditional instruction after discussion as exploration, (d) what did not work with discussion as exploration, (e) what students liked in literature instruction, and (f) what students did not like in literature instruction.

Student perceptions about traditional instruction include both positive and negative comments. Students were divided as to their feelings about traditional literature instruction; some liked it, others did not. Students also tended to like the teacher taking charge of the instruction and giving student specific, rather than ambiguous, assignments:

It [traditional instruction] was rather boring...[the teacher] taught me what new words means and about what we would be reading in the chapter. (Student 6)

Well, I was not too excited about the reading she assigned us. But, I just thought I might as well do it. I like doing exciting things. (Student 3)

I liked it when she [the teacher] tells us what to do. I also like it when she lets us read in partners. (Student 8)

I think it [traditional instruction] makes it easier to understand the book. It also makes it a lot more fun. (Student 6)

I liked it when she [the teacher] told us the [vocabulary] words. This helps me learn. (Student 11)

It's boring when the teacher just stands there and talks. I'm sick of it. That's all teachers have done to me all my life. I HATE IT! (Student 1)

Student feelings and perceptions about discussion as exploration revealed that they liked to work in groups. Students also liked to talk and discuss their interpretations of reading assignments:

I thought it was neat to be in groups. I liked the four jobs we used. There wasn't anything dumb or not fun about today [using discussion as exploration]. (Student 17)

I liked being in groups because my friends and I had more fun, it was interesting, and [time] goes by faster. I liked how we discussed things and how we did it. (Student 3)

I liked [discussion as exploration] because it gave us responsibilities and it gave us more ideas and gave us a chance to be with other people more. (Student 6)

I liked reading with groups. I think it makes reading more enjoyable for me. I also liked talking about the chapters. (Student 11)

I loved it [discussion as exploration] because I'm with my best friends. For some reason, I read faster than I ever have with them. I love to work with people I like. It's better than working alone. (Student 1)

Working in groups was great because we got a chance to express our feelings, and because I like to talk! (Student 5)

When the instruction switched back to the traditional mode, the teacher and I were surprised that most students did not mind switching. Also, some students felt that a traditional approach was better instruction:

I don't mind going back to traditional instructional, but it's pretty fun working in groups. (Student 19)

I liked it [traditional instruction] better because discussing doesn't really help me. It's funner just writing about what happened in the story. (Student 14)

I liked being in groups better than going back to just a regular way because it's a change. But this [traditional instruction] is fine too. (Student 5)

It's really easier to be back in traditional mode. Because the other way of doing things [discussion as exploration] is really hard for me. (Student 2)

I really like how we went back to traditional reading because we can read either by ourselves or with a group. (Student 21)

I like to read with people we pick, and know exactly what to do. I think it is easier. I also like it [traditional instruction] because you can read faster and get your work done so you don't have homework. (Student 6)

But actually, I can't decide if I liked it [discussion as exploration] better or not. I thought having partners was a smart idea, and I was used to discussing. (Student 3)

During the times the teacher and I felt discussion as exploration was not working as well as we had hoped, we asked for student perceptions via quickwrites. Statements from student quickwrites indicated that discussion was not working when students perceived the text to be dull, when they did

not understand the message of the text, and when their friends interfered with group discussion:

[Discussion didn't work well] because it was kind of a boring chapter. It wasn't as easy to talk about it. Not a lot of things happened in this chapter. (Student 1)

[Discussion didn't work well] because we all didn't really understand what happened in the book. (Student 2)

It [discussion as exploration] wasn't working as good for me because I'm excited to get out of school early today. I can't wait to see Missy and her new kitty. (Student 3)

My group was in a silly mood today! (Student 4)

I think it [discussion as exploration] wasn't working as well because we get out early and we are all excited about that. We were goofing off a little bit too. We also lost some people because they went to serve [lunch]. (Student 5)

We got to be better friends and we wanted to talk instead of study. Maybe some people thought they could get away with it. (Student 6)

Eventually, student perceptions in their quickwrites reflected those things students enjoyed doing during literature instruction such as reading in voices, art projects, drama, and enrichment activities:

I like when I can read a chapter in voices and then can read it and put it on like a play. (Student 7)

I liked letting us pick groups and acting out a part in the book, or that our class could act out the whole book in front of the school. (Student 8)

Art projects are what I seemed to enjoy best. (Student 9)

I liked drawing pictures of what we read. It was fun to read using voices. (Student 2)

Do different things with the story. Because it can be boring if you do the same things over, it's boring. (Student 9)

I just liked reading the story where they ran away in this chapter. I wonder what's going to happen next. (Student 5)

I liked listing the character traits with everybody else. I also liked listing the things we would take with us to New York. (Student 10)

I liked it when he [researcher participant-observer] showed us the art books. I thought they were very interesting. (Student 11)

Student opinions and feelings about what they did not like also began to surface in their quickwrites:

I did not like two people in my group and I hated arguing with my partner. (Student 2)

The group work was hard, and the interruptions [student leaving to be lunch workers] made it confusing. (Student 13)

I hated it when Mrs. M— makes our groups for us. I liked my first group. I didn't want to change. (Student 14)

I didn't like making journal entries because it was hard to get all of the information down. I did like it when we predicted what was going to happen. (Student 2)

It made me mad that we didn't get to choose our own groups and that we had to discuss. I didn't think discussing was that fun. (Student 15)

I don't like the journal entries. They are boring. (Student 5)

[I didn't like] journal entries, and not getting to choose our own groups. (Student 3)

In conclusion, student quickwrites provided valuable insight into the thoughts and opinions of the student participants. Table 8 presents a frequency count of student perceptions concerning instruction. Analysis of

Table 8

Frequency Count of Student Responses Concerning Literature Instruction

Negative Comments about Traditional Instruction	Positive Comments about Traditional Instruction	Negative Comments about Discussion as Exploration	Positive Comments about Discussion as Exploration	Negative Comments about Going Back to Traditional Instruction	Positive Comments about Going Back to Traditional Instruction
13	12	6	9	9	7

the quickwrites indicates support among students for the use of discussion as exploration as one of many instructional tools for literature study. As with most teaching methods, one needs to be careful when implementing the paradigm; some students will enjoy using discussion, others will not.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided me during the course of implementation of discussion as exploration. These questions, along with summary findings, are reviewed in this section.

Research Question A

The first research question guiding this study was, "What events are happening as the teacher moves to incorporate discussion as exploration while teaching a class novel?" Data for addressing this question came from

videotaped sessions, researcher participant-observer fieldnotes and daily journal entries, teacher participant-observer journal entries, and student quickwrites. Data were reduced by using a Taxonomic Analytic Process, as described in Chapter 3 (Methodology). Figure 9 shows the Taxonomic Analysis for finding number one discussed below. Important findings from the above described data collection procedures include:

Finding 1. Discussion as exploration was well-received by students who enjoyed working together in groups. Most students were comfortable with the ambiguity of open-ended discussion prompts; however, other students preferred teacher-directed instruction. Some students liked taking responsibility for leading discussions. A technique which the teacher and I found helpful was to train students in collaborative team building and cooperative learning. After instructing students and giving them practice with cooperative learning, we assigned class members to various roles within their response groups. We designated (a) taskmasters—students who kept the group on task, (b) discussion leaders—students who began conversations and gave opportunities for all students to participate, (c) recorders—students who wrote down key points the groups wanted recorded, and (d) suppliers—students who would get materials for the group. Training students in collaborative group processing and assigning them to various roles improved students' ability to begin and keep conversations going. (Fieldnotes: 3-27-95,

Documentation

Field notes

Two minutes were given for students to move into groups...Within five minutes all students are engaged and reading the chapter...

Two students normally distracted are discussing the book with each other...

Three groups are thoroughly engaged in talking about what they have read.

Researcher Journal

Students enjoyed being given permission to actually talk to each other...

Discussion is working better today...

Teacher Journal

Most of the kids enjoyed reading in groups...

Students stayed on-task better in groups...

Most of the students who had read alone, enjoyed reading in groups.

Student Quickwrites

I thought it was neat to be in groups...

I liked [Discussion] because it gave us responsibility...
I liked reading with groups, I think it makes reading more enjoyable...

I liked it [traditional instruction] because discussion doesn't help me...

It's easier to be in traditional mode...

Videotapes

Student leader initiated conversations.

Students were able to read and discuss.

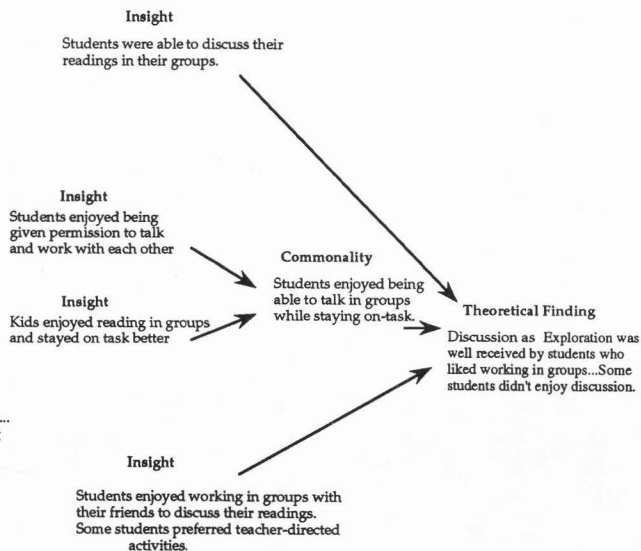


Figure 9. Taxonomic analytic scheme.

3-28-95, 3-29-95, 4-4-95, 4-5-95, 4-6-95. Researcher Journal: 3-28-95, 3-29-95, 3-30-95, 4-6-95. Teacher Journal: 3-27-95, 3-28-95, 4-4-95. Videotapes: 3-28-95, 4-7-95.)

Finding 2. During traditional literature instruction, analysis of teacher and researcher fieldnotes indicated that a substantial portion of teacher-directed instruction featured the use of literal-level, closed-convergent types of questions designed to elicit correct responses from students. At any given time, two to four students could be found staring off or not looking at the teacher as she was instructing. Often, the teacher was unaware of this behavior. As a whole, students were comfortable with traditional whole-group instruction because they knew what their roles were, and what was expected of them. Almost half of the participating students preferred to read alone during traditional instruction. (Fieldnotes: 3-20-95, 3-21-95, 3-22-95, 3-24-95, 4-4-95, 4-7-95. Researcher Journal: 3-21-95, 3-22-95. Teacher Journal: 3-24-95, 4-7-95. Videotapes: 3-23-95, 3-28-95.)

Finding 3. All students participated in group readings of the assignment when discussion as exploration was implemented. Students who tended to get off-task during traditional instruction stayed more on-task when they worked together collaboratively. Although discussion as exploration engaged more students in staying on-task, when students did get off-task, they did so in groups, rather than individually. (Fieldnotes: 4-4-95, 4-5-95. Videotapes: 3-28-95, 4-7-95.)

Finding 4. When students were asked to return to traditional forms of literature instruction after participating in discussion as exploration, they were able to do so without much concern. Student perceptions about traditional instruction included both positive and negative comments. Students were divided as to their feelings about traditional literature instruction; some liked it, others did not. Some students preferred the teacher taking charge of instruction and giving students specific, rather than open-ended ambiguous assignments. (Student Quickwrites: Students 2, 3, 5, 6, 14, 19, 21. Fieldnotes: 3-30-95.)

Finding 5. Asking students to read and discuss as they read encouraged more discussion than asking students to read and discuss their reading later. Students naturally engaged in discussion as a part of working in groups. Careful attention had to be given to establish discussion as a real assignment in the eyes of students. (Fieldnotes: 4-5-95, 4-6-95, 4-7-95. Videotape: 4-7-95. Researcher Journal: 4-4-95, 4-6-95.)

Research Question B

The second research question was, "How does implementing discussion as exploration provide a sound aesthetic literary experience in the elementary classroom on an individual basis?" This question was also addressed by the research procedures described for question one. The data support the following findings:

Finding 1. Students enjoyed participating in collaborative readings and peer discussions when they had a say in choosing members of their groups. At one point in the study we tried unsuccessfully to assign students to literature response groups. Students either complained that they did not like the members of their groups, or simply chose to work with those peers in the group they liked. Allowing students some say and choice in organizing and selecting literature response groups had a positive effect on improving student-led discussion. (Student Quickwrites: Students: 2, 8, 14, 16, 20.)

Finding 2. Student journal entries reflected an appreciation for the novel, as well as a critical understanding of its central themes. We found that student-led discussion allowed for a greater range of interpretations of literature and fostered student pride and ownership of those interpretations. Indeed, students frequently would become experts on themes or related ideas presented in the text. When students were engaged in discussing their readings, they focused on elements of the story and connected personal life-experiences with the text. (Students' Literature Logs 1-5.)

Research Question C

Research question C, "Does implementing discussion as exploration lead to more movement among dimensions of reading comprehension as identified by Langer's literary stances?" was addressed in the A|B|A|B phase withdrawal array plotted for the selected five students. Langer's literary stances included (a) stance 1—being out and stepping into an envisionment,

(b) stance 2—being in and moving through an envisionment, (c) stance 3—stepping back and rethinking what one knows, and (d) stance 4—stepping out and objectifying the experience. Visual inspection of data points indicated discussion as exploration did lead to greater movement among the stances. A frequency distribution was made for the number of shifts (movement among various stances in contrast to stable stance reporting) occurring in each instructional phase. Shifts in stances remained stable during traditional instruction phases. Greater number of shifts took place during discussion as exploration phases with the greatest number of stance shifts occurring during the last discussion as exploration phase (B³). Also, when students participated in discussion as exploration, they entered into the fourth stance, something that did not occur during traditional phases.

Research Question D

The final research question defined was, "What instructional concerns does the teacher have as she attempts to implement the paradigm?" Data addressing this question were generated by my conversations with the teacher as we viewed videotaped sessions, planned instruction, and as I analyzed her daily journal. The teacher expressed the following concerns:

Finding 1. As we initiated discussion as exploration, the teacher wondered if she was implementing the paradigm correctly. After using discussion as exploration for three sessions, she felt comfortable using the paradigm for planning instruction. Her initial concerns were alleviated as we

progressed through the study and had time to read students learning logs and watch and discuss the videotapes. (Fieldnotes: 3-20-95. Teacher Journal: 3-20-95, 3-21-95, 3-27-95. Videotape: 3-28-95.)

Finding 2. Toward the end of the study, the teacher was concerned that students were rushing through discussion. After questioning a few students who had hurried through their discussion, it was determined that we had placed greater importance on journal entries than discussion. For the concluding sessions, we asked students to discuss as they read and record conversations they had in their literature response groups. This, the teacher felt, encouraged better, more in-depth discussion than giving journal prompts and discussion prompts alone. (Fieldnotes: 3-28-95. Teacher Journal: 3-27-95, 3-28-95, 4-6-95, 4-7-95.)

Finding 3. Classroom management was an early concern of the teacher when we planned discussion as exploration lessons. The teacher wondered if students were more likely to get off-task during discussion as exploration phases. As we implemented the paradigm, we found discussion as exploration actually encouraged more students to be active, rather than passive readers and to keep up with members of their groups. In addition, the quality of journal responses recorded in the students' literature logs supported the teacher's conclusion that they were constructing events of the story and developing personal interpretations during discussion phases. (Teacher Journal: 3-28-95, 4-6-95, 4-7-95. Students' Literature Logs 1-5.)

Finding 4. Finally, the teacher was concerned that students might not enjoy using discussion as exploration every day with every reading assignment. Her concern was validated by responses from student quickwrites where several students reported they preferred more traditional teacher-directed instruction. However, many other students expressed pleasure with using discussion as part of a repertory of literature instruction methods. (Teacher Journal 4-4-95. 4-5-95. Student Quickwrites: Students 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13.)

Summary

A study was conducted during March and April 1995 that investigated the effects of incorporating discussion as exploration in an elementary reading class. Data collection methods included survey instruments, ethnographic participant-observation, and a single-subject A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component.

Survey data provided profiles of students, the teacher, and the researcher. Visual arrays of students' literary stances were also presented with student profiles. A context for readers was established by providing two case scenarios—one for each instructional method. Analyses of ethnographic fieldnotes, teacher and researcher journals, and videotapes were presented.

Results of the study confirmed that (a) students were capable of using discussion as exploration, (b) using the paradigm led to movement among students' literary stances, and (c) discussion as exploration engaged groups of

students in literature reflection. The next chapter (Discussion) addresses the limitations of the study, its implications for theory and research in literature instruction, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study investigated the effects of incorporating a paradigm of literature instruction, discussion as exploration, in an elementary reading class. The regularly assigned classroom teacher and I acted as participant-observers in implementing the paradigm, making decisions concerning pedagogy, and collecting and interpreting data. The study took place during March and April of 1995 for a period of 4 weeks.

The design of the study featured two instruction phases—traditional literature instruction and discussion as exploration. Several methods were used for the purpose of data collection. Three categories of methods included (a) survey research, (b) participant-observation fieldnotes and journal entries, and (c) a single-subject A|B|A|B phase withdrawal component for identifying and plotting students' literary stances. Several procedures were used for data reduction, including (a) daily coding of fieldnotes and journal reflection writing, (b) a card sort procedure to identify unifying themes in student quickwrites, and (c) analysis of student literature logs according to Langer's four literary stances.

In Chapter 4 (Findings), I reported the discoveries revealed by the study. Profiles of five selected students, visual displays of their literary

stances, and a portrait of their classroom teacher were presented. Two case scenarios—one for a traditional lesson, and one for a discussion as exploration lesson—were created to give readers a more holistic feel for what occurred during instruction. Next, major categories that emerged through the coding of fieldnotes, teacher and researcher journal entries, and student quickwrites were described. Finally, the four research questions guiding this study were considered in light of the revealed data.

It was not possible to observe and record everything that happened during the study. A variety of data collection methods was used to insure that I did not overlook any important things which transpired. I believe that the data collected, as well as interpretations created by myself, the teacher, and her students, represent a faithful view of what occurred during literature study. Of course, other researchers who may implement discussion as exploration in other contexts and with other students may have different data and interpretations revealed to them. Qualitative research perspectives acknowledge multiple views of realities (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Nevertheless, the view presented in Chapter 4 (Findings) represents my best description of what occurred during instruction in a specific context. In this section of the dissertation a discussion covering the limitations of the study, contributions to theory concerning literature instruction, how my study relates to the theoretical literature cited in Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), and recommendations for further research are presented.

Limitations of the Study

This descriptive study used a single classroom as a context for investigating the effects of implementing discussion as exploration. Findings of the study have contributed to the knowledge base concerning effects of incorporating discussion in literature instruction and concerns teachers may have as they attempt to incorporate the paradigm in elementary reading classes. Investigating the implementation of the paradigm in a single context with a variety of data collection techniques allowed me to generate a description of what occurred with richness, fullness, and detail. Because a single context was used to study the paradigm, generalizability of such a study is very limited. A similar study altering any variable such as context, participants, and instruction may result in altered findings.

Another limitation of the study was the short interval of time I was in the classroom (one month). The study cannot be considered true ethnography, even though one research component involved ethnographic research. Ethnography implies that the researcher live as a member of the culture being studied for a lengthy period of time (Fetterman, 1989). An investigation of the paradigm for longer periods of time, as a member of the classroom community, might have revealed subtle nuances of data missed by investigating it for a shorter time interval. Additionally, because I familiarize the teacher with discussion as exploration at the first of the study, I was not a neutral participant observer in the truest sense of the word.

Finally, participant observation, itself, also proved to be a limiting factor of the study. When I participated in a small group activity, my very participation focused my attention on that group experience exclusively. Fortunately, the classroom teacher also shared the responsibilities of participant observation. A careful discussion took place each day to insure that we were in agreement in observing the same type of behaviors within different groups. When one of us saw something different, we alerted the other to watch for that unique behavior.

Similarly, videotaping was used to record group interactions three times during the study to examine what occurred during instructional phases. When I videotaped a group, the very act of focusing the video camera on one group of students exclusively automatically shut out other group experiences. To account for this limitation, I purposely chose three different groups of students for each videotaped session.

When considering the limitations of this study, three questions arise. First, did my study provide a complete and valid perspective of what occurred during the instructional phases? Second, was I able to identify legitimate concerns the participating teacher had about implementation of discussion as exploration? And third, were enough data generated in student literature logs to plot their literary stances? The answer to all three of these questions is affirmative.

In considering question one, the use of multiple data collection tools, including participant observation, did allow patterns of data to surface. Initially, as reviewed in Chapter 4 (Findings), my reflection journal recorded my worries that I would be able to see what was occurring and be able to make sense out of it. The joy I felt was recorded when patterns of data did emerge from fieldnotes and videotaped sessions. My observations were also validated by discussion with the classroom teacher and information generated by student quickwrites. These two other sources of information provided additional triangulation as to the faithfulness of my observations and interpretations of them.

The second question, involving the teacher's concerns as she implemented the paradigm, is the easiest of the three questions to address. At the conclusion of the study, I showed my fieldnotes to the teacher along with my tentative interpretations of what occurred. Together we debriefed. We also identified her concerns and feelings as recorded in her daily journal. Finally, we generated a list of what her concerns were and possible remedies for them.

Question three addresses the issue of data used to plot students' literary stances. At the beginning of the study, this issue was on my mind. In addition to wondering about how much data students would generate in their reflection logs, I also was concerned with the quality of responses recorded. Again, at the conclusion of the study, a graduate assistant coded the responses

in the reflection logs to Langer's literary stances. After data points were assigned to each response and were recorded in a visual array, it became apparent that I did have enough quality data to see where students' literary understandings were during the phases of instruction, and that students did indeed move among the different stances.

Implications for Theory and Research in Literature Instruction

This study has contributed to the body of research investigating literature instruction in the elementary classroom. As Rosenblatt (1994) described earlier, most investigations in literature instruction come from those interested in teaching high-school or college English. This study was important because it provided additional research into the efficacy of a paradigm of literature instruction that was adapted for use in an elementary reading class. It served to make connections between elementary and secondary education perspectives.

Several of my elementary colleagues have also made important contributions to the pedagogy of literature instruction. Harste, Short, and Burke (1988) developed a practical theory of literature instruction based on student involvement and process-centered instruction. Routman (1988 & 1991) provided elementary teachers with practical strategies for encouraging student response to literature. And, Short (1991) described activities for

building communities of readers. These scholars provide practical strategies for classroom teachers based on the theorists cited in Chapter 2.

Eeds and Wells (1989) described how children as young as 10 years old could articulate their construction of meaning, share personal stories inspired by reading, and participate as active readers who used prediction and inferencing. This study supports Eeds and Wells' conclusions. However, an important distinction must be made between our two studies. Eeds and Wells' research relied on 17 undergraduate students to act as facilitators in encouraging and supporting student conversations in small group settings. In my study, only two adults (the classroom teacher and I) were present to give support and encourage discussion. My study reflects more closely what teachers can expect in authentic school contexts when they attempt to implement discussion. I agree with Eeds and Wells' assertion that literature teachers must move from gentle inquisitors to conversation facilitators; my study suggests that elementary teachers would also facilitate conversation by asking students to converse as they read a selection rather than reading and then conversing.

Discussion as exploration, as described in Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), has been proposed as a vehicle for creating an environment that fosters what Rosenblatt (1983) referred to as the aesthetic literary experience. The use of discussion as exploration in elementary reading classes is supported by my study. Elementary-age students can engage in meaningful

discussions about their reading. However, unlike older students, elementary-age children benefit by having large amounts of training and scaffolding as they move to take responsibility for their reading and interpretations. Indeed, during the first phases of discussion, many students who had been socialized over the years with traditional elementary reading programs actually identified and defined vocabulary words presented in the text because they felt that was what they were supposed to do. The use of traditional reading programs has led to student expectations as to what to expect during reading class.

Elementary-age students may be best described as novice readers. An important distinction between them and more experienced students is that they need to have assignments that help them construct meaning with various texts (Cooper, 1993). For these novice readers, discussion prompts need to be somewhat specific and focus discussions on what has been presented in the text. And yet, the prompts must allow for greater personalization and sense of ownership. Elementary teachers must carefully construct discussion prompts that are specific, yet encourage discussions that enhance personal understandings of the text.

As for the aesthetic literary experience itself, admittedly, it is a construct difficult to measure. The sense of ownership students felt as they participated in discussion as exploration and the quality of their learning logs certainly were indicators of a positive, rich, stimulating learning experience. Data from

the single-subject arrays also support the conclusion that the use of discussion encouraged students to enter a literary stance where they stepped out and objectified the experience presented in the text.

The use of single-subject designs in literacy research is becoming more common place. Neuman and McCormick (1995) presented a review identifying different single-subject designs, their use in literacy research, and issues related to their use. The single-subject phase withdrawal component in my study was fully congruent with such research. Additionally, the study was strengthened by the use of multiple research methods.

Finally, in considering the importance of my study, I feel an important contribution was made by considering the practical aspects of adapting the paradigm for use in a typical elementary reading class. The findings of this study will certainly be of use for teachers who want to explore the role of discussion in literature teaching. Writings from Langer (1990, 1991a, 1991b, & 1992), Many (1991 & 1994), and Rosenblatt (1983) have provided literacy educators with basic theory concerning literature instruction. Applied research, such as my investigation, provides data for those interested in classroom applications of basic theory.

How This Study Relates to Theory

Vygotsky (1962 & 1978) described the social nature of learning. He also explained that an individual can accomplish higher levels of competency

with support or help from more capable others. His zone of proximal development is the distance between the problem-solving ability of the independent individual and the level of which he is capable under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Individual zones of proximal development must be created to personalize learning for students.

My study used Vygotsky's work as a theoretical base. Results of my investigation concluded that students were more actively engaged in literature exploration when they participated in learning communities. This supports the Vygotskian notion that learning is socially based. Learning communities provide a small group forum where more capable students can lead less capable ones to higher levels of achievement.

Rosenblatt (1983) wrote that literature teachers must strive to create a literary environment where students could have a powerful emotional connection with literature. She called this the aesthetic literary experience. She described how all individuals bring to the literary event a wealth of personal experiences and understandings. Literature teachers, Rosenblatt wrote, must be aware that personal experiences will lead readers to different, credible, defensible interpretations of the same text. These interpretations must be acknowledged and appreciated if students are to continue to develop their literary understandings.

Analyses of the literary reflection logs of students who participated in my study did indeed show that elementary-age students are capable of

developing personal interpretations of text. These students are also capable of modifying interpretations, rereading for deeper understandings of text, and defending their literary interpretations. In order for them to do so, a literary environment conducive to an aesthetic experience with literature had to be created.

Finally, Langer's (1991b) paradigm of literature instruction, discussion as exploration, provided the means of structuring learning to create an environment where students could explore literature with their peers. My study concluded that elementary-age students were capable of using discussion as exploration provided their teacher trained them how to use discussion. The use of the paradigm led to more movement among students' literary stances. And, elementary teachers have a research base supporting the use of discussion as exploration as one model of literature instruction.

Recommendations for Further Study

Discussion as exploration has not thoroughly been examined in a variety of classroom contexts. Langer (1991a) stated that the paradigm may hold great promise for the future as a model of literature instruction. To become a teaching model, steps and procedures of the paradigm need to be clearly described, delineated, and investigated in a variety of classroom contexts. This has not been done. The context for this study was a fifth-grade class composed of 25 students with a typical range of abilities. Further study as

to the efficacy of using discussion as exploration in elementary reading classes must take place in other classroom contexts. Such investigations may replicate findings similar to those from this study. Middle-school and high-school teachers may also find applications for discussion as exploration in their classrooms.

Perhaps, discussion as exploration might be useful in training less skilled readers how to interpret text, and then how to defend those interpretations. Remedial reading instructors may benefit by having a model of literature instruction where the emphasis is on students constructing meaning from text through small-group interactions. Discussion as exploration needs to be studied in remedial reading contexts.

Ideally, further investigations examining the role of discussion in literature exploration must take place over longer periods of time. True ethnographic participant-observation may yield additional patterns of data, which did not surface during this study. Additionally, student participants may, over longer periods of time, internalize procedures for facilitating literature discussion and require less specific discussion prompts. This notion is consistent with the idea of scaffolding instruction—providing initial experiences with lots of support, then providing less support as students become more capable. Investigations need to look at the long-term effects of teaching students how to use discussion as a way of exploring literature.

Another area of interest for future research is whether or not knowledge about how to discuss one's reading will transfer to content-area texts where emphasis is on efferent reading. Proponents of using discussion as a teaching model have not delineated whether or not they feel efferent reading comprehension will be enhanced by similar types of discussion with content-area texts. Perhaps, discussion as exploration will become a generic teaching strategy that will have uses in content area reading as well as literature instruction. The role of discussion in content-area reading instruction also needs to be investigated.

Finally, other methods of research need to be used to investigate the efficacy of using discussion as exploration. Although this study had a single-subject design component to gather data in a more experimental fashion, further research must have greater generalizability to specific student populations. This can only be accomplished with empirical research methods and the use of precisely defined control and experimental groups. A research base with both empirical and qualitative studies may move discussion as exploration to the forefront of literature instruction methods.

Summary

In this chapter a discussion was presented detailing limitations of this study, its contributions to research and theory, and suggestions for further research. Limitations of the study included using a single classroom for

research and the limited duration of the study—one month. In spite of these limitations, the study contributed to research and theory regarding literature instruction by describing the effects of using a model of literature instruction, discussion as exploration, in an elementary reading class. This study provided support for using more specific discussion prompts and for having students discuss as they read a selection, rather than waiting to discuss until they have finished reading a selection. Suggestions for further research include using true ethnography for longer duration in other elementary school contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Bromley's (1986) Protocols for Case Study

**Student Profiles Based on
Bromley's Case Study Guidelines
Adapted by Michael E. Cena**

To insure complete student anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for all students.

- I. General information about the subject
 - A. Age
 - B. Gender
 - C. Teacher's general description about subject's abilities, successes, limitations in schooling

- II. Present circumstances in the classroom
 - A. favorite subject
 - B. least favorite subject
 - C. Preferred working/learning style: cooperative, alone, competitive

- III. Subject's feelings regarding reading and writing
 - A. Approximate amount of time spent reading in school
 - B. Does he/she like reading and writing
 - C. Why or why not
 - D. Does he/she enjoy reading literature
 - E. Why or why not
 - F. Favorite types of literature

- IV. Subject's social role in the classroom
 - A. leader or follower
 - B. Amount and types of friends in the classroom
 - C. Does he/she work well in group settings
 - D. Does he/she contribute in group discussion settings

- V. Interactions between subject and researcher
 - A. Record all direct interactions
 - B. Daily recording and coding of observer's fieldnotes regarding subject

**Teacher Profile Based on
Bromley's Case Study Guidelines
Adapted by Michael E. Cena**

To insure complete student anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for all participating students and teachers.

- I. General information about the subject
 - A. Age
 - B. Gender
 - C. Amount of years as a teacher
 - D. General impressions about being a teacher
 - E. Master's degree or additional schooling beyond B.A.

- II. Present circumstances in the classroom
 - A. favorite subject to teach, why
 - B. least favorite subject to teach, why
 - C. Preferred models of instruction

- III. Subject's feelings regarding reading and writing
 - A. Approximate amount of time spent teaching reading and writing in school
 - B. Does he/she like teaching reading and writing
 - C. Why or why not
 - D. Does he/she teach students reading through literature
 - E. If so, what types of literary instruction are used
 - F. Favorite types of literature
 - G. Has subject participated in cooperative learning training
 - H. Does subject use cooperative learning in the classroom
 - I. If so, how often and for what subjects

- IV. Subject's social role in the school
 - A. leader or follower
 - B. Amount and types of recent inservice training
 - C. Does he/she work in cooperation with others on grade level
 - D. Additional school assignments and responsibilities

- V. Interactions between subject and researcher
 - A. Record all direct interactions
 - B. Daily recording and coding of observer's fieldnotes regarding subject

APPENDIX B

Fieldnote Data Collection Format

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date
Time
Activity
Key words

Observation

Relates to methodology

Relates to theory

Interpretation

APPENDIX C

Examples of Journal and Discussion Prompts

EXAMPLES OF JOURNAL AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Traditional Instruction

Journal Prompts:

1. Claudia deliberately selects Jamie as her partner. How well do you think she would manage without him? Give reasons for your opinion.
2. In what ways are you similar to or different from Claudia and/or Jamie.
3. Make two columns in your journal. On top of one column put Claudia's name. Then put Jamie's on the other column. Compare and contrast the two characters.
4. If you were going to run away from home, list some of the possessions you would take with you. Briefly discuss where you would run away to.

Whole class discussion after the assigned readings are completed:

1. Teacher begins, "Where and when does the story take place?"
2. "What kind of person is Claudia? Jamie?"
3. "Why is Claudia always correcting Jamie's grammar?"
4. "What is the dispute the art experts are having about 'Angel?'"

Discussion as exploration journal prompts:

1. Write in your journal your thoughts about your reading and the conversation you had with other members of your group.
2. Write about the characters in the story. What's happening to them?
3. Summarize your favorite part in the story.
4. Write about the discussion your group had today.

Discussion as exploration discussion prompts:

1. Your assignment is to discuss your reading with the other members of your team. To get your discussion going: Tell me something about the characters in the story.
2. Discuss what you learned about the characters in today's reading.
3. Discuss what is happening in the story.
4. Discuss what new things you have learned about Claudia and Jamie.

APPENDIX D

Examples of Fieldnotes for Traditional and
Discussion as Exploration Lessons

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date	3-21-95
Time	10:45
Activity	Review of yesterday's reading
Key words	Review, direct instruction

Observation

T: can anyone do a reader's digest of the reading from yesterday?
 S: Jamie and Claudia are in the story. Claudia decides to run away. She chooses Jamie, her brother, to join her because he was rich.
 T: who can add to it? S: she hated doing things over and over. T: what's that new word from yesterday: Ss: monotony. (One S standing with hand raised for about 3 minutes, wanting to tell class what monotony means. T does not notice her.) S: Claudia said she would run away on Wed. S: Jamie had \$24, so Claudia wanted him to come along. Jamie decided to run away on Fri. but Claudia wanted to do it on Wed. so that they could take music cases to put their clothes in. T: How many of you ever wanted to run away? (Ss Laugh). Most Ss hands go up.
 T: Let's look at our new vocabulary. Who knows what BVDs are? No S responses. T: They are underwear (Ss laugh). So, when someone says my BVDs, they are talking about underwear. Here's a new term: Grand Central Station. Does anyone know about it? S: it's a train station. to 4 students:
 T: Pencils down, we're not decorating folders right now! Here's a new word: stowaway. T: to RPO: what's a stowaway? RPO: a person who sneaks aboard a train, airplane, etc.
 T: What's a commuter? S: someone who drives to work each day. T: Good for you!

Relates to methodology

Teacher provides a reflection prompt to activate students' prior knowledge & experience with text
Examples of direct instruction led by the teacher

Relates to theory

During whole class instruction if students are not ~~not~~ actively engaged in the conversation they are decorating journal folders

Interpretation

The teacher loses a couple of students during whole class instruction. Will I observe this during other whole class lessons?

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date 3-21-95
 Time 11:00
 Activity Intro. to today's reading
 Key words direct instruction, group reading

Observation

T: As you read today, I want you to notice Claudia's character trait. T: I need all eyes up here. Please listen to me. T: Claudia and Jamie make their escape. This is what I want you to think about: why did they take the school bus. T: What does cheapskate mean? Is it a complement? S: No, its someone who is stingy with money.

T: Today ou are to read chapter 2, you can read by buddies, or by yourself. I will have a journal assignment for you when you are done.

S reading. 10 students choosing to read by themselves. 13 reading in small groups. Group of girls giggling at the story line.

Group of boys stopping to read to discuss: No she said..."Stop" S: BVD briefs size 10 (Boys giggle) They are reading the book as dialogue. Each taking turns as main characters, and one narrator "It's your turn Mike," etc.

TJ, Melissa reading alone
 Michael, McCall and Todd working with others in a group.

15 minutes: 4 students making folders, or writing journal entries. 3 students sitting around staring-off. T answering S questions. One S not reading at all. T does not seem to notice.

Relates to methodology

*Examples of low level
 Teacher directed questions*

*Some students prefer to
 read alone - O'Brien
 groups.*

*Several students staring
 off - Teacher doesn't
 notice*

Relates to theory

*Teachers who
 are busy with
 helping students may
 not notice quite
 students who are
 not engaged by their
 assignments*

Interpretation

*Students have preferred learning styles. Some like
 working in groups - others by themselves. Direct instruction
 does not always engage all students.*

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date 3-21-95
 Time 11:30
 Activity finishing up independent reading time,
 Key words *Direct instruction*

Observation

3 girls - one reading, others listening. Students gradually go back to their seats. T: okay, everyone back to their seats. S go back to seats, begin to work on T assigned journal assignments: 1 using a character chart, list characteristics of Jamie and Claudia 2. Make a list of possessions you would take if you were running away to New York. 3 Reread the section where Claudia corrects Jamie's grammar, "hiding out in? What kind of language is that?" What can you tell from this passage?

S quietly discussing assignments. Some S looking back at book. 1 student drawing a venn diagram of characters. 2 students sharing their answers. Classroom quiet, Ss whispering.

T: look at questions no. 3. Tell me what that says about her. I don't want you to tell me what the grammar should be, I just want to know about her character traits.

Boy and girls talking about their answers. Group of girls giggles outloud "Hairspray!" S get more animated. T: shhh!

T to S: boy and girl are character traits.

Erin, you have 20 seconds to get started.

T: I'm not asking you what the language means, what does that tell you about Claudia? I'm going to give you about 5 more minutes, then we will talk about what you read and the

Relates to methodology

*Examples of Teacher - directed direct instruction
 Use of story grammar elements: Character traits, Venn diagrams.*

Students can read & discuss the narrative

Relates to theory

*Group of students are excited about the story
 Teacher engages students in looking for answers she deems important
 Little opportunity for students to construct their own interpretation of the story.*

Interpretation

Students can be engaged by reading & discussing however, in teacher-directed instruction the teacher determines what is important.

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date 3-21-95
 Time 11:50
 Activity Discussion over reading
 Key words *direct instruction, closed convergent questions*

Observation

T: puts chart paper on board. Students already discussing answers: "I put... CDs, radios, TV" S: "How can you do that?" T: one more minute. T: okay, pencils are down, eyes are up here. We're describing the character Traits of J and C. T writes as students generate ideas:
 C: straight A student, 3 S hands, likes ice cream sundaes, stubborn. T: who told you she's stubborn? S: because she argued with Jamie over when to run away. T: how do you know she likes her brother? S: (only 1 hand up) she choose him, S: C likes to play the violin T: what told you that? S: I mean she plays the violin because of her music case. S: she is picky. T: how do you know that? S: she is always correcting J's grammar. S: C is cautious about getting caught. T: excellent thinking! S: adventurous. S: she is a thinker who plans things out. T: what things did she think about when she knew she couldn't run away the old fashioned way? S: C wanted to plan things out. S: she wanted to run away to the museum. T: how about Jamie?: (5 hands go up). S: J likes to gamble, play the trumpet, and is generous. T: why do you say that? S: he decided to let C use his money.
 T: calls on quiet S, what about you? Silence, Can you think of anything else, silence, T calls on other students S: likes to listen to music. S: can keep a secret S sneaky. T: tell me more. S:

Relates to methodology

*Even during traditional whole class discussion some students will begin to discuss on their own
 examples of closed convergent discussion*

Relates to theory

During closed-convergent questioning the teacher determines what is important - The students try to please her with the "right" answers

Interpretation

An 'AA/AA' During whole class instruction only one student and the teacher can speak at any given time. Other students must raise their hands & wait for the teacher's attention.

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date 3-21-95
 Time 12:05
 Activity QUESTIONS
 Key words rewards w/ candy

Observation

T: tell me something you have taken if your were running away to New York that nobody else in the classroom would would taken. S: BB gun, portable stove, blankie, lighter, matches, T: hands down. Does anyone have these things? Yes and nos. T: What else would you have taken? S: a lighter, portable shower, T gives out candy, (lots of hands up, students excited) flashlight, my cat, port a potty (laughter), markers, (lots of excitement in classroom due to candy.)

Relates to methodology

*examples of direct instruction
 The teacher rewards
 "correct" answers with
 candy.*

Relates to theory

*The teacher must use
 some form of extrinsic
 rewards for correct
 responses to keep her
 students engaged
 while one student talks
 (during whole groups) others
 must wait.*

Interpretation

*Why does the teacher feel she must use candy
 to reward correct responses? It may be that
 students are not normally engaged by traditional
 whole class grouping patterns.*

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date 3-28-95
 Time 10:45
 Activity teacher introducing today's tasks.
 Key words *Coop learning structures*

Observation

T: We are concerned with the fact that the discussion period is not being used at its fullest. We think this is because you have been trained to look at the written assignment as the real one. Today, we would like you to make sure that you talk about the book with your friends. Even if you don't know what to say originally, just try. We also need to remind you of the various group assignments.

T: today we will read Chapter 5. Yesterday, some great things happened. I noticed that a group whose taskmaster was missing assigned someone else to do the job. That's great, the new taskmaster kept the group on task.

T: Remember is you need any help, we will come around that help you. Also, if Mr. Cena or myself can help you get discussion going, let us know.

Today, there is less off-task talking going on (talk not related to the story). Students are more settled into the roles we've assigned them. The ADD student was a lunch worker today. As students read the selection, there were several discussions going on.

TPO and RPO note that students are allowed to read together and then discussion, we wonder if asking students to read the selection by themselves and then discuss will lead to longer

Relates to methodology

Using a "structures" model of cooperative learning helps students know roles during cooperative reading

Students use a variety of reading groupings: pairs, small groups, shared reading during discussion

Relates to theory

Structures w/ roles defined eg task masters facilitate discussion

Structures transfer ownership of discussion from the teacher to students.

Interpretation

Cooperative learning strategies are necessary to train students in "how to's" of discussion. Discussion transfers ownership of learning from the teacher to student.

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date	3-28-95
Time	11:15
Activity	Student discussion
Key words	discussion

Observation

I observed one group of students during discussion:
 S1: The people in the museum moved angel. C & J bathed i the fountain. S2: After they took their bath in the fountain, they went to wash their clothes, everything came out gray. J wanted to watch TV C said let's learn about Angel. So they went to the library. C wanted to see angel again again. S3: When & J were hiding in the bathrooms, two guards walked in Jamie heard them talking about moving Angel.
 S4: When they went to the library and they read about much. did it tell about Angel?
 S1:No. S3: I remember they found a candy bar, that they felt was filled with cocaine or marijuana. S4: Claudia is very cautious isn't she, what is Jamie's feelings. S1: if it does have dope in it, she might get addicted and not have enough money to buy more. S3: I didn't get the part when they were in the restrooms and the guards came and Jamie almost got caught. S4: Who got it? S2: Jamie almost got caught, he knew he could move but he didn't know if Claudia knew she couldn't move, so he said "Stay Put". S4: it's like ESP he thought really hard, and she picked up the message. S1:When C & J were researching they found out some of Michelangelo's works were lost.

Relates to methodology

*Students engage in discussion
 They take turns talking about
 what occurred during the
 narrative.
 Students can monitor
 their thinking and
 comprehension - "I didn't
 get the part when they
 were in the bathrooms..."*

Relates to theory

*Elementary age students
 can engage in meaningful
 discussion about their
 readings.*

Interpretation

*Discussion as exploration can & does work for
 elem. age students.*

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date	3-28-95
Time	11:30
Activity	students reading book out loud
Key words	Discussion time -

Observation

T tells the students: Today, I would like you to consider discussion as an important assignment. I'm not going to give you a journal prompt until you have spent at least 20 minutes discussing.

During reading, students will raise their hands to ask questions about vocabulary. Some of the words could be figured out in context, others needs some help. For example: "every corpuscle," not defined in context. "Cupid, he's a pagan," could be figured out by context.

The students seem actively engaged with this chapter, perhaps the information we presented last Friday about Michelangelo is having an impact. There is less talking about things not related to the story.

It is noticeably quieter in the room with the soft sounds of students reading. Less giggling than in times past, Students are more settled into the roles we've assigned them. Taskmasters are keeping conversations on the story.

Conversation leaders are starting discussion. Nevertheless, I am concerned that some students don't seem to be using their discussion time to best advantage. Three groups are thoroughly engaged in talking about what they have read, but two groups are not discussing anything, instead they are simply reading the selection in round-robin fashion.

Relates to methodology

Specific time limit (20 min) given for student to discuss.

Students do not need to know the exact meaning of new vocabulary words. Often, they will figure out new words through context.

3 groups are engaged in discussion. 2 groups are off.

Relates to theory

Students are able to figure out the meanings of unknown words.

Some groups of student (3 groups) are engaged by discussion - Other students (2 groups) are having difficulty talking about what they read.

Interpretation

Discussion time must be viewed by student as being a real assignment - It is just as important as say, a journal assignment.

Field Notes for Discussion as Exploration

Date 3-28-95
 Time 12:10
 Activity Discussion closure
 Key words Discussion, journal prompt

Observation

Even though on the outside students don't always seem to stay on-task, they are enjoying the book, as evidenced by so much talking about it. And, as judging from listening to the conversations today, students are actively engaged in their reading and conversations.

By waiting to give students the journal prompt we have established the importance of discussion. Students now see discussion as being as important as writing the journal entry.

Relates to methodology

Sometimes elem. students may not appear to be using discussion time to its best advantage

Relates to theory

Strategy of waiting to put journal prompt up until after discussion time is working

Interpretation

Students can enjoy using discussion when they see it as an important assignment

APPENDIX E

Selections from Researcher Journal

3-20-95

How to get started? I've been reading the Spradley book on Participant observation and have been taking notes about what to do. I am worried that I might overlook important data.

I go into the portable classroom. Students are eager to know who I am. I introduce myself to them. Spradley emphasizes that participants in ethnography need to know why the researcher is there. I tell students something about myself. In depth, I present the research project to them. I am careful, however, not to tell too much about my research questions. Rather, I say I'm in the room to see what types of instruction fifth grades like. We talk about the nature of the research cycle. I go to the back of the room.

The teacher proceeds with instruction. She is a little nervous I am in the room. She presents the lesson in a traditional manner, using the Heath study guide for lesson ideas. Students respond okay to her, however, several are not always on task. They seem to want to investigate me, and exactly what I doing in the back of the room (I'm typing field notes on the computer).

Instruction goes smoothly. Remarkably, my observations are going okay. Things to do jump out at me. I discuss the instruction with the teacher. She is more relaxed around me. She remarks that direct instruction such as what's in the Heath book is difficult for her. QUESTIONS: What IS HER PREFERRED TEACHING STYLE FOR NOVELS? HOW DOES SHE FEEL ABOUT USING SMALL GROUPS FOR LITERATURE STUDY?

Also as I look at my field notes, I wonder, why did I miss what the room looked like. I remember the organization of students' desks, and that their was a grow box for plants in the back of the room. TOMORROW: LOOK AT WHAT THE ROOM LOOKS LIKE DESCRIBE IT IN THE TOMORROW'S FIELD NOTES.

Last thought: I sure hope that crystallization does occur. Rights now I don't know what is going to emerge. Hopefully during the course of the study something will emerge.

March 21, 1995

Well, today, the data collection seemed to go more smoothly. After analyzing the data, I began to see several patterns in my notes! In particular, I'm interested in looking at how many students are on-and off-task. Also, only about half of the class wants to work with each other in collaborative learning. is this also a pattern?

The students in this class seem quite cooperative. They obviously like their teacher and she likes them. They do seem to be quite friendly, and in general more polite than most fifth graders. QUESTION: IS THIS CLASS TYPICAL OF MOST FIFTH GRADERS AS FAR AS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT? I NEED TO ASK THE TEACHER TOMORROW WHAT THIS CLASS PROFILE IS LIKE: DOES THIS CLASS CONTAIN HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW PROFILES OF STUDENTS TYPICAL IN MOST HETEROGENEOUS CLASSROOMS?

Also today, I had a flash of inspiration, at least I hope that is what it is. To gather more data concerning student feelings, I've decided to begin to give them quick writes. A quick write will typically last two minutes. A brief writing prompt such as, "Tell me your feelings about the work we did today?" The students seem to be eager to tell me what they enjoy and what they don't like. I'm also going to ask them to tell me their suggestions for making the instruction more enjoyable for them.

3-22-95

Today is the last day of the first A phase of data collection, the time is going by quickly. I am seeing the same similar patterns noted earlier. Namely, about half of the students choose to read alone rather than in groups. I wonder if after having been in group discussions during the B phase, students will relate to this pattern during the next A phase? It's something to watch.

Another pattern I'm noticing that during directed instruction, typically three to four students (various ones plus one or two of the same) are off-task at any given time. I'm wondering if these same students will continue to be off-task during group discussion periods.

After instruction today, the teacher and I talked about the things we needed to do to place the students in groups, and then how we would train them what to do. Both the teacher and I wondered how it will work tomorrow. One concern the teacher told me about was her fear of unstructured activity. THIS IS POSSIBLY A COMMON CONCERN WITH OTHER TEACHERS WHO DON'T USE A LOT OF GROUP WORK.

Both the teacher and I agree that we need to be specific with our insistence that the students remain on task and discuss the novel rather than just talking about what ever they want to. Another concern, the students have not had training in cooperative learning processes, nor has their teacher used a lot of cooperative learning in this classroom, we are wondering how it's going to work tomorrow. Well, we will start tomorrow.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Michael E. Cena

CAREER OBJECTIVE

University faculty member and researcher in reading and language arts instruction.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Assistant Professor of Literacy Education, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah; Staff Developer, Davis County Schools; Adjunct Faculty, Weber State University; Supervisor of Student Teachers: Weber State University, Utah State University, Brigham Young University; Elementary Social Studies Instructor, Utah State University; Curriculum writer, GEMS foreign language project, Jordan School District; Classroom Teacher, Davis County Schools, Jordan School District; Music Resource Specialist, Tustin School District, Tustin, California.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

1995—Anticipated Ph.D., Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Emphasis: Curriculum and Instruction with focus in reading and language arts instruction.

1990—Administrative/Supervisory Certificate, Utah State University. Completed administrative internships in elementary, secondary, and special education.

1980—M.Ed., Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Emphasis: Curriculum and Instruction with focus in reading instruction.

1975—B.S., Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Major: Elementary Education, Minor: Music Education.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Teaching Assistant to Dr. Jay Monson, department head, Utah State University. In addition to team-teaching elementary social studies methods class, served as a liaison between students and faculty members. Consultant for two schools in Granite School District who needed in-service training in Whole-language elementary school programs.