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**"You can pick really good literature that will lead them there":
Investigating the instructional roles teachers utilize when
conducting literature discussions**

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/2044491>

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“YOU CAN PICK REALLY GOOD LITERATURE THAT WILL LEAD THEM
THERE”: INVESTIGATING THE INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES
TEACHERS UTILIZE WHEN CONDUCTING
LITERATURE DISCUSSIONS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the

**Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction
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**Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
December 2010**

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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

Sophie M. Ladd

entitled

**“You Can Pick Really Good Literature That Will Lead Them There”:
Investigating the Instructional Roles Teachers Utilize When Conducting
Literature Discussions**

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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December 2010

ABSTRACT

“You Can Pick Really Good Literature That Will Lead Them There”: Investigating the Instructional Roles Teachers Utilize When Conducting Literature Discussions

by

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The purpose of this multi-case study was to investigate the instructional roles teachers utilize in whole group and small group discussion. This study highlights the questioning and response strategies two elementary teachers used during read alouds and literature discussions. Data sources included whole group and small group discussions, interviews, teachers' reflection journals, classroom observations, researcher field notes, and Informal correspondence. Data were analyzed using Merriam's (1998) analytic framework for case study. A within-case analysis was conducted for each case, followed by a cross-case analysis. Through with-in case analysis questioning and response categories were developed. These categories included: appealing, prompting, examination, labeling, seeking agreement, critical junctures, expanding, and release. Additionally, a cross-case analysis resulted in the identification of two themes across both cases, which were teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator. The findings indicate that the teachers' instructional approaches, teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator, were impacted by university collaboration, teachers' reflective practice, administrative pressures, tension with high-stakes testing, and curricular demands. A key implication of this study is the

need for instructional planning time that allows for time for teachers to collaborate and share ideas about the benefits of including literature discussion in their reading programs.

To my Deven, Spencer, and Abbie Girl
who inspire me every day to be the very best I can.

I love and treasure each of you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on my journey to completing my dissertation it is without a doubt that there are many people that supported and encouraged me along the way of making a Ph.D possible. Reflecting on how I got to this point in my educational career brings me back to my first positive school experience learning to read in first grade. As a beginning reader I was encouraged to enjoy the books that were introduced. Ms. Coughlin loved all of her beginning readers and had nothing but kind words to say, even when I stumbled. However, my twin sister Nicki had a very different experience learning to read in the classroom next door. She was belittled and discouraged when she struggled with a word or passage. Sadly, today my sister's displeasure for school and reading is still apparent, all because of her first grade teacher. Nick, you amaze me each and every day. You have proven time and time again how strong you are, overcoming obstacles along your learning path. As an educator and literacy instructor I make it my goal in every class I teach to make certain my students, both elementary and college age know how important it is to make sure all young children learn to love reading despite their struggles. Because of you Nick, I can say teaching about reading has become my passion in hopes that no child will ever have to feel the way you did in your first grade classroom. Thank you for inspiring me to help others; you make me proud to be your sister.

This process has proven that I have been blessed with the opportunity to work and study along side scholars, in-service teachers, preservice teachers, and students. I will be forever grateful for all of the guidance and support offered by my committee. I want to thank Dr. Serafini for challenging me intellectually. Though, the first notebook he handed me to read was rather intimidating it has proven to be some of the most influential

academic reading I have ever done. I appreciate the intellectual guidance he offered from afar. I am thankful for Dr. Bean and his soft-spoken wisdom. I admire his incredible knowledge and academic scholarship. I am also thankful for Dr. Olafson and her tremendous guidance throughout my research process and writing. She always believed in me and left me feeling that this was all possible. Finally, I want to thank Dr. Giorgis.. I admire her personal knowledge of children's literature and amazing commitment to all of her students, including me. Each meeting, each draft revision were a reflection of her unending dedication to me and this dissertation. I also want to thank Dr. Giorgis for providing me with the opportunity to work on *JCL*. Thank you for sharing your experience and knowledge with me, I will be forever grateful.

I want to thank two of the most incredible teachers I know for participating in this study. I am inspired by you and will continue to share with other educators the great things you do in your classrooms.

To my doc star friends, Jenni Wimmer, Laura Bower, and Char Moffit, what a crazy journey this has been. I am blessed to have met each of you and will be eternally grateful for all of the time we spent together. Who would have know five years ago that this is where we would all be now. I cherish each of you. My BFF, the countless tears of joy and sometimes those of defeat, the endless conversations, and the "you can do this" will never be forgotten. Without you I would have never made it; I will never be able to thank you enough.

Most importantly, I am thankful for my family. Mum and Dad, you have proven to me time and time again that I can do anything with you by my side. Thank you for loving me and knowing, even when I didn't, that I could do this. With a Mum and Dad

like you every goal is within reach, and no dream is too big. Matty and Nick, you are two of my biggest fans. Thank you for keeping life normal with family dinners and shopping to redirect and remind me of the important things in life. To my hubby, David, what can I say: daddy daycare, lots of coffee, cards, and hugs. This crazy ride is over and I will never be able to thank you enough for supporting not only me, but all of us. Deven, Spencer, and Abbie are lucky to have a daddy like you. And I am lucky to have a hubby like you.

Finally this is for you Deven, Spencer, and Abbie. Always believe that you can do anything, because I know you can. You each are beautiful in my eyes. Thank you for loving me unconditionally and inspiring me to be the best mommy I can be.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

As adult readers, the first thing we do when reading an incredible piece of literature is call our closest friend or family member, quickly professing “you have to read this book!” Following these words, a spontaneous conversation erupts as you offer your insight on all of the scandalous events, fascinating characters, and raw emotions that lured you in. You hang up the phone thinking to yourself, they have to read it, they just have to. It is your words that encourage a speedy trip to the local bookstore or prompt a rapid search on Amazon.com. Soon your friends will be frantically turning pages much like you were trying to figure out who did it. The importance does not lie in the reviews published in the New York Times or the recent recommendation from Oprah, but in the spur-of-the-moment discussion you had in which you professed your love for a piece of literature.

Consider another conversation between two young boys, Deven age ten and Dylan, age nine. While searching through his fourth grade classroom library Deven picks up the new and popular children’s novel, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* by Jeff Kinney (2009), and begins to read silently. Bursting out loud in hysterical laughter he proclaims to Dylan, “I can’t believe he just did that. I would never be brave enough to throw a football at my friend and knock him over,” enthusiastically describing a scenario from the novel. The boys proceed to converse about all of the silly things that occurred in the book, extending their discussion to include the events which they admire, various ways to recreate the storyline in their own cartoon format, and situations they believe to

be impossible. Discussion has allowed Deven and Dylan to share their unique thoughts, the personal meanings they create, and the profound ideas that come forth when transacting with literature. Chambers (1996) states that, “Ours is a talkative age. Never before have people talked so much. This has been a century of chatter” (p. 1). If this truly is a century of talk, then teachers’ instructional approaches need to include opportunities for students to participate in meaningful literature discussions, such as the conversation described between Deven and Dylan. Consequently, teachers will recognize that discussion is a viable form for students to communicate their understandings of literature in the classroom.

The purpose of this study was to examine student discussion in whole group and small group literature discussions, investigating the impact that teachers and literature had on student’s interpretation of children’s literature. Specifically, I sought to answer the question: What instructional roles do teachers utilize when conducting whole group and small group literature discussions?

Background

Developments and changes in literacy education over the past several decades have impacted instructional approaches that teachers utilize when conducting literature discussion in the classroom. While literature discussion has become an integral part of literacy curriculum in the past several decades the approaches teachers utilize when conducting literature discussions are numerous and vary greatly (Bishop, 1992). In the third volume of the *Handbook of Reading Research* (2000) Galda, Ash, and Cullinan

described teachers' beliefs about incorporating literature in language arts programs.

Research indicated:

Teachers expressed the beliefs that children's literature should be the primary component of a language arts program. Not surprisingly, however, there was little evidence that children's literature was being used for literary as well as literacy instruction. (Galda, Ash, & Cullinan, 2000, p. 374).

Current research suggests that teachers' philosophical beliefs underpin the approaches they utilize when facilitating discussion in the classroom. These beliefs essentially influence the choices teacher's make in their literacy instruction. Serafini (2003) argues, teachers who approach literacy and reading from a modernist perspective will differ from those who consider themselves transactional. Modernist perspectives, categorized from research conducted in the early 1900s, support the belief that students read for the purpose of uncovering the single meaning that is found only in the text. Transactional perspectives, supported by research in the mid 1900s, support the belief that readers construct meaning when transacting with text.

Faced not only with the challenge of meeting educational needs of their students, teachers today struggle philosophically in an attempt to meet the needs of administrator and testing pressures. Recent research suggests that teachers are faced with a turbulent educational environment, where high stakes testing has risen to the forefront of education Hoffman, Assaf, and Paris (2001) reported,

State-mandated achievement testing has grown at an exponential rate over the past 2 decades. Prior to 1980 fewer than a dozen states in the U.S. required

mandated standardized testing for students, but in 2000 nearly every state used high-stakes testing. (p. 482)

With the rise of high-stakes testing teachers find themselves searching for space in their instructional day to incorporate read alouds and literature discussions. Sipe (2008) argues that while researchers and educators agree that reading stories to children and talking with them about these stories is important, there still seems to be two perspectives in literacy that challenge the value of reading aloud. He states, “On the one hand reading aloud is barely tolerated by some and widely misunderstood by others as a waste of time; on the other hand, it tends to be ignored and considered a middle-class, elitist practice” (p. 5). While Sipe (2008) agrees that reading aloud can be a waste of time when approached as simply story time, he advocates for read alouds that encourage substantive talk and interpretation. Further, Sipe (2008) urges teachers to use read alouds as a space for, “fostering the development of children’s higher-level literary interpretive skills” (p. 5).

Recent research recognizes that picture books offer readers an avenue for discussion and a medium for interpretation. Bishop (1992) argues that the picture book has become a prominent “resource” in elementary and middle school classrooms during the past few years. Furthermore, Moss (1990) states, “Literature provides children with language experiences which enhance their ability to generate meaning from it” (p. 19). Students have been asked to read and respond to stories and the images in picture books as an essential element of literature-based reading programs. Therefore, understanding meanings that students construct from these ubiquitous resources, has played a major role in research on response to literature in the past several decades.

Readers today are also exposed to a variety of text and non-text based media. Not only do picture books offer readers possibilities for discussion, but the internet has become an integral part of discussion both in and out of the classroom. The primary mode of text-based instruction will need to change as society begins to rely on image and text on screen as a format for learning at home and in schools (Kress, 2003).

In the past ten years, the internet has become an important resource in elementary classrooms (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). In particular, children's book publishers have created websites that provide additional resources and information for classroom teachers and readers of picture books. In addition to publishers' commercial sites, individual authors and illustrators have been using the internet as an opportunity for extending their work and providing information for young readers. Their websites are filled with resources to support young readers and classroom teachers as well. Coupled with picture books, web resources provide students with a variety of formats for constructing meaning.

Definitions

As picture books were the primary source utilized for discussion, it is important to note the difference between an illustrated text and a picture book and likewise offer two comprehensive definitions. Sipe (1998) and Nodelman (1988) formulated definitions of picture books that will underpin my use of the word picture book in this study. Sipe (1998) stated, "In a picturebook, the words of the text and the sequence of the illustrations contribute equally to opportunities they provide for constructing meaning. In this way, picturebooks differ from illustrated texts, where the illustrations are clearly subsidiary to the verbal text, enhancing and supplementing our experience of the book,

but not integrally necessary to our understanding” (p. 98). Nodelman, (1988) described picture books as “books intended for young children which communicate information or tell stories through a series of many pictures combined with relatively slight texts or no texts at all.”

Significance of the Study

Children’s literature has often been the focus of research on student response to text; through questioning, literacy activities, testing, and discussion, teachers and researchers have attempted to measure students’ understanding. With picture books playing a critical role in elementary classrooms today, it is imperative that students have multiple opportunities to discuss and formulate ideas that correspond with children’s literature. Sipe (2008) argues that research needs to include theories specific to and grounded in understanding children’s responses to literature. In turn teachers today need to recognize how literature serves as a tool for constructing meaning and implement instruction that focuses on interpreting picture books in meaningful ways. Sipe (2008) states:

We need multiple perspectives on literacy teaching and learning that include the power of literature for young children, without turning it into a mechanical tool for teaching children how to “do school”—perspectives that recognize the ways which children may playfully interact with literature while at the same time contributing their literacy learning, high level cognitive abilities, and engagement with the imaginary world of stories so that they may develop more nuanced perspectives on real life, as well as a critical stance toward the status quo. (p. 7)

The intent of this study was to understand the instructional roles two elementary teachers utilized while conducting whole group and small group discussion. Because teachers are faced with negotiating literacy instruction in an era of high-stakes testing, understanding how teachers utilize literature discussion as a space for interpretation and construction of meaning can support instructional approaches that encourage students to share their understandings of children's literature. This study will ultimately help teachers reconsider how they approach literacy instruction, specifically how they conduct whole group and small group literature discussion. Moreover, recognizing the benefits of discussion and response in the classroom and implementing literature discussion in elementary literacy curriculum. Studying two elementary school teachers' approaches to conducting whole group and small group literature discussions developed these ideas.

Drawing on the work of Merriam (1998) I selected case study as the methodology, with the purpose of gaining a holistic understanding of a fifth grade teacher, Ms. Duarte, and a first grade teacher, Ms. Romer's, instructional practices. This multi-case study covered twelve weeks of observation in two elementary school sites, six weeks in each classroom. Data sources for this multi-case study included primary and secondary sources. Whole group and small group discussions served as the primary data source. Secondary sources included: teacher reflection logs, researcher field notes, Informal correspondence, and interviews. Data were collected for six weeks in each classroom, totaling twelve weeks. I spent from the beginning of October to mid November in Ms. Duarte's classroom and from the beginning of January to mid February in Ms. Romer's classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical influences in this study are directed by Reader-response theory, research on Reader-response and visual literacy research. Reader-response theory was developed on the premise that readers are active participants in the reading process; they are the primary makers of meaning. Reader-response considers aspects such as cultural, social, cognitive, and emotional discourses in readers' understanding/meaning of text. Rosenblatt (1978) suggests that neither the reader nor the text should take precedence, but that they are part of the "total situation of reading." Rosenblatt also believed that readers come to the text and transact with it. Essentially, students and text work together in the construction of meaning. Moreover, Rosenblatt (1938) purported that the focus of reader is the transaction between readers and texts. According to a transactional view of response, the reader is, "not seen as a separate entity, acting upon the environment, nor the environment acting on the organism, but both parts acting as a total event" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 98). Transaction is therefore a negotiation of children's construction of meaning while reading a text in the total event of reading.

Scholars have studied students' responses to literature in a variety of contexts. Seminal research suggests that the reader and what they bring to the transaction with the text influence response (Rosenblatt, 1938; Beach, 1993; Squire, 1964; Applebee, 1978). Moreover, contemporary research on Reader-response theory recognizes that the text is no longer the primary source of meaning but the total situation including, the text, the reader and the context. Additionally, students' responses are influenced by a range of factors including: social, historical, or cultural contexts.

Over the past century, Reader-response theory and research on reader response has highlighted the many roles that readers assume when responding to a variety of forms of literature in the classroom. Reader-response theory suggests that readers negotiate and express ideas while responding to text in a variety of ways. Generally, theorists have characterized three perspectives of Reader-response. These include text, reader, and context based responses. Text based responses emphasize how readers draw on and deploy their knowledge of the text to respond to specific text features (Sloan, 2002). Reader-based responses focus on how the reader transacts with a text and responds. Context based responses consider social context in conjunction with the reader/text transaction. Reader-response theory that underpins my research study acknowledges that response comes from a reader's transaction with the text as well as the social context.

While each of these perspectives is important, it is imperative that teachers recognize the many purposes students employ when responding to texts. Reader-response theory purports that students respond to texts for various reasons. Beach (1993) states:

Theorists argue that readers respond for a range of different purposes. Readers may respond to express their emotional reactions, to explore difficulties in understanding, to corroborate or verify their opinions with others, to build a social relationship through sharing responses, or to clarify their attitudes. (p. 6).

Because response has many purposes, responding in the classroom cannot be limited to written response. According to Reader-response theory, discussion is acknowledged as a viable form of response (Purves, 1979). Sloan (2002) states, "In good practice, response involves a rich mix of transactions with text, predominantly oral with younger readers" (p. 28). Oral responses are largely expressed during literature-based

discussions, therefore it is important to touch on research that has explored the impact of the teacher on response.

Acknowledging the importance of the teacher in response, studies on readers' responses have described the role that teachers play in response. Within the last two decades studies on readers' response suggest that teachers can hinder or enhance students' ability to express their interpretations of literature (McClure, 1985; Hickman, 1981; Beach & Hynds, 1996, Sloan, 2002). McClure (1985) noted in her research that the teacher's construction of classroom context greatly impacted students' written and oral response through the construction of the classroom environment, focused praise, and clear behavioral expectations. Similarly, Hickman (1981) found that students' response could be fostered through literature selection and the classroom literacy environment created by the teacher. Sloan (2002) noted that teachers' instructional approaches to response equally impact response. She stated, "In many cases, the reams of teacher-made questions that follow the reading of every story ask readers for responses inappropriate to the imaginative literature" (p. 28). Research of this nature suggests that teachers have the opportunity to promote or hamper discussion in the classroom through the selection of literature, the classroom context, and the types of questioning employed.

Finally, research on classroom discussion has acknowledged the importance of the teacher's role in literature-based discussion. Studies conducted by Myhill (2002), Nystrand (1997) describe how teachers' questioning and response strategies in literature discussion foster or hinder discussion.

Nystrand (1997) believed that three instructional approaches to discussion were beneficial for fostering student interpretation. These three questioning and response

methods included uptake of students' ideas, authentic questions, and high-level evaluations. Nystrand (1997) reported, "Instruction such as this helps students understand literature in-depth, remember it, and relate to it in terms of their own experience, and – most important for literature instruction—respond to it aesthetically, going beyond the who, what, when, and why of nonfiction in literal comprehension" (p. 2).

Myhill (2002) noted that during a 7th grade literacy discussion the teacher was able to encourage discussion by the questioning she used. She stated, "The very simple strategy of asking a subsequent question which offers a possible reason evokes a more extended response" (Myhill, 2002, p. 38). Conversely, Myhill also found that teachers who asked multiple questions did not allow time for students to process and construct understanding. Myhill (2002) stated, "in terms of promoting constructive environments for the co-construction of meaning or understanding, factual or closed questions often act as inhibitors which generate relatively silent children: the more questions teachers ask, the less children say" (Myhill, 2002, p. 38).

Visual literacy research, research on multimodality, and new literacies studies, provide theoretical models for understanding how images in books and in web based resources such as author websites impact readers interpretation of texts. "Although the illustrations are a 'source of aesthetic delight,' everything about the illustrations conveys 'information' about how viewers are being invited to [read and] respond" (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, p. 278). For too long picture books have been regarded as a work of literature and not as a work of art.

Each of the theoretical perspectives discussed helped frame this study. Reader-response theory informs my understanding of how students construct response. Research

on literature discussion provides a framework for identifying the teacher's position in discussion. Finally, visual literacy research offers a lens for reconsidering how images and other multimodal texts, such as author websites, impact interpretation.

Summary

The purpose of this multi-case study was to develop an in-depth understanding of teachers' instructional roles while conducting whole group and small group literature discussions. The details of this study are presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study including the statement of the problem, significance, and theoretical framework. Chapter 2 presents a summary of relevant research related to Reader-response theory, classroom discussion, and visual literacy. Chapter 3 outlines research methods and procedures followed to conduct the study. Chapter 4 contains the major findings, including a with-in case analysis of Ms. Duarte's fifth grade classroom, a with-on case analysis of Ms. Romer's first grade classroom and a cross-case analysis. Chapter 5 then provides a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, and implications for theory and practice.

The review of the literature is presented in the next chapter, which includes a review in three areas: Reader-response theory, research on classroom discussion, visual literacy research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

While Reader-response literature has dominated literacy research over the past several decades (Beach & Hynds, 1996), this field has expanded to include meaning construction, instructional context, classroom discussions, and the roles of the teacher and the curriculum. The results of these studies have focused on “response processes as influenced by factors in the reader, the text, and the instructional context” (Beach & Hynds, 1996, p. 470). Stemming from the work of Rosenblatt (1938), Reader-response focused on the transaction between readers and texts. According to a transactional view of response, the reader is, “not seen as a separate entity, acting upon the environment, nor the environment acting on the organism, but both parts acting as a total event” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 98).

A key element of Reader-response studies involves taking into account the ways in which meaning is constructed through observation of a variety of instructional contexts. Previous studies have investigated the impact of classroom contextual factors such as the teacher and the curriculum on student response (e.g. Hickman, 1981; McClure, 1985). Additionally, research conducted within the past several decades has explored effects that classroom discussion and teachers have on student response (e.g. Nystrand, 1997; Myhill, 2006; Chambers, 1996; Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn & Crawford, 1999; Serafini, 2002; Eeds and Wells, 1989). Specifically, research on discussion has provided a framework for understanding the impact of contextual influences on whole group and small group literature discussion. This body of research calls attention to the teachers’ role in classroom discussion. Drawing on the work of

Mehan (1979), who originally identified the teacher response pattern IRE (**I**nitiation, student **R**esponse, and teacher **E**valuation), Cazden's (1988) seminal work triggered contemporary scholars (e.g. Chambers, 1996, Eeds & Peterson, 2007; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand, 1997; Short, Kaufman Kaser, Kahn & Crawford, 1999) to reconsider the way in which discussion takes places. Consequently, redefining the role of the teacher as well as the participation role of students.

Several related bodies of literature influence this study: Reader-response theory, research on reader response, research on classroom discussion, and visual literacy research. Each of these bodies of literature uniquely categorizes the teacher, the students, and the use of literary resources. This chapter will briefly describe each area of research and then address what the studies purport about teachers, students, and literary resources.

Reader-response Theory and Research on Reader Response

Reader-response theories focus on different aspects of the act of reading, including; text, author, context, reader (Beach 1993). Scholars focus on each of these aspects in varied ways and from varied theoretical perspectives. In his effort to synthesize the works of other scholars, Beach (1993) described each act of reading in the following ways. The category of textual response was derived primarily from a focus on the text; the text held the correct or stable and universal meaning, which was to be uncovered by the reader. Second, reader-based response was established from the understanding that readers transacted with the text in order to create meaning. Finally context based responses were student responses, which were influenced and shaped by the immediate

and external contexts including social, political, and classroom contexts. Consequently, focusing more on the context of the reading event than the individual reader.

Beach (1993) described how the focus of these theoretical perspectives is “somewhat” based on the historical development within reader response. “The early theorists (1920s and 1930s) focused more on reader’s knowledge of text conventions and/or the reader’s experience” (Beach, 1993, p. 9). In the 1960s and 1970s, psychoanalytical and cognitive psychological perspectives were of interest to theorists; hence these approaches were applied to reader response, taking into account the readers’ construction of meaning (Beach, 1993). “Then in the 1980s and early 1990s, the rise of social constructivist, poststructuralist, feminist, and cultural media studies perspectives led to an increased interest in the transaction imbedded in social cultural contexts” (Beach, 1993, p. 9). These historical shifts are evident in the studies and literature that follow.

In the 1920s, Richards (1964) studied college students’ responses to poems he read aloud in class. Although he had asked students to respond freely, Richards organized their responses into several categories based on the level of difficulty they had responding. Richards’ work was based on the idea that all texts contain a single meaning that is to be uncovered by the reader; this single meaning is found explicitly in the poems, privileging the text as the primary source of meaning. Readers’ purpose was to read each work with a critical eye, unveiling the proper meaning within the text. If a reader made an outlandish interpretation or an uncommon judgment, the reader strayed from the paths of proper criticism (Purves, 1979). According to Richards’ research, a proficient reader should be able to read a text and come to an understanding of what the author is

expressing in a piece, thus location of literary meaning is in the text. Despite his text-centered assumptions during the era of literary criticism, Richards (1929) noted, “the personal situation of the reader inevitably affects his reading” (quoted in Beach 1993, p. 16). His recognition of reader influenced other scholars of the time including Rosenblatt.

Rosenblatt (1938) acknowledged that all literary experiences should be concerned with the reader’s transaction with a text. In her book *Literature as Exploration* (1938), Rosenblatt argued that readers play an important role in the construction of meaning. In her opinion, literary works only gain significance during the reading event in which a reader responds to them. With the publication of *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978), Rosenblatt made a case for a transactional theory of literary response. She insisted that readers’ responses to a text ranged along a continuum from aesthetic to efferent.

Aesthetic responses were characterized as responses in which the reader attends to the experience of reading rather than the knowledge or the meanings of the literary work. On the other hand, efferent responses were knowledge centered and formulated by the readers’ construction of meaning. The primary difference between these two types of reading was that efferent readings were concerned with what the reader could take away from the reading event; aesthetic reading was concerned with the reader’s lived through experience.

Unlike the traditional notions of text, Rosenblatt (1978) described text as an avenue for interpretation.

[Text is a] stimulus activating elements of the reader’s past experience—his experience both with literature and with life... the text serves as a blueprint, a

guide for the selecting, rejecting, and ordering of what is being called forth; the text regulates what shall be held in the forefront of the reader's attention. (p. 12).

Reader-response theory has offered researchers a theoretical approach for understanding how students respond to literature. The work of Richards (1929) primarily focused on the text as the source of meaning with which the students could find the meaning the author had intended. However, Richards noted in his research that the text is no longer the only source of meaning, suggesting that reader has an impact on response. Rosenblatt's transactional theory took Reader-response one step further, believing that reader's experiences and context influenced the way in which they respond. Much like text and reader play an important role in response, so does the teacher. The next body of research that underpins this study is Reader-response research that examines the influence of the teacher on response.

Teachers and Research on Reader Response

Although Reader-response theory by and large focuses on the reader and his/her response to text, studies have also examined instructional and curricular aspects that influence readers' response. It is important to review Reader-response studies that have examined the impact of the teacher in response. Researchers such as Beach and Hynds (1988), Hickman (1985), and McClure (1985) have sought to understand how specific factors such as teachers and curriculum influence response. Reviews of research on reader response suggest that teachers can assist or inhibit student response in literature discussion. Research of this nature guided this study by recognizing that teachers profoundly affect students' responses. Each of the studies that contributed to this literature review purported that teacher's instructional approaches, and selection of

literature bear strong influence on the way students respond. Teachers who fostered “genuine” sharing of student ideas enhanced the quality of student responses (McClure, 1985); however, those teachers that imposed curricular goals fettered response. The following section reports on multiple studies that examined the influence of teachers on student response.

Hickman’s (1981) ethnographic study sought to understand student response to literature in three multi-age classrooms, grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Focusing on children’s responses expressed in classroom settings, Hickman aimed to understand not only interpretations elicited by students, but also the social-instructional contexts that contributed to their response. During her four months of data collection, she recognized that the teacher had an important role in the selection of literature read aloud as well literature selected for the classroom library. Notably, Hickman (1981) stated, “Teachers and children seemed generally to share a positive perception of literature: books were central to the school experience, and they were meant to be enjoyed” (p. 352). In her desire to understand the contextual setting of the classrooms in this study, Hickman (1981) analyzed the elements, which she deemed to be teacher controlled.

Based on data analysis, Hickman (1981) noted that several elements controlled by the teacher directly influenced student responses. These included:

1. Selecting titles for classroom use with an emphasis on quality and relatedness
2. Assuring children of access to books putting books within children’s reach, in attractive displays, and by providing time for browsing and reading
3. Presenting literature by reading aloud every day and by introducing books to individuals and to groups

4. Discussing books with groups and individuals, including the use of critical terminology when children had the idea but needed the words
 5. Providing space, time, material, and suggestions for book related activities or “extensions”
 6. Providing for formal sharing and display of completed work
 7. Planning for cumulative experiences with literature, allowing for children to consider some selections and genre in depth, and in a variety of ways over time.
- (Hickman, 1981, p. 352)

Hickman’s (1981) work suggests that teachers have the opportunity to control and manipulate the classroom context through all of the aforementioned strategies. This seminal research is applicable to my research because Hickman (1981) recognized that teachers have the power to influence response through many contextual variables. “It was clear the teacher had considerable power to influence the expression of response through the ability to manipulate the classroom context” (Hickman, 1981, p. 353).

Other studies, such as McClure’s (1985), have made note of impact of teachers on response. In a year-long ethnographic study, McClure (1985) aimed to understand how students responded to poetry. This study examined one group of intermediate grade students’ responses to poetry and how these responses were influenced by the context in which they occurred. McClure noted:

The variety and depth of poetic response were in striking contrast to those reported by previous research. The children not only manifested a wide range of responses but their understandings were frequently at a level of complexity more typical of older children. (p. 385)

McClure (1985) established that these elaborate student responses could be contributed to the supportive context created by the classroom teacher. Moreover a supportive context was considered critical for fostering higher-level responses. McClure stated, “This context was characterized by teacher sanctioning of peer interaction, support for experimentation, focused praise and feedback, acknowledgement of frustration, clear behavioral expectations and flexibility in time and space” (p. 403).

Each of these studies suggested that teachers have the opportunity to promote student response through in a variety of ways. Hickman (1981) found that student response could be fostered through literature selection and the classroom literacy environment created by the teacher. McClure (1985) reported that teachers could cultivate higher-level response through contextual elements such as providing praise and feedback to oral and written responses. Research studies such as this influence this study by recognizing that teachers are critical part of developing student response. The next section of this review will report on the role of students in Reader-response research. Specifically, this body of research has classified students’ interpretive and literal responses in discussion.

Students and Reader-response Research

Stemming from research on Reader-response theory, several scholars have conducted research on reader response, which have contributed widely to the field of literacy education (Applebee, 1978; Purves & Rippere, 1968; Squire, 1964). Research has been organized through a variety of categories for classifying students’ response. These studies influence my line of research by providing frameworks that allow teachers to envision the benefits of readers’ verbal response to picture books.

Squire's (1964) examination of response to short stories was one example of an attempt to analyze students' oral response to text. Squire believed that by the teacher asking questions that elicited verbal responses, one could gain an in-depth and accurate understanding of students' response to the work being questioned. Seven categories of response were identified: literary judgments, interpretational responses, narrational reactions, associational responses, self-involvement, prescriptive judgments, and miscellaneous. Each category supported the concept that student response is formed by emotional involvement with the text. Squire's studies helped shift the new critics' perspective of meaning embedded in the text to transaction with the reader and the text. Probst (1991) stated, "with Squire's study we began to develop a picture, not just of the categories of response, but also of the active, responding reader" (p. 659).

Purves and Rippere (1968) developed a system to analyze students' written response to literary works. Although more than 100 categories of response were originally developed, four primary categories have been widely implemented and are still frequently used by researchers today. These categories are: engagement-involvement, perception, interpretation, and evaluation.

Applebee (1978) conducted a study focusing specifically on developmental differences in students' response to literature. Students in the study were ages six, nine, thirteen and seventeen. Applebee found significant differences in response across each age level. Younger students, ages six and nine, typically focused on discussion of story action in two ways: six-year-olds frequently employed retelling and narration approaches; nine-year-olds primarily produced short summaries. Both age groups relied on literal recall of the story. Unlike the six and nine year olds, thirteen and seventeen year olds

took an analytical position (Applebee, 1978). Response moved from general recall to analytical interpretations and generalizations. Adolescent students analyzed story structure and made generalizations about meaning. Generalizations were then used as a source to create greater understanding. Analysis enabled students to link structure of the literary work to evaluation of text (Applebee, 1978). Four categories of response were apparent: narration, summarization, analysis, and generalization. These categories were directly tied to students' developmental differences. Applebee's (1978) developmental findings have influenced the selection of two different grade levels, first and fifth grade, for my study to highlight diverse interpretations stemming from their developmental abilities.

The work of Squire (1964), Purves and Rippere (1968), and Applebee (1978) acknowledge that student response transpires in numerous ways. Squire (1964) enabled researchers to recognize that readers are part of the response process. As a result, they construct their own meaning based on an emotional response to reading. Purves and Rippere (1968) constructed categories of student response that are still used by contemporary scholars to describe student response. Applebee's (1978) identification of developmental differences in response also plays a role in understanding how students respond by recognizing that to age can be a factor in the formation of meaning. By understanding the ways in which students respond, teachers can further better understand how to respond during classroom discussion. The following section outlines classroom discussion, taking a historical look at accounts as well as contemporary research.

Research on Classroom Discussion

Historical Overview of Research on Discussion

While considering theoretical approaches that contributed to this study, classroom discussion was the most important theoretical lens to consider. In the introduction of *Classroom Discourse*, Cazden (2001) posited schools are social institutions, which should be considered communication systems, further suggesting that communication is central to education because spoken language serves as a means by which the majority of teaching takes place. Not only does communication serve as a tool for instruction but also as a way for students to demonstrate their understanding of content through discussion. Kress (2003) concurred, “Language-as-speech will remain the major mode of communication [in schools]” (p. 1). Therefore, studying classroom discourse on dialog and discussion is an essential foundation for understanding how classroom-based discussion influences the production of knowledge and comprehension of text. Barnes (1976) adds:

Speech unites the cognitive and the social. The actual (as opposed to the intended) curriculum consists in the meanings enacted or realized by a particular teacher and class. In order to learn, students must use what they already know so as to give meaning to what the teacher presents to them. Speech makes available to reflection the processes by which they relate new knowledge to old. But this possibility depends on the social relationships, the communication system, which teacher sets up. The study of classroom discourse is the study of that communication. (p. 2)

In this study whole group and small group discussion served as the primary data source. Students' primary form of response is through discussion, therefore research on classroom discussion contributes to the research that underpins this study. With this in mind, a historical look at classroom discussion research as well as contemporary research framed the multiple approaches to understanding literature discussion. Cazden's (1988) seminal work on IRE [**I**nitiation, student **R**esponse, and teacher **E**valuation] will be described followed by contemporary research conducted by Eeds and Wells (1989), Nystrand (1997), Myhill (2006), Chambers (1996), Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn & Crawford (1999), and Serafini (2002). Contemporary research reveals the many benefits of student centered classroom discussion, offering positive examples of what productive conversations can do for student interpretation. Each study depicts the variety of possibilities that teachers can utilize in order to facilitate discussion within the classroom.

Cazden, (1988) described common patterns of communication in teacher directed instruction. Based on her own teaching in primary classrooms as well as observing and collaborating with other colleagues, Cazden used classroom examples to exemplify teaching methods that were both exemplary and substandard. The IRE [**I**nitiation, student **R**esponse, and teacher **E**valuation] form of teacher-student communication was revealed in her research on "traditional" teaching. A typical transaction in a "traditional lesson" follows this sequence: the teacher calls on a student to share (initiation); the student responds (response) and then the teacher comments or evaluates the response (evaluation). Cazden (1988), states that IRE "is certainly the oldest [classroom discourse], with a long hardy life through many decades of formal Western schooling."

Questions that follow the IRE sequence are often referred to as “display” or “inauthentic” questions to which the teacher already knows the answer (Cazden, 2001).

Cazden’s (1988) research on the IRE teacher/student interaction pattern allows teachers to reevaluate format for conducting literature-based discussions. IRE does little to encourage students’ participation in discussion and can often lead to lack of engagement. On the other hand, contemporary research brings forth discussion formats that advocate student involvement. Wells (1985) states, “What seems to be important is that, to be most helpful, the child’s experience of conversation should be in a one-to-one situation in which the adult is talking about matters that are of interest and concern to the child” (p. 44).

Contemporary Research on Classroom Discussion

Based on my review of the literature on classroom discussion there were two obvious divisions in the related research: research that describes teacher questioning and research that describes the role of the teacher in conducting literature discussion. The research on literature discussion will be reported in two sections beginning with teacher questioning and concluding with the role of the teacher.

Teacher Questioning

Nystrand (1997) traced interaction patterns in eighth and ninth grade classrooms in which interaction patterns between students and teachers were overall dialogic in nature. In contrast to IRE, dialogic instruction resulted in a mutual transaction between students and teachers. Discussions were unique to each class and reflected societal views of the teacher and the students that participated. Nystrand (1997) believed one teacher in his study exhibited teaching of the highest quality because the instruction observed was

“instruction that helps students understand literature in-depth, remember it and relate to it in term of their own experience, and –most important for literature instruction—respond to it aesthetically, going beyond the who, what, when, and why of nonfiction in literal comprehension” (p. 2). Three methods, uptake, authentic questions and high-level evaluations, were designated as principles that consistently reflected effective instruction in dialogic.

In collaboration with the University of Exeter, Myhill (2006) studied Year 2 and Year 6 [approximately 3rd and 7th grade in the U.S.] students in primary schools in Sussex, England. The TALK (**T**eaching and **L**earning to **A**ctivate children’s **K**nowledge) project, lead by the interest of 12 teachers, sought to “improve children’s learning experiences in schools” through teacher directed action research in numeracy (mathematics) and literacy. Research revealed that students often sat silently while the teacher asked multiple questions, finding that “in terms of promoting constructive environments for the co-construction of meaning or understanding, factual or closed questions often act[ed] as inhibitors which generate[d] relatively silent children: the more questions teachers ask, the less children say[said]” (p. 38). However, there were also unique situations that depicted what Myhill had hoped would occur more frequently throughout the project, moments where students talked openly about their ideas. During one Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher utilized a pattern of questions to encourage the child to talk more about “whacking” someone. The following sequence exemplifies the patterning of questions that helped promote more discussion.

Teacher: Why did you do it?

Child: I don’t know.

Teacher: Did you do it to hurt him, had he made you cross?

Child: No, he kept bugging me so he was walking along the garden and I lobbed it and it just bounced off the top of his head. (Myhill, 2006, p. 38)

This proved effective because, “The very simple strategy of asking a subsequent question which offers a possible reason evokes a more extended response” (Myhill, 2006, p. 38)

Chambers (1996) began his work with educators during the 1980s when he and a small group of teachers met to discuss ways to improve talk in classrooms. These small group discussions contributed to his organization of the “Tell me” approach. Closely studying students’ responses to literature, focusing specifically on teachers’ questions and response during and after reading children’s literature, Chambers (1996) proposed a new way of asking questions which were intended to be adapted to students’ particular needs. In his book, Chambers outlined strategies that teachers could use to further discussion. Based on research in classrooms of all ages including Pre-K through college, Chambers analyzed transcripts to enable him to talk about an approach to discussion that was sufficient for multiple ages in the classroom setting.

Findings in Chambers (1996) research suggested that teachers consider the following:

- Students are critics and have the capability to talk about literature in a constructive and critical way. Thus teachers need to recognize these moments and ensure that nothing is wasted, which often takes them to the heart of the matter quickly and surprisingly. Teachers cannot dismiss students’ responses that they may judge as unimportant instead they must see where they lead.
- Readers must trust that the teacher really wants an honest reaction therefore

everything can be *honorably reported*, without the fear of rejection, denial, or belittlement. Further teachers need a repertoire of questions that assist readers in speaking about their reading.

- The use of the question “why?” often sounds aggressive, threatening, oppositional, and examinational therefore avoid using it, instead ask students to “Tell me.”
- Beginning *booktalk* by allowing students to share the *known* in order to build common understandings of the literature. However the teacher doesn’t offer his/her reading of a text until later in the discussion as to not impose his/her ideas on the group.
- Sometimes teachers need to ask the question, “How do you know that?” to take the conversation beyond the obvious.
- Teachers need to select literature carefully keeping in mind time, context, and children’s taste. (Chambers, 1996, p. 16).

Furthermore, Chambers (1996) explained that teachers who use the “Tell me” approach offer students the opportunity to explore their own construction of meaning in literature discussion and therefore have to choose their questions carefully. By doing so, teachers create a space for multiple interpretations that are valued by the students as well as the teacher. According to Chambers (1996) when talk is going “well” in a classroom the teacher will:

1. Keep bringing the readers back to the text by strategies such as asking, “How do you know that?”
2. Be ready to ask “general” questions that might help develop talk.
3. Be ready to ask a question particular to the book in hand.

4. Sum up what seems to have been said so that everyone has a chance to remember, to find coherence in the talk, and eventually to reach interpretive understandings.

(p. 50)

Chambers' (1996) work presented an approach for thinking about how teachers can enhance or hinder talk in classroom discussion stating, "If *booktalk* is to take us beyond statements of the obvious, to reach thoughtful interpretations and develop understandings, we need to discover what it was that caused us to think, feel, notice, remember, reason as we did" (p. 50).

Teacher's Role in Discussion

The following studies highlight the role of the teacher in literature-based discussion, each of which varies based on the researchers interpretation of what teachers ought to do. Serafini's (2002) study suggested that teachers needed to provide a variety of opportunities to respond to picture books. Short, Kaufman , Kaser, Kahn & Crawford (1999) analyzed teacher talk in turn distinguishing several roles that teachers assume including: teachers as facilitator, as participants, as mediators, and active listeners. Finally, Eeds and Wells (1989) offered insight on how teachers can facilitate conversation. By examining each of the studies, the teacher's role in discussion is clarified by research that pinpoints effective strategies for teachers to utilize during discussion.

Short, Kaufman , Kaser, Kahn & Crawford (1999) sought to analyze teacher talk in literature discussions. Because the research of Short et al. (1999) focused on the role of the teacher in literature discussion, their work has a direct impact on my study and in turn has provided a framework for understanding similar teacher talk that occurred in both of

the classrooms I observed. Having previously analyzed students' responses in their research, Short et al. deemed it important to look at the teacher as well. Using data from classroom literature circles lead by both teacher and students, Short and her colleagues aimed to examine the role of teachers and students and the types of a talk that occurred. In each of the four intermediate classrooms studied, researchers participated in discussions as both facilitators and discussion group members.

Upon examining transcripts from the literature circles, Short et al. (1999) identified several roles the teachers had taken, which included teachers as facilitators, participants, mediators, and active listeners. Each of these roles contributes to my understanding of how teachers interact with students during literature discussion.

When assuming the role of teacher as facilitator, teachers encouraged students and talk by monitoring social interactions when they interfered with discussion (Short et al., 1999). Multiple roles were assumed when the teachers acted as facilitators. With the first facilitator role, teachers used questioning like "Why do you think that?" and "What do you mean?" encouraging students to share more of their thinking. The second facilitator role involved teachers providing additional information for clarification of details related to the story. For example, while reading historical fiction, teachers clarified confusion between internment camps and concentration camps. The third facilitator role was to restate comments from students when the teachers felt that other students participating in the discussion had missed something important. Students then made the decisions as to whether or not they wanted to engage in discussion around these topics. The fourth facilitator role was aimed at maintaining order in classroom discussions, at other at times it was used as an invitation to change topics or invite silent students to participate. Finally

the role of teacher as facilitator was classified as a way to challenge students' interpretations. This role was used with caution in order to avoid silencing students.

Teachers also acted as participants in literature discussions. The types of talk the teachers used as participants included: sharing connections to a book, talking about related experiences, making broad thematic statements, questioning issues that were puzzling, and expressing personal opinions and evaluations (Short et al., 1999). Students accepted their teachers' opinions as being part of the group process and they built on them with their own comments, frequently agreeing and disagreeing with the teachers as if they were their peers. Teachers also wanted to push the group to contemplate other perspectives. After students had engaged in a lengthy discussion about slavery and hatred, the teacher pushed the group to think about hatred, as it exists today (Short et al., 1999).

Lastly, Short et al. (1999) described the teachers' role as a mediator. Using facilitator talk, teachers encouraged students to connect their discussion about the books to personal experiences, values, or lessons from their own lives. By using questions and comments, teachers invited students to explore social issues rather than engage solely in book talk. Literature discussions were also used as a space for students to talk about and work through personal issues and discuss values (Short et al., 1999). "School doesn't often provide the space and invitation for this type of discussion. Literature circles allowed teachers to understand children's thinking and to challenge them to consider other possibilities" (Short et al., 1999, p. 380).

The research by Short et al. (1999) exhibits the potential that teachers have to use their role as a facilitator, participant, and mediator to push students thinking about

literature in whole group and small group discussion. Notably the teachers did not specifically “train” students how to participate; however, they did teach them about talk and roles that may be appropriate during a read aloud and discussion. When thinking about my study, it is apparent that the work of Short et al. (1999) is applicable to the role of the teachers I desired to understand.

Serafini’s (2002) reflective study on literature discussion in his intermediate classroom is another study that contributes to the field of research on classroom discussion. Serafini’s (2002) study “tried to restructure read alouds, and whole group discussions to explore new ways of engaging with a text and sharing interpretations that would be supported by a change in theoretical perspectives” (p. 73). Providing a variety of experiences with picture books to present students with multiple opportunities for interpretation, Serafini sought to offer different opportunities for his students and himself to talk about books. These experiences included: identifying and sharing picture books that focus on a central theme, revisiting a cornerstone picture book over an extended period of time, disrupting a text, and creating visual representations of classroom discussions (Serafini, 1999).

As he explored each of these experiences, he found that: the quality of discussion was due to the depth of the texts, educators needed to aide students in uncovering the richness in books, interpretations were extended by disrupting the text, and students understandings were made obvious when using visual representations (Serafini, 2002). Based on analysis of these experiences Serafini (1999) stated that:

If we believe that readers construct meaning in transaction with text we must change the way we talk about texts, the types of questions we ask students, who gets to

ask questions, the expectations we have for our class discussions about literature... In other words we need to change how teachers and students transact with a piece of literature if we are to change the way students read and see themselves as readers (p. 77).

Serafini (2002) suggested that teachers need to provide students with multiple opportunities for interpretation, as well as encourage them to be active participants in literature discussions. This is ultimately achieved through the interaction that teachers have with students therefore it is critical that teachers learn to question and respond to students effectively. By doing so students are able to verbalize their interpretations.

In their seminal piece, *Grand Conversations*, Eeds and Wells (1989) offered teachers insight on how to facilitate learning in literature discussions. They suggested that dialogue is the best system for students to use in text interpretation because it is instinctive, contrary to the monologic pattern of communication. Dialogue creates the opportunity for students to share, produce, and revisit ideas they have constructed while reading literature. Eeds and Wells also argue that:

The elements of literature can emerge naturally as children and teacher talk about the books together because talking about the books necessitates a discussion of character coping, time, place, theme, mood and language as they are contained within and evoked by the work. (p. 23).

Moreover, Eeds and Wells (1989) believe that this process allows students and teachers to socially construct the meaning of the story by engaging discussion that fosters the analytic aspect of literary understanding.

In their recent work, Eeds and Peterson (2007) cautioned teachers that dialogue is not always the easiest mode of interpretation especially when conflict arises or ambiguity takes over. In order for effective dialogue to occur, two rules must be applied. “First, students and teachers need to respect interpretations of others and help in their development whenever possible. Second, participants—teachers and students—must not enter dialogue with an agenda in mind” (Eeds & Peterson, 2007, p. 27). Of these two rules, the most challenging for teachers would be entering a discussion without a preconceived agenda. Teachers desire to be leaders rather than participants. In order for literature groups to be effective, the teacher must forego the traditional reading group format where he/she leads the group by asking a series of comprehension questions and the students’ answer. It is Eeds and Peterson’s (2007) belief that “children are born makers of meaning” (p.27). Therefore, teachers should allow them the opportunity to construct meaning via literature groups.

Teachers have an important role in preparing for literature discussion. The teachers’ role is to act as a curator of literature. “A curator knows art, collects it, cares for it, and delights in sharing it with others, helping them see it in ways they may have not discovered if left on their own” (Eeds & Peterson, 1991, p. 118). Much like a museum curator knows art, it is the teachers’ job to know literature inside and out and share this passion and understanding with their students. This begins with understanding how literary elements contribute to the total reading of a piece of literature and thus sharing this knowledge with students. The role of curator also requires teachers to: practice their own reading, practice writing with their students, listen carefully to what students have to say as they talk about books and trust the books, trust the students and trust themselves

as teachers (Eeds & Peterson, 1991). According to Eeds and Peterson (2007), literature discussions serve as a way for “teachers to work alongside their students, negotiate meaning with them, and take into account their perspectives—what they know or don’t know” (p. 25). Using a variety of classroom studies, a framework for creating small group literature studies was created that enabled students to talk, reflect and create meaning with other students and the teacher. Based on research conducted in intermediate elementary classrooms, Eeds and Peterson (2007) suggested the following structure for literature study groups but cautions teachers that this is not a prescriptive format and they must develop their own style.

1. Form literature study groups—select five to seven students to participate or allow students to sign up.
2. Select a book to read—students may suggest a book or the teacher can choose two to three books that they feel have good potential for a study
3. Phase One/First reading—meet with the students daily for about five to seven minutes to check for progress and clarify any confusion
4. Phase Two/Critical Interpretation—meet with the students to discuss the book, focus shifts to sharing interpretations and moving beyond personal connections. The intent of this phase is to get into the text—to puzzle over what the author has written...to fill in the blanks.

(Eeds & Peterson, 2007, p. 79)

Tracing research that focuses on the teachers’ role in literature discussion underpins this study by lending insight into the means by which teachers can encourage or discourage discussion while conducting whole group and small group literature

discussions. Stemming from the work of Cazden who critiqued the IRE sequence of instruction and concluding with the work of Eeds and Peterson (2007) who suggested an approach to sustain conversation facilitated by the teacher, each research study mentioned guided this study.

Research on Visual Components of Picture Books and Websites

Picture books, author websites, connected texts such as poems, or nonfiction articles all contribute to the literary resources students and teachers have access to in today's classrooms. Consequently, these resources have varying impact on readers based on readers' understanding of the visual and textual elements presented. Visual literacy research and research on multimodality, and new literacies research, provide theoretical models for understanding how images in books and in web based resources such as author websites impact readers interpretation of texts. "Although the illustrations are a 'source of aesthetic delight,' everything about the illustrations conveys 'information' about how viewers are being invited to [read and] respond" (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, p. 278). For too long picturebooks have been regarded as a work of literature and not as a work of art.

Visual literacy and Picture Books

Literature discussions include interpretive responses about the images presented in picture books, requiring students to read the pictures as well the written text. Pantaleo (2008) stated that, "scholars agree that reading pictures is a multifaceted act" (p. 22). This section focuses on research that contributes specifically to student's discussion of picture book illustrations, including the work of Pantaleo (2007), Clark (1960), and Sipe (2004).

When thinking about reading and comprehending picture books, it is common practice to concentrate on the textual elements, forgetting the visual aspects that equally contribute to the overall experience students have with a picture book. Visual literacy is laden with values and ideas presented in the social environment in which people live. Kress (2006) proposed that visual images are as important as the written word, bringing meaning to all that is seen through multimodal visual representations. “Kress argues persuasively that images can be the central medium of communication in any text and reminds us that ideology is always present” (Arizpe & Styles, 2003, p. 42).

Working collaboratively with a fifth grade teacher for three years, Pantaleo (2007) studied students’ responses to postmodern picture books. Small group and whole group discussions contributed to her data. Focused on Dresang’s (1999) characteristics of picture books with “Radical Change,” Pantaleo analyzed students’ interpretations of the contemporary picture book *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (Scieszka, 1992). Analysis revealed that metafictional devices, texts that draw readers’ attention to how texts work and to how meaning is created (Waugh, 1984), were evident in both the illustrations and the textual features. Metafictional devices included several types:

- Type One—Changing forms and formats described: graphics, words and pictures, nonlinear organization and format, nonsequential organization and format, multiple layers of meaning, and interactive formats.
- Type Two—Changing perspectives explained: multiple perspectives.
- Type Three—Changing boundaries portrayed: unresolved endings. (p. 32).

Each of these categories included some direct reference to the influence of the illustrations on students' interpretations. Of particular interest to my study were those responses that Pantaleo (2007) noticed were directed by variations in color, illustrative styles, visual layering of the story, and the idea that "readers must move back and forth between text and pictures" (p. 32). At one point a student mentions that The Little Red Hen in *The Stinky Cheese Man* "took up the whole page," referring to how the illustrator used metafictional techniques in the illustrations to manipulate the readers' opinion of the character (Pantaleo, 2007). Pantaleo's work focused on the idea that illustrations provided readers with more than a pretty picture; they are essential in the construction of meaning.

Children respond to visual images in a variety of ways. Clark (1960) examined four phases of appreciating visual works of art: impact, scrutiny, recollection, and renewal (Arizpe & Styles, 2003). He described how viewers first get a general impression of the picture as a whole including subject matter, color, shape and composition. This phase is referred to as *impact*. If there is no impact, then the next phase, *scrutiny*, cannot occur because essentially there is no transaction between the see-er and the seen (Arizpe & Styles, 2003). Scrutiny is characterized as looking closely at the pictures. Viewers may make connections with the pictures, which are identified as the third phase, *recollection*. Recollection can be closely tied to interpretation when thinking about students' transaction with picture books. Clark (1960) explained that the last phase of appreciation involves thinking about the picture and examining it more closely this phase is called *renewal*. The word viewer is synonymous with student. Students travel through these phases much like adults do when viewing art. As students confront pictures in

picturebooks they are called upon to use analytical skills to interpret means that are present. Arizpe and Styles (2003) noted that in their research with five-year-olds, pictures “never failed to *impact* them [students]” (p. 44). Clark’s four phases of appreciation provide a helpful framework to think about how children respond to picture books.

Another classroom study conducted by Sipe (2004) explored the ways that first graders constructed meaning from visual features in four variations of the classic *Three Little Pigs* (Marshall, 1989). Because young children attended to pictures more readily, Sipe’s (2004) research focused on response to visual details. Analysis of data collected revealed eight categories in which children used visual talk to create meaning: setting, character-appearance, character-action, character-inner state, prediction/confirmation of plot, integration, comparison, story boundaries. (Sipe, 2004) Description of setting in illustration sculpted the category Sipe termed setting. Students attended to details in the background of the pages. Character appearance and character actions were identified and described in verbal responses throughout read alouds. Interpretations and inferences were made about character-inner state with visual talk centered on feelings and emotions depicted in the images. Students noticed variations in the nonlinear sequence of the illustrations. Variations in illustration were used as a tool for prediction and confirmation of plot with student referencing pages to confirm or disconfirm interpretations. Children also made intratextual and intertextual connections across the four stories, comparing them in their responses, which were guided by the illustrations. Children relied on the illustrations to interpret the metafictional elements in all four story variations.

Visual literacy research shows that students have the capability to transact with pictures in a meaningful manner. This can be taken one step further by offering vocabulary to speak about what they observe. It is important then to talk about frameworks for the analysis of picture book design and format. In his comprehensive article *A Framework for Picturebook Criticism*, Sipe (1998) takes a journey through the many design elements that influence the readers' transactions with picture books. *Looking at Pictures in Picture Books* by Doonan (1993) is an exploration of the possibilities offered by pictures. Both of these influential pieces offer ways of interpreting and discussing visual images and design elements of picture books, contributing to the field of research on visual literacy and response.

Multimodality

This study draws on picture books and author websites, with the understanding that the picture book is a print-based multimodal text and author websites are digitally based multimodal text. Each has different affordances. Sipe (2008) states, "picturebooks rely heavily on an illustration sequence—a visual sign system—to convey meaning" (p. 16). Kress (2003) argues:

Two trends mark the recent history of 'learning resources' in school. Where writing had been the central mode of representation, and the book the dominant medium of dissemination, image is now increasingly prominent as a carrier of meaning in 'learning resources'; and the digital media including the web are more and more the site of 'learning resources', affording the use of moving images and sound.

An additional form of literacy required of contemporary students is online literacy, such as reading author websites (Coiro, 2001). Because this form of literacy differs from traditional literacy (Kress, 2003), like reading a picture book, it is important to briefly note some research that has focused on the reading and transacting with websites. Coiro (2003), Kress (2003), and Leu et al. (2005) discussed the importance of new ways of reading when transacting with web-based resources. I will describe their work as it pertains to my study and the use of author websites.

Coiro (2001) stated "Today, the definition of literacy has expanded from traditional notions of reading and writing to include the ability to learn, comprehend, and interact with technology in a meaningful way" (p. 256). While participating in the current study, teachers and students explored children's author websites. It is important to recognize that reading and negotiating websites is different from the traditional classroom reading format which includes picture books, basal readers, novels, and other print forms. Coiro reviewed the work of Sutherland-Smith (2002) and Eigelton (2001) and The RAND Reading Study Group (2002), proposing that students need to be taught how to work with internet resources in order for them to comprehend what they are reading. Based on her analysis of previous scholars, Coiro (2003) explored important questions about how teachers can prepare students to be effective users of the internet. In her findings she suggests that teachers model how to use strategies to solve different comprehension tasks as technologies rapidly change and new forms of literacy emerge (Coiro, 2003). Coiro (2003) also stated, "Our [the teacher] role, in fostering literacy learning with technology, often becomes that of facilitator, expertly guiding readers to appropriate online texts while taking advantage of the scaffolded learning supports

embedded in many electronic environments” (p. 463). In other words, teachers need to help students learn how to be effective users of websites, and never assume that reading in this form is the same as traditional reading. This is pertinent to this study because students and teachers had the opportunity to explore author websites.

In order to understand how author websites offer a different format for interpretation it is necessary to discuss the work of Kress (2003). Kress (2003) believes that a multimodal approach to learning allows different affordances for students’ production of meaning. Kress (2003) states, “Image has resources such as position in space, size, colour, shape, icons of various kinds – lines, circles, as well as layout resources such as spatial arrangement; and in the case of moving images, movement...” (p. 30). With this idea in mind, author websites in this study present resources that are not available in a picture book. Students’ navigation through various icons, images and text lead them to different information about authors and picture books. Resources like author websites do different kinds of semiotic work, or do broadly similar semiotic work with different resources in different ways. Modes such as author websites have different affordances: potentials and constraints for making meaning (Kress, 2003 & Gibson, 1997). Websites afford readers a text that is nonlinear allowing them to negotiate the reading and meaning construction of images and text in a variety of ways. During this study students explored author websites they had the ability attend to a variety of images and text which afforded them a different mode of reading.

Summary

Research from the past frames this study including research on reader response, classroom discussion research, visual literacies research, and new literacies research. Each of these theoretical stances influenced and guided this study. Much of the research conducted on literature discussion focuses on student response and neglects to analyze the role of the teacher, and the role literature play in discussion. New literacies research recognizes that reading on the Internet differs from traditional reading. Because children's author website explorations were included in this study it is important to note that previous research on literature discussion has not considered the influence of websites of literature discussion. In the following chapter I describe the methodology that was employed in order to answer the question: What instructional roles do teachers utilize when conducting whole group and small group literature discussion.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of my research study was to examine the instructional roles teacher employ when conducting whole group and small group literature discussions, specifically investigating the impact that teachers, literature and author websites had on students' interpretation of children's literature. Because I sought to gain insight into the instructional practices of the teachers and gain an understanding of how their approaches in literature discussions influence student response, case study methodology was determined the most appropriate for this research. Merriam (1998) states, "a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis bounded by a phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit" (p. xiii). I used case study to answer the following question:

What instructional roles do teachers utilize when conducting whole group and small group literature discussion?

Several scholars define case study. Creswell (2007) defines case study as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes" (p. 73). As described by Merriam (1998) case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Case studies are particularistic because they focus on a particular situation, event or, phenomenon; equally the case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, case studies are descriptive, seeking to report information with rich description in a narrative fashion

(Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) also suggests that case studies can be heuristic, meaning that they illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study. Finally, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) note that case study is often a detailed examination of a particular event. While all of these definitions describe case study in similar ways, I primarily drew on Merriam to direct my study.

When choosing to implement qualitative case study as a methodology, researchers assume that research is grounded in studying human beings, in a naturalistic setting, under normal conditions, and with sensitivity to the people under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) describe qualitative research as naturalistic because "researchers enter and spend considerable time in schools, learning about educational concerns. The data is collected on the premises and supplemented by the understanding that is gained by being on location" (p. 4). By conducting research in a naturalistic setting, in this case the classroom, I had the opportunity to observe participants in the context in which they were most comfortable.

With data collection occurring at two different elementary school sites, my research is considered a multi-case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) multi-case studies are typically conducted for the purpose of comparative analysis across cases. Although generalizability was not my goal, multi-case studies were conducted for the purpose of comparing data across the two classrooms in this study. When conducting multi-case studies Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest, "You pick a second site on the basis of the extent and presence or absence of some particular characteristic of the original study" (p. 63). Consequently a second site and classroom was selected. I used the following teacher criteria to select both sites. The

teachers selected to participate: a) conducted daily read alouds, b) performed literature discussions, c) believed reading instruction was holistic and driven by high quality literature, and d) utilized a transactional approach for discussion. By selecting a second site for data collection, I had the ability to compare data across cases.

There are many strengths and possibilities in using qualitative multi-case study as a design for investigating whole group and small group literature discussions. Some of these benefits include: flexibility in data collection based on the type of research questions asked, ability to change researcher role in the study when necessary, the use of a variety of data sources and collection techniques, and use in educational research to influence future educational strategies.

Case studies are often selected based on research questions or the nature of the research problem. Because case study looks to describe a phenomenon in a holistic manner, it offers a means for investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables (Merriam, 1998). Educational studies especially lend themselves to case study research. With flexibility in data collection procedures and analysis techniques, researchers are able to observe and participate in research that might not be possible to conduct using quantitative research methods. Questions related to the social organization of classrooms, the relation between curriculum and learning, differentiation learning based on class, race, ethnicity and gender, and the relation between social context and learning can all be studied using interpretative research such as case study.

Another possibility in case study research is the opportunity for the researcher to expand their role beyond observer. “The researcher can assume one of several stances while collecting information, from being a full participant—to being a spectator”

(Merriam, 1998, p. 100). The researcher can assume the role of participant-observer, which Merriam (1998) says allows the researcher, “to have active membership in the settings central activities without committing themselves to the member’s goals and values” (p. 101). I see this as one of the primary benefits to selecting case study research; it allows the researcher to be fully involved.

Further, case study enables the researcher to use a variety of techniques to collect data. Data collection is comprised of multiple formats, including interviews, observations, and documents. In case study, researchers have the freedom to select the methods in which they collect data, as well as how they go about conducting interviews, selecting documents, and structuring observations. Researchers can consider participant input and chose to include data in their study based on the relationships they have with their participants. As a data source, participants’ documents can also offer insight for the researcher and may be chosen to add to the data corpus. With the opportunity to collect participant documents, researchers can expand their study beyond the initial data collection and gain insight into the meanings of events. In literature-based discussions personal documents such as reflection logs and teacher notes are especially useful because they are considered a reliable source of data, “concerning a person’s attitudes beliefs and views of the world” (Merriam, 1998, p. 116). In this case the documents were particular to the picture books teachers and students were exposed to.

The most beneficial aspect of case study research is that it provides insights that can influence future educational research. “Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). Although case study cannot predict future behavior it can inform

practice in ways that are useful to educators. In other words case study can provide in-depth information in a holistic view that allows teachers to see themselves.

The following section describes the research context, the research site selection process, characteristics of the research sites, the teacher selection process, as well as a description about the teachers who participated in my study. I conclude this chapter with my data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Context

Research Site Selection

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), “purposeful sampling is choosing particular subjects because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of developing theory” (p. 65). Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to choose sites that show different perspectives and enhance the research through situations that facilitate theoretical development. Because the teachers participating in this research served a crucial role in conducting classroom literature discussion, it was imperative that purposeful sampling be employed. Purposeful sampling allowed me to select sites and participants that enacted daily read alouds, performed literature discussions, and shared similar reading instruction philosophies. Also important to this study was access to individual computers per student and Internet access, therefore sites were purposefully selected based on this criteria as well. Each site selected also had principal support for participation in this study.

As context is fundamental element in the implementation of read alouds and literature discussions, careful selection of each school a site was necessary. In order to

ensure that each classroom and school site were suitable for my study, classroom observations served as a guide for selecting classrooms for participation. While observing each of the classrooms the following criteria served as a guide. Individual classrooms were purposefully selected on the basis of whether: (a) children's literature was already being used in the reading curriculum, (b) teachers and students had access to the internet and were familiar with navigating through websites, (c) there was administrative support for literature-based reading instruction, (d) access could be obtained to each classrooms on a weekly basis and daily basis, (e) the teachers were interested in the research project, (f) the schools willingness to participate in the study, and (g) there was a diverse population of students both academically and ethnically. Research took place in two elementary schools, Bear Elementary School and Logan Elementary School (all names are pseudonyms), in an urban school district in Southwest United States.

Research Sites

This first site was a kindergarten through fifth grade year-round elementary school, Bear Elementary School. Because of my previous work at Bear Elementary School, as a university mentor for preservice teachers, the principal as well as the teacher Ms. Duarte were familiar with my work and me. It is my belief that this increased my trustworthiness and in turn made them more apt to participate in my research (Merriam, 1998). In the 2009-2010 school year Ms. Duarte taught 31 students in her fifth grade classroom. There were 17 boys and 14 girls. Bear Elementary School made adequate yearly progress (AYP) according to criterion referenced test scores. With an attendance rate of 96.4 %, Bear Elementary School had a higher attendance rate than the district average of 94.5%. According to Bear Elementary School's 2008-2009 accountability

report the school student population was ethnically diverse with approximately 47% Caucasian, 27% Asian/Pacific Islander, 9% African American, and 17% Hispanic.

The second research site was a kindergarten through fifth grade nine-month elementary school, Logan Elementary School. I had the opportunity to collect data at this school because I had worked with the first grade teacher who participated in my study several years ago at different elementary school, in the same school district. Similar to the first school selected for my study, I gained trustworthiness from my past work experience with Ms. Romer, thus the principal also agreed to Ms. Romer's participation. In the 2009-2010 school year Ms. Romer taught 16 students in her first grade classroom. There were 9 boys and 7 girls. Based on criterion referenced test scores Logan Elementary made AYP. The school's attendance rate was also higher than the district average at 96.7%, which also could have influenced student participation in this study. According to the 2009-2010 accountability report the school's population was not as ethnically diverse as the first school. With a student population of 68% Caucasian, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 9% African American, and 14% Hispanic, the population was predominantly Caucasian.

Teacher Selection

Two elementary teachers, a fifth grade teacher (Ms. Duarte) and a first grade teacher (Ms. Romer) participated in my study. The teachers that participated were selected based on their classroom structure and instructional philosophy, which included daily read alouds, literature based instruction and discussion, and a curator approach to leading literature discussion (Eeds & Peterson, 1991).

Ms. Duarte

Ms. Duarte was selected because I had the opportunity to observe her conducting read alouds, facilitate literature groups, and her reading instruction philosophy coincided with my research study. Although Ms. Duarte had only been teaching for five years, her peers considered her an “exceptional teacher”. According to the vice principal, she was known through out Bear Elementary as one of the best teachers in the school. Elected to serve as her grade level chair, Ms. Duarte stated in our preliminary interview that she hoped to have her grade level reconsider how they were teaching reading, advocating for the use of novels instead of basal readers. Continuously trying to better herself as an educator, Ms. Duarte stated during a casual conversation, “Education is my life. I am constantly learning. Right now I am working towards my master’s degree.” My initial observations of Ms. Duarte’s classroom, as well as interviews I had with Ms. Duarte prior to data collection, confirmed she met my selection criteria. The following narrative captures the essence of Mrs. Duarte’s philosophical beliefs about reading instruction and standardized programs. Furthermore, this vignette exemplifies the tension Ms. Duarte often felt between standardized grade level reading programs and her desire to use high interest literature in her reading program.

The reason I don’t believe in [reading] contracts or that you don’t have to read for thirty minutes per night is because it is the same thing as a textbook. It just gets the kids to hate reading, by forcing them to do something they don’t want to do. And you want kids to love to read. That’s what you need to teach, the importance of reading. For example, since 1999, I’ve seen a handful of kids out of all of the kids I’ve worked with that have actually truly enjoyed reading. And

that's not fun. Somewhere along the line, they've been taught to hate to read.

And where does that come from? You know?

When I was a preschool teacher, those kids were there. At that time, they would sit there and model what I was doing at the same time. They could play with Legos, blocks, but they would pick up a book. They would actually sit there, at their chair and hold up a picture book and pretend to read like I was reading, and they had a little group of kids around them that couldn't read a word but they made it up as they went. That's what would make me happy.

Then, when I started teaching fifth grade, and they would sigh or they would cheer because I didn't tell them they would have to read at night, that's a problem! Why? Why is that? And when they're consistently failing textbook tests, from *Trophies* or whatever reading series that we have, there's a problem with that. When I consistently see F's over and over again, and it's supposed to be something in the glossary, and if the teachers who...or other teachers at the grade level are seeing the same thing, then why are we doing that? And it's accepted! And why is that accepted?

But then when you give them a novel, and with that novel, they can tell me all about it with discussion, or if I'm reading a book during read aloud and they can tell me all about it and they're begging me for more. That's what I mean by [reading contracts], that's not a good way to go.

(Preliminary Interview, 9/15/09).

Ms. Romer

It hit me from the moment I walked in Ms. Romer's first grade classroom door: tubs and tubs of books, shelves stacked high with children's literature from a variety of authors and genres. After over 20 years of teaching, it was apparent she had a passion for children's literature. Ms. Romer's daily routine consisted of read alouds from her favorite authors. During our preliminary interview she was forthcoming about the era of testing she had been challenged with since No Child Left Behind (NCLB) had been instated. Despite the tension she had with the administration's emphasis on maintaining high test scores, Ms. Romer was adamant about sharing children's literature with her first grade students. Philosophically Ms. Romer believed that by exposing children to high quality literature, through read alouds and discussion, she was helping them become "better, well-rounded, readers".

Throughout Ms. Romer's 20 years of teaching, she had been exposed to many literacy movements including the whole language movement in the 1980s and now the high stakes testing push with NCLB. Consequently she was certain about her position on reading. The following excerpt from my preliminary interview with Ms. Romer captures the essence of her teaching beliefs about reading and supports the criteria I established for selecting teachers to participate in my study. She touches on not only her passion for reading but also details some of the challenges she is faced with today as an educator. I began the interview by asking Ms. Romer what her reading goals were for her first graders. She responded:

I want them to walk with their favorite authors. I want them to be able to discern between crummy literature and very good literature. And of course I want

them to love to read. I read aloud every day at least once, a lot of times I will pull in read alouds for science and social studies, but the majority of reading aloud is what I call story time, and it's usually based on different authors or it's based on like a seasonal/holiday activity like Martin Luther King but mostly author study or themes. During our read alouds I have a chair and they all come down and sit with me. I usually recap what our books have been about. What is our common thread of our books? Is it an author, a theme? I recall it or I review it depending on where we're at in the study. Or if it's a theme, we'll just talk about what have been some commonalities in all these books that we've been reading.

Although it's never my goal to teach story elements like character, main idea, and so I on I often have to do it [during read alouds]... you know to cover the topics, which the kids will be tested on. I don't enjoy doing it, but there is a lot of pressure to make sure you are always doing something that meets the goals [using her fingers to gesture quotation marks]. You know it feels like you have to justify why you are reading picture books even though you know after 20 years that this is what helps students become better readers.

(Preliminary Interview, 12/19/10).

Role of the Researcher

In my study I assumed the role of a participant/observer. Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe a participant/observer as a researcher who immerses himself in the setting seeing, hearing, and beginning to experience reality as the participants do. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) state that the researcher is key in interpreting the data; therefore by assuming the role of participant/observer I had the ability to witness things

that may be absent from audiotapes or transcripts. “Unlike passive observation where there is minimum interaction between the researcher and the object of the study, participant observation means establishing rapport and learning to act so that people go about business as usual when you show up” (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). As Bernard & Ryan (2010) explained, after spending time in both classrooms I had established a rapport with the teachers and the students enabling me to become part of the classroom environment. As a participant observer my role included taking field notes, observational records rich in description, and at times participating in classroom events.

During my time in both classrooms, my role as a participant/observer shifted. After observing in each classroom for a week, I became more of a participant rather than an observer. As Bogdan and Biklen (2003) note there is a continuum of participant/observer roles, “During the first few days of participant observation, for example, the researcher often remains somewhat detached, waiting to be looked over and hopefully, accepted. As relationships develop, he or she participates more” (p. 83). Initially I intended to remain a complete observer; however, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer frequently wanted to discuss their read aloud sessions, requesting feedback from my researcher stance. Students also looked to me for help in their daily work such as editing their writing workshop stories, helping select literature for silent reading and answering questions about tasks they were working on. Because of my interactions with the teachers and students I became a moderate participant

Ethical Considerations

Acting as a moderate participant may have influenced the outcome of the data especially in the case of Ms. Duarte. After Ms. Duarte’s first whole group read aloud she

quickly came to me and described how she had made the discussion into a lesson about predicting instead of an open-ended discussion. Although our discussion was not audio taped I noted several things in my field notes including the fact that she had asked me specifically what I had hoped for the read alouds. I stated that I was not expecting her to conduct mini-lessons about specific content such as prediction, rather I would prefer her facilitate students in having a discussion about the picture book she was reading. Whereas Ms. Duarte asked for my advice as a researcher, Ms. Romer wanted to share interesting things she had heard students say. The findings related to my discussions with Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Data Sources

Data collection in my multi-case study took place over a twelve-week period, beginning in October 2009 and concluding in January of 2010. During this twelve-week period, preliminary interviews with the participating teachers were conducted, consent forms were collected, and classroom read alouds and small group discussions took place. In case study research, data collection typically involves three strategies including: interviews, observation, and gathering and analyzing documents. Merriam (1998) states, “Rarely are all three strategies used equally. One or two methods of data collection predominate; the other(s) play a supporting role in gaining an in-depth understanding of the case” (p. 137). Data collection in this case involved the audio taping of whole group and small group discussions as my primary data source. Secondary data sources included: field notes, interviews, teacher reflection logs, Informal correspondence and the

collection of various student artifacts. Data sources and timeline in which they were collected are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Data Sources and timeline

Data Sources	Ms. Duarte	Ms. Romer
Preliminary teacher interviews	October 2, 2009	December 15, 2009
Whole group discussions	October 6, 2009 October 8, 2009 October 13, 2009 October 15, 2009 October 20, 2009 October 27, 2009	January 5, 2010 January 6, 2010 January 11, 2010 January 12, 2010 January 13, 2010 January 19, 2010 January 21, 2010
Small group discussions	October 9, 2009 October 16, 2009 October 27, 2009	January 7, 2010 January 13, 2010 January 22, 2010
Researcher field notes	September 7-9, 2010 September 21-23, 2010 October 2-27, 2009	December 8-10, 2010 December 14-16, 2010 January 5-22, 2010
Teacher reflection logs	October 6-27, 2009	January 5-29, 2010
Informal correspondence	October 5, 2009 October 6, 2009 October 16, 2009 October 27, 2009	January 6, 2010 January 11, 2010 January 13, 2010 January 22, 2010
Student artifacts	October 2-27, 2009	January 5-22, 2010
Final teacher interview	November 15, 2009	February 10, 2010

Primary Sources

Whole Group and Small Group Discussions

Throughout this study whole group and small group discussions were audio taped. In order to capture teacher and students verbal reactions to the picture books, audiotapes were a necessary form of data collection and served as a primary resource. A tape recorder with a microphone was placed in front of the group each time a discussion occurred. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) it is crucial to make sure that the placement of the microphone is in a position that gets a “distinct recording of the subject” (p.123). In order to ensure that students’ voices were heard and that audio recordings were sufficient, I allowed students to help test the recording by speaking and playing it back prior to recording each discussion. Whole group discussions ranged from 30-45 minutes and subsequently tapes were the same length of time. Each of the audiotapes was transcribed immediately following the discussion.

Small group discussions were also a primary data source. Each small group discussion typically took place following the whole group discussion and website explorations. Students were selected by Ms. Duarte, Ms. Romer, and me. Because Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte wanted to ensure that all students had the opportunity to participate in at least one small group discussion, some students were selected to ensure parity. Other students that participated in small group discussion were selected because of their responses to the read alouds. For example, during a whole group discussion of *The Wretched Stone* in Ms. Duarte’s class, two students began a debate about evolution versus creation. This dialogue piqued the interest of Ms. Duarte, thus she selected them to participate in a small group discussion that week. With the intention to find out more

about this debate, Ms Duarte posed a question during the small group discussion about evolution versus creation. Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte also looked to me for suggestions for students whom I thought should participate. I selected students based on questions recorded in my field notes about responses they had expressed during whole group discussions. Ms. Duarte, Ms. Romer and I also selected students to participate that had not responded during whole group discussion with the intention to make sure that all students had an opportunity to share their thoughts. Small group discussions lasted approximately 20-30 minutes and were audio taped. All of the audiotapes were transcribed immediately following each discussion.

Transcripts were the primary data source for this study. Using Bogdan and Biklen's (2003) example of transcription, transcripts were typed line by line. Every time a new person spoke I started a new line noting on the left who the speaker was (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) also state, "the transcripts should, parallel the interview, and be dominated by the subjects remarks" (p. 121). In this case comments were dominated by the teachers' questions and responses as well as the students' questions and responses. In qualitative research, it is acceptable to "leave out the material that does not address your concerns" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 124). Because the focus of this study was not related to discourse analysis, when transcribing, the data "ums" and other verbal pauses were purposefully omitted. A transcript example is listed below.

(Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus, WG, 10/14/09)

Ms. Duarte: OK. And what would lead you to believe that it would be Mo Willems?

Bailey: Because we are learning about an author named Mo Willems.

Ms. Duarte: And does anybody know any other books that Mo Willems has written?

Christine: Mo wrote *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*

Ms. Duarte: OK.

Sam: Mo also wrote *Knuffle Bunny Too*.

Ms. Duarte: *Knuffle Bunny Too*. Thank you, Sam. Has he written anything else that we've read in class?

Andre: Mo Willems also wrote the book *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* and also because I took a couple of tests on Reading Counts.

Ms. Duarte: Thank you. So does anybody have a prediction about what this book will probably be about today?

Danielle: It's probably about not letting the pigeon drive the bus.

Ms. Duarte: OK. All right. And this guy looks familiar. Where have we seen him before? Where have we seen him? Oh, Ashton, you look so happy.

Ashton: We've seen the pigeon in *Knuffle Bunny* because in the middle of the story there is a guy wearing a t-shirt with a picture of the pigeon on it.

Secondary Sources

Field Notes

Observation was defined broadly to include both in class physical observation and audio recording. Observations were conducted daily throughout the study and included hand written detailed accounts of student interactions, teachers' discussion strategies, and classroom environment relationships. Descriptive field notes were used to record classroom observations. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) describe descriptive field notes as the

researcher's best efforts to "objectively record the details of what has occurred in the field. The goal is to capture a slice of life" (p. 112). Field notes served as a guide for capturing the essence of the physical classroom environment, as well as physical gestures made by the students and teachers that could not be captured by audio taping. Field notes were also used to notate theoretical memos and methodological notes throughout data collection. Theoretical memos contributed to the construction of categories that were used to analyze the data.

Teacher Reflection Logs

Teachers kept a reflection log in which they recorded remarks from daily discussions, questions, and wonderings. The reflection logs served as a communication tool between the teacher and me, as well as a data source. Throughout this study reflection logs enabled the teachers in this study to explore their personal growth while facilitating whole group discussions, website explorations, and small group discussions. Teacher reflection logs also contributed to data analysis and the development of categories by providing context for the transcript excerpts presented.

Informal Correspondence

Informal correspondence also contributed to the data corpus, this included email correspondence as well as conversations that I had with the teachers throughout the study. Conversations were not audio taped but were noted in researcher field notes. Emails were printed out and organized in binders.

Student Artifacts

Students' documents such as artistic and written responses were collected to supplement my understanding of student responses and further analysis. Some of these

documents included fifth graders' written interpretation of the author websites, fifth graders notes about Mo Willems' writing format, and first graders writing workshop books. Bogdan and Biklen state, "documents are self-revealing of a person's view of experiences" (p. 125). Students' personal documents provided information that may have not have been shared in an interview nor observed during my time in the classroom.

Timeline and Implementation

The following section outlines the implementation of the twelve-week study (six weeks in each respective classroom) and describes the timeline in which data were collected. Data collection began with classroom observations during the first and second week of each six-week study in each individual classroom. I spent three to four mornings per week in both classrooms, prior to audio taping literature discussions, with the intention of immersing myself in the environment. This gave students the opportunity to become familiar with me and in turn understand my role as a researcher. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) describe some fundamental concepts that enable the researcher to fit into the environment in which they are conducting research. These include: blending into the setting, becoming a natural part of the scene, and being trustworthy (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Trust was initially established through a question and answer session about the research study, which took place during the first day of my observation period. In order to further develop trust during the second week of observation, I conducted a read aloud from the students' choice of a selection of my favorite picture books. I also had the opportunity, in both classrooms, to have individual discussions and friendly conversations with the students during silent reading time and other times throughout my initial observations. These conversations often dealt with students' favorite books and

characters from their silent reading selections. Upon completing my two-week observation period I began my second stage of data collection, which consisted of audio taped discussions of whole group and small group literature discussions.

As part of the teacher's daily curriculum, students participated in six whole group literature discussions during the third, fourth and fifth week of my study. Each teacher conducted two read alouds, each week, for three consecutive weeks, with discussions taking place during and after the read alouds. Each week students were introduced to a new author that was selected based on the following criteria: student and teacher interest, quality of illustrations and text, readability of the text—for the purpose of conducting a read aloud, and availability of a related website produced by the book publisher or author which students could easily negotiate independently. By the end of the study students had been exposed to three different children's literature authors. Weekly discussions were focused on picture book read alouds in conjunction with information learned from exploration of author websites. Each teacher read picture books aloud in their regular classroom. Audiotapes were used to record class discussions. I began recording whole group and small group discussions the moment the teachers began to talk about the picture books. I concluded recording when teachers dismissed students to participate in another activity. Students selected to participate in small group literature discussions talked about their responses to picture books three times throughout the six-week period.

Not only did students in both classrooms participate in two whole group read alouds with literature discussions; students also participated in a weekly author website exploration and one small group literature discussion (see Table 2 for an outline of the weekly schedule). As a whole class students and the teacher explored a connected author

website once a week in the computer lab. Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer allowed students to freely explore all of the author websites each week. Finally one small group discussion took place at the end of each week based on the picture book read alouds as well as the exploration of the author website. Teachers and the researcher selected students for participation in the small group discussions. Students were selected as purposefully based on their input or lack off during whole group read alouds. Additionally, all students in each classroom had the opportunity to participate in small group discussions and were therefore selected to ensure they had the chance to participate in at least one small group discussion.

Table 2

Classroom Observation Weekly Schedule

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Whole Group Read Aloud Literature Discussion	Author Website Exploration	Second Whole Group Read Aloud Literature Discussion	Small Group Literature Discussion	Small Group Literature Discussion

Picture Books Introduced in the Study

During the course of my study in the fifth and first grade classrooms, the teachers had the opportunity to self-select picture books to read aloud. Ms. Duarte selected *Wretched Stone* as her first read aloud but asked for my assistance selecting the other picture books for the remainder of the study. On the other hand, Ms. Romer selected all of the picture books to be read during the study. Each of the titles is listed below with a

short summary. In order to maintain clarity I have listed the titles read in each individual classroom and also included a list of the titles both teachers read that were the same.

Ms. Duarte Fifth Grade

- *The Wretched Stone* by Chris Van Allsburg (1991) is a story written in journal form. Each day the captain writes a passage about his adventures on the Rita Anne. He begins to notice something is terribly wrong with the crew of the Rita Anne after bringing aboard a huge glowing rock that was found on shore. The crew have stopped speaking and they seem to walk the decks stooped over resembling monkeys. At night, shrieks can be heard coming from the forward hold. Questioning bringing the rock on board, the captain quickly takes action to get his crew back to normal.
- *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems (2003) is a Caldecott Honor book and the first in Willems' Pigeon series. When a bus driver takes a break from his route, Pigeon springs into action volunteering to take his place. Pigeon pleads, coaxes, and begs his way through the book. Never able to convince the driver to let him drive the bus Pigeon gives up and begins dreaming of driving a big rig semi-truck.
- *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears* by Emily Gravett (2008), an English writer, captures the many fears that children encounter through the eyes of a small mouse. Little Mouse documents his fears through comical accounts of his meetings with each of the things he is afraid of. Gravett uses dictionary definitions on each page to inform readers about technical term for each fear. The

illustrations in this book include die-cuts and fold outs, which pique students' interests.

- *The Odd Egg* by Emily Gravett (2008) is a simplistic book about a duck that wants an egg just like all of the other birds he knows. When Duck finds a large egg he is thrilled. When it hatches, Duck is the proud parent of a crocodile.
- *Meerkat Mail* by Emily Gravett (2007) is a story about Sunny a meerkat that becomes bored with his life with his meerkat family. Sunny decides to pack his suitcase and travel to visit his mongoose relatives. To document his travels Sunny sends postcards home. After traveling he quickly realizes that home isn't so bad and returns to his meerkat family. In a unique writing and illustrating fashion, Gravett uses postcards to tell Sunny's story.

Ms. Romer First Grade

- *The Hat* by Jan Brett (1997) is one of the first books that readers are introduced to Brett's famous character Hedgie, a hedgehog. Lisa, a young girl, hangs her winter clothes out in the sun to air out for winter. When one of Lisa's woolen stocking flies off the clothesline, Hedgie, finds it and pokes his nose in. Attempting to pull his nose out of the stocking, Hedgie gets it stuck on his prickle. When an array of animals comes by, they all laugh at Hedgie, especially when he pretends he's wearing a new hat. But in the end, Hedgie has the last laugh, when all of the animals come by wearing various clothing items from the clothesline on their heads.
- *The Mitten* by Jan Brett (1996) is based on a Ukrainian folktale. When Nicki, the main character, drops his white mitten in the snow without realizing it, the mitten

piques the curiosity of the woodland animals. The first animal to come across the mitten is a mole, which decides to crawl in. One by one more animals find the mitten, each one larger than the last. The animals all crawl into the mitten. Finally, a big brown bear climbs into the mitten, which causes the mitten to burst. Consequently, all of the animals go flying out.

- *Hedgie's Surprise* by Jan Brett (2000) is another story that readers get to meet Hedgie again. Every morning the Tomten, a troll, steals an egg from Henny's, a hen, nest, then runs away to cook it in his little kettle and gobble it down for breakfast. Henny doesn't like the Tomten taking her egg, but she doesn't do anything -- until one day when a goose swims by with a new brood of little goslings. Then Henny wants chicks of her own. With the help of her friend Hedgie, the little hen finally gets to keep her eggs through a sharp and clever plan that in the end surprises even Henny.
- *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay up Late* by Mo Willems (2006) is the third in the Pigeon series. In his classic begging, often convincing way, Pigeon tries to persuade his audience to let him stay. Using every trick under the sun, Pigeon prolongs his bedtime until finally he is too tired to stay awake any longer.
- *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy* by Mo Willems (2008) is the fourth book in the Pigeon series. Pigeon tries to convince his audience that he should have a puppy. He begs and pleads but when he discovers how large a puppy truly is, Pigeon quickly changes his mind.
- *There is a Bird on Your Head! An Elephant & Piggie Book* by Mo Willems (2008) is one in a set of Elephant & Piggie books. In this story Gerald, the

elephant, discovers that there is something worse than a bird on your head -- two birds on your head. Piggie attempts to help her best friend, Gerald, figure out how to remove the birds from his head without harming them. Eventually the birds relocate to Piggie's head.

- *A Weekend with Wendell* by Kevin Henkes (1986) introduces children to issues of bullying through the eyes of a sweet mouse, Sophie and her hardships with her controlling cousin, Wendell. When Sophie's cousin Wendell comes to visit she is less than pleased. Wendell doesn't share, he is bossy, and mean; all things characteristics that Sophie can't stand. Sophie struggles with Wendell's bullying ways but in the end Sophie figures out how to deal with Wendell and his overbearing personality.
- *Chester's Way* by Kevin Henkes (1988). Chester likes to do everything one way and that is his own way. Chester's mother and father think he has a mind of his own. Fortunately, Chester's best friend, Wilson, likes doing things just the same way as Chester. All is well until Lilly moves into the neighborhood. Lilly has her own way of doing things, which Chester soon learns.
- *Julius, Baby of the World* by Kevin Henkes (1990) is a story that captures the essence of the feelings older siblings feel with the birth of a new baby. When baby Julius is born, Lilly's parents think he is just perfect. They always say, "Julius is the baby of the world," as they kiss him and admire him. Lilly, Julius's older sister feels differently. Used to being the queen, Lilly says she hates Julius, until one day when her cousin comes to visit.

Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer

- *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* by Mo Willems (2004) is the follow-up to the Caldecott Honor book *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*. Pigeon finds a delicious hot dog, and can hardly wait to devour the entire thing. When a very sly and hungry duckling comes into the scene and wants a bite, Pigeon is faced with the dilemma of sharing his hot dog. Ultimately the duckling wins when Pigeon shares half of his hot dog.
- *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems (2004) is a Caldecott Honor book for 2005. Trixie, a toddler, Daddy, and her prized possession Knuffle Bunny take a trip to the neighborhood Laundromat. The adventure begins when Trixie realizes Knuffle Bunny has been left behind. As Trixie goes “boneless,” Daddy tries to figure out what on earth has gotten into his little girl. When they make it back home Mommy quickly discovers the issue, Knuffle Bunny is missing. Using a combination of black-and-white photographs and Willems’ cartoon illustrations, the reader is lured into this timeless story.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research assumes that data collection and analysis are an interactive process that allows the researcher to investigate and produce believable and trustworthy findings (Merriam, 1998). Throughout data analysis, I moved back and forth between data collection and analysis using an interactive approach as suggested by Merriam (1998). As Merriam (1998) explains, “Simultaneous data collection and analysis can occur in and out of the field. That is, you can be doing some rudimentary analysis while

you are in the process of collecting data.” Data sources for my study included primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included whole group and small group discussions; secondary sources included teacher interviews, field notes, teacher reflection logs, informal correspondence, and student artifacts. In order to manage data throughout this study whole group and small group discussions were transcribed immediately following taping. Each transcript was coded (Merriam, 1998) with the name of the teacher, the book read, WG for whole group or SG for small group, and the date of the discussion. For example one heading read Ms. Duarte, *The Wretched Stone*, WG, 10/06/09. Transcribed discussions were grouped by teacher and organized in a three-inch, three-ring binder with dividers separating each week. Also included in each teacher binder were secondary sources including: teacher interviews, field notes, teacher reflection logs, informal correspondence, and student artifacts. Transcripts were also stored on my computer as well as an external hard drive.

Utilizing Merriam’s (1998) methodology for data analysis, as well as Erickson’s (1986) idea of generating assertions, data were read multiple times, categories were constructed, and themes were developed. Beginning with a with-in case analysis of Ms. Duarte’s fifth grade classroom and multiple readings of the transcripts, from whole group and small group read alouds, category construction began. Each step will be explained in detail in the following section.

Generating Assertions

Data analysis was broken into several steps starting with an initial reading of the data corpus (Erickson, 1986). The data corpus included field notes, interview transcripts, reflective notes, student documents and audiotapes. Using Erickson’s (1986) notion of

empirical assertions, notes and preliminary findings were recorded while reading through the data corpus. General notations were made in a notebook as I was reading through each data source and also while I was collecting data. Upon reading the transcripts I wrote theoretical memos about the role of the teacher, the literature, and author websites. The following assertions were recorded in my notebook. The first assertion reflected the role that the teachers played while facilitating classroom discussion, particularly how they enhanced or hindered whole group and small group discussion. This assertion was the most prevalent in the data based on my rereading of my initial assertions from my field notes. My first assertion became the focus of my with-in case analysis for both teachers.

The second assertion suggested the tension between the teachers and administrative and testing pressures. A third assertion generated suggested that the picture books selected for each of the read alouds had a direct impact on the way students discussed the literature. Moreover, the visual structure of the picture books influenced discussion. Finally, a fourth assertion was noted about the ease and issues related to website negotiation and the ability to comprehend information presented. This assertion was recorded in my field notes as well. My second, third, and fourth assertions became the focus of my cross-case analysis.

By repeatedly reviewing the data corpus, initial empirical assertions were tested for validity (Erickson, 1986). In order to test for validity confirming and disconfirming evidence was originated from the data. General assertions were then generated. Following the process of generating assertions, I began constructing categories.

Category Construction

Drawing on the work of many scholars who have conducted classroom studies focused on classroom literature discussion (Chambers, 1996; Eeds and Peterson, 1989; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand, 1999; Serafini, 2002; Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn & Crawford, 1999) as well as concepts I saw reflected in the data, preliminary categories were developed and used to code all transcripts from whole group and small group literature discussion. As Merriam (1998) states, “devising categories is largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study’s purpose, the investigator’s orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves” (p. 179). Table 3.1 defines the initial categories that were constructed based on my reading of the fifth grade data as well as my knowledge about literature discussion. Because the most prevalent assertion was the role of the teacher in discussion, categories were constructed around this concept first. (see Table 3.1).

With-in Case Analysis and Coding

Merriam (1998) describes with-in case analysis as the first stage of analysis in multi-case study, stating:

For the with-in case analysis, each case is treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much about the contextual variables as possible that might have bearing on the case. The data of the single qualitative case are analyzed. (p. 194)

Beginning with with-in case analysis of Ms. Duarte’s fifth grade classroom, coding was conducted based on multiple readings of the data corpus. Merriam (1998) states that, “Coding occurs at two levels—identifying information about the data and

Table 3.1

Initial Categories: Teacher approaches in discussion

Categories	Code	Description
Appealing	AP	Teacher knows the answer but solicits students by making insistent requests or questions repetitively to get them to state the answer that she may have in mind.
Prompting	PR	Teacher uses leading statements to urge students to respond in a particular manner.
Paraphrasing	PA	Teacher restates or rewords students' responses in their own terms to simplify or shorten interpretations.
Expanding	E	Teacher uses students' interpretations to expand and foster discussion.
Questioning	Q	Teacher asks only questions to help students come to an idea or clarify uncertainty in discussion.
Examination	EX	Teacher asks a succession of different questions and investigates what students are saying in order to get them to respond in a certain manner.
Critical Junctures	CJ	Teachable moments in the discussion where students elicit ideas that are recognized and taken up by the teacher.
Praise	PRZ	Teacher makes arbitrary comments that praise students interpretations but are not justified, clarified or expanded on to further discussion.
Labeling (L)	L	Students make connections with the text, self or the world and teacher asks them to label the type of connection they are making or the teacher assumes a label and states for the student.
Seeking agreement (A)	A	Teacher asks the class how many agree with another student's statement.
Release (R)	R	Teacher begins by facilitating discussion but then turns it over the students allowing them to lead the conversation without her assistance.

interpretive constructs related to analysis. The coding scheme can be quite simple, as in identifying a theme that can be illustrated with numerous quotes” (p. 164). As I read through the transcripts from Ms. Duarte’s classroom discussions, I coded individual comments or questions the teacher made during discussion. In the margins of my transcripts I wrote: AP (Appealing), PR (Prompting), PA (Paraphrasing), E (Expanding), Q (Questioning), EX (Examination), CJ (Critical Junctures), PRZ (Praise), L (Labeling), A (Seeking agreement), and R (Release). After coding all of the fifth grade transcripts I noticed that some of the categories were very similar, thus they needed to be refined and collapsed.

Merriam (1998) suggests that in order to determine efficacy of the categories the researcher derives from the constant comparative method, categories must be exhaustive, therefore “you should be able to place all data that you decided were important or relevant to the study in a category” (p. 184). In this study that was the case. The categories listed in Table 3.2 were the refined categories that were consequently used for coding all of the transcripts in my data set from both the fifth and first grade classrooms. After collecting data from the first grade classroom, I used the refined list of categories to conduct the with-in case analysis of the data. Because the categories had been refined, I had to go back to the fifth grade transcripts and code them again using the categories specified in Table 3.2. Once I completed the with-in case analysis of both classrooms I concluded with the cross-case analysis of all data from the first and fifth grade classroom.

Cross-case Analysis

In order to effectively identify key linkages across the classrooms studies, cross-case analysis was conducted. Based on initial analysis of single classroom cases

conducted a secondary analysis looking broadly across both cases. Miles and Huberman (1994), in Merriam (1998), state that cross-case analysis allows the researcher to “see

Table 3.2

Refined categories: Teacher approaches in discussion

Category	Code	Description
Appealing	AP	Teacher knows the answer but solicits students by making insistent requests or questions repetitively to get them to state the answer that she may have in mind.
Prompting	PR	Teacher uses leading statements to urge students to respond in a particular manner.
Examination	EX	Teacher asks a succession of different questions and investigates what students are saying in order to get them to respond in a certain manner.
Labeling	L	Students make connections with the text, self or the world and teacher asks them to label the type of connection they are making or the teacher assumes a label and states for the student.
Seeking agreement (A)	A	Teacher asks the class how many agree with another student’s statement.
Expanding (E)	E	Teacher uses students’ interpretations to expand and foster discussion.
Critical Junctures	CJ	Teachable moments in the discussion where students elicit ideas that are recognized and taken up by the teacher.
Release (R)	R	Teacher begins by facilitating discussion but then turns it over the students allowing them to lead the conversation without her assistance.

processes and outcomes that occur across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations” (p. 172). As I coded data I was continuously looking for linkages within the data.

With the desire to understand how both cases related, I began to think about data theorizing, developing inferences and themes (Merriam, 1998) that I felt explained several aspects of the classrooms I was studying. I began thinking metaphorically about how the categories developed related to one another and then established the themes teacher as solicitor, and teacher as facilitator to describe the instructional roles utilized by Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer in whole group and small group discussions. As a result while rereading the data I discerned that all of the following categories could be organized under the broad theme teacher as solicitor: appealing, interrogations, prompting, labeling, and seeking agreement. Under the broad theme teacher as facilitator questioning and response categories included: expanding, critical junctures, and release.

Using secondary data sources, such as teacher reflection logs, Informal correspondence, field notes and interviews, I conducted a cross-case analysis with the intent to identify contextual factors that impacted the ways Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte utilized their role as solicitor or facilitator in discussion. As Merriam (1998) suggests, “A qualitative, inductive, multicase study seeks to build abstraction across cases” (p. 195). In an effort to understand how the overarching themes teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator were influenced by the local dynamics and processes, I looked carefully across all secondary data sources (Merriam, 1998). While reading through each teacher

reflection log and interviews, I began to make sense of the purposeful choices the teachers made while enacting the role of solicitor and facilitator.

As I read through the secondary data, I recorded theoretical memos about reoccurring themes I noticed in teacher reflection logs that were also noted in my field notes or had been recorded in Informal correspondence. Merriam (1998) states, “ These notations are next to bits of data that strike you as interesting, potentially relevant, or important to your study” (p. 181). Using my notations and excerpts from each secondary data source, I was able to establish themes that influenced each of the themes teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator. Based on my cross-case analysis several factors were identified that impacted how Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer enacted their role as facilitator and solicitor. Each of these factors will be explained in detail in chapter 4.

Validity and Trustworthiness

When selecting case study as a methodology there are procedures that can be taken to ensure trustworthiness and in turn present a study that is valid. With all qualitative research, researchers’ and participants’ biases are inherent. “Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being’s worldview, values, and perspective” (Merriam, 1998, p. 22). The final result is an interpretation of the data from the researchers’ and participants’ perspectives. Because of the nature of qualitative research multiple realities exist making case study research subjective rather than objective. Therefore, case study is not generalizable.

Researchers use their own interpretation of events that occur in a particular setting to suggest possible theory or categorization of the events. Moreover, each case has a different set of participants and context, hence no one case can ever be generalized with another. Unlike quantitative research, the findings from a case study can only be used to describe a phenomenon and not predict future behavior; instead the goal of qualitative research is transferability.

Transferability, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is the degree to which the findings of the study can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the research study. Because the goal of qualitative research is for educators to gain insight into practice, transferability is desired. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the researchers position in this way, "It is not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability, but it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (p. 316). Therefore, it was my hope that this study would bring forth findings that were transferable.

In order to enhance internal validity, the following three strategies were employed as suggested by Merriam (1998). First, member checks were conducted continuously throughout the study. Data were shared with participants as well as tentative interpretations (Merriam, 1998). Second, I involved Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer in all phases of my study including sharing my findings. Finally, as a researcher I was forthcoming with my own biases and "theoretical orientation at the outset of the study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). By acknowledging research biases, with transferability as a goal, and by conducting member checks I was able to conduct a valid study.

Summary

In this chapter I provided a detailed description of the methodology that was utilized in this study. Specifically, I provided an overview of case study, explained the selection process and provided an overview of the research context, sites and teachers. I also described the data collection process and analysis, and identified how validity and trustworthiness were established. In Chapter 4, I present the findings of the study. I share my with-case analysis for Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's classroom discussions. I also present my cross-case analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

As stated in Chapter 3 my study examined student discussion in whole group and small group literature discussions, specifically investigating the impact that teachers, literature, and author websites had on student's interpretation of children's literature. This chapter is organized in terms of my research question posed in Chapter 3.

What instructional roles do teachers utilize when conducting whole group and small group literature discussion?

During daily read alouds and whole group and small group discussions, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer exhibited different instructional roles while leading whole group and small group discussions. Through analysis categories were constructed that identified the numerous ways these teachers conducted discussion. These categories included: appealing, examinations, prompting, labeling, seeking agreement, critical junctures, expanding, and release. Based on aggregation of multiple categories from initial data coding (Creswell, 2007), categories were then organized into two overarching themes: teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator. The categories that contributed to the development of these themes were outlined in Chapter 3, but will be revisited briefly. The theme teacher as solicitor was developed from the categories: appealing, examinations, prompting, labeling, and seeking agreement. The theme teacher as facilitator was developed from the categories: critical junctures, expanding, and release. (see Figures 1 and 2).

Therefore, Chapter 4 is organized in the following way. The theme teacher as solicitor is reported first from the findings of my with-in case analysis of each individual

classroom, followed by a cross-case analysis. Then the theme teacher as facilitator is answered by reporting findings from my with-in case analysis of each individual classroom. I conclude with a cross-case analysis of the theme teacher as facilitator.

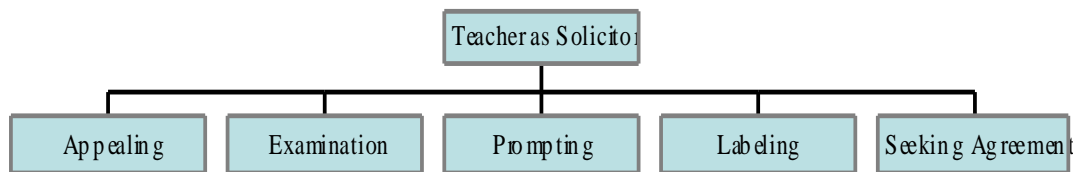


Figure 1. Teacher as Solicitor categories of analysis

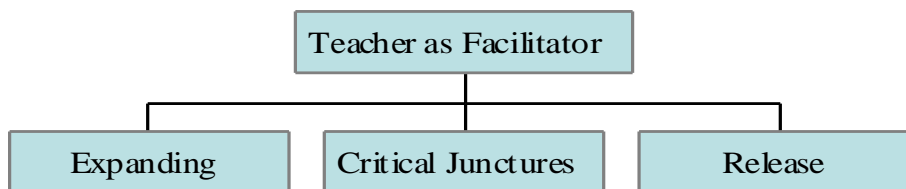


Figure 2. Teacher as Facilitator categories of analysis

Teacher as Solicitor

Drawing on multiple data sources including whole group and small group literature discussions, teacher reflection logs, interviews and researcher field notes, data analysis conducted revealed two themes that describe the instructional roles assumed by Ms. Duarte (fifth grade teacher) and Ms. Romer (first grade teacher) during whole group and small group classroom discussions. The first theme, teacher as solicitor was

constructed based on prevalence in the data. In defining teacher as solicitor, this theme was classified by responses and questions where the teachers used predetermined information to lead students to respond in a certain manner. Students were instructed to recall, name, review, and label information during discussions. The questions and responses teachers employed were used as a tool to regulate students' responses. According to Ms. Romer, she intentionally used read alouds as a space to help students retell stories. She disclosed in her reflection log:

In the second trimester it is part of our goals to get students to retell events in stories. I suppose I used today's read aloud as a way to even the playing field. That way everyone is exposed to the story and can tell me what happened.

(Teacher reflection log, 1/04/10)

When enacting the role of solicitor, teachers structured questions around school district curriculum standards as well as state curriculum standards. Notably both teachers reflected in their teacher reflection logs that utilizing questioning and responding strategies central to curricular standards was not ideal. However, they felt it necessary because of district and administrator criteria. Ms. Duarte, fifth grade teacher, stated in her first reflection:

I feel the pressure to make sure all standards are met. I felt like today would have been so much better had I not tried to make it a goal to get my students to come to one single conclusion about the book [*The Wretched Stone*, Van Allsburg, 1991].

(Teacher reflection log, 10/06/09)

For these reasons, the instructional role of soliciting is neither a negative or positive strategy employed during discussion, but as suggested by Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte, a necessary strategy.

The following analysis addresses each category and the corresponding data that contributed to the construction of the theme teacher as solicitor. I first address Ms. Duarte's fifth grade classroom discussions and then address Ms. Romer's first grade classroom discussions. Finally, I conclude by reporting my cross-case analysis for the theme teacher as solicitor.

It is important to note that transcripts excerpts from whole group and small group discussion were used as the primary data source in this analysis and are notated with WG for whole group and SG for small group. Transcript examples reflect many of the books read during this study; however, not all transcripts from picture book discussion have been reported on. Because I sought to use transcript excerpts that most accurately reflected each of the categories presented, I purposefully chose transcript examples that I felt provided exemplary evidence of the research. Secondary data such as teacher reflection logs, teacher interviews, and researcher field notes are used to support the development of each category. Moreover, secondary data provides context as well as the teacher's voices in data analysis.

Teacher as Solicitor- Ms. Duarte (Fifth Grade Classroom)

Throughout this study, Ms. Duarte primarily used questioning and response strategies which were categorized under the over arching theme teacher as solicitor. This was determined by significance in data, specifically transcripts from whole group and small group discussions. Although it may appear that acting as a solicitor in whole group

and small group discussion was a negative interaction, this type of questioning and response was purposeful. According to Ms. Duerte, questions and responses that help students recall, restate, name, or label ideas were directly associated with the pressures of testing and skill based standards disseminated by administration. Ms. Duerte said, “At times I find myself making students recall from stories just so that I know they can get to the main idea. With testing such an influence on everything I do, I do things I hate” (Interview, 11/05/09). Soliciting responses from students served as a review of concepts, recall of ideas, and recitation of information from the text. The responses elicited by the students were literal interpretations that were already known by the teacher. Students were required to state answers when the teacher prompted, questioned, or responded to them during discussion.

Teacher as solicitor is a theme structured on the idea that the teacher makes a request through questioning or response for predetermined information that is literal or previously agreed upon. In each of these categories, there is little to no room for interpretation. In Ms. Duerte’s case, this role was considered a way for her to, “make sure students knew the main concepts” (Interview, 11/05/09). Therefore, student responses were surface level ideas represented in the text. The categories that comprised the approach to teacher as solicitor include: appealing, examination, prompting, seeking agreement, and labeling. Each of these categories are analyzed in the following section. Examples from whole group and small group discussions were used to illustrate these categories and are underpinned by Ms. Duerte’s reflections, researcher field notes, and informal conversations that occurred following classroom discussions. Table 4 provides an overview of the theme teacher as solicitor and the corresponding categories.

Table 4

Overview: Teacher as Solicitor

Teacher as Solicitor	Ms. Duerte	Ms. Romer
Appealing	(Meerkat Mail, WG, 10/19/09)	Ms. Romer: Boys and girls, I want you to remember at the beginning when I first started this story, I said that you had two jobs. I wanted you to enjoy the story, which obviously you did, but also there was another job. And the other job was I wanted you to think about how is <i>The Hat</i> the same or different than <i>The Mitten</i> . So did anyone give any thought to that? Jake, what did you think?
Teacher makes insistent requests or questions repetitively to get students to respond with an answer that has been predetermined by the teacher.	<p>Ms. Duerte: We're going to do <i>Meerkat Mail</i> by Emily Gravett, and who knows some of those things that she has gone ahead and written. Dawn?</p> <p>Dawn: She wrote <i>The Odd Egg</i>.</p> <p>Ms. Duerte: OK, that was one. What was another one?</p> <p>Clara: She wrote <i>The Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears</i>.</p> <p>Ms. Duerte: OK.</p> <p>Deegan: <i>The Odd Egg</i></p> <p>Ms. Duerte: Yes. What's another book?</p> <p>Nicco: <i>Meerkat Mail</i></p>	<p>Jake: Well, one that wasn't different the animals didn't go all in one hat.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: Right. But they did in <i>The Mitten</i>.</p> <p>Jake: Yeah. And it's like all of the animals were in both.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: Oh, so there's lots of animals in both stories, but you're saying <i>The Mitten</i> there was only one piece of clothing, wasn't there? There was only one mitten, but here there were...</p>
Examination	(<i>The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog</i> , WG, 10/13/09)	Jake: a lot of animals (Jan Brett, SG, 1/07/10)
Teacher asks a succession of different questions and investigates what students are saying	Ms. Duerte: How has he changed? What's changed on him? Olivia, do you	Ms. Romer: Hey Gabe, what book have you sort of really been into? And tell me what made you kind of really into this book?

Table 4 continued

Teacher as Solicitor	Ms. Duarte	Ms. Romer
Examination	<p>Olivia: He got angry.</p> <p>Ms. Duarte: He got angry?</p> <p>Olivia: and all the words are bigger than before.</p> <p>Ms. Duarte: and the words are all bigger than before. What about the way he looks?</p> <p>Olivia: He looks mad.</p> <p>Ms. Duarte: How do you know that he looks mad?</p> <p>Olivia: Because his eyes turned red.</p>	<p>Ms. Romer: Show me what pages you are talking about.</p> <p>Gabe: So at the beginning, he's all happy, but then something's missing - friends.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: I love how you're retelling the story.</p> <p>Gabe: Yeah, and then Matti has a couple other friends, and the gingerbread baby sort of feels left out. Then he tries to make some other friends and then it doesn't really work out because they're made out of something else that's fried or icing, and they're all fried so they couldn't move, and then Matti on the border was like baking some other ones.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: So it's sort of like he's tracking all of the people over to an attic and then he has a little adventure. He does have a little adventure, doesn't he?</p>
Prompting	(<i>The Odd Egg</i> , WG, 10/27/09)	(<i>The Mitten</i> , WG, 1/5/10)
Teacher uses leading statements to urge students to respond in a particular manner.	<p>Ms. Duarte: Where'd he get this from? [Teacher points to the booties that were knitted for the alligator] Remember?</p> <p>Samantha: Because duck was knitting while he waited for the egg to crack. You know how they were on the page where everyone else is cracking, the one with the owl, it was saying all that smart stuff, all the equations and stuff, because the owl kept on reading a book about how to make your kid bright.</p>	<p>Ms. Romer: [Summarizing] And they all flew out of the mitten.</p> <p>Stacy: When the bear sneezed, the mitten flew and then Nikki found his mitten and Baba was really _____ [pausing] she didn't know what happened to the mitten because it was so big compared to the small mitten.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: Wow, and I wonder when you were saying that, I wonder if someone can help Stacy with the word she was searching for there. She said she was really not sure what had happened to the mitten What would be a good word to describe the character Baba when she saw</p>

Teacher as Solicitor	Ms. Duarte	Ms. Romer
Prompting		<p>the mitten?</p> <p>Nathan: That it stretched.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: It stretched? How was she feeling when she looked at the really stretched out mitten and the tiny mitten? What would be a word for describing Baba, and how she was feeling, when she looked at that mitten?</p> <p>Emma: Surprised.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: Surprised!</p>
Labeling	<i>(Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears, WG, 10/20/09)</i>	<i>(Julius, Baby of the World, WG, 1/21/10)</i>
Labeling connections with the text, self or the world	<p>Ms. Duarte: OK. Then one more and we are going to go with Belle.</p> <p>Belle: The colors of the book, red, black, and then the white mouse down there, my brother plays football and those are the colors of his team.</p> <p>Ms. Duarte: OK. What were you all saying?</p> <p>Students: Text-to-self</p>	<p>Ms. Romer: Jake, what did you say?</p> <p>Jake: My baby cousin, he was the one who started out being nice to me, except the</p> <p>Ms. Romer: Oh, so you kind of have a reverse connection. So in that story, are you Lilly and your cousin is Julius, or no? Or the other way around?</p> <p>Jake: The other way around.</p> <p>Ms. Romer: So your baby cousin was the one who – I got it.</p>
Seeking agreement	<p>Ms. Duarte: Oh, text-to-self. <i>(The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog, WG, 10/13/09)</i></p> <p>Samantha: I think that the duckling is trying to trick him into giving the hot dog to him that he's going to be tricked? How many of you agree with Samantha?</p> <p>[Teacher counts hand] OK. Ashley?</p>	Not observed
Teacher polls class for agreements with other students' ideas		

Appealing

Ms. Duerte selected Chris Van Allsburg as the first author to introduce to her fifth grade students. Having read his work in the past with her fifth grade classes, she felt confident using his work again. Ms. Duerte stated, “I know that Chris Van Allsburg has a lot to offer my fifth graders” (Informal correspondence, 10/05/09). Although she had never read *The Wretched Stone* aloud, she chose to do so with this class. Because Ms. Duerte wanted her students to sit comfortably during read alouds and discussions, she gave them freedom to select their own seats. She asserted, “I don’t want them to feel weird talking if they are sitting next to someone they aren’t comfortable around” (Informal correspondence, 10/06/09). The majority of the time during data collection, two-thirds of the class chose to sit on the floor in front of Ms. Duerte’s desk for each read aloud, while the rest of the class opted to sit at the desks surrounding the group on the floor.

During the first discussion I observed, as well as subsequent discussions, Ms. Duerte used a strategy that was categorized as appealing. Appealing was developed from questioning strategies employed by the teachers, when they asked a series of consecutive questions, to call students’ attention to a concept or point. Teachers already knew the answer, but they required their students to state the answers as well. Ms. Duerte stated, “I felt like I had to have a goal in mind. It is something we are trained to do,” (Interview, 10/02/09). The goal in this instance was to get students to recall the name of a strategy they could use to make a mental picture in their head. Illustrated in the transcript example below, Ms. Duerte’s questioning technique of searching for the correct response required students to respond in short one to two word statements. During this particular

discussion, Ms. Duarte wanted students to state “mind picture maker,” which was a term students had been taught to use to describe a mental picture of a concept. While searching for the term, Ms. Duarte repeatedly appealed for students’ responses.

Appealing (*Wretched Stone*, WG, 10/06/09)

Ms. Duarte: OK, so when you’re thinking about this story, I want you to think about also, not only your predictions, but other Chris Van Allsburg stories that have turned into movies. Can this book be turned into a movie? Can this book be a movie inside of your head while I read? You should talk about that in book club. You should be having that movie going on also in your head. Jennifer, what’s it like?

Jennifer: It’s like, one of the jobs during writing workshop? Like he’s imaging in his head. And then it’s like you have to write stuff about it.

Ms. Duarte: Well, what is that? She’s asking a question?

Dawn: Summary expert

Dawn: illustrator or mapmaker

Krista: illustrator is.....

Ashley: no, the mind moment

Derrik: mind mapper?

Deegan: Picture make

Ms. Duarte: Mind pict (waiting for response)?

Deegan: mind picture

Ms. Duarte: Mind pic.... ma...?

Derrik: mind maker

Derrik: mind mapper

Ms. Duarte: Deegan said mind picture maker, good job. All right, here we go.

[Reading from *The Wretched Stone* (Van Allsburg, 1991)] *May 8. We finished bringing supplies on board early this morning. At midday, we left on a tide and found a fresh reef just outside the harbor. It is a good omen that our voyage has begun with fair winds and clear sky. May 9th. The first mate, Mr. Howard, has brought together a fine crew. These men are not only good sailors, they are accomplished in other ways* (n.p.). What is this already starting to remind you of? May 8th, May 9th. Samuel?

The following excerpt also illustrates the category appealing. When introducing the read aloud for the day, *Meerkat Mail* (Gravett, 2007), Ms. Duarte asks students to name other books that were written by Emily Gravett. With the Gravett's picture books displayed on the white board in the front of the classroom, students looked at the board to confirm that they had named all of the books. Although the students had explored Emily Gravett's website, and been exposed to other picture books she had written, none of them were named when Ms. Duarte appealed for their response. Because Emily Gravett's books were new to Ms. Duarte, she reflected in her log that she found herself "not knowing where to go with the discussion" (Teacher reflection log, 10/20/09). This contributed to her role as a solicitor. Thus, when appealing Ms. Duarte was attempting to get students to recall information that she was certain she already knew.

Much like the previous transcript example from *The Wretched Stone*, students' answers were short one to two word titles. Prior to reading *Meerkat Mail*, Ms. Duarte required the students to recall Gravett's picture book titles until all of the books displayed

had been named. These responses were not only obvious when reading the transcript excerpt, but visually the transcripts also displayed the pattern of questioning that Ms. Duarte frequently utilized during whole group discussion.

Appealing (*Meerkat Mail*, WG, 10/28/09)

Ms. Duarte: We're going to do *Meerkat Mail* by Emily Gravett, and who knows some of those things that she has gone ahead and written. Dawn?

Dawn: She wrote *The Odd Egg*.

Ms. Duarte: OK, that was one. What was another one?

Clara: She wrote *The Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*.

Ms. Duarte: OK.

Deegan: *The Odd Egg*

Ms. Duarte: Yes. What's another book?

Nicco: *Meerkat Mail*

Each of these transcript examples captured the essence of the category appealing. In each example, students answer in short one to two word phrases while Ms. Duarte uses questioning and response to urge them to recall information. The interpretive level is minimal because students already know the information but seek to find the correct answer, which Ms. Duarte had in mind. With the presumption that there is a right or wrong answer, students quickly pop off answers to find the correct one. As evidenced in the transcript excerpt, as well as in Ms. Duarte's reflection log from *The Wretched Stone*, Ms. Duarte used appealing as a review process in attempt to meet administrative pressures. Appealing was also used when Ms. Duarte met uncertainty in discussion as displayed in the transcript example from *Meerkat Mail*.

Examination

While reading *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* (Willems, 2004) Ms. Duerte called students' attention to an illustration that depicted the pigeon's eye with a red iris. As she verbally stated, "Look at the illustrations" (*The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, WG, 10/13/09) and physically pointed to the pigeons' movement in the illustration, Ms. Duerte beckoned a response regarding the implied emotion of the pigeon. Questioning that occurred when the teacher was asking a succession of different questions and investigating what students were saying in order to get them to respond in a certain manner was categorized as an examination.

Ms. Duerte recognized in her journal that at times, "I was rough on the kids. I guess I was trying to push them, but it wasn't always in the right direction" (Teacher reflection log, 10/14/09). Although the intention was to get to higher level thinking, students were simply stating the obvious. Notice that in the transcript below, Deegan makes a statement about his desire to discuss a different interpretation of the story; however Ms. Duerte takes no notice of his response and follows up with another question regarding the emotion of the pigeon as displayed in the illustration.

Examination (*The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, WG, 10/13/09)

Ms. Duerte: [Reading from *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*] *I just paid for the hot dog, OK? OK. OK* (n.p.). Do you know anybody that's ever looked like this, or anything that's ever looked like this? Riley? I'm just wondering. Look at the illustrations [Pointing to the illustration].

Riley: I have seen my brother do that, but then he would fall on his stomach. My brother would always run to my mom because like if I take the last cookie or

something, he would start acting angry, he would fly out and then crash back on his stomach and then start pounding on the floor.

Ms. Duarte: So you see this pigeon as being an angry pigeon at this point?

Riley: Yeah.

Ms. Duarte: OK, does anybody see a different emotion? A different one?

Deegan?

Deegan: I want to say something else, I think he's going to fly over and the duck is going to fly him over him and eat the hot dog.

Ms. Duarte: Karen, I know you had your hand up originally, about his expression and about his emotion, do you feel that this is a different emotion besides Riley's anger emotion that she feels from this picture?

Karen: I pretty much think that he's just gone crazy because the little duckling keeps annoying him and it's really getting on his nerves.

During a discussion about *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (Willems, 2003), Ms. Duarte searches for the implied emotion of the pigeon depicted in the illustrations. When students answer Ms. Duarte's questions they are urged to state why the pigeon seems mad or angry. Students use simple sentences to answer each question. Ms. Duarte reflected on how the discussion could have taken place, "I guess I was trying to get them to see that emotion can be in colors but instead the whole discussion went back and forth with the stupid eye. I could have done so much more" (Teacher reflection log, 10/13/09). At the beginning of the transcript excerpt, you will notice that Ms. Duarte begins with a series of four questions without pausing. This was typical of the category of examination.

Examination (*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, WG, 10/15/09)

Ms. Duarte: How has he changed? What's changed on him? Olivia, do you know what's changed? OK, I was just asking you. Olivia, do you see what's changed?

Olivia: He got angry.

Ms. Duarte: He got angry?

Olivia: and all the words are bigger than before.

Ms. Duarte: and the words are all bigger than before. What about the way he looks?

Olivia: He looks mad.

Ms. Duarte: How do you know that he looks mad?

Olivia: Because his eyes turned red.

Ms. Duarte: His eyes turned red. So what's going on with his eyes before?

What color was his eye before?

Jay: The pigeon's eye was black before, like in one of the pictures.

Ms. Duarte: OK, so the pigeon's eye was black before, and now when we see it....

Jay: It's like a little red on his eye.

Each of the transcript examples that make up the category examination depict the repetitive questioning Ms. Duarte used to acquire answers from students. In the first transcript example Ms. Duarte asked students to describe the emotions of the pigeon. The second excerpt showed how Ms. Duarte employed the use of multiple questions

requiring students to state that the pigeon's eye is red. In both examples Ms. Duarte asked students to explain why or how they knew the information, and this served as confirmation with specific examples from the text or illustrations. Ms. Duarte acknowledged that this questioning strategy was at times purposeful, expressing, "They have to know where answers come from, so sometimes I ask them to support their answers by using the text, because that's what they will have to do during testing" (Informal correspondence, 10/16/09). Although Ms. Duarte reflected on the struggle she had with the proceedings of these discussions, she still used examination to acquire information from her students.

Prompting

Ms. Duarte chose to open her read aloud discussion this day with an inquiry about a bonus question that was posted on the classroom website for homework the evening before. Making a point to call students attention to Fritz (a dog that Chris Van Allsburg has drawn in an illustration on one page in all of the picture books he has published), Ms. Duarte asked a series of repetitive and leading questions or responses to elicit answers. This type of questioning and response was categorized as prompting. Paraphrasing and rewording what students had said, in this excerpt Ms. Duarte wanted students to name the website where they located the information about Fritz and also state how they found this information. This category may seem similar to appealing; however students' responses in this category were often more fully developed thoughts rather than simple one or two words responses. Students were allowed to explain themselves in a more detailed manner but were still urged to state an answer Ms. Duarte already knew.

Prompting (*Wretched Stone*, WG, 10/08/09)

Ms. Duarte: OK, give them a round of applause. How did you find that information out? How did you know about Fritz?

Ashley: A few minutes ago, Riley – you asked her what the bonus question was on chrisvanallsburg.com and Riley had information that I wanted to keep in mind because I wanted to find Fritz.

Ms. Duarte: OK, and then Riley, can I ask you a question? Riley, how did you know where on chrisvanallsburg.com – what did chrisvanallsburg.com tell you to do? What did it ask you to do?

Riley: It asked - you needed to go to www.chrisvanallsburg.com to find characters.

Ms. Duarte: Did it say Fritz? What did the question ask?

Riley: about the white dog

Ms. Duarte: OK. What about the white dog?

Riley: What's the name of the white dog?

Ms. Duarte: OK, and so then how did you find that information? Because you weren't the only one that found that question, or the answer to that question, were you? Who was the other one? There was Logan and Clara. Now you and Logan were able to help me answer that question this morning, weren't you? Did Clara help me answer that question this morning? Clara, can you tell me how you found the bonus answer this morning? How did you find the answer to that bonus question from last night?

Clara: I found it by – I had taken the website, where to go

Ms. Duarte: What website?

Clara: chrisvanallsburg.com. And I went, and the first thing on the site, you see Fritz and then I clicked on beside his name, and that's how I figured it out.

Ms. Duarte: So you figured it out by clicking on Fritz himself. Did anybody else who found the name of Fritz find it a different way?

Logan: When I went to go look for it, I went to information for frequently asked questions, and then one of the questions was, "When did you have the dog in most of your book?" So I used that and that's how I figured out what his name was.

Ms. Duarte: Thank you, Logan. Did somebody else find it differently? OK, Andre found it differently.

Andre: When I was in second grade in Ms. O's class, she told us this website called AskJeeves.com. And it like helps you, so if you type in to sea and all about it, you can like print a flag of that, I mean not sea, of that country and everything, and also you can ask questions – I mean, you can write questions on the search thing that they have, and I asked that it and it gave me the answer, and also I did it with my fifth question. I just type in each question, and then it gives me the answer and then I write it down.

Prompting was used as a strategy to get students to recall events or information from the literature or other instructional moments. Leading questions enabled Ms. Duarte to get students to respond with the correct answer, which she had predetermined. During the read aloud of *The Odd Egg* (Gravett, 2009), Ms. Duarte called students' attention to the last opening, which showed a picture of Duck and his alligator wearing booties. Pointing to the booties knitted for the alligator that just hatched from Duck's egg, Ms.

Duerte questioned students about where the booties came from. Using the word “remember,” Ms. Duerte beckons students to recall the event in the book that depicts Duck knitting booties. In this example prompting was not limited to verbal response or questioning. Ms. Duerte physically pointed to the illustration as well as asking students to recall information from a previous page.

Prompting (*The Odd Egg*, WG, 10/27/09)

Ms. Duerte: Where’d he get this from? [Teacher points to the booties that were knitted for the alligator] Remember?

Samantha: Because duck was knitting while he waited for the egg to crack. You know how they were on the page where everyone else is cracking, the one with the owl, it was saying all that smart stuff, all the equations and stuff, because the owl kept on reading a book about how to make your kid bright.

The category prompting was utilized as a tool for Ms. Duerte to get students to respond to questions or responses she structured around predetermined information. By using a succession of questions, leading responses, and physical gestures, Ms. Duerte obtained answers from students about information from the literature and the website exploration.

Labeling

Multiple discussions, in Ms. Duerte’s case, elicited instances of labeling. When students made connections with the text during discussion, Ms. Duerte promptly asked students to label the type of connection they made. For example students had to state whether their connection was “text-to-self,” “text-to-text,” or “text-to-world”. Students automatically assigned a label to the connection they were making. Additionally, Ms.

Duarte labeled students' connections for them. Labeling was commonly observed during data collection. Moreover, labeling was reflected in multiple daily occurrences across transcripts from each week's read alouds.

The following excerpt comes from a read aloud of *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears* (Gravett, 2008). Students were asked to describe what they noticed about the colors of the dust jacket illustrations. As Belle described what she noticed about the cover, without being prompted, the students in the class labeled Belle's connection. This was common throughout data collection.

Labeling (*Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*, WG, 10/20/09)

Ms. Duarte: OK. Then one more and we are going to go with Belle.

Belle: The colors of the book, red, black, and then the white mouse down there, my brother plays football and those are the colors of his team.

Ms. Duarte: OK. What were you all saying?

Students: Text-to-self

Ms. Duarte: Oh, text-to-self.

Labeling was categorized when the teacher or the students labeled connections while discussing literature. This occurred in whole group discussions as well as small group discussions. In the previous example of a whole group discussion about *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*, the class labeled Belle's statement as a text-to-self connection. In the following small group discussion of *The Wretched Stone*, Ms. Duarte asks Deegan to state the type of connection he is making. Not only does Ms. Duarte ask Deegan to label his connection, further she asks him to state what part of *The Wretched Stone* he is connecting to.

Labeling (*The Wretched Stone*, SG, 10/09/09)

Ms. Duarte: Deegan, did you have something to add as well?

Deegan: I have a connection. A long time ago, there was this little, it sort of looked like a nut, so I picked it up, and it split open, and there was some stuff inside it, and it didn't come off.

Ms. Duarte: It was a nut?

Deegan: Yeah, not a nut, it looked like a nut. And I picked it up, and it just split open. And there was this stuff inside and it was black, and it didn't come off, at all.

Ms. Duarte: And so what kind of connection are you making?

Deegan: Self-to-text.

Ms. Duarte: And what are you connecting it to? What part of the text?

Deegan: When he picked up the stone because he thought it looked pretty so he picked it up and it turned everyone into apes.

Labeling often served as an opportunity for Ms. Duarte to assess students' recall of the types of connections they were making with the books. In many instances throughout data collection, this was a purposeful decision, made by Ms. Duarte, to test students' ability to label connections they had with the picture books. As seen in the excerpt from *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*, there were times when students' labeled connections without Ms. Duarte requiring them to do so. Because it had become part of the required response during read alouds, students frequently labeled connections without prompting.

Seeking Agreement

While observing whole group discussion, I noted that Ms. Duerte often asked the class if they agreed with other students' interpretations. This occurred frequently, but seemed to have no real value in aiding in discussion. For example students were asked, "How many of you agree with [Name of a student]?" Once Ms. Duerte posed the question, hands were raised to indicate either agreement or disagreement. The conversation then continued without any further discussion about what these seeking agreement meant for the discussion, if anything. This category was defined by instances in the transcripts where the teacher simply asked "how many students agree?".

The following transcript excerpt comes from a whole group discussion about the book *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* (Willems, 2004). At this point in the book, the duckling is trying to convince Pigeon to share his hot dog by pleading his case about having never tasted a hot dog before. Samantha offers her interpretation of the ducklings' intentions. After Samantha shares her version, Ms. Duerte asks twice how many students agree with Samantha. Ashley then offers an interpretation of the events and Ms. Duerte asks the class again about who is in agreement.

Seeking agreement (*The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, WG, 10/13/09)

Samantha: I think that the duckling is trying to trick him into giving the hot dog to him.

Ms. Duerte: So you think the pigeon is now starting to catch on to the duckling's plan and that he's starting to think that he's going to be tricked? How many of you agree with Samantha? [Teacher counts hand] OK. Ashley?

Ashley: Something to add to Samantha is that when they said ‘If you’ve never experienced a hot dog before, you should really’ and then he said you should really try it, but then the pigeon said wait a second because the duckling probably tricked him and the duckling probably thought that he took the bait like he got tricked.

Ms. Duarte: So how many of you believe that that’s what, like how Ashley was saying, that that’s what the pigeon was going to say? [Counts hands again-and then pauses and begins reading from the book.] *He’s really trying! He’s out of his mind! I found it. Of course, go ahead. Would you say that it tastes like chicken? Can you believe this guy?* (n.p.).

As exemplified in the transcript example above, Samantha suggested one interpretation and Ashley offered another. In both instances Ms. Duarte counted hands to find out who agreed with each interpretation. Seeking agreement provided a way for Ms. Duarte to measure consensus amongst her students.

Teacher as solicitor was an instructional approach that Ms. Duarte relied on to test students’ knowledge by requiring them to recall, review, and restate information that had been presented in the picture books read aloud or was previously learned. As reflected in her teacher reflection logs and interviews, Ms. Duarte did not feel this instructional approach in discussion was the most effective way to teach. However, she believed it provided an opportunity for her to ensure that her students were meeting curricular standards. Each of the examples from whole group and small group discussions exemplify how Ms. Duarte used questioning and response techniques such as appealing, examination, prompting, labeling, and seeking agreement to elicit responses from

students. I will now present my analysis of the theme teacher as solicitor from Ms. Romer's first grade classroom discussions.

Teacher as Solicitor- Ms. Romer (First Grade Classroom)

As stated previously in this chapter, the theme of teacher as solicitor was constructed from the categories appealing, examination, prompting, labeling, and seeking agreement. Teacher as solicitor was classified by responses and questions in which Ms. Romer used predetermined information to lead students to respond in a certain manner, recalling, naming, reviewing, and labeling information during discussion. Ms. Romer's role as a solicitor was associated with skills based instruction and testing. According to Ms. Romer, it was never her intention to use read alouds as a means for testing skills. However, she articulated, "It seems that there can't be any moment lost. It will come up in testing" (Interview, 12/15/09). Markedly, Ms. Romer was concerned that "administrators would want to see what testing standards were connected to read alouds" as noted in her teacher reflection log (1/05/10).

Ms. Romer utilized the role of solicitor primarily during the first week of discussion. The majority of the data that contributed to teacher as solicitor for Ms. Romer was coded under the category prompting, with approximately eight times more occurrences than the other categories as recorded in the transcripts from whole group and small group discussions. Specifically, Ms. Romer voiced that prompting was used as a way, "to even the playing field for my students. By paraphrasing and rewording I can give even my lowest kids the chance to respond" (Informal correspondence, 1/06/10). It is also important to mention the category agreement was not observed in Ms. Romer's class, nor was it evidenced in read aloud transcripts. Consequently, the category

agreement is not included in analysis from first grade discussions. Instances in the data were also limited in the categories of examination and appealing. Overall, data analysis indicates Ms. Romer's role as solicitor was limitedly performed.

Ms. Romer utilized her role as a solicitor for reviewing concepts, recalling ideas, and recitation of information from the text. Although used exiguously, the categories that were used to develop the theme teacher as solicitor will be reviewed and described based on data from the first grade classroom whole group and small group discussions. Each of these categories will be analyzed in the following section. Transcript samples will be used to illustrate each category, which are also evidenced in Ms. Romer's reflections, researcher field notes, and informal correspondence.

Appealing

Although the category of appealing was minimally represented in the data from Ms. Romer's class, there were still instances that demonstrated this type of questioning and response. As previously stated, appealing was categorized by the use of asking questions consecutively to call students' attention to a concept or point that the teacher already knew the answer to but required students to state. In light of second trimester testing, Ms. Romer used appealing as a review technique during the first week of my observation. She professed, "Unfortunately, I need to know where everyone is at" (Informal correspondence, 1/06/10). Using appealing as a tool to assess students' comprehension was observed primarily during the first week of the study. Ms. Romer contributed this to the high stakes testing, which was to take place within the first week I was collecting data.

During a discussion Ms. Romer asked students to compare *The Hat* (1997) and *The Mitten* (1996) by Jan Brett. Ms. Romer managed the discussion by asking questions that enabled her to evaluate students' comprehension of the two stories. After completing a read aloud of the two books, Ms. Romer asked the class to compare the two stories. Ms. Romer intentionally chose students that represented a variety of reading levels. She stated in her reflection log, "When we were doing the book to book comparison between *The Hat* and *The Mitten*, I purposefully picked a mix of reading levels to see what their responses would be" (Teacher reflection log, 1/05/10). By selecting students from a variety of reading levels, Ms. Romer utilized the read aloud as a space to evaluate students. Once more, the method of appealing was particular to the first week of the study.

The transcript sample exemplifies how multiple questions were used to get students to respond with an answer that was obvious to the teacher but necessary, according to Ms. Romer, to ensure that students "were on the right track" (Teacher reflection log, 1/05/10). The question and answer pattern typical of the category appealing is especially evident in the dialog between Ms. Romer and Matthew.

Appealing (*The Hat*, WG, 1/05/10)

Ms. Romer: Boys and girls, I want you to remember at the beginning when I first started this story, I said that you had two jobs. I wanted you to enjoy the story, which obviously you did, but also there was another job. And the other job was I wanted you to think about how is *The Hat* the same or different than *The Mitten*.

So did anyone give any thought to that? Jake, what did you think?

Jake: Well, one that wasn't different the animals didn't go all in one hat.

Ms. Romer: Right. But they did in *The Mitten*.

Jake: Yeah. And it's like all of the animals were in both.

Ms. Romer: Oh, so there's lots of animals in both stories, but you're saying *The Mitten* there was only one piece of clothing, wasn't there? There was only one mitten, but here there were

Jake: a lot

Ms. Romer: a lot of pieces of clothing. That is a really great noticing that you did.

Emma, what is the same or different that you noticed about these books?

Emma: *The Hat* has three borders, and *The Mitten* has two borders.

Ms. Romer: Hmmmm, let's take a look at that. *The Hat* has three borders, so you're meaning – tell me what you mean by three borders. (pause) So you pointed to the three parts of the border. So you're saying there's three things happening in the border of *The Hat*? And how many parts of the border in *The Mitten* did you notice? (pause) Oh, one, two parts in the border. Good observation, thank you Emma. Joseph?

Joseph: In the stories, when he first got the thing stuck on his head, all the animals saw him and they all freaked out, the animals got all the clothes so they could get covered.

Ms. Romer: Wow, so Joseph you're saying in *The Hat* everybody thought it was weird that Hedgie had the sock on his head. But in *The Mitten* they all thought it was a pretty good idea and they wanted to do it right away. Nobody had to talk them into it. They crawled right on in and said it was a good idea. But over here they thought it was weird at first, but then Hedgie said something about this is my

cool hat and then thought about it. Wow, that is an amazing difference that you noticed. Matthew?

Matt: I noticed that there used to be all the clothes, but then after a while the clothes were all gone on the top pages.

Ms. Romer: Yes

Matthew: And I also noticed that I saw Mattie and the animals coming, too.

She's doing whatever she wants and the animals laugh at Hedgie because he has a funny hat on.

Ms. Romer: You know what, Matthew? I want to get back to something you just said. Matthew, I noticed something at the beginning that you said. You said in *The Hat* all the clothes were disappearing and going away, sort of subtracting, weren't they? So it was sort of like a taking away story in the hat, wasn't it? So was *The Mitten* a taking away story or was it an adding story?

Matthew: It was an adding one.

Ms. Romer: Oh, because each animal kept coming in that one, whereas here the clothes were being taken away from the clothesline.

Matthew: Because every time I looked up at the pages, I saw that the clothes were being gone every single time.

Ms. Romer: And that's subtraction. We've been talking about that.

Appealing provided an opportunity for Ms. Romer to assess students' proficiency of reiterating major concepts from the stories *The Hat* and *The Mitten*. Through the use of numerous questions and paraphrasing Ms. Romer utilized appealing to advance students in retelling points in the stories that pertained to ideas she had hoped students learned

from read alouds. Although not an ideal method for conducting discussion, Ms. Romer felt this was inescapable based on the testing environment within the school. In Ms. Romer's case, appealing was limited by and large to the first week of data collection.

Examination

Although infrequently observed, there were some instances that Ms. Romer used examination as an approach to elicit responses from her first grade students. Questioning that occurred when the teacher was asking a succession of different questions and investigating what students were saying in order to get them to respond in a certain manner was categorized as examination. During Ms. Romer's first small group discussion, examination was observed when she questioned Gabe about his interpretation of the story. At several points in the verbal exchange between Ms. Romer and Gabe, Gabe attempts to talk about his favorite page; however, Ms. Romer is persistent when inquiring about why a trail of cupcakes was left behind. When Gabe's response is unclear Ms. Romer turns to Emma who answers correctly. Examination differs from appealing in that the teachers use persistent questions despite students' desire to discuss other topics or elaborate on their own interpretations.

Ms. Romer reflected on her displeasure with the first small group discussion, "The in-depth group was hard work, I tried to control it too much" (Teacher reflection log, 1/07/10). Ms. Romer explained during a casual conversation after the discussion that she considered it "hard" to conduct the small group discussions largely because of the way she aimed to manage the dialogue. Although Ms. Romer frequently used small group discussion in her leveled readings groups, she pointed out that this was her first time conducting small group discussions with a "mixed level of students." The following

transcript excerpt accurately illustrates the category examination, further the transcript sample attests to the apprehension Ms. Romer felt during facilitating her first small group discussion in this study.

Examination (Jan Brett, SG, 1/07/10)

Ms. Romer: Hey Gabe, what book have you sort of really been into? And tell me what made you kind of really into this book?

Gabe: It's because at the end it had really funny pages, and at the beginning

Ms. Romer: Show me what pages you are talking about.

Gabe: So at the beginning, he's all happy, but then something's missing - friends.

Ms. Romer: I love how you're retelling the story.

Gabe: Yeah, and then Matti has a couple other friends, and the gingerbread baby sort of feels left out. Then he tries to make some other friends and then it doesn't really work out because they're made out of something else that's fried or icing, and they're all fried so they couldn't move, and then Matti on the border was like baking some other ones.

Ms. Romer: So it's sort of like he's tracking all of the people over to an attic and then he has a little adventure. He does have a little adventure, doesn't he?

Gabe: An adventure, yes. So then he climbs into a rat's nest and then he got the pompon and sort of moved on. And then he was riding on the rooster, and he saw a little trail of cupcakes. He was probably eating them up there.

Ms. Romer: Do you think the trail of cupcakes someone left behind?

Gabe: Matti.

Ms. Romer: Why do you think – wait, wait, wait a minute. [Gabe tries to turn to the pop up page in the *Gingerbread Baby*] Let's go back. I know that's the best page, isn't it? But before you go back to that one, why do you think Matti left that trail of cupcakes up there?

Gabe: So he could have some friends.

Ms. Romer: What do you think? So he could find friends? Are you sure?

Gabe: Because when I saw the page when he was looking on the borders, he was putting some gingerbreads and I thought he was going to peek in and put these trails on so he can grab the cupcake and because the cupcakes were piling up on the ladder because maybe he was bad and maybe started crying.

Ms. Romer: And Emma, you add that, too. Why did Matti put the trail of cupcakes up the ladder?

Emma: So he could find them. He couldn't find them if he didn't put the cupcakes out because they're gingerbread.

Ms. Romer: That's right, Emma. So now Gabe what is your all time favorite page?

Examination was used as an approach to get students to recall information from stories that had been introduced in read alouds or was pertinent during small group discussion. As exemplified in transcript example from a small group discussion about Jan Brett's work, Ms. Romer used examination as a strategy to keep Gabe focused on recalling events from the book *Gingerbread Baby* (1999). In his attempt to share his favorite page with Ms. Romer, Gabe was quickly redirected with persistent questioning

about the trail of cupcakes from the story. Using examination was a purposeful approach Ms. Romer employed during discussion to obtain information from students.

Prompting

When teachers in both cases asked a series of repetitive or leading questions to elicit predetermined answers, it was categorized as prompting. Paraphrasing and rewording students' statements proved to be a common characteristic of prompting as well. While assuming the role of solicitor, prompting occurred more frequently than any other question and response technique employed by Ms. Romer. It was Ms. Romer's belief that first graders need a little bit of guidance recalling details from time to time. Ms. Romer connoted, "I like to offer my students a reference point. It helps them" (Interview, 12/19/09). By rewording or calling attention to particular moments in discussion, Ms. Romer felt she was able to help students articulate their understanding of the text. Ultimately the questions Ms. Romer asked while prompting were used to get students to recall, restate, or describe ideas that she felt were pertinent to their understanding of the books being discussed.

During the first discussion I recorded, Ms. Romer used prompting as a means for review with her first grade students. Ms. Romer sought to have students recall where they had first been introduced to the main character, Hedgie, in previously read Jan Brett books. After asking students about Hedgie, Ms. Romer proceeded by asking a series of prompting questions in order to get students to recall information about other books read in the past. All of the books that were reviewed in the transcript excerpt below were introduced and read aloud in December, before the winter break. Consequently, Ms. Romer expected students would need some "help remembering." In an attempt to help

students answer each question, Ms. Romer repeated student's prior responses to advance discussion. This was common for Ms. Romer in the category of prompting. The following transcript example exemplifies the category prompting, through the paraphrasing and repetitive questioning that occurs.

Prompting (*Hedgie's Surprise*, WG, 1/4/10)

Ms. Romer: I'd like someone to raise their hand and tell me if you remember which book we met Hedgie in. This is a tough one because it was before the holidays. Do you remember, Stacy, which book we met Hedgie in? It was one of the ones I read before the break.

Stacy: *Christmas Trolls*?

Ms. Romer: *The Christmas Trolls*. Jonah, do you remember, what did Hedgie do in *The Christmas Trolls*?

Jonah: He was stealing.

Ms. Romer: Stealing. He was stealing from the girl, wasn't he? He was talking all of her Christmas things. And he was taking them to who? Do you remember?

Student: Trolls.

Ms. Romer: Oh, hold on because I was talking to Jonah.

Jonah: The trolls.

Ms. Romer: Yeah, and why was Hedgie stealing all of the girl's Christmas things and taking to them to the Trolls? Do you remember?

Jonah: They never knew Christmas, so they tried to take them so they were going to use them for Christmas.

Prompting, as demonstrated in this transcript excerpt, served as way for Ms. Romer to review concepts previously learned. Using questioning, Ms. Romer required students to retell events from a story that was previously introduced. Another example of prompting occurred during a discussion of *The Mitten* (Brett, 1996).

While discussing *The Mitten* by Jan Brett, Ms. Romer concluded her discussion by calling upon students to summarize events that occurred in the story. Prompting in this situation was used to aid students in their recitation and recall of the storyline. Similar to other transcripts passages that were categorized as prompting, Ms. Romer used question and response strategies of restating and paraphrasing. In this transcript sample, Stacy struggled to label the emotion Baba felt when she saw the mitten that had been stretched out by the animals. Because Ms. Romer felt it was important that students recognize how Baba was feeling, she directed students to name the emotion that Stacy was unable to state.

Prompting (*The Mitten*, WG, 1/5/10)

Gabe: And then lastly the mouse came in and it went into the bear's nose and it sort of sneezed and all of them flew out.

Ms. Romer: [Summarizing] And they all flew out of the mitten.

Stacy: When the bear sneezed, the mitten flew and then Nikki found his mitten and Baba was really _____ [pausing searching for a word to describe Baba] she didn't know what happened to the mitten because it was so big compared to the small mitten.

Ms. Romer: Wow, and I wonder when you were saying that, I wonder if someone could help Stacy with the word she was searching for there. She said she was

really not sure what had happened to the mitten. What would be a good word to describe the character Baba when she saw the mitten?

Nathan: That it stretched.

Ms. Romer: It stretched? How was she feeling when she looked at the really stretched out mitten and the tiny mitten? What would be a word for describing Baba, and how she was feeling, when she looked at that mitten?

Emma: Surprised.

Ms. Romer: Surprised! She was very surprised to see one of the mittens very large and one of them small.

Prompting allowed Ms. Romer to assure that Stacy's inability to identify Baba's feelings was not disregarded. Using prompting with students in the class, Ms. Romer successfully discerned what Stacy meant. The next example illustrates another approach to prompting that Ms. Romer used in classroom discussions with the picture book *There is a Bird on Your Head* (Willems, 2008).

As part of a discussion concerning *There is a Bird on Your Head* by Mo Willems, Ms. Romer questioned students about speech bubbles that were distinctive to Willems' work as students often mentioned speech bubbles while the class participated in studying Mo Willems' work. As noted in my researcher field notes, students often read speech bubbles aloud and pointed to them while Ms. Romer was conducting read alouds. Not only were they recognized in Mo Willems' work but also, according to Ms. Romer, "students began to remark on other books in the classroom library that utilized speech bubbles" (Teacher reflection log, 1/13/10). Ms. Romer recognized that speech bubbles were an integral part of Mo Willems' books as well her students' writing. Ms. Romer

stated, “speech bubbles began to show up in their writer’s workshop stories” (Teacher reflection log, 1/13/10). While observing in the classroom, students were also eager to share their writing samples with me that included references to Willems’ characters or writing style.

In order to help students recognize the purposeful color choices used by Mo Willems for different characters in his picture books, Ms. Romer incorporated questions into the whole group discussion that called attention to Willems’ unique writing technique. Ms. Romer shared that, “her purpose was to ensure that students understood how the speech bubbles helped them read each page” (Informal correspondence, 1/13/10). Using prompting as an avenue to help students make the association between the speech bubbles and the characters, Ms. Romer questioned Emma to explain what she noticed. Moreover, prompting helped Ms. Romer teach students about the speech bubbles within the context of a read aloud as identified in this transcript example.

Prompting (*There is a Bird on Your Head*, WG, 1/ 13/10)

Ms. Romer: If you remember, before I started reading, are you with me? I want to see who were my thinkers while I was reading. Do you remember I said to think about how Mo Willems uses his talk bubbles here with the pigeon, and how he used his talk bubbles here with Piggy and Elephant. Emma, what do you notice about that. How are they the same or how are they different?

Emma: Those are white and this ones [pointing to speech bubbles in the book] – Piggy’s got pink ones and elephant’s got grey ones.

Ms. Romer: Why do you think when Mo Willems was illustrating this he decided to make Piggy’s talk bubbles pink and the elephant’s grey?

Emma: Because the elephant is grey and the piggy is pink.

Ms. Romer: So that keeps me organized as a reader, doesn't it?

Emma: And the pigeon, I think he probably did it in white because this one is kind of grayish bluish, so he did his white because there is a lot of parts white.

Ms. Romer: And you know what, Emma? Will I get confused when I read this one about who is doing the talking? Because how many animals are they talking in this book?

Emma: One and they did it different colors like that so you know which one is talking.

Each of the transcript examples selected to demonstrate the category prompting exemplify how Ms. Romer employed question and response strategies to help students express their understandings of concepts or ideas she deemed important. Illustrated in the first transcript example, Ms. Romer sought to review previously read books, essentially requiring students to summarize events from *The Christmas Trolls* (Brett, 1993).

Similarly, Ms. Romer used prompting techniques during a discussion about *The Mitten* to assist Stacy when she was unable to pinpoint Baba's emotions about the mitten. Finally, the last passage captures how Ms. Romer used prompting as a teaching tool to help students recognize the connection between the color of the speech bubbles and the characters. Although prompting was employed using different means, the primary purpose was nonetheless to acquire information from students through recall, recitation or review, essentially soliciting information from students.

Labeling

Using labeling to express connections related to the text or themselves, Ms. Romer took the same approach as Ms. Duarte, frequently requiring students to label a connection they voiced. Connections were part of the mandated first grade curriculum as well as an instructional practice Ms. Romer thought to be essential. Ms. Romer asserted, “We are always making connections. I even have students make a ‘c’ with their hand during a read aloud if they have a connection” (Interview, 12/19/09). Because Ms. Romer found it necessary for her students to share their connections, she also strived to make sure that opportunities to call attention to connections were not overlooked. The following transcript passage reflects how Ms. Romer calls attention to a connection she finds applicable to her students, consequently making a connection “for them” by noting that the fable they read in class earlier had a moral similar to *Hedgie’s Surprise* (Brett, 2000). `

Labeling (*Hedgie’s Surprise*, WG, 1/4/10)

Ms. Romer: I think some of you have come up with some really good tricks to trick that Tomten, but before we go on, I feel like I have to say something. I have to make a connection for you, or with you. Boys and girls, remember this morning when we were talking about our fable and we were talking about playing tricks?

Emma: This teaches us a lesson!

Ms. Romer: Well, wait a minute, because in our fable we were talking about this morning

Many students: Oohhh

Ms. Romer: But in this case is the trick ok? Yes, because Hedgie is planning on playing a trick on that Tomten to save the egg.

Matt: Sometimes tricks are good.

Ms. Romer: Sometimes maybe a trick is ok when you've got a real bad guy on your hands like this Tomten. I agree.

Matt: Like a troll or something.

Ms. Romer: Like a troll or something. I agree. We'll make a rule then – tricks are ok if you're dealing with goblins.

Isaiah: Strangers.

Ms. Romer: Strangers?

Isaiah: Trolls.

Ms Romer: Trolls, and mean little Tomtens who like to steal eggs. OK. You've actually made some really good text connections there.

Labeling enabled Ms. Romer to solicit connections from her first grade students. By initiating a dialogue structured around a connection she considered important, Ms. Romer questioned students essentially bringing forth a text-to-text connection she had hoped students would identify themselves. Much like Ms. Duarte, the ability to make connections, and in turn label them, was thought to be valuable in discussion. Another instance of labeling occurred during a discussion about *Julius, Baby of the World* (Henkes, 1990).

Jake was eager to share his feelings about his relationship with his younger cousin. When he began telling his story, Ms. Romer let Jake tell the class how he and his cousin interacted. After he shared his thoughts Ms. Romer identified the connection he

had made, labeling it a “reverse connection.” In other words, Jake was similar to Julius and his cousin was similar to Lilly. The term “reverse connection” required Jake to identify the connection he made to the story. The transcript passage below exemplifies how Ms. Romer used questioning to get Jake to label his connection.

Labeling (*Julius, Baby of the World*, WG, 1/21/10)

Ms. Romer: Jake, what did you say?

Jake: My baby cousin, he was the one who started out being nice to me, except then he got mean to me. So they didn’t want him around me. One time, he was all happy, and then he came to me and looked at my face and then he started crying.

Ms. Romer: Oh, so you kind of have a reverse connection. So in that story, are you Lilly and your cousin is Julius, or no? Or the other way around?

Jake: The other way around.

Ms. Romer: So your baby cousin was the one who – I got it.

Labeling was a strategy utilized for naming students’ connections. Both Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte frequently required students to distinguish the connection they were making as a “text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world.” This was supported by Ms. Romer’s teaching beliefs as well her mandated curricular goals from her administration.

Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer used a variety of questioning and response strategies that contributed to the development of the categories appealing, examination, prompting, labeling, and seeking agreement. A cross-case analysis of teacher as solicitor will be presented next.

Cross-Case Analysis: Teacher as Solicitor

In the following section I describe each of the contextual factors that contributed to role of solicitor. Contextual factors were defined by outside influences that impacted the ways in which Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte approached their role as solicitor in classroom discussions. These contextual factors included administration, testing, literature, instructional methods, and teaching beliefs. First, I generally define each of the key contextual factors that impacted how Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer enacted the role of solicitor. Then, I describe in detail each contextual factor using excerpts from teacher reflection logs and interviews. Finally, I conclude with a summary of my cross-case analysis.

Throughout data collection I asked Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer to keep a teacher reflection log. I was not specific in what I wanted them to do with each reflection but requested that they note anything pivotal they noticed during daily discussion or other moments throughout the day, which reflected the read alouds. It was my hope that the things they noted would be related to whole group picture book discussions or small group discussion that had taken place. At the end of data collection, as I began to look across each log, it became apparent that Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer used their reflection logs as an outlet for making sense of not only students reactions to read alouds but as a tool for self reflection. These logs provided great insight for my cross-case analysis.

While reading through each log, I began to make sense of the purposeful choices the teachers made while enacting the role of solicitor. Based on my analysis of Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer I identified four key contextual factors that influenced their role as solicitor. First, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer felt restricted at times by the influence of

administration and curriculum standards and therefore directed discussions in a manner that did not match their philosophical beliefs. Second, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer noted that they felt confined by the reading schedules they were required to uphold, insisting there could be no time lost in the day. Third, standardized testing greatly influenced all of their educational practices, including read alouds. Finally, there were times both teachers felt the picture books and websites posed challenge, consequently influencing the way they conducted read alouds and website explorations. Each of these contextual factors will be addressed specifically in the following section. For an overview of these contextual factors see Figure 3.

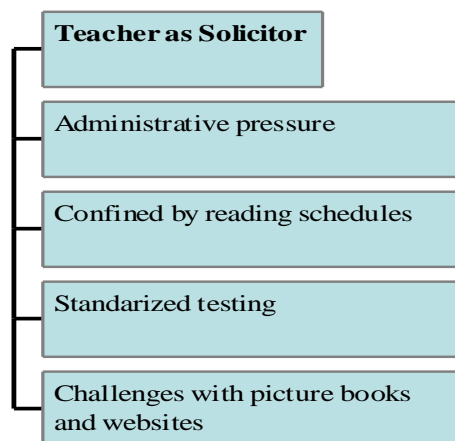


Figure 3. Contextual factors that influence teacher as solicitor

The most common finding across all of the reflection logs and interviews analyzed was the influence of administrative and curricular standards. Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer frequently commented in their teacher reflection logs, and confided in me during interviews, that they felt tension between the expectations of administrators and

curriculum standards and their teaching beliefs. When describing the relationship between the administration and their teaching philosophy Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer used words such as “challenging, demanding and frustrating.” (Interview, 10/02/09 & 12/19/09) Ms. Duarte expressed in our preliminary interview (9/15/09), “even though the administration is supportive of me they still want to see the standards in everything. Sometimes I think they forget the value of teachable moments which is really frustrating.” Ms. Romer had similar feelings when discussing her literacy grade level meetings that were held each week. She stated, “It’s like they [administration] demand to know what we are doing but forget that we know what is best for our students” (Interview, 2/10/10). When conducting read alouds, Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte often communicated that their teaching and enacting the role of solicitor was partly due to the “fear” (Ms Duarte, teacher reflection log, 10/6/10) that administration may come in and “want to see what we are doing.” (Ms. Romer, teacher reflection log, 1/10/10). Administrative apprehensiveness had great impact on the role of solicitor as demonstrated in Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte’s reflections and interviews.

Coupled with administrative tension was the pressure of ensuring that district curricular standards were transparently reflected in their “read aloud block” (Ms. Duarte, Interview, 9/15/09). Although Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte were confident that read alouds and discussion provided students with a variety of learning opportunities, both teachers noted that if curriculum standards weren’t stated in lesson plans, or as in Ms. Duarte’s case on the white board, then their administrators would question what instructional goals were being met. This pressure drove Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte to often use read alouds

as a time for imbedding curriculum standards even though they wanted read alouds to serve as a space for open discussion and interpretation.

After a student debate took place about evolution versus creation during a discussion about *The Wretched Stone* (Van Allsburg, 1991), Ms. Duerte shared her feelings about the confines of curriculum objectives. She said:

Today's discussion led me to the realization that as an undergrad I was always told to not state the objective to my students before the lesson, rather have them discover what the objective was. When I began teaching in this school district, I was told that I must state the objective before the start of each lesson and have it written on the board. What objective would I have written today? The debate that occurred was higher-level thinking beyond the stupid standards. (Teacher reflection log, 10/08/09)

Ms. Romer also shared her contention with the districts emphasis on curricular goals. The first two days I observed read alouds and discussions about *The Hat*, *The Mitten*, and *The Trouble with Trolls*, Ms. Romer sought to have students retell and summarize the events that had occurred in each of the stories. When I read her reflection log it was apparent why she had enacted the role of solicitor. She wrote, "We are inundated with trying to make APY [Annual Yearly Progress] so even though I do my best to avoid pushing goals on my students during read alouds I felt like I had to" (Teacher reflection log, 1/07/10). By analyzing reflection logs and interviews, Ms. Romer and Ms. Duerte's position on administrative and district curriculum standards and the pressures associated with them was evident.

The second contextual factor that impacted the role of solicitor was the feeling of confinement as result of the mandated reading schedules. Because of limited time in the districts required daily content schedule, both teachers felt rushed during read alouds, often voicing their contention in reflections and interviews. For example, Ms. Romer stated, “there could be no time lost in the day” (Interview, 12/19/09). Each teacher chose to incorporate read alouds in their daily schedule differently; however, read alouds and discussions in each classroom were limited to approximately half an hour a day. In Ms. Duarte’s class, read alouds were incorporated into the district’s mandated daily 90 minute reading block. In Ms. Romer’s class, read alouds took place after lunch but she did not consider them part of the district’s mandatory reading block. The following examples illustrate the constraints that the teachers felt, as voiced in reflection logs and interviews, regarding the mandated reading schedule.

Ms. Duarte expressed her feelings of confinement during the week she focused on Chris Van Allsburg’s work, specifically *The Wretched Stone*. Because the mandated reading block was coming to an end, Ms. Duarte imposed her own interpretation on the students by stating that glowing stone in the story was a television. However, she recognized that her students did not take up this idea. Ms. Duarte described her discord with imposing ideas on students because of time constraints in the mandated reading schedule. She said:

I also found it interesting that even though we had discussed that the stone was a TV on Tuesday, they still referred to it as a stone. It was as though the TV theory was never discussed. This goes to prove that students learn best when they come

to a conclusion, rather than a conclusion be forced upon them—such as I did in the short amount of time we had on Tuesday. (Teacher reflection log, 10/9/09)

As demonstrated in Ms. Duarte’s reflection, the mandated reading schedule impacted the way she enacted the role of solicitor.

In a similar fashion, Ms. Romer took issue with the mandated reading schedule as well. She voiced her concern during an interview. Ms. Romer expressed:

I know that students need a good amount of time each day for reading instruction but it seems as though the time we dedicate to this reading block isn’t always the best way to do things. We [teachers] need to remember that students say some wonderful things and we shouldn’t tell them ‘sorry our reading time is over.’ The idea of everyone teaching reading at the same time of day for the same amount of time doesn’t work! (Interview, 2/10/09)

With mandated reading schedules to uphold, Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte articulated their concern with the impact it had on their teaching. These examples demonstrate that enacting the role of solicitor was associated with the mandated reading schedules.

The third contextual factor that influenced Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte’s educational practices was the impact of standardized testing. During my preliminary interviews, both teachers were forthcoming about the influence that testing had on their daily instruction. When describing their feelings towards testing Ms. Romer stated, “it [testing] was harmful to good teaching” (Interview, 12/19/09). Additionally Ms. Duarte said, “it [testing] dictated what we were expected to do” (Interview, 9/15/09). Furthermore, Ms. Romer explained, “In the name of testing we have these directives that

are almost dictating how we teach. If it's not your style of teaching we are doing more harm than good" (Interview, 2/10/10). The pressure of testing was reflected in the read alouds I observed. Ms Romer disclosed in her teacher reflection log (1/08/10), "I felt that I had to make sure students could summarize and retell stories during those first two days of discussions because of second trimester testing." Despite her anguish towards testing, Ms. Romer consequently used read alouds as a time for reviewing concepts that might be associated with standardized tests.

Ms. Duarte was frank about the impact of Criterion Referenced Test[ing] (CRT) on her teaching. Concerned by the fact that her students were scheduled to take CRT's within a month of my study, Ms. Duarte stated, "We are all doing test prep stuff to make sure our students are ready" (Casual conversation, 10/06/09). After students explored Chris Van Allsburg's website in class Ms. Duarte communicated, "I printed off the autobiography of the author [Chris Van Allsburg] and will turn it into an assignment and have students answer questions about the reading. This will be a CRT prep activity" (Teacher reflection log, 10/09/09). Test prep surfaced in several of Ms. Duarte's reflections, as demonstrated in this passage. Although both teachers voiced contention with testing, it became part of how they performed their role as solicitor during discussion, as illustrated through my analysis.

Finally, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer communicated their feelings regarding how picture books and websites used in this study could be a hindrance in discussion and exploration. Both teachers asserted some picture books weren't as captivating to students as others. In addition, both teachers noted negotiating some of the websites presented

challenges. As a result, the picture books and websites used in this study influenced the approaches Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer utilized in read alouds and website explorations.

Most notably was the concern shared by Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer about how website explorations transpired. With no specific guidelines expressed about how Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer should negotiate website explorations, both teachers noted that ambiguity on how to proceed was a hindrance. Ms. Duarte remarked, “I should have set up a scavenger hunt so that my students would get to some of the important information” (Teacher reflection log, 10/07/09). Likewise, Ms. Romer, shared, “I thought I should have a lesson with the website, and so I did. I quickly realized that wasn’t a good idea because the kids wanted time to look around” (Teacher reflection log, 1/11/10). Although both teachers desired structure in their approach to exploring the websites, neither were satisfied with the outcome of the website lessons.

Not only were instructional practices a concern while working with websites, so were the visual elements of individual author websites. Ms. Romer purported in her reflection log, “I don’t think the students got as much out of Kevin Henkes’ website as Mo Willems. I think it is because there is a lot less ‘interaction’ between the students and the characters” (1/20/09). Visually Ms. Romer felt her students were dissatisfied with websites that weren’t visually enticing. In the same vein, Ms. Duarte commented on her students’ reaction to Chris Van Allsburg website compared to Mo Willems’ website, “They all said that Mo Willems’ was so much better. I felt the same way. Van Allsburg’s was really blah and not that easy for the kids to use. The kids thought Mo Willems’ was really cool ‘because the characters come to life like cartoons’” (Teacher reflection log, 10/14/09). As exhibited in Ms. Romer’s and Ms. Duarte’s reflections, the visual

representation of the author websites explored influenced their students' satisfaction with the investigations.

Ms. Romer and Ms. Duerte also reported on their disappointment with particular picture books. Ms. Duerte found that neither she nor her students took a liking to Emily Gravett's picture books. She stated, "I don't know why but my kids didn't love her books. I think that perhaps they weren't that into her illustrations especially since we studied Mo Willems first" (Teacher reflection log, 10/26/09). Because Ms. Duerte wasn't as familiar with Emily Gravett's work, she believed this might have contributed to her sometimes "negative" approach to sharing Gravett's work. In the same accord, Ms. Romer felt that students in her first grade didn't connect as well to the visual elements in Kevin Henkes' books as they had with Mo Willems' and Jan Brett's books. "I think next year when I share these authors again I will switch up the order I share each author. Or maybe not do Kevin Henkes at all. My kids this year just connected so much more with Mo Willems and Jan Brett" (Interview, 2/10/10). Individual websites and picture books often had an effect on how Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer approached read alouds and online author explorations. This is evidenced in the teachers' reflections and interview excerpts presently shared.

Although not identified in the contextual factors previously addressed that contributed to teacher as solicitor, it is important to note that Ms. Romer and Ms. Duerte reflected that they felt as though my presence impacted the way they conducted some of the read alouds I observed. Ms. Duerte came up to me immediately following the first discussion I observed and recorded declaring, "Man that didn't go the way I wanted it to. I got nervous because you were there. I wanted to make sure I was doing what you

wanted me to” (Casual conversation, 1/06/09). In similar fashion, Ms. Romer stated in her exit interview (2/10/10), “I felt like I had to review because you were there. I guess I was worried about having structure when I usually didn’t do that.” Not only did testing and curricular pressures impact Ms. Romer’s and Ms. Duarte’s approach to discussion, my presence while collecting data did as well. This concept is important to the findings and implications of this study and will be described in detail in Chapter 5.

Teacher as Facilitator

Teacher as facilitator is not a new concept in research on literature-based discussion. Maloch (2002), Short, Kaufman, Kahn, and Crawford (1999), have examined the role of the teacher in discussion, defining what a facilitator role can entail. Short et al. (1999) states, “the facilitator role involved teachers encouraging student interaction and talk and monitoring social interactions which interfered with discussion” (p. 378). Throughout this study there were moments in whole group and small group discussion that Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer transitioned from soliciting during discussion to facilitating. In this study, the word facilitate means that the teacher guided students during discussion, helping them interpret literature through questioning and responding to ideas that the students brought into the discussion. As a facilitator the teachers did not use repetitious questioning; instead, they often used open-ended questions and helped students expand and build on their half-baked ideas (Serafini, 2006).

In defining approaches that contributed to how teachers enacted the role of facilitator, responses and questions in which the teachers used opened ended questions and responses to facilitate discussions were essential. Ms. Romer enacted the role of

facilitator frequently, as observed in daily read alouds and discussions. By doing so she recognized that students' discussion were more inferential and detailed. In a reflection about a small group discussion regarding Mo Willems' work, Ms. Romer shared, "I liked just putting books out and letting them speak. They had so much to say, so many connections and deep thoughts" (Teacher reflection log, 1/13/10). At points in whole group and small group discussions, Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte were able to remove themselves as the primary guide of discussions by allowing students to manage the exchanges. Both teachers noted that they believed this enabled students who were not apt to participate to engage in conversation because their peers were leading the group. Ms. Duarte recognized, "When I stepped back, they had so much to say. Lydia never said much until today" (Teacher reflection log, 10/09/09). The role of teacher as facilitator encompasses Ms. Duarte's and Ms. Romer's ability to act as a guide during discussions, in turn enabling students to develop thoughtful remarks about the books they were introduced to through read alouds and in literature discussion.

The theme teacher as facilitator was developed from the following categories: expanding, critical junctures, and release. I first address each of the teachers in this study individually and then I present my cross-case analysis. Table 4 illustrates the theme teacher as facilitator.

Teacher as Facilitator- Ms. Duarte (Fifth Grade Classroom)

Although the role of solicitor was more prominent than the role of facilitator for Ms. Duarte, as demonstrated in my analysis of transcripts from classroom discussions, she utilized questioning and response strategies to foster discussion. Ms. Duarte

Table 5

Overview: Teacher as Facilitator

Teacher as Solicitor	Ms. Duerte	Ms. Romer
Expanding	(<i>The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog</i> , WG, 10/13/09)	Emma: The boots are Lilly's.
Teacher uses students' interpretations to expand and foster discussion.	<p>Ms. Duerte: [Reads from the book] <i>You know, I'm pretty smart for a duckling</i> (n.p.).</p> <p>Logan: He was just joking to get the hot dog.</p> <p>Ashley: He's never tried it before.</p> <p>Logan: He was lying so he could get the hot dog.</p> <p>Ms. Duerte: I guess I'm not understanding what you were saying. Why are you saying that, 'Oh, he was just saying that and he was lying?' Logan, Why were you all saying that he was lying?</p> <p>Logan: I said that because the duckling? Oh yeah, he wanted the hot dog. He was wondering, like was describing it to give him the hot dog so he can taste it. He was probably thinking that the pigeon would give him a hot dog to eat and he would be trying to joke with him and eat the hot dog.</p>	<p>Stacy: Wait – and because she has a tail right there.</p> <p>Isella: Chester and Wilson don't have those [boots].</p>

Table 5 continued

Teacher as Facilitator	Ms. Duarte	Ms. Romer
Critical Junctures	(<i>Wretched Stone</i> , WG, 10/08/09) Ms. Duarte: You can choose somebody else [to share].	(<i>A Weekend with Wendell</i> , WG, 1/19/10) Ms. Romer: I would like someone to tell me because I notice that some of you are making faces like you're not very happy with what is going on. Leann, tell me your thoughts on this.
Teachable moments in discussions, recognized and taken up by teachers to foster discussion.	Bridget: Another reason why he could have chose monkeys is because they are the closest thing to people because before there were even men there were just monkeys and then eventually the monkeys started turning into people and so maybe he made the closet things to monkeys. Ms. Duarte: OK. Krista: Everyone was becoming humans because the rest is still an idea and people started looking at it and then the monkeys and that man started breading with them. Maybe the world	Leann: He [Wendell] gets like five things to do and she[Sophie] only gets one. Sophie is sad and Wendell is mean. He gets everything. Ms. Romer: Emma? Emma: Because he's kind of bossy and rude and he's making up things like he's making Sophie be one thing and he's all the rest
Release Teacher begins by facilitating discussion but turns conversation over to the students.	(<i>The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog</i> , WG 10/13/09) Krista: My idea was the opposite of Dawn's. I was saying that he has tasted it [a hot dog] and tricked the pigeon into giving him some, and because when he said, 'Oh, it needs mustard. How would he know mustard would taste good on a hot dog? It might taste awful. Like how would you know that?	(<i>A Weekend with Wendell</i> , WG, 1/19/10) Ms. Romer: [Reading from <i>A Weekend with Wendell</i>] <i>After Sophie's parents tucked Sophie in her bed, Wendell in his sleeping bag, kissed them both and turned off the light, Wendell grabbed his flashlight and shone it right into Sophie's eyes. 'See you tomorrow,' he said, smiling. Sophie shut her eyes. I can't wait for Wendell to go home she said to herself.</i> (n.p.)

Table 5 continued

Teacher as Facilitator	Ms. Duarte	Ms. Romer
Release	<p>Ms. Duarte: Are you asking me? Are you asking your peers?</p> <p>Dawn: I had a milkshake with French fries and I've never had that before.</p> <p>Krista: A milkshake?</p> <p>Derrik: A frosty.</p> <p>Riley: This is something like Krista's and it's like maybe the duckling had something better than the hot dog before like he probably had something that had mustard in it, like probably a hamburger or something, and he probably, how would he know that it tasted like chicken or like mustard?</p> <p>Ms. Duarte: Throw it back to your peers.</p> <p>Bridget: Maybe the duckling just really likes mustard for some reason, and like put it on everything he eats or something like that. And usually when people have a hot dog, they usually put mustard, ketchup, or relish on.</p>	<p>Jonah: That's so not nice.</p> <p>Matt: Wendell was being mean to Sophie, so Sophie should get him back.</p> <p>Gabe: Like a payback.</p> <p>Isella: He could see how it feels.</p> <p>Jonah: Well that's not nice either.</p> <p>Matt: But that's what he gets.</p> <p>Gabe: Yah a payback!</p>

recognized how valuable acting as a facilitator was by stating, "Throughout this process I have begun to realize that the children are able to travel down the path of learning and discovery and the teacher is able to act as the facilitator" (Teacher reflection log, 10/15/09). While facilitating discussion, Ms. Duarte relied on questioning and response approaches such as expanding, recognition of critical junctures, and release to encourage students to share interpretations posited during discussion. The next section reports on

each of the categories that contributed to how Ms. Duarte enacted the role of facilitator.

Expanding

Using uptake (Nystrand, 1997) with students' statements elicited during whole group discussion, Ms. Duarte restated students comments, requesting that they expand on their initial ideas using questions like, "Why did you think that..." and "Why are you saying that..." This questioning and response strategy was utilized when there were moments in the discussion that required further explanation from students to form interpretations. The category expanding was structured on comments and questions from the teacher that helped develop interpretations and allowed for deeper construction of meaning. In this transcript example from *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* (Willems, 2004). Ms. Duarte rephrases Logan's comment about the duckling lying to the pigeon, asking, "why he [the duckling] was saying that." By asking "why" Ms. Duarte believed that she was, "helping students think deeper." Expanding enabled Ms. Duarte to foster dialogue, in turn guiding students to articulate deeper understandings of the books they were discussing.

Throughout data collection Ms. Duarte also commented that she felt like some literature was better than others for discussion. She stated, "My kids love these Mo Willems books! I was surprised at how much they had to say about such simple stuff" (Interview, 10/15/09). In this case the small amount of storyline offered a point for discussion, which Ms. Duarte was able to expand on.

Expanding (*The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, WG, 10/13/09)

Ms. Duete: [Reads from the book] *You know, I'm pretty smart for a duckling*
(n.p.).

Logan: He was just joking to get the hot dog.

Ashley: He's never tried it before.

Logan: He was lying so he could get the hot dog.

Ms. Duerte: So wait, you all had ideas about this, I guess I'm not understanding what you were saying. Why are you saying that, 'Oh, he was just saying that and he was lying?' Logan, Why were you all saying that he was lying?

Logan: I said that because the duckling? Oh yeah, he wanted the hot dog. He was wondering, like was describing it to give him the hot dog so he can taste it, like 'Does it taste like chicken?' He was probably thinking that the pigeon would give him a hot dog to eat and he would be trying to joke with him and eat the hot dog.

Expanding assisted Ms. Duerte in facilitating discussion. By utilizing students' responses and questions, Ms. Duerte was able to extend discussion. As a result, students were able to express their interpretations of the characters' actions and events occurring in the stories.

Critical Junctures

Critical junctures were categorized as moments in discussion when teachers had more than one possible way to proceed (Serafini, 2009). These moments were recognized as possibilities in the discussions or teachable moments in which the teachers had the opportunity to recognize the potential students had to offer in discussion (Serafini, 2009). Critical junctures were observed during a follow up discussion of the picture book, *The Wretched Stone* (1991). Ms. Duerte noted in her reflection log (10/08/09), "On the first day of discussion students were intrigued by the characters in

the book and focused on the fact that the glowing rock had turned the human crew into monkeys.” During the second day of discussion the class began to debate about the notion of creation versus evolution. At one point I noted in my field notes that I could read discomfort on Ms. Duarte’s face. However, she allowed the conversation to take place at a critical moment where she could have chosen to terminate discussion. Although there was no uptake of the ideas expressed by the students, Ms. Duarte did not discourage conversation at this critical juncture; instead, she listened as students debated. Contrasting from previous discussions, Ms. Duarte recognized that there were possibilities in the discussion (Serafini, 2008), consequently allowing students to proceed with their conversation.

This excerpt demonstrates how discussion could have been taken one step further had Ms. Duarte chosen to use the students’ ideas to advance discussion. At the end of the discussion you will notice that the conversation turns to Nicco, who was not involved in the debate between Bridget and Riley, essentially shifting the exchange in a new direction.

Critical Junctures (*The Wretched Stone*, WG, 10/08/09)

Ms. Duarte: You can choose somebody else [to share].

Bridget: Another reason why he could have chose monkeys is because they are the closest thing to people because before there were even men there were just monkeys and then eventually the monkeys started turning into people and so maybe he made the closet things to monkeys.

Ms. Duarte: OK.

Krista: Everyone was becoming humans because the rest is still an idea and people started looking at it and then the monkeys and that man started breeding with them. Maybe the world started, as everyone being one human and the rest are monkeys.

Ms. Duarte: OH! OK. That's a theory [pause] but usually?

Riley: That's a theory, that's a theory. It's like, people say God created man and then the rib of it just made a human body.

[Some random noises in the group and side conversations that were inaudible]

Ms. Duarte: You ok Nicco? You just wanted to prove that point though, right?

Nicco: Yeah.

Based on Ms. Duarte's reflection log she felt that the religious nature of this discussion could have been troublesome as a teacher; therefore, she opted not to be involved with nor allow the debate to continue. Furthermore, Ms. Duarte shared, "The debate that arose between evolution vs. creation was quite amazing. These are the types of discussion that I really do love, however I often fear what the reaction will be from parents" (Teacher reflection log, 10/09/09). Her purposeful decision not to continue is important to discuss here. Although Ms. Duarte stopped the discussion, she later stated in her reflection log that she recognized that had she simply allowed the students to continue the debate by removing herself from the conversation there would have been "no harm." This recognition brings forth the idea that Ms. Duarte was aware of the potential in this discussion although she did not encourage it to continue. Coupled with the transcripts and Ms. Duarte's reflection log, this excerpt exemplifies how critical junctures could have been taken up.

Release

At several points during various picture book discussions, Ms. Duerte turned the conversation over to her students, allowing them to facilitate discussion. She often used terms like “throw it back to your peers” or “what do your classmates think”. Although these moments may seem as if Ms. Duerte is unsure of how to respond, she stated in her reflection log that this was her way of turning the discussion over to the students. In other words, she purposefully released her responsibility as facilitator of the discussion to her students. While talking about *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* (2004), students seek to figure out if the duckling has had a hot dog before, after he states at the end of the book “It needs mustard” (n.p.). As the students worked through their interpretations, Ms. Duerte turns over the conversation at a point where she could have continued to facilitate the discussion stating, “Are you asking me? Are you asking your peers?”. In the following transcript sample students talk back and forth continuing conversation while Ms. Duerte takes a step back. Most noticeably is the amount of student response compared to teacher talk.

Release (The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog, WG, 10/13/09)

Ms. Duerte: OK. Now do you also agree with...it seems as though from what I've heard once we finished the story, was some of the class believes that the pigeon has never tasted a hot dog, and some of the class believes that the pigeon was lying about eating a hot dog. Not the pigeon, the duckling.

Dawn: I think he did because he's like, you wouldn't do that if you wanted a hot dog. What does it taste like?

Krista: He'd never tasted a hot dog with mustard on it. How does he know that a hot dog would taste better?

Ms. Duarte: Ladies, Dawn and Krista, what were you talking about the mustard here?

Dawn: Well maybe like he's never tasted mustard before, and once he gets the hot dog maybe he thinks, 'Oh wow! We should have some mustard. That'd be really good.

Ms. Duarte: OK.

Krista: My idea was the opposite of Dawn's. I was saying that he has tasted it [a hot dog] and tricked the pigeon into giving him some, and because when he said, 'Oh, it needs mustard. How would he know mustard would taste good on a hot dog? It might taste awful. Like how would you know that?

Ms. Duarte: Are you asking me? Are you asking your peers?

Dawn: I had a milkshake with French fries and I've never had that before.

Krista: A milkshake?

Derrik: A frosty.

Riley: This is something like Krista's and it's like maybe the duckling had something better than the hot dog before like he probably had something that had mustard in it, like probably a hamburger or something, and he probably, how would he know that it tasted like chicken or like mustard?

Ms. Duarte: Throw it back to your peers.

Bridget: Maybe the duckling just really likes mustard for some reason, and like put it on everything he eats or something like that. And usually when people have a hot dog, they usually put mustard, ketchup, or relish on.

During the same discussion about *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, Ms. Duarte turns the conversation over to her students. Again using the words “throw it back to your peers” she allows the class to facilitate the discussion and removes herself, giving students the opportunity to continue to discuss the book without her guidance. Because of the ambiguity of Mo Willems’ picture books, I observed Ms. Duarte frequently offering students the chance to facilitate the discussion. In the beginning of the transcript example, you will notice that students took over the conversation by discussing back and forth their interpretation of how the duckling was manipulating the pigeon throughout the book to get the pigeon’s hot dog. After a series of questions, Ms. Duarte turns the conversation over to the students.

Release (*The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, WG, 10/13/09)

Ms. Duarte: [Reading from the book] *You know, I’m pretty smart for a duckling.*

Clara: He was just joking to get the hot dog.

Riley: He’s never tried it before.

Logan: He was lying so he could get the hot dog.

Ms. Duarte: So wait, you all had ideas about this, I guess I’m not understanding what you were saying. Why are you saying that, ‘Oh, he was just saying that and he was lying?’ Why were you all saying that he was lying?

Logan: I said that because the duckling? Oh yeah, he wanted the hot dog. He was wondering, like was describing to give him the hot dog so he can taste it, like

‘Does it taste like chicken?’ He was probably thinking that the pigeon would give him a hot dog to eat and he would be trying to joke with him and eat the hot dog.

Ms. Duarte: OK. Derrik, did you want to add something to Logan’s or say something different?

Derrik: What I think was kind of weird was that, why would the duckling say it tastes like chicken. Because if you really wanted it, then why would you want to know if it tastes like chicken if you wanted it.

Ms. Duarte: Throw it back to your peers. What do they think?

Derrik: Well, I have an idea. He said that because he thought maybe the pigeon would be like he’s [the duckling] never tasted a hot dog before to see if it tasted like chicken, so then he thought that maybe he would share it

As demonstrated in this passage, Ms. Duarte empowered students to facilitate whole group discussion by “throwing it back to [their] peers.” By doing so students felt warranted in guiding the conversation without Ms. Duarte’s control. Because they were accustomed to this practice, students were apt to continue dialogue as Ms. Duarte observed. This was characteristic of the category release. The category release was also observed in small group discussion.

In addition to whole group discussions, small group discussions also provided an opportunity for students to lead. Ms. Duarte often began small group discussions by posing questions to the group of students participating. During a small group discussion about *The Wretched Stone*, Lydia directed a question at Ms. Duarte. At this point, Ms. Duarte could have answered the question based on her interpretation; however, she asked the students if they were going to answer Lydia’s question. As a result, the students took

over the conversation and began working collaboratively to answer. Students took on the teacher's facilitator role by posing subsequent questions related to Lydia's original question.

Release (*The Wretched Stone*, SG, 10/09/09)

Lydia: Is the stone a good thing or a bad thing?

Ms. Duarte: Now Lydia threw out a question. Are you going to answer that question?

Helena: I think the wretched stone was a bad thing because risking your life and almost being an ape forever isn't as glad an experience as you think. If you're dead you can't experience anything.

Dawn: Could gold be idolized?

Bridget: This just came to my mind, but I think the wretched stone was supposed to stay at that forest place or that little island because they said there was no life in that place, so the people could go there and visit and there would be life.

Helena: I thought of something and I don't know, well, maybe since they already know people there's different parts of land, so maybe this was like in the 1700s, maybe that's why - like what setting he wanted the book to be. So maybe that's like a country now, and nobody lived there before. I just thought of that.

Dawn: Going back to Bridget's, what if there was life there? Like monkeys?

Except they all died and they were in the box and they came back to haunt people that looked at them too long and became monkeys.

The transcript examples provided illustrate how Ms. Duarte was able to release her role as the facilitator of discussion to her students. The students in these situations had the opportunity to manage the conversation by posing questions to one another, as well as responding to each other's interpretations. By stepping back from the discussion, Ms. Duarte enabled her students to guide the dialogue. This in turn gave students the confidence to continue talking with out Ms. Duarte being in charge.

As part of her closing reflection, Ms. Duarte described how she felt about the read alouds and picture book discussions, "Throughout this process I have begun to realize that the children can learn so much on their own when the teacher is able to act as the facilitator. My students have gained so much from these read aloud sessions, in the passed few weeks, and so have I" (11/15/09). With the recognition that students can be actively involved in facilitating, Ms. Duarte effectively enacted the role of facilitator.

Teacher as Facilitator- Ms. Romer (First Grade Classroom)

Throughout my study, there were many moments in whole group and small group discussion that Ms. Romer transitioned during discussions from soliciting to facilitating. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the word facilitate implies that the teacher guided students during discussion, helping them interpret literature through questioning and responding to ideas that the students brought into the discussion. As a facilitator, Ms. Romer moved away from using repetitious questioning, instead relying on open-ended questions to help students expand and build on their half-baked ideas (Serafini, 2006). Differing from the findings from Ms. Duarte's classroom discussions, Ms. Romer's analysis revealed that role of facilitator was more prevalent than the role of solicitor. With a little over sixty-five percent of the transcript categories contributing to teacher as

facilitator, prevalence in the data suggests that Ms. Romer was more apt to use uptake (Nystrand, 1997) in assisting students during their discussions. Ms. Romer believed that by acting as a facilitator her students were, “engaged in pretty sophisticated conversations” (Teacher reflection log, 1/07/09). Furthermore, the categories that were used to develop teacher as facilitator are more advantageous for promoting discussion, as exemplified with excerpts from the discussion carried out in Ms. Romer’s class.

When enacting the role of facilitator, Ms. Romer employed a variety of strategies to foster discussion, one of which was categorized as expanding. By recognizing that her students had ideas to share that were inferential, Ms. Romer used questioning and response to guide them. Accordingly, students were able to express deeper interpretations of the books they were exposed to. As stated previously, expanding was defined by instances in which Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte used questioning and response to help develop students’ interpretations, allowing for deeper construction of meaning.

Kevin Henkes was an author that Ms. Romer enjoyed introducing to her classes each year. Ms. Romer noted in her reflection log (1/19/10) that she hoped that her class would connect with the characters, like previous year’s students had. Much like she hoped, Ms. Romer’s students were fascinated with the relationships between the characters in Henkes’ books, which I had noted in my field notes. During a discussion and read aloud of *Chester’s Way* (Henkes, 1988) students noticed that some of the characters they had been introduced in other Henkes’ books, such as *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse* (Henkes, 1996) and *Lilly’s Big Day* (Henkes, 2006), also appeared in this book. As anticipated, several students remarked on noticing Lilly in the illustrations of *Chester’s Way*. Cognizant of her students’ noticings, Ms Romer immediately asked

Emma how she knew the “fierce cat” was Lilly. By expanding on what Emma observed, Ms. Romer enabled a short discussion to take place in which several students highlighted the characteristics of Lilly as depicted in the illustration. The following excerpt captures the interaction that took place, exemplifying how Ms. Romer expanded on Emma’s initial reaction.

Expanding (*Chester’s Way*, WG, 1/19 /10)

Ms. Romer: [Reading from *Chester’s Way*] *One day, while Chester and Wilson were practicing their hand signals, some older boys rode by, popping wheelies. They circled Chester and Wilson and yelled personal remarks. Chester and Wilson didn’t know what to do. Just when they were about to give up hope, a fierce-looking cat with horrible fangs jumped out of the bushes and frightened the older boys away.*

Emma: That’s Lilly because of the boots.

Ms. Romer: You could tell that fierce cat is Lilly

Emma: The boots are Lilly’s.

Stacy: Wait – and because she has a tail right there.

Isella: Chester and Wilson don’t have those [boots].

This short exchange that took place between the students depicts how Ms. Romer’s questioning enabled students to fully convey their interpretations of the character Lilly in the illustrations of *Chester’s Way*. By asking an expanding question, Ms. Romer provided her students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of Kevin Henkes’ characters.

Another occurrence of expanding was observed during a whole group discussion about *Julius, The Baby of the World* (Henkes, 1986). While Ms. Romer was reading a passage Jordan burst out, “That’s mean!” She then accompanied her comment with a question. Jordan said, “Why is Lilly being so mean?” Conscious of Jordan’s displeasure with Lilly’s actions, Ms. Romer stopped reading and posed Jordan’s question to the whole group. Revisiting part of the story where Lilly, the main character, becomes unkind, Ms. Romer takes Jordan’s question and asks her students to discuss with a partner their interpretations of Lilly’s behavior. Expanding on Jordan’s thoughts, Ms. Romer facilitated a discussion that allowed students to voice their opinions of the twist in Lilly’s personality. This following passage demonstrates how expanding affords students the opportunity to communicate their views.

Expanding (*Julius, The Baby of the World*, WG, 1/21/10)

Ms. Romer: [Reading from *Julius, The Baby of the World*] “*Julius is the baby of the world,*” chimed Lilly’s parents. “*Disgusting,*” said Lilly.

Jordan: That’s mean!

Jordan: Why is Lilly being so mean?

Ms. Romer: I just think that is the best question of all that you could ask there, Jordan. Boys and girls, Jordan said out loud the question I was thinking on my mind. Why before Julius was born was she so kind? But now that Julius is here, is Lilly being so unkind? Would you turn to a partner and talk about that?

[Students discuss with a partner for approximately 3 minutes] Wrap up that thought and come on back. Oh my goodness, that was a big discussion, and you were totally on target. I heard lots of discussion about Julius and Lilly, I heard

some great conversations going on. Isella, will you tell us what you talked about?

Isella: I think she's jealous because when my sisters were born I was jealous my parents and my grandma, they paid attention to her.

Ms. Romer: Oh, so you can understand how Lilly is feeling here. Interesting.

Matthew, what do you think? What did you talk about?

Matthew: We talked about that maybe she might go to the store. She might find a dog something or maybe she'll go there and maybe she's got a dog because maybe she's supposed to be the only child instead of him. So she gets a dog for attention.

Ms. Romer: So you think like Isella that there's a little jealousy going on?

Matthew: Well, she wants to be the only kid and she might get really upset that she might want to get a dog or whatever.

Ms. Romer: Oh, so you think maybe that'll make her feel better? That's an interesting thought.

Matt: Yeah, so then she won't have to get mad.

With purposeful questioning and response, Ms. Romer was able to expand on Jordan's thoughts to help her students share their interpretations of Lilly's actions. Ms. Romer noted, "I think the students got into Lilly this time, because she evoked a lot more emotion with her unkind acts towards her baby brother" (Teacher reflection log, 1/21/10). Encouraging students to turn to a peer and share their thoughts was also helpful approach for expanding the conversation. This strategy was observed frequently throughout this study. According to Ms. Romer, she regarded this approach as useful. She stated,

“providing students with the opportunity to turn and discuss with their peers helped the conversations develop” (Interview, 2/10/10). Coupled with Ms. Romer’s interest in Kevin Henkes’ work and her knowledge of the characters in his stories, she was able to assist students in expanding and furthering discussion with the use of questioning and response. The next category observed in Ms. Romer’s class was critical junctures.

Critical Junctures

Critical junctures, as stated previously, were categorized as moments in discussion in which the teacher had a window of opportunity to acknowledge and act in response to students’ reactions, elicited during discussion. By doing so teachers recognized that there was potential in the discussion, further providing students an opportunity to share their interpretations.

While Ms. Romer was reading *A Weekend with Wendell* (1986) by Kevin Henkes, she quickly noticed that her students were disgusted by the main character, Wendell, and his actions towards his cousin Sophie. In her reflection (1/19/10) Ms. Romer commented on her students’ physical reaction to Wendell, “I saw that everyone was appalled by Wendell’s behavior and I thought it was interesting that no one said anything until I brought it up.” Acknowledging that students were struggling with the way Wendell was treating Sophie, Ms. Romer responded to their nonverbal cues. In turn, she recognized the potential in discussion and questioned her students about their feelings. The following transcript excerpt exemplifies how questioning at critical junctures can foster interpretation.

Critical Junctures (*A Weekend with Wendell*, WG, 1/19/10)

Ms. Romer: I would like someone to tell me because I notice that some of you are making faces like you're not very happy with what is going on. Leann, tell me your thoughts on this.

Leann: He [Wendell] gets like five things to do and she [Sophie] only gets one. Sophie is sad and Wendell is mean. He gets everything.

Ms. Romer: Emma?

Emma: Because he's kind of bossy and rude and he's making up things like he's making Sophie be one thing and he's all the rest.

Ms. Romer noticed a critical moment in discussion, which needed to be called to attention. Using questioning to help students articulate their interpretations, Ms. Romer was able to expand discussion at a critical juncture. This is evident in the transcript example above. Ms. Romer recognized students' concern about Sophie and addressed it in discussion. Another example of critical junctures was demonstrated in a discussion of the book *Pigeon Wants a Puppy* (Willems, 2008).

Mo Willems' books often beckoned students to respond during read alouds. Ms. Romer discussed, "It's like he [Mo Willems] writes these books to get the kids involved. He has a way of bringing them. I have noticed the students love to talk to the Pigeon as if he is talking to them" (Informal correspondence, 1/13/10). While reading *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late* (Willems, 2006) the day before, Ms. Romer noticed that her students began answering Pigeon's questions. As she continued to read, students became more involved with the conversation taking place between Pigeon and them. Because Ms. Romer was intrigued by her students' interest in having a dialogue with Pigeon, she decided to read *Pigeon Wants a Puppy* the next day. Much like she had anticipated, Ms.

Romer's students instantly began responding to Pigeon's questions in the first opening of the book. Significantly, Ms. Romer recognized a critical juncture in the discussion. In this transcript excerpt, Ms. Romer acknowledges her students' reaction to Pigeon's concern with the puppy, by providing them the opportunity to discuss their interpretations of what the Pigeon is thinking. This was characteristic of the way Ms. Romer approached critical junctures in discussion.

Critical Junctures (*Pigeon Wants a Puppy*, WG, 1/13/10)

Ms. Romer: [Reading from *Pigeon Wants a Puppy*] *I want a puppy! Right here! Right now!* (n.p.)

[Students groan with a "no" sound.]

Students: No, no, no!

Ms Romer: [Reading from *Pigeon Wants a Puppy*] *What's that? Woof! Woof! Is it possible? Have my dreams come true?!*

Stacy: No.

Nathan: Yes.

Ms. Romer: [Reading from *Pigeon Wants a Puppy*] *Woof?*
AAAAAAAGGGGHHHH! (n.p.)

[Laughter from students]

Isella: Look at that eye.

Gabe: He got his puppy.

Ms. Romer: [Reading from *Pigeon Wants a Puppy*] *It's huge! The teeth! The hair! That wet nose! The slobber! The claws! I mentioned the teeth, right? Really, I had no idea!* (n.p.)

Emma: He wanted a puppy. He got it.

Stacy: He got his wish.

[Students talk over one another]

Ms Romer: [Reading from *Pigeon Wants a Puppy*] *I've changed my mind.*

[Students burst out with giggles and start talking amongst themselves] I want you to turn to a partner and very quickly tell them why he changed his mind. [3 minute discussions] Turn back to me when you're done, please. Ok, come on back. I know you're not all the way done. Let's talk about the different reasons that you talked about. Why did he change his mind? Joseph?

Joseph: Maybe because he's big and he thought it was going to be a little smaller, like the same size as him.

Ms. Romer: Joseph, show me how big a pigeon is in your hands. How tall are pigeons? And how big do you think a puppy might be compared to a pigeon? So it would seem really big. Even though puppies seem small to us, would it seem really big to the pigeon?

Joseph: And sometimes pigeons are afraid of dogs.

Ms. Romer: Oh, yeah. So Joseph said that he might have changed his mind was that it was just a little bit bigger than he thought. Kaden, what did your group talk about?

Kaden: He was like really scared of it. He was like – he had those sharp teeth, and all that slobber and wet.

Stacy: That was a little more than he thought. A little more in his face than he thought.

Kaden: Would you go back to the dog page?

Ms. Romer: He doesn't look real scary there, but I guess to a pigeon he looks pretty scary, huh? But he was just a little more in his face than he thought. So, Joseph said he was bigger than the pigeon though.

Kaden: I also have got one more thing. And maybe he was going to lick him, too.

Exemplified in this transcript example, Ms. Romer identified a critical moment in discussion that needed to be taken up. Although there were no specific student responses that lead her to identify a critical juncture, she relied on students' reactions to the book as a cue to further discussion. By allowing students to share their interpretations of Pigeon's feelings about the puppy, Ms. Romer recognized the potential in this discussion (Serafini, 2006). Critical junctures, as demonstrated from the excerpts from discussions in Ms. Romer's class, were teachable moments that enabled students to verbally process their understandings of the events occurring in *A Weekend with Wendell* and *Pigeon Wants a Puppy*. The next category observed in Ms. Romer's discussions was release.

Release

Release was an approach used to turn the responsibility of facilitating discussion over to students. In other words, she purposefully released her responsibility as facilitator of the discussion to her students. As stated previously, this was an approach that contributed to how the role of facilitator was enacted. Moreover, this was a strategy employed by the teachers to give students the confidence to lead discussion without the teacher providing assistance or interrupting discussion.

Ms. Romer never stated when she was giving students responsibility to lead discussions. She simply sat quietly and observed as students took control. This was purposeful and was addressed in Ms. Romer's teacher reflection log. She said:

Sometimes students got going and I let them. My first graders are great at talking back and forth and sharing ideas. I believe it is good to let them go. They are capable of leading discussion. I find that some of my lower-level readers are my highest-level thinkers and do a great job at talking and taking over. (Teacher reflection log, 1/19/10)

This pattern of release was observed during a read aloud of *A Weekend with Wendell* (Henkes, 1986). Ms. Romer considered Matt and Jonah as low-level readers. When she noticed that Jonah was articulating his feelings about Wendell's behavior she chose to let the students take control of the conversation. As expressed in Ms. Romer's previous reflection, she believed that low-level readers, like Jonah and Matt, were capable of facilitating discussion when given the opportunity. In this example Matt responds to Jonah, expressing his solution to the issue with Wendell. Moreover the conversation continues without Ms. Romer facilitating.

Release (*A Weekend with Wendell*, WG, 1/21/10)

Ms. Romer: [Reading from *A Weekend with Wendell*] *After Sophie's parents tucked Sophie in her bed, Wendell in his sleeping bag, kissed them both and turned off the light, Wendell grabbed his flashlight and shone it right into Sophie's eyes. 'See you tomorrow,' he said, smiling. Sophie shut her eyes. I can't wait for Wendell to go home she said to herself.*

Jonah: That's so not nice.

Matt: Wendell was being mean to Sophie, so Sophie should get him back.

Gabe: Like a payback.

Isella: He could see how it feels.

Jonah: Well that's not nice either.

Matt: But that's what he gets.

Gabe: Yah a payback!

Another example of release occurred during a discussion of *Pigeon Wants a Puppy* (Willems, 2008). While sharing Mo Willems' picture books, students frequently bantered with the Pigeon as Ms. Romer read aloud. Because Mo Willems' character Pigeon talks to the audience, the first graders treated each read aloud from the Pigeon series as a discussion between the Pigeon and themselves. Moreover, the students treated the Pigeon like a friend. Ms. Romer said:

They started adding Pigeon to everything their writing workshop, stories, songs and even poems. His face was popping up everywhere. Every time they [students] read his [Mo Willems] books for silent reading I could hear them talking to the Pigeon. They became friends. (Interview, 2/10/10)

The following transcript example exemplifies how Ms. Romer released the discussion to her students. This enabled them to facilitate a debate about sunshine without teacher assistance. Isella attempts to bring Ms. Romer into the conversation by asking her a question. However, Ms. Romer chooses not to answer. She purposefully responds nonverbally as to not interrupt the exchange amongst students; thus, allowing students to continue their dialogue without her guidance.

Release (*Pigeon Wants a Puppy*, WG, 1/13/10)

Ms. Romer: [Reading] *What?! Everybody knows that puppies need plenty of sunshine and water!* (n.p.)

Various students say "oooooh!"

Ms. Romer: Well don't puppies need sunshine and water?

Some students say no

Emma: They do need water.

Stacy: They do need water.

Matt: And sunshine.

Nate: And food.

Isella: If they didn't have sunshine they couldn't see very well.

Matt: Yes, they can. I can see in the dark.

Isella: Oh in the dark. Ms. Romer can you see in the dark?

Ms. Romer shrugs but doesn't respond verbally

Matt: Well you can.

Isella: Yes

Stacy: That's not what he [Pigeon] means. You know like plants need sunshine to grow. He is making a joke!

Emma: Yah he is being funny.

Isella: Oh that's funny.

Students laugh.

The role of facilitator was characteristic of Ms. Romer across data from classroom discussions. She approached the role of facilitator by expanding on students initial

interpretations to enhance discussion. By elaborating on students' initial ideas, Ms. Romer facilitated discussion. Moreover, encouraging students to fully articulate their understandings of the picture books they were introduced to. Ms. Romer also employed the strategy of utilizing critical junctures in discussion to help students express ideas that were not fully constructed. Finally, Ms. Romer released control of facilitating discussion to her students when she perceived they were able to guide the conversation without her. The role of facilitator was also impacted by themes that were noted in Ms. Romer's and Ms. Duarte's reflection logs and interviews. The following section presents a cross-case analysis of the role of teacher as facilitator.

Cross-Case Analysis-Teacher as Facilitator

In the following section I explain each of the contextual factors that contributed to how Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte enacted the role of facilitator. First, I generally define each of the key factors that impacted instructional approaches used by Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer when carrying out the role of solicitor. I then describe in detail each theme using excerpts from teacher reflection logs and interviews. Finally, I conclude with a summary of my cross-case analysis of teacher as facilitator.

Using secondary data sources, I analyzed Ms. Romer's and Ms. Duarte's reactions to facilitating read alouds and discussions. Based on my analysis four contextual factors were identified that impacted the role teacher as facilitator. These contextual factors are illustrated in Figure 4. The first contextual factor identified through Ms. Duarte's and Ms. Romer's reflections and interviews was, release of control made it easier to facilitate discussion. The next factor acknowledged was the benefit of small group discussions.

Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer mentioned that small groups offered a space for all students to share their ideas; as a result, students who typically didn't share felt comfortable doing so within a smaller group. Literature and websites impacted the approach that teachers took when acting as a facilitator; hence, the third contextual factor evidences the importance of selecting and implementing the use of quality literature and websites. Finally, the last factor determined exhibited the passion both teachers had for using author studies in the classroom; Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte recurrently purported their desire to use author studies despite administrative pressures, concurring that there is great educational value in teaching with author studies. Each of the contextual factors identified demonstrate the approaches that Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte were influenced by when performing their role as a facilitator during whole group and small group discussion.

Articulated in journal reflections as well as in interviews, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer described how critical relinquishing control to students in discussion was. Essentially Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte surmised that releasing conversation to students enabled them to more effectively facilitate conversation. Ms. Romer reported in her final reflection that she felt teachers should, "open up discussion so that students can say what they mean in their own words" (Teacher reflection log, 2/05/10). Correspondingly, Ms. Duarte expressed in her final interview (11/15/09), "At the end of this process I thought it was so much easier to give up control. Towards the end the students were coming up with their own ideas. They didn't even need me."

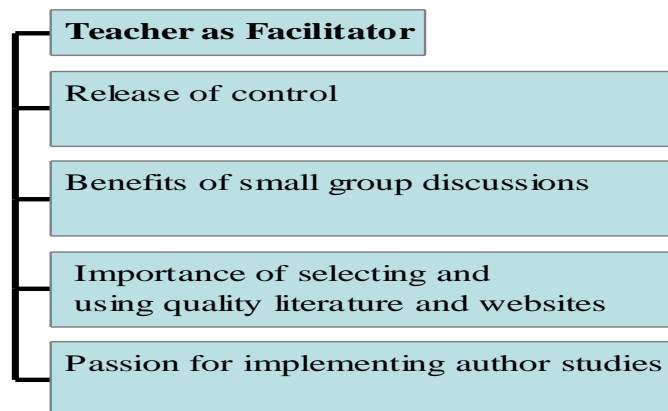


Figure 4. Contextual factors that influence teacher as facilitator

Having the belief that students can construct their own interpretations if teachers are willing to let them, Ms. Romer often provided her students the opportunity to share ideas without her “controlling” everything that was said. Reflecting on a small group discussion Ms. Romer noted, “When I gave up control of having to direct the conversation and took a backseat and just guided the conversation, the conversations flowed better” (Teacher reflection log, 1/07/10). Because each discussion may play out differently Ms. Romer also said, “There is no such thing as cookie-cutter teaching” (Interview, 2/10/10). With this in mind, Ms. Romer made it a point to let her students’ thoughts guide her while facilitating discussion. Similarly Ms. Duarte acknowledged, “I was able to listen to their response and guide the discussion by what they needed from me. Not by what I assumed they needed” (Interview, 11/15/09).

The second contextual factor evidenced in teacher reflection logs and interviews was the benefit of conducting weekly small group discussions. Ms. Romer mentioned that small groups offered a setting for all students to share ideas. She stated, “Small groups

were good for some of my readers that had a hard time talking with the whole group. I noticed that my lower readers really especially responded to the small group discussions. Nathan really had a lot to say today” (Teacher reflection log, 1/22/10). Additionally, Ms. Duarte said that students who typically didn’t express their ideas felt comfortable doing so with a smaller group. She noted, “Small groups helped some of my quiet ones come out of their shells. I know Rachel and Helena were two of the ones I noticed the most” (Interview, 11/15/09). Furthermore, both teachers agreed that they were more apt to let their students guide small group discussions. Ms. Romer posited in an interview, “I loved the open-ended discussion with the small groups. I liked just putting the books out and letting them speak” (Teacher reflection log, 1/13/10). Ms. Duarte felt more comfortable letting students facilitate small group discussion. She said in her reflection log (10/16/09), “I trusted what they were going to say and their ideas. They saw things and made connections that I didn’t see. To be honest they needed this place to talk and infer. They got things.” The examples shared support the benefits that small groups afforded Ms. Duarte’s and Ms. Romer’s students, as articulated in reflection logs and interview transcripts.

The third contextual factor determined from analysis of interviews and reflection logs was the influence of selecting high quality literature and websites. Moreover, selecting authors and illustrators that students were interested in or that the teachers were knowledgeable about affected how whole group and small group discussions were facilitated. Ms. Romer said, “You can pick really good literature that will lead them there” (Interview, 2/10/10). This was especially apparent during discussions about Mo Willems’ work.

Each teacher chose to study Mo Willems' literature and explore his website. Notably, both teachers expressed how much their students "took to his books." This was evidenced recurrently in reflection logs and interviews. Both teachers described how enthusiastically their students responded to Mo Willems' picture books. Ms. Romer said, "When we got to the talk bubbles, the students spontaneously started interpreting what Trixie's baby words meant" (Teacher reflection log, 1/13/10). Additionally, Ms. Romer articulated in her teacher reflection log that "talk bubbles" worked their way into students' writer's workshop stories. Ms. Duarte said, "My students laughed out loud when I read them *Knuffle Bunny*. They totally love *Trixie*!" (Teacher reflection log, 10/16/09). Ms. Duarte noted that some of the most intriguing conversations came from Mo Willems' books. She expressed, "Today we read *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*. It was interesting to see how the students were able to internalize how the Pigeon and the Duckling were feeling. There was also quite a discussion about the gender of the Duckling" (Teacher reflection log, 10/13/09). Not only were the conversations progressively more inferential, students responded to the visual elements of the stories as well.

Furthermore, the teachers articulated that their students were "enthralled" and "captivated" by the illustration technique employed by Mo Willems. Ms. Romer said, "They commented on the nuances of the looks on the parents faces in *Knuffle Bunny*" (Teacher reflection log, 1/12/10). Moreover Ms. Romer's believed that her students "could tell that they [Trixie's parents] were upset just by observing the illustrations" (Teacher reflection log, 1/12/10). Additionally, during a discussion about *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*, Ms. Duarte noted that she was amazed at how the students used the

illustrations to interpret the characters feelings. She said, “Students reacted to the emotion of the Pigeon and how he treated the Duckling. They were so surprised when the Pigeon threw a fit. We had to stop as everyone [students] pointed to the pictures and talked about it” (Teacher reflection, 10/13/09). As reflected in these examples Mo Willems’ illustration style intrigued students, which impacted classroom discussion. Not only was Mo Willems’ literature influential, so was his author website.

As I observed website explorations I reflected in my field notes that students in both classrooms showed more interest in Mo Willems’ website. Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte supported this notion in their teacher reflections as well. Ms. Duarte said, “This site was geared towards children; they were energetic when searching it” (Teacher reflection log, 10/14/09). Moreover, when asked to compare the websites they explore throughout the study, Ms. Duarte’s students expressed that they thought “his website was the best.” Ms. Duarte’s fifth grade students said, “It was the best because Mo Willems is like a cartoonist and his characters are really funny and cool” (Researcher field notes, 10/14/09).

The design of Mo Willems’ website was also central to the positive reaction Ms. Romer had to Mo Willems’ website. Because it was easy for students to negotiate independently, Ms. Romer let her students freely explore Mo Willems’ website. She said, “I loved letting them loose on the website, rather than so much direction. We ended up having much more sophisticated conversations one-on-one rather than whole group” (Informal correspondence, 1/11/10). Mo Willems’ picture books and websites impacted the way Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer approached facilitating discussion. As exemplified in these examples, both teachers exhibited aptness in facilitating students in discussion and

website exploration because of the high interest and quality in Mo Willems' work. At the conclusion of the study Ms. Duarte stated, "These [Mo Willems] picture books became a huge part of our classroom. Students took all of the books we studied to take to their kindergarten reading buddies" (Interview, 11/15/09). Not only did the students display their enthusiasm for picture books, so did the teachers.

The last contextual factor determined was the teachers' passion for incorporating author studies in their reading instruction. Despite administrative restrictions they believed that teaching author studies was an integral part of their literacy instruction. Ms. Romer said:

I will never, ever give up author studies. It should be the topic of a class so every teacher knows how to do it! The contents of the class should focus on leading open-ended discussion groups, enhancing using author websites, how to create collections, who good author collections are. And what not to do. (Teacher reflection log, 2/05/10).

Ms. Romer expressed that throughout her 20 years of teaching she had always used author studies and plans to continue to do so until she retires.

In the same way, Ms. Duarte expressed her love for author studies. She reflected on her beliefs saying:

I will do this forever. The kids were so into it and I learned so much. Author studies aren't just for the younger grades, my students kept going back to all of the authors and learning more on the websites and checking out books from the library. (Interview, 11/15/09)

Author studies were important to the teachers who participated in this study as demonstrated in their reflections and will continue to contribute to their literacy instruction.

The approaches teachers utilized when enacting the role of facilitator were influenced by the four themes identified from analyzing teacher reflection logs and interviews. These contextual factors included: release of control during discussion, benefits of using small group discussions, implementing high quality literature and websites, and a passion for using author studies in the classroom. Ms. Duarte's and Ms. Romer's desire to conduct literature discussions and website explorations that were beneficial to students became apparent through this analysis. Each teacher identified, through their reflection logs as well as interviews, the need for conducting discussions that enabled students to share their interpretations effectively. Analyzing secondary sources provided a window into Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's feelings towards facilitating discussion. By identifying themes that impacted Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's ability to facilitate discussion, teachers' perspectives were evidenced.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings related to the overarching themes teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator from Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's classroom discussions. By presenting findings from the categories appealing, prompting, examination, labeling, and seeking agreement from my with-in case analysis, I found that theme teacher as solicitor was purposefully employed by Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer. I also presented the findings for the theme teacher as facilitator, as demonstrated in the

categories expanding, critical junctures, and release. My cross-case analysis explained how contextual factors influenced the way Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer approached their role as solicitor and facilitator. Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the themes teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator and offer implications from this study that impact education.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

With the intention of understanding teachers' instructional roles in literature discussion, I conducted research that called attention to teachers' questioning and response strategies employed during whole group and small group discussion. Through this research I specifically highlighted two elementary teachers' instructional approaches for conducting whole and small group literature discussion and the contextual factors that influenced these approaches. In this final chapter I provide an overview of my study including: statement of the research problem, theoretical framework, methodology and findings. Next, I provide a summary of the findings in relation to research and theory. Finally, I discuss the implications of my research study and make suggestions for future research.

Methodology

As explained in Chapter 2, the study reported here is a multi-case study of two elementary teachers, which focused on the instructional roles utilized when conducting whole group and small group literature discussions. Drawing on the work of Merriam (1998) I selected case study as the methodology, with the purpose of gaining a holistic understanding of the instructional practices of Ms. Duarte, fifth grade teacher, and Ms. Romer's, first grade teacher. This multi-case study covered twelve weeks of observation in two elementary school sites, six weeks in each classroom. Whole group and small group literature discussions served as the primary data source. Secondary sources included: teacher reflection logs, researcher field notes, Informal correspondence, and

interviews. I spent from the beginning of October to mid-November observing in Ms. Duarte's classroom and from the beginning of January to mid-February in Ms. Romer's classroom. For three of the six weeks in each classroom, each week the teachers conducted: two whole group read alouds with discussion, one author website exploration, and one or two small group discussions.

Underpinning this study were three theoretical perspectives: Reader-response theory, research on classroom discussion, and visual literacy research. Reader-response theory assumes that students transact with text in order to construct meaning; therefore reading is considered a transactional process (Rosenblatt, 1978). Research on classroom discussion identifies the questioning and response techniques teachers utilize in classroom discussion and purports that the teachers' role in discussion impacts student response (Cazden, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Nystrand, 1997; Myhill, 2006). Finally, visual literacy research recognizes that children's literature is a multimodal text, the images as well as the written text afford different opportunities for interpretation; images convey meaning as do the words in a picture book (Kress, 2003). Each of these theoretical and research perspectives guided this study as I sought to make sense of the instructional roles Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer utilized in classroom discussions.

Utilizing Merriam's (1998) methodology for data analysis, as well as Erickson's (1986) idea of generating assertions, I read data multiple times, constructed categories, and developed themes. I began with a with-in case analysis of Ms. Duarte's, fifth grade classroom and then proceeded to conduct a with-in case analysis of Ms. Romer's first grade classroom. I coded whole group and small group discussions using the following categories; appealing, prompting, examination, labeling, seeking agreement, expanding,

critical junctures, and release. After coding was complete, I began thinking metaphorically about the relationship of the categories. This helped me establish the themes teacher as solicitor and teacher as facilitator to describe the instructional roles utilized by Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer in whole group and small group discussions. As a result while rereading the data I discerned that all of the following categories could be organized under the broad theme teacher as solicitor: appealing, interrogations, prompting, labeling, and seeking agreement. Under the broad theme teacher as facilitator questioning and response categories included: expanding, critical junctures, and release.

Using secondary data sources, such as teacher reflection logs, informal correspondence, field notes and interviews, I conducted a cross-case analysis with the intent to identify contextual factors that impacted the ways Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte utilized their role as solicitor or facilitator in discussion. I identified four contextual factors based on contextual factors that impacted the teachers' role of soliciting. These included: administrative pressure, confinement with the reading schedule, tension with standardized testing and challenges with picture books and websites. Additionally I identified four contextual factors that impacted the teachers' role of facilitating. These included: release of control, benefits of small group discussions, the importance of selecting quality literature and websites, and passion for implementing author studies.

Discussion of Findings

At the onset of this study it was my hope that the teachers selected for this study would demonstrate innovative approaches to facilitating discussion, moving beyond traditional methods of discussion, such as IRE [Initiation Response Evaluation] (Mehan,

1979; Cazden, 1988). As I began observing, it was quickly brought to my attention that tension existed between Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's philosophical beliefs and what was expected by school site administration. During Ms. Duarte's first literature discussion of *The Wretched Stone* (VanAllsburg, 1991) questioning and response were literal, requiring students to name, recall or summarize ideas found in the text. Much like Ms. Duarte, Ms. Romer's first discussion of *The Hat* (Brett, 1997) was a summarization of events in the story. Despite the fact that these teachers professed their love for read alouds and literature discussion in preliminary interviews and observations, neither discussion reflected more than a recitation of "main ideas". At the conclusion of each of these discussions Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte confided in me, with the hope that I would not perceive their instructional approaches to literature discussion in negative manner. Ms. Duarte said to me, "Man, that didn't go the way I wanted it to" (Informal correspondence, 10/06/09). Ms. Romer confessed to me as well, "These days we are inundated with testing and that came out today in my lesson" (Informal correspondence, 1/05/10). It was apparent that these teachers were faced with some difficult decisions regarding their instructional approaches. Both teachers' recognized the disadvantages of using literature discussion as an avenue for testing skills, yet deemed it necessary because of the educational climate in which they were teaching. When analyzing whole group and small group discussion strategies such as prompting, appealing and examination served as a tool for Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte to ensure that students were capable of retelling, recalling, summarizing, and naming story elements.

As the weeks progressed, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer incorporated more open ended discussion with read alouds. Questioning and response reflected ideas brought

forth by students in whole group and small group discussion, which Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer used to foster and enhance discussion. Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer remarked on the benefits of transitioning to facilitating discussion, promoting student interpretation, and encouraging conversation. “My first graders are saying so much more. The discussions are richer” (Ms. Romer, teacher reflection, 1/5/10). Students began to share ideas more frequently as each of these teachers incorporated their students’ response in literature discussion. Instead of using questioning and response techniques that only required literal response, these teachers posed open-ended questions and responded to their students in ways that encouraged conversation. I would argue that this open dialogue allowed students to express their meaningful interpretations of the literature they interacted with during read alouds and literature discussions. Importantly, Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer identified the potential these discussions afforded for authentic learning.

Because each of the teachers in this study had the opportunity to reflect on their instructional approaches through teacher reflection logs, Informal correspondence and interviews, they were able to make changes in their approaches to literature discussion. The role of facilitator began to include instructional approaches of expanding on students’ initial interpretations, recognizing critical junctures and using them to foster discussion, as well releasing control to their students to facilitate discussion. Facilitating discussion became a promising approach for supporting students in their construction of complex meanings. Ms. Duerte noted in her teacher reflection log, “My students have gained so much more from these read aloud sessions, in the past week and a half, and so have I” (10/13/09).

As I watched Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer conduct whole group and small group discussions it was apparent that the role teacher as solicitor was necessary because of administrators' demands and testing tension; and the role teacher as facilitator was promising because of the opportunity it provided for authentic learning. Moreover, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer found themselves negotiating between their desire to conduct literature discussion in an interpretive manner and the constant administrative and testing pressures. They often oscillated between the role of facilitator and solicitor in order to meet the needs of their students as well as meet the demands of their administration and high-stakes testing. In the next section I summarize the findings through examples from the data and in research on reader response, classroom discussion and visual literacy, in order to juxtapose the instructional roles of these teachers in the current research and educational climate.

The Necessity of Teacher as Solicitor

“This nonsense and all this crap around reading programs causes you to lose the opportunity for talking and making connections, but we are told it's necessary.”

(Ms. Romer, Interview, 2/10/10)

Teachers today are faced with developing literacy programs that meet not only their students' needs but also align with the high-stakes testing and the current educational climate. With the pressure to maintain curriculum standards that directly reflect standardized testing objectives, the teachers in my study were faced with negotiating between their philosophical beliefs and the need to meet AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress]. Serafini (2003) calls attention to this issue stating, “The role of children's literature may be reduced to that of an instructional device used to teach

children how to decode more effectively or identify the main idea of a reading selection in order to secure higher scores on standardized tests” (n.p.) Research has highlighted contextual factors such as school climate that impact the teacher’s ability to conduct literature discussion that promotes interpretation (McClure, 1985; Hickman, 1981; Myhill, 2006). Unfortunately, the teachers in my study were forced to incorporate testing strategies, and administrative requirements in all aspects of their instruction, in this case even in literature discussion. For each of these teachers, this was a reality they had to deal with despite their displeasure with doing so.

From the results of this study and current research it is no wonder that the role of soliciting was a prominent approach in literature discussion. The role of solicitor in literature discussion was often purposeful, as demonstrated in Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer’s teacher reflection logs, interviews, and casual conversation. Through my cross-case analysis I was able to identify factors that contributed to the use of soliciting during discussion. These included administrative tension, testing pressure, and the need to meet curricular standards. Despite these teachers’ desire to use open-ended questioning and response to foster discussion they deemed it a necessity at times to incorporate strategies during read alouds that required students to recall, restate, summarize, and name ideas from the stories that were introduced.

Administrative Tension, Testing Pressure, and Curriculum Standards

Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte were frank about the philosophies of their school administration. During my preliminary interview with Ms. Duarte she shared her objection with administrative requirements, discussing how her “administrator would walk into the classroom to check to see if goals were written on the board.” Similarly,

Ms. Romer described how her grade level was told to comprise a list of all of the reading strategies they would use throughout the school year. Her administration made clear this list was to be followed throughout the school year and that all first grade teachers were to use the same approaches. Ms. Romer expressed her trouble with the requirements of her administration:

We create these goals and write them down that are supposed to be reflective of us teachers, but the administrator is going to expect that this poster is going to be it for teaching reading, when we see it as a jumping off point.

(Final Interview, 2/10/10)

Because of the administrative pressure to meet curricular goals, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer found they were using read alouds as a space for incorporating testing standards as well as scripted program ideals despite their opposition to incorporating testing strategies in read alouds and discussions.

Findings in my cross-case analysis also reported the tension Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer associated with high-stakes testing. Similar to the findings in my study, Abrams, Pedulla and Madaus (2003) found that “high-stakes mandated testing programs can lead to instruction that contradicts teachers’ views of sound educational practice” (p. 18). Ms. Romer stated, “it [testing] was harmful to good teaching” (Preliminary Interview, 12/19/09). The findings in this study suggest that Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer’s role as solicitor was a reflection of the need meet AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress]. Although these teachers acknowledged the pitfalls of using read alouds for testing centered instruction, they deemed it necessary.

During my first week of observation in Ms. Romer's classroom she incorporated testing strategies in her discussion of *The Hat* (Brett, 1997), requiring students to recall and summarize the main events in the story. She confessed, "We will be testing soon. I hate to do this but I know they need some extra help" (Informal correspondence, 1/05/10). In a similar way, Ms. Duarte used author websites as a CRT [Criterion Referenced Test] test prep activity. She stated in her reflection log, "I printed off the autobiography of the author and I will turn this into a reading assignment and have students answer questions about the reading. This will be a CRT test prep activity" (Teacher reflection log, 10/06/09). Although somewhat alarming, these examples reflect the reality these teachers are faced with in the era of high-stakes testing.

High-stakes testing strongly influenced the teachers in this study, not because they found testing to be an accurate measure of what their student knew, but because they knew their career depended on their students achieving high scores. These findings are similar to those of other scholars. In their new literacies study Hagood, Provst, Skinner and Egelson (2008) reported that a "culture of test preparation" (p. 81) greatly influenced the teachers' practices. I would argue that the teachers in my study were aware of the culture of test preparation; consequently these teachers did their best to negotiate between educational approaches that would help their students pass the tests and those that would foster higher-level thinking.

Because the teachers in my study were also challenged with meeting curricular goals and time constraints on reading instruction, they imbedded questioning and response techniques that required students to recall information that was found in the text. This modernist perspective was not what Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer desired or believed

in; however, they considered it necessary. As reflected in their comments about teaching in this manner, it was apparent that they felt regretful. Ms. Romer stated, “there could be no time lost in the day” (Interview, 12/19/09). With the push to cover content and make sure her reading program provided coverage of all standards, Ms. Romer felt that literature discussion had to serve multiple purposes. Ms. Duarte also commented on her objection to forcing curricular goals on her students. She said, “When I began teaching in this district, I was told that I must state the objective before the start of each lesson and have it written on the board. Is this necessary? I guess they [administrators] think so” (Ms. Duarte, teacher reflection log, 10/13/09). Research recognizes the tension teachers feel to incorporate curricular standards in literature discussion but advocate for an approach that challenges teachers to move beyond looking for canned answers. Johnson and Giorgis (2007) state, “While we both advocate *teaching* some strategies for response, our patience runs short with scripted programs that expect the same answers and don’t trust either the reader or the literature to create unique responses” (p. 51).

Ms. Romer said:

We [teachers] need to remember that students say some wonderful things and we shouldn’t tell them ‘sorry our reading time is over.’ The idea of everyone teaching reading at the same time of day for the same amount of time doesn’t work! (Ms. Romer, Interview, 2/10/10)

Despite the shortcomings of the role of soliciting in literature discussion, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer deemed it a necessary instructional approach. Soliciting in discussion was a strategy used to appease administration, review for high-stakes testing, and meet curricular demands. In a study conducted by Abrams et al. (2003) about the

effects of high-stakes testing on instruction found, “teachers frequently report that the pressure to raise test scores encourages them to emphasize instructional and assessment strategies that mirror the content and format of the state test, and to devote large amounts of classroom time to test preparation activities” (p. 25).

While it is easy to criticize teachers that use these approaches in literature discussion, the reality is that the teachers in this study found a way to negotiate between the role of soliciting and facilitating in a time where accountability is at the forefront of education. Administrators often require teachers to imbed what the administrators deem important in reading instruction without recognizing the true value in teachers’ practical and pedagogical knowledge. The issue lies in the fact that the teachers in this study knew what was best for their students’ literacy learning; however, administrators did not. Further, the administration in both schools neglected to see the value in these teachers’ knowledge of what their students needed to be successful learners. Had the teachers in this study had the support they needed and trust from their administration, the educational approaches they utilized in discussion would have reflected more interpretive and thoughtful questioning and response strategies, similar to those identified in their role as facilitator.

The Promise of Teacher as Facilitator

“Throughout this process I have begun to realize that the children are able to travel down a path of learning and discovery and the teacher is able to act as the facilitator”

(Ms. Duarte, teacher reflection log, 10/13/09).

As Sloan (2003) states, “Response is free and guided, the teacher building upon initial response to guide young critics to a greater insight and appreciation of literary

works and literature as a whole” (p. 40). Consequently, utilizing instructional approaches in whole group and small group discussion that enable teachers to facilitate conversation can encourage students to move beyond literal recall, review, recitation, and naming. The teachers in this study utilized questioning and responses strategies to encourage students to respond to children’s literature in a thoughtful manner. More importantly, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer recognized the potential in their students and the opportunities literature discussion provides, in a time when other teachers and administrators often challenge instruction of this kind.

Many scholars have provided explanations of how facilitating literature discussion can positively impact readers (Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn, & Crawford, 1999; Nystrand, 1997; Myhill, 2006; Eeds & Wells, 1989). Strategies such as Nystrand’s (1997) idea of uptake, Serafini’s (2009) recognition of critical junctures, and Sipe’s (2008) response to visual literacy all provide research and theory that identify opportunities for teachers to foster discussion in a variety of meaningful ways. The teachers in this study sought to encourage, foster, and enhance discussion through multiple strategies. They found literature discussion to “be promising” (Ms. Duarte, Interview, 11/15/09); a space for developing interpretation and higher-level thinking.

In their seminal study, Eeds and Wells (1989) turned the control of the conversations over to the students with the teacher as participant, rather than inquisitor. Eeds and Wells found that students were able to express their own meanings based on their interpretations and the interpretation of others. Much like the Eeds and Wells research revealed, the teachers in this study recognized the potential of their students in literature discussion. Students in both classes shared interpretations and connections that

encouraged further discussion. Had the students in these classrooms not had the opportunity to discuss and share their ideas about literature, valuable interpretations would have been lost.

With the recognition that time for interpretation of literature is crucial, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's instructional roles shifted from soliciting to facilitating. This was especially apparent when Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer began to release control of whole group and small group literature discussion to their students. Notably, these teachers found their students' interpretive responses increased as they began to guide discussion rather than control it. Ms. Duarte said, "My kids had so much to talk about. They didn't even need me. I couldn't believe how awesome they were at talking about *The Wretched Stone*" (Teacher reflection log, 10/13/09). Ms. Romer reflected:

I loved the open-ended discussion with the small group. I liked just putting the books out and letting them speak. They had so much to say, so many connections and deep thoughts. I think this type of discussion is far more powerful when guided by the students' thoughts, rather than the teacher's.

With faith in their students, Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte engaged students in interpretive discussions, leading them to construct meanings that reflected their understanding of the picture book they interacted with during read alouds.

Findings in this study suggest that the role of teacher as facilitator was promising for these teachers. By incorporating open-ended questioning and response strategies Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer felt they were able to "take discussion to a higher-level" (Teacher reflection, Ms. Romer, 1/19/10). Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer incorporated a variety of response strategies that drew on students initial interpretations, valuing surface level

ideas. As stated in Chapter 4, strategies such as using critical junctures to further discussion, and expanding on student interpretation assisted Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer in facilitating discussion. Ms. Romer utilized students' wonderings expressed during literature discussion to pose questions that cultivated response. She said, "I couldn't help but ask Emma about the speech bubbles in *Piggie and Elephant*. She noticed something that I hadn't considered" (Teacher reflection, 1/11/10). Cochran-Smith (1984) found that the types of questions and comments children make during read alouds help teachers gain insights into the way children construct meaning and make sense of text. Ms. Duarte also found herself, "using students ideas to help them talk more in small group discussion" (Teacher reflection, 10/20/09). Each of these teachers recognized that their students had powerful things to say, which could only improve discussion and learning.

Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer sought to help students articulate their interpretations of the texts they were introduced to in read alouds. For the teachers in this study, questioning and response strategies stemming from their students thoughts encouraged the development of literary understandings. These teachers believed that students' responses and questions were valuable; consequently instructional approaches in discussion drew on students' ideas. Nystrand posits (1997) dialogic instruction starts with what students know and modifies or expands this understanding. With their students in mind, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer fostered literature discussion that encouraged readers to discuss picture books in meaningful ways.

Students in this study articulated responses that were unique to their experiences. Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer had the choice to recognize these ideas and use them to enhance and foster discussion or to dismiss them. Serafini (2009) describes these

moments in discussion as critical junctures, moments in discussion when teachers have more than one possible way to proceed. Further, critical junctures are possibilities in the discussions or teachable moments in which the teacher has the opportunity to recognize the potential students have to offer in discussion (Serafini, 2009).

At times the ideas students expressed in discussion challenged Ms. Duarte's thinking and beliefs. This was evidenced in a conversation about creation versus evolution while reading *The Wretched Stone*. As Ms. Duarte listened to a debate transpire between two students, one that believed in creation and one that believed in evolution, she became extremely uncomfortable, as this topic was considered inappropriate in school. Although she recognized the potential risk and even feared the repercussions of parent disapproval, she believed that her students were interpreting the literature in "amazing ways" (Informal correspondence, 10/06/09). Ms. Duarte believed that by allowing conversations such as this to transpire her students were getting so much more out of the literature. These critical junctures fostered discussion and challenged her fifth grade students to consider multiple perspectives when interpreting literature. Johnson and Giorgis (2007) advocate, "Creating time for whole-class responses to the read-aloud encourages a stance of discovery as you and your students track and discuss how different responses enhance and deepen understanding" (p.60). Because Ms. Duarte was confident that her students were talking about literature constructively, she set aside her fears and allowed conversation to proceed. Teachers like Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer are rare. Sadly, fear hinders teachers' educational approaches to literature discussion time and time again.

Possibilities in Literature and Websites

“You can pick really good literature that will lead them there”

(Ms. Romer, Final Interview, 2/10/10).

As the primary text in this study, picture books served as a tool for discussion and interpretation. Notably each of the teachers in this study identified the benefits and possibilities in selecting literature that promotes discussion. Ms. Romer and Ms. Duarte reported in their teacher reflection logs and interviews that authors such as Mo Willems and Jan Brett had “more to offer students” (Ms. Romer, teacher reflection log, 1/13/10). Scholars in the literacy field support the idea of selecting literature with the highest potential for promoting discussion. Johnson and Giorgis (2007) state, “ While all literature holds the potential for response, some books seem richer with possibility. We often refer to these books as ‘literature with meat on its bones’ because of their full, lively potential” (p. 53). Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer identified critical moments in discussion that enabled their students and them to challenge their own beliefs and interpret literature from a variety of perspectives.

Implications

While this qualitative multi-case study does not allow for generalizability of findings, it does offer unique contributions to the field of education which can be seen as transferable. Throughout this study it was apparent that my role as a researcher/participant influenced the instructional roles these teachers utilized in discussion. As we talked about the nature of discussion and the roles they assumed while conducting literature discussion it became obvious that collaborative relationship existed

that impacted their teaching. I also identified in my analysis that teacher reflection journals enabled Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer to reconsider their educational practices. While reflecting on their practice these teachers made changes in their approaches to literature discussions. Furthermore, teacher reflection had methodological implications. Implications of this study will be explored further in the next section.

University Collaborative

In chapter 4 I briefly highlighted the influence I had as a researcher on each of these teachers in this study. Despite the fact that Ms. Romer was a seasoned teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience, she looked to me as a professional to help guide her instruction throughout my time collecting data in her classroom. Similarly, Ms. Duerte asked me for guidance and feedback on her instructional approaches for conducting literature discussion. Although I had observed Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer teaching prior to collecting data and was completely confident in their ability to facilitate discussion, my role as a researcher often teetered on mentorship during my time in each classroom. For example, after observing Ms. Duerte's first discussion of *The Wretched Stone* (Van Allsburg, 1991), she came to me professing her discontent with the proceedings of the discussion. Ms. Duerte said to me, "Man that didn't go the way I wanted it to. I got nervous because you were there. I wanted to make sure I was doing what you wanted me to" (Casual conversation, 10/06/09).

Throughout the data collection process Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer looked to me for support. As a fellow educator and literacy instructor at the university, they sought my help often calling on me as a mentor during this research study. As Short et al. (1999) identified in their study, the role of collaboration in research is beneficial. They

acknowledged, “The power of dialogue to transform thinking is a potential available to all of us as learners, teachers, and researchers if we create the contexts and the flexible roles in our classrooms and research that encourage this dialogue” (p. 384). Asking my advice and instructional suggestions, each of the teachers reported in their teacher reflection logs, interviews, and in Informal correspondence that they believed they had benefited from my presence in their classroom. They also acknowledged how they believed their literature discussions had improved while I was observing. This was especially evident with Ms. Duarte.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, Ms. Duarte felt the pressures of administration and testing had influenced their role in literature discussion. However, as we debriefed after each discussion Ms. Duarte felt liberated, wanting to “go back” to what she considered “better ways to teach” (Teacher reflection, 10/08/09). She spoke to me about her desire to, “teach the way I was taught to teach in college because kids get so much more” (Informal correspondence, 10/09/09). Expressing in her final interview, Ms. Duarte said:

I wish we could all have you here to talk to us [teachers] about how important literature discussion is. I think people don’t know how great kids are about talking about these books. I mean look at the conversation about creation vs. evolution. Its like all of us need to think about why we don’t do this everyday with our kids. I have learned that this is the best way to teach. I have always done it [literature discussion] but you helped me think about it in a new way.

(Final Interview, 11/15/09)

Ms. Romer wrote, “I thank you for this. I will be looking for authors who have websites and incorporating more open discussion” (Final teacher reflection log, 1/29/10). Analysis of teacher reflection logs, interviews, and Informal correspondence highlighted these interactions and identified the impact that I had on their instruction. Merriam (1998) states:

The interdependency between the observer and the observed may bring about changes in behaviors. The question, then is not whether the process of observing affects what is being observed but how the researcher can identify those affects and account for them in interpreting the data. (p. 103).

Reflective Practice

One of the key findings in this study reflects the strong impact that teacher reflection journals had on Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer’s instructional roles and practices in literature discussion. By choosing to include teacher reflection logs as a data source, I had a window into Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer’s personal thoughts about their instructional approaches, feelings, challenges, and benefits associated with conducting literature discussions. Because teachers learn from examining their own practice, Short et al. (1999) research suggests, “Just as we ask children to examine and push their thinking, so must we as teachers and researchers more closely examine our own beliefs, practices, and interactions” (p. 384). Reflection journals provided a space for these teachers to reconsider their instructional practices. Throughout the research process each teacher’s reflections called attention to their own approaches to conducting literature discussion as well as things they noticed about student growth. Scholars have considered reflective practice, such as keeping a teacher reflection journal, a useful tool for improving

instructional practices. Shulman (1987) argues that reflective practice can be used as a tool for teachers to better themselves as professionals. He states that reflection is:

What a teacher does when he or she looks back at teaching and learning that has occurred, and reconstructs, reenacts, and/or recaptures the events, the emotions, and the accomplishments. It is that set of processes through which the professional learns from experience. (p. 19)

Reflection logs enabled Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer to reconsider their instructional approach and role in literature discussion. This was especially apparent when the teachers were oscillating between soliciting and facilitating in discussion. Because these teachers were questioning their own educational practices through reflection, their instructional approaches in literature discussion.

I do believe that the teachers in this study looked to better themselves as educators. By articulating the benefits they saw in literature discussion as well as the challenges they faced, their role as educators in literature discussion evolved. Not only were teachers' reflection logs a useful tool for the teachers in this study, but they also had positive methodological implications.

Methodological Implications

It was my intention that teacher reflection logs would provide a space for the teachers in this study to reflect on their practice, perhaps noting the benefits and challenges with conducting whole group and small group literature discussion. I did not, however, expect them to be such an important data source. As I began reading across Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer's teacher reflection logs, I realized that their logs explained and often justified the approaches they used in literature discussions. Reflection logs gave

these teachers a voice beyond what I had observed while I was conducting my research. Merriam (1998) states, “It is assumed that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences” (p. 6). Consequently, I sought to ensure that the teachers’ experiences and voices were heard. Without incorporating a teacher reflection log as a data source my findings would have been drastically different. The role of teacher as solicitor would have been misunderstood as a negative instructional approach instead of purposeful at times. Moreover, rationalization for teaching strategies that were employed throughout this study were also noted in Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer’s reflection logs.

Because the key concern of qualitative research is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s, including teacher reflection logs as a data source captures direct thoughts, feelings, experiences, and opinions of the participants (Merriam, 1998).

Future Research

This research sought to understand the instructional roles teachers utilize while conducting literature discussion. As suggested in my discussion of the findings, the teachers I researched had challenges such as administrative pressure and high-stakes testing demands that impacted the way they conducted literature discussion. Despite their strong philosophical beliefs these teachers incorporated strategies in their discussion that they felt would help students when testing. Future research should be conducted to help in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and administrators recognize the benefits of literature discussion in developing students’ interpretive thinking. There has been much research conducted on student response, literature discussion, and visual literacy,

however there seems to be a gap in the research that focuses directly on the impact that contextual factors such as administration, high-stakes testing, and curricular demands play on teacher's willingness to incorporate literature discussion in their reading programs. I recognize that this would be a challenge considering the untouchable nature of high-stakes testing, however research today neglects to identify the realities of teaching in an era where testing is valued over teachers' practical knowledge.

Professional development could highlight the roles Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer used to conduct literature discussions, sharing the ways that they transitioned between soliciting and facilitating to meet students needs in an era of accountability. Ms. Romer suggested in her final reflection, "It [literature discussion] should be a topic of a class so every teacher knows how to do it! The contents of the class should focus on leading open ended discussion groups, enhancing by using author websites, how to create collections, who good author collections are. What not to do, etc" (2/10/10). I am certain, like the teachers in this study, teachers today are unaware of the great potentials in literature discussion. However, in order for the benefits of literature discussion to be recognized teachers beliefs must correspond with their instructional practices. As Serafini (2003) argues:

A shift in the resources used in classrooms, from controlled texts, to authentic children's literature, must also include a parallel shift in theoretical perspectives that support classroom instruction if significant changes in reading practices are to occur." (n.p.)

After identifying the many benefits that collaboration had on this study, I would also propose that a longitudinal study be conducted tracing the approaches teachers utilize in

literature discussion when teacher collaboration is encouraged. As I noted earlier in this chapter Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer frequently came to me as a fellow educator and reflected on their growth throughout this study. The benefits of collaboration were numerous. Ms. Duerte transitioned back to her old ways of teaching, which encouraged discussion rather than recitation and recall. Ms. Romer challenged the pressures of administration and testing and held strong to her belief in the power of literature discussions. Teachers today are missing time to simply talk about practice with other teachers. Although teachers are required to attend professional development, they are not required nor encouraged to talk to one another about their practice. This study shows that this time is not only beneficial but necessary for change in educational practices to occur. With a study that highlights a collaborative approach for the sharing of ideas and “good” practice, teachers today would be given the much needed time for collaboration for improving their practice.

Final Thoughts

As I conclude this chapter I have a few final thoughts. Each of the teachers selected to participate were what their peers, their administrators, and I consider to be exemplary educators. In an era where testing is valued over pedagogical knowledge teachers such as Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer find themselves faced with the dilemma of doing what is best for their students or maintaining stability their jobs. Recognizing that these are turbulent times in education, Ms. Duerte and Ms. Romer negotiated between soliciting and facilitating during discussion to ensure that all curricular areas they were accountable for were met. Ultimately the teachers in this study met the challenges of

educating their students in an era of high-stakes testing, curricular demands, and administrative mandates in what I would consider a promising way.

Through the reflective process, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Romer identified the shortcoming of their instructional approaches and articulated their successes in literature discussion. As a researcher/participant my role often dealt with coaching and encouraging these teachers to continue to do what they were good at, teaching. In the words of Ms. Romer, “My God, when I just let go and teach they [administrators] say I am doing something wrong and then I realize NO this is what I do!” (Final Interview, 2/10/10).

APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL NOTICE



Social/Behavioral IRB – Exempt Review
Approved as Exempt

DATE: September 30, 2009

TO: Dr. Giorgis, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

FROM: Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. Paul Jones, Chair
Protocol Title: Responding to text: Investigating the impact of the teacher,
literature and websites on student discussion.
OPRS# 0908-3182M

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.

PLEASE NOTE:

Attached to this approval notice is the **official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/IA) Form** for this study. The IC/IA contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/IA form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

The protocol has been reviewed and deemed exempt from IRB review. It is not in need of further review or approval by the IRB.

Any changes to the exempt protocol may cause this project to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a **Modification Form**.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at OPRSHumanSubjects@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT-PARENTAL CONSENT

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Department of Curriculum and Instruction – College of Education
Informed Consent – Parental Consent Form

Dear parent / Guardian of _____,

My name is Sophie Ladd. I am a doctoral student and part time instructor in the College of Education at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. I am the principal researcher on this research project. Your child's classroom has been selected to participate in the study concerning their responses to contemporary children's picture books and children's author websites. Your child is invited to be a part of the study.

If you volunteer your child to be part of this study, your child will be asked to read several picture books and discuss the meanings they arrived at before, during and after reading. As part of regular classroom computer time your child will be asked to explore children's author websites and share their understandings. Your child will also take part in several group discussions about the picture books read aloud by the teacher in class and the author websites they explored. Your child may be selected to be interviewed by myself. This interview will focus on your child's reading habits, behaviors and understandings.

By participating in this study, your child will become more knowledgeable about contemporary picture books. There is relatively no risk in participating in this study. All data collected will remain confidential and each child will be referenced anonymously. If your child does not want to answer any questions, they are not obligated to do so.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact me at anytime by phone at (702) 895-4392 or by e-mail at sladd@unlv.nevada.edu. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, you may contact the **UNLV office for the Protection of Research Subjects at (702) 895-2794**.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to have your child participate in this study or any part of the study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time before, during or after the study has been completed.

All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you or your child to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least three years after completion of the study. Informed consent forms will be collected from parents or guardians of each student in the study, as well as from the students themselves.

The informed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at UNLV. Data will be stored using assigned codes that protect participants' identities. Data will be kept for at least three years. At the completion of the study, the data will be destroyed.

Your signature below acknowledges that you have read this form and agree to permit your child to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to complete.

I allow my child to participate and to be audio-taped.

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

I do NOT allow my child to participate and be audio-taped.

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

Thank You! Sophie Ladd, Doctoral Candidate (702) 895-4392

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT-STUDENT CONSENT FORM

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Department of Curriculum and Instruction – College of Education
Student Consent Form

Dear Student; _____,

My name is Sophie Ladd. I am a doctoral student and part-time instructor in the College of Education at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Your class has been selected to participate in a study concerning student responses to picture books and author websites. You are invited to be a part of the study.

If you volunteer to be part of this study, you will be asked to read several picture books and discuss what the books mean to you and what you thought about when you were reading them. As a class you will be asked to explore author websites during regular computer class time and discuss your understandings of these websites as well. You will also take part in several group discussions about the picture books read aloud by your teacher in class. You may be selected to be interviewed by me, Sophie Ladd. This interview will focus on your reading habits, behaviors and understandings.

There is relatively no risk in participating in this study. All of your ideas and answers to the questions will be kept secret and your identity will not be shared with anyone. If you do not want to answer any questions, you don't have to. If you don't want to be a part of the study, you don't have to. You are free to quit the study anytime you like.

Your parents or guardians will be asked to sign a consent form like this to allow you to be in the study. It is important to discuss the consent form with them so that you understand what the study is all about. You will be given a copy of this form when it is completed.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact me at anytime by phone at (702) 895-4392 or by e-mail at sladd@unlv.nevada.edu. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time before, during or after the study has been completed. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, you may contact the UNLV office for the Protection of Research Subjects at (702) 895-2794.

The informed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at UNLV, office CEB 340. Data will be stored using assigned codes that protect participants' identities. Data will be kept for at least three years. At the completion of the study, the data will be destroyed.

If you have read this form and agree to participate and be audio-taped, please sign below.

Student's Name	Date
----------------	------

If you choose NOT to participate, please sign below.

Student's Name	Date
----------------	------

Thank You! Sophie Ladd Doctoral Candidate (702)895-4392

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