FOURTH GRADERS AS CO-RESEARCHERS OF THEIR ENGAGED, AESTHETIC READING EXPERIENCE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School at The Ohio State University

By

Linda T. Parsons, B.A., M.Ed.

****

The Ohio State University
2004

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Janet Hickman, Advisor
Dr. Karin Dahl, Emerita
Dr. Patricia Enciso
Dr. Anna Soter

Approved by

Advisor
College of Education
ABSTRACT

This study stands with and builds upon the research that seeks to document children’s engagement with text: how they create, enter, and sustain the story world. It discloses, from the perspective of the children themselves, the activities central to their reading experience. Sociocultural theories of learning, specifically reader response, feminist poststructuralism, and constructivism informed this study, and the children were involved as co-researchers as they identified, explored, and analyzed the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience.

The children were intimately involved with the first two questions of the study: How do the children who participated in this study describe their experience of engagement as they create, enter, and sustain the world of the story? and What are the themes and dimensions of the children’s engagement in the world of the story? Data was collected through memory work, through metaphors created as part of a visual protocol, and through group discussions. Secondary concerns of this research dealt with the impact of discussion on the construction of knowledge and the generativity of the children’s role as co-researchers.

My synthesis of the themes and dimensions identified by the children and the metaphors they created resulted in the conception of three distinct levels of immersion in
envisionment. At the level of creation the children are positioned outside the story and use various strategies and maneuvers to build sufficient understanding to enter or reenter the world of the story, forming mental images or picturing in an attempt to create or recreate understanding. In the level of observation, the children’s perspective is that of an observer because they feel that they are a step removed from and are passively watching the action. I have conceptualized this level as “EYE” because of the importance of observational watching. The third level of immersion is that of participation. At this level of involvement the children feel that they are actually participating in the story world. I conceptualized this level as “I” because of the reader’s personal participation and involvement with its emphasis on actually and actively seeing what is happening in the story.
Dedicated to those who read to me and those to whom I have read.

“Aesthetic value, then, is like the wind – we know of its existence only through its effects”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This undertaking would have been impossible without a passionate drive to know, relentless and single-minded effort, and the support and understanding of others who consciously and unconsciously contributed to this endeavor. First and foremost I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to my advisor and committee. I could not have had a committee more supportive, more validating, or more intellectually challenging. My sincere thanks goes to each of them for guiding me through this journey. Dr. Janet Hickman, my advisor, mentor, and exemplar always centered me emotionally and intellectually. Dr. Karin Dahl raised the important questions and validated my potential and my ideas. Dr. Patricia Enciso shared my passion regarding children’s engaged reading and helped me see possibilities for the future. Dr. Anna Soter challenged me to see and think from other perspectives and unwittingly gave me the permission and freedom to write this dissertation in my own time and in my own way.

I am also indebted to members of The Ohio State faculty who were not part of my committee. I was graced by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop’s knowledge, expertise, and presence. She encouraged me to send my writings out into the world and gave freely of her time to guide me through the process. I am also indebted to Dr. Patti Lather who
serendipitously included the article about memory work in her qualitative research course and provided me with the key that turned my passion into a researchable topic.

I cannot possibly express the depth of my gratitude to Dr. Lesley Colabucci, my colleague and friend, who was always one step ahead in the journey and lighted my path. I am grateful for the many she hours spent debriefing and challenging my assumptions, revising and editing countless drafts, and in simple communion. May our friendship last a lifetime. An acknowledgment of Lesley must include Barb Smentec whose many, many kindnesses did not go unnoticed.

I am also fortunate to have a professional relationship with Diane Conley and Karen McClellan. They granted site access, expressed continued interest and support in the study, and have encouraged and enabled my professional growth in countless ways. Thanks also to Dr. Machelle Kline for her support and encouragement early in the process. Marlene Beierle was a source of never-ending enthusiasm. Nancy Holmes helped to provide the space for the children and me to work, gave technical support, and has been an important professional and personal friend for many, many years. She never let me lose my bearings and celebrated every step of the journey.

I also thank my teammates, Amy Frankenberg, Vicki Moss, and Christy Pomeroy, for helping with the logistics of the twice-weekly meetings and for their patience with my enthusiasm as well as their insights in to the group's developing understandings. Vicki and I have a long-standing joke that there is an important difference between “whine and wine” and that each are called for on occasion. This became evident as she shared every
stage of this journey with me and supported me with her strength and sense of humor. My dear and long-time friends, Marita Kellett and Cynthia Leppert, understood my need to achieve this goal and have continued to be my friends despite my preoccupation. I value their friendship more than they will ever know.

This simply would not have been possible without the support of my family. Larry Pennington, my companion and partner, continually reminds me of who I am and allows me to simply be me. That is the greatest gift he could give. My sons, Tony and Geoffrey Cella, have enriched my life in immeasurable ways. Tony keeps me humble and regales me with his sense of humor. Geoffrey understands how important it was for me to complete this journey, and he never lets me forget that he is proud of me for it. My grandchildren, Breanna, Ashley, and Jonah, begin the circle anew. I hope that my journey will serve as an inspiration to them at some point in their own journeys.

Finally and most importantly, the children in the Readers as Researchers Club deserve my heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Without them there simply would be no study. Their hard work and dedication to understanding more about themselves and their experience of engaged reading were an inspiration to me. They will always occupy a very special place in my heart.
VITA

December 24, 1953 .................................................. Born, Hamilton, Ohio

1975 ................................................................. B.S. in Education,
                  Miami University, Miami, Ohio

1975-1982 ............................................................ Teacher, Lakota Local Schools,
                  West Chester, Ohio

1982-present ........................................................... Teacher, Westerville City
                  Schools, Westerville, Ohio

1988 ................................................................. M. Ed., Ashland College,
                  Ashland, Ohio

2001-2002 .............................................................. Graduate Teaching Assistant,
                  School of Teaching and Learning,
                  The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

2002-present .......................................................... Instructor, The Ohio State
                  University, Columbus, Ohio

2003-present .......................................................... Instructor, Ohio Wesleyan
                  University, Delaware, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS

Parsons, L. T. (2002). ‘Otherways’ into the garden: Re-visioning the feminine in The

Advocate, 16, 149-160.

**FIELDS OF STUDY**

Major Field of Study .......................... Education

Studies in Children’s Literature ............... Dr. Janet Hickman

Gender Issues in Literacy Learning ............. Dr. Anna Soter

Creating Contexts for Literacy Learning .......... Dr. Karin Dahl

Dr. Patricia Enciso
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................... ii  
Dedication ........................................................................................................ iv  
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................... v  
Vita .................................................................................................................... viii  
List of Tables ................................................................................................... xiii  
List of Figures ................................................................................................ xiv  

## CHAPTERS

1. Framing the Question:  
   Authorizing the Aesthetic ................................................................. 1  
   Legitimizing the Aesthetic .............................................................. 2  
   Exploring the Power of Story .......................................................... 10  
   Creating Space in Classrooms for Engaged, Aesthetic Reading ........ 14  
   Transaction with the Text ................................................................. 19  
   Strands of Research ........................................................................ 22  
   Statement of Purpose ....................................................................... 24  
   Mediating Method ........................................................................... 25  

2. Literature Review:  
   Creating and Experiencing the World of the Story and  
   Creating Understanding through Dialogue ....................................... 29  
   Aesthetic Experience and Response ............................................... 30  
   Approaching and Engaging with Texts ............................................ 30  
   Merging the Self and the World of the Text ....................................... 37  
   Creating Understanding through Dialogue and Discussion .............. 48  
   Epistemologies of Learning ............................................................ 48  
   Positioning in Dialogue and Discussion .......................................... 53  
   Characteristics of Classroom Dialogue and Discussion .................. 58  
   Moving into Metaphor ...................................................................... 68  
   Summary .............................................................................................. 72
3. Research Methodology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Research with Children</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Selection</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Selection</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relationship Between the Researcher and the Participants</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Work</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Protocol</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Aloud</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Representation Interviews</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Space</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Protocol Development</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sources</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives and Positions in the World of the Story and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Negotiation of Knowledge</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Dimensions of Children’s Engaged Reading Experience</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Book</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with the Characters</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing Emotions and Physical Reactions</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualizing</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering and Predicting</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuning Out</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reader as Metaphor</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis of Findings:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of Immersion in Envisionment</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Creation</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level of Observation (EYE) .................................................. 173
Level of Participation (1) .................................................... 178
Children’s Construction of Knowledge as Co-Researchers ............... 184
Dialogue in the Readers as Researchers Club ................................ 185
Stance ........................................................................... 186
Interpretive Authority .......................................................... 187
Control of Turn-Taking .......................................................... 188
Topic Selection and Shifts ...................................................... 190
Focus ................................................................................ 191
Children as Co-Researchers .................................................. 194
Summary ........................................................................... 207

5. Implications:
   Worlds from Words on a Page and
   Levels of Immersion in Envisionment ......................................... 209
   Summary of Children’s Findings ............................................. 210
   Summary of Levels of Immersion in Envisionment ......................... 215
   The Reading Event as Envisionment ........................................... 215
   Levels of Immersion in Envisionment ........................................ 218
   Summary of Characteristics of Dialogue
     in the Readers as Researchers Club ....................................... 221
   Children as Co-Researchers .................................................. 223
   Relationship of Findings to Existing Theory and Research ............. 224
   Implications for the Classroom .............................................. 229
   Limitations and Possibilities ................................................ 240
   Conclusion ......................................................................... 244

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data Collection Time Line ....................................... 246
Appendix B: Memory Stories ..................................................... 249
Appendix C: Initial Coding of Memory Stories ............................... 254
Appendix D: Thematic Coding of Memory Stories ......................... 257
Appendix E: Graphics Created During Stage 3 of Memory Work .......... 261
Appendix F: Recruitment Script, Recruitment Letter, Consent Form ...... 264
Appendix G: Discursive Moves .................................................. 270

List of References .................................................................... 280
LIST OF TABLES

4.1 Themes and Dimensions of the Children’s Experience of Engagement ……127
4.2 Perspectives and Positions Indicated through Metaphors .....................154
5.2 Levels of Immersion in Envisionment ........................................... 221
5.3 Questions to Encourage the Experience of a Story ............................. 238
LIST OF FIGURES

5.1 Movement Between Levels of Immersion ............................................. 219
E.1 Dimensions of Visualizing ................................................................. 262
E.2 Perspectives in Relation to the Characters ........................................... 263
G.1 Discursive Moves ............................................................................. 278
G.2 Turns in Discussion ........................................................................... 279
CHAPTER 1

FRAMING THE QUESTION

AUTHORIZING THE AESTHETIC

Eric: Reading a book is ... just ... well ... it's not just reading a book ... it's more.
Linda: What is it?
Paige: You're experiencing.
Eric: ... having fun and ... learning ... depending on the type of book you're reading.
Paige: You're not just reading it you're experiencing it.

It is essential to consider the myriad benefits and the dynamism of aesthetic reading in order to establish the importance of researching and understanding the themes and dimensions of children’s engaged, aesthetic reading experience. One consideration is the legitimization of the aesthetic since both positive and negative cultural messages inform our perceptions of aesthetic reading. Negative beliefs include the perception of passivity on the part of the reader, the misconception that aesthetic reading is a solitary pursuit rather than a social act, and various gendered expectations regarding who should read and what should be read. Next, the idea that children can come to understand themselves and others through literature in ways that may not be afforded to them in real life needs to be recognized. Furthermore, aesthetic reading in our classrooms is much more than a pleasurable activity as it forms the foundation for literacy skills throughout life and for
content area learning that becomes meaningful to the reader. Finally, it is important to recognize that according to the transactional model of reader response, aesthetic reading is an event in which the reader engages.

Once the importance of aesthetic reading has been established, it becomes clear that it is a valuable activity, and it is imperative that we gain a clearer understanding of the experience itself in order to encourage children to become engaged readers. We cannot advocate for children to engage in something we cannot illuminate. Different strands of research have documented various aspects of reading, and this study stands with and builds upon the research that seeks to document children’s interaction with the text: how they create, enter, and sustain the story world. Sociocultural theories of learning, specifically reader response, feminist poststructuralism, and constructivism are the theoretical frameworks that informed this study and enabled the children who participated to explore the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading.

Legitimizing the Aesthetic

Reading for pleasure, or aesthetic reading, has been described as “the most hidden of literacy practices” (Newkirk, 2002, p. 48). The reader usually needs uninterrupted time and relative quiet in order to create and enter the world of the story, and nonreaders perceive this seemingly passive act of reading as unnatural. To the outside observer, the reader is engaged in a totally idle pursuit with the only activity being eye movement and the turning of pages. Silent, solitary reading is often stereotyped as a pallid substitute for actual activity and social engagement. In the extreme, aesthetic reading has been viewed as “symbolic withdrawal” (Eidman-Aadahl, 1988, p. 167) as the engaged reader creates a
private space into which others are discouraged from intruding. This private space is sometimes chosen and is at other times imposed, as in some school practices, and dissuades certain children from aesthetic reading.

The perception of reading as a solitary pursuit is common. It is not difficult to conjure a mental image of a lone reader sitting quietly, absorbed in a book, and oblivious to surrounding activity. Elyse Eidman-Aadahl (1988) explored this conception of reading with a class of eleventh-grade reluctant readers whose model of reading was “‘one child, one book,’ silent, sedentary, leading to nothing more than the consumption of the book itself. … To read was to remove yourself from companions, to enjoy an experience which could not be shared simultaneously by your friend” (p. 167). Our schools, primary sites where cultural ideology is supported and reproduced, promote this view of the isolated reader as a sanctioned model of reading. For the students in Eidman-Aadahl’s study, schooling set parameters for legitimized reading. “Reading in schools typically is constructed as a private and socially unsituated act, as a matter of individual difference and proclivity, one divorced from the gendered politics of identity and social relations” (Luke, 1994, p. 366). Some types of reading are simply ignored in classrooms, yet they are part of robust, unofficial literacies in which students engage. Many of the ways of reading that are overlooked or devalued are, as the students in this study discovered, ways of reading as a social act. Reading is not only a solitary act but a social one as well.

As schools have become more crowded and class sizes have increased, the public aspect of reading has indeed been diminished. The fact that silent reading is sometimes utilized in schools as an instrument of immobilization and control may deter ‘nonreaders’ from engaging in aesthetic reading. Carole Edelsky (1996) has contrasted reading
exercises with authentic, self-initiated engagement with text, distinguishing reading from “what merely looks like reading” (p. 88). Edelsky proposes that a difference between authentic literacy and school literacy, or reading and non-reading, is the positioning of the reader: positioning which is social and political rather than individual. School literacy is often framed by curricular concerns with an authority figure defining and controlling the parameters of the reading event. This positions the reader as an object and, more often than not, results in non-reading.

Children, however, frame literacy according to their “relationships, interests, and values” (Burnett & Myers, 2002, p. 61) and use literacy for private pleasure, to maintain and reinforce relationships, to organize life, to learn, and to reflect their identity. Authentic literacy emphasizes the personal significance of the text by focusing on the reader’s creation and visualization of the secondary world, focusing on the reader’s personal reaction to that world, and valuing connections made between literacy and the reader’s life experience (Many & Wiseman, 1992). The more control the reader herself exhibits over the parameters of the reading event and the more she is encouraged to discover and explore personal significance in her reading, the more likely she will be to position herself as a literate subject and voluntarily engage in authentic reading.

It is often difficult to determine whether and how reality influences literature as opposed to whether and how literature influences reality. This was made clear when Frank Serafini (2004) explored the images of readers and reading in children’s picture book literature. His premise was that the images presented in picture books affect the way young children perceive reading and what it means to be a reader. It seems that the reverse could also be asked and argued; “How are cultural perceptions of reading and
what it means to be a reader reflected in images presented in picture books?” Serafini found that images of readers ranged from reluctant to avid. Many of the portrayals of young readers showed them reading as a solution to problems rather than reading for their own pleasure. When children did read for pleasure, they were portrayed as bookworms with glasses, promoting a negative stereotype of avid readers. Readers were also portrayed as those who go on adventures through books rather than in reality. He found that the portrayals of readers in schools stood in direct contrast with readers who attained literacy skills independently. Struggling readers in schools viewed themselves as failures in school and in society while those who learned to read outside school were represented as intelligent and precocious. Illiteracy affected characters in books negatively while literacy was a key to social and economic success.

Serafini found that in picture books, reading was equated with fluency and expression rather than with comprehension and group construction of knowledge. “Readers sharing ideas about books with other readers were not included in any of the stories reviewed” (Serafini, 2004, p. 614). The books also promoted non-reading (Edelsky, 1996) as successful reading. These activities included “round-robin reading, reading groups, and doing workbook pages” (Serafini, 2004, p. 615). Reading was defined as the ability to decode words and read fluently rather than the ability to comprehend and socially construct knowledge. The perception that reading is equated with decoding ability is consistent with Henk and Melnick’s (1998) findings that children themselves use fluency to determine reading ability; they equate fluency with good
readers. This is attributable to the fact that fluent oral reading is public, the listener can immediately verify the accuracy and judge the delivery of the reading, and social comparisons can be made regarding the oral reading performance.

Traditionally, literacy was a symbol of the educated regardless of one’s economic station in life. Familiarity with literary passages equalized the division between the wealthy and the poor. However, after World War II, the status of the literate was replaced by the status of professional success (Iser, 1989). Furthermore, until literacy rates increased in the early 20th century, reading was predominately an oral, social endeavor. It was an occasion for gathering: not an occasion for separating. Literacy was public, performed, and response driven (Newkirk, 2000, 2002). It can be argued that literacy is still a social act (Lewis, 2001), “an act of engagement rather than withdrawal” (Eidman-Aadahl, 1988, p. 170). Studies have shown that literacy is still used to signal membership in certain groups (Brown, 1997; Burnett & Myers, 2002; Finders, 1997; Myers, 1992) and is used as a springboard for collegiality, solidarity, and action.

The recognition that reading establishes membership in and boundaries between groups is significant. Some children may believe that they are not readers or that they cannot become readers. Therefore, they perceive themselves as outsiders. Frank Smith (1988, 1997) has discussed how children “join the literacy club.” Customarily, this membership is a natural process whereby children are recognized as neophyte members and are helped by more expert others to become experts themselves. The literacy learning within this context is meaningful, incidental, collaborative, and without risk. Yet we know that not all children choose to become members and that some children are denied membership. Smith (1988) observed:
We reject clubs if we do not see ourselves as belonging to them, and differentiate ourselves from others whom we do not accept as belonging to our clubs. If we do not want to belong to a particular club, or if we are deliberately excluded, then we learn not to be like people in that club (p. 5).

On the other hand, children who do “join the club” see those who read as the kind of people they themselves want to become.

Jamie Myers (1992) studied the social contexts of school literacies and the multiple official and unofficial clubs in which children position themselves. Some of these clubs would be sanctioned by academic and authority figures while others were backstage literacies that help children establish their individuality and identity within a particular group and simultaneously position them against sanctioned literacies. Burnett & Myers (2003) contend that “children constantly create and recreate literacy in ways that are meaningful to them” (p. 56). Children use literacy to “share membership, contest membership, fake membership, and maintain membership in the multiple, simultaneous, overlapping communities at school” (Myers, 1992, p. 306). Illuminating the act of engaged, aesthetic reading and countering the perceptions of seclusion and inactivity may help children view aesthetic reading as a club worthy of membership.

Literacy clubs are characterized by three dimensions: membership, knowing, and risk (Myers, 1992). Membership within a club establishes interior and exterior boundaries as individuals are identified as insiders or are positioned as outsiders. Members of a literacy club mutually establish and define knowledge as either residing elsewhere or as
negotiated and constructed by the members themselves. Finally, risk refers to the level of conformity that is expected within the group and the degree to which members can differ and still maintain membership.

The issue of gender cannot be ignored in a consideration of how aesthetic reading is viewed. Cultural discourses regarding reading influence the construction of gendered literacy practices. Because literacy involves learning and mastering associated social codes, it is “a practice entailing strategic decisions about who should read, what they should read, how they should read, where they should read, and to what ends and consequences” (Luke, 1994, p. 369). Men in our culture have traditionally been viewed as more physically assertive, and their sphere of influence has been the public domain. They are perceived as reading for utilitarian purposes, and reading fiction is not considered an acceptable pastime. Women, on the other hand, have traditionally been seen as responsible for nurturing and maintaining relationships within a more private sphere. Reading fiction is seen as a valuable part of a girl’s childhood and something that she can share with her friends. It is considered an appropriate and safe way for her to fill time.

Parents act as powerful models for their children, demonstrating literacies within particular social contexts and transmitting tacit, gendered assumptions about reading (Cherland, 1994; Millard, 1997). Meredith Cherland (1994) observed that although men talked about reading science fiction, Stephen King novels, and condensed novels, they denied reading fiction. Interestingly, when asked if their sons read fiction, they denied that as well. She discovered that mothers, on the other hand, talked with their daughters “both about what they ought to read, and about how they ought to read, and in this way
they were actively teaching their daughters to read like women” (p. 94). This ideology of gendered reading preference is so widespread that it has taken on the aura of common sense, and as such, is virtually uncontested as truth.

Boys often actively and passively resist school literacy practices in light of the dominant discourse of masculinity outside the school setting. School literacy, which emphasizes self-disclosure, introspection, and empathetic response, as well as personalized and creative expression requires emotional investment that society considers feminine (Alloway & Gilbert, 1997; Kelly, 1986; Lewis, 2001). It is girls’ reading and response that is established as the norm in many classrooms where successful reading involves “the ability to decenter, to empathize, to enter the world of the text, and to identify with characters” (Barrs, 2000, p. 288). Therefore, because boys are striving to develop a masculine identity, they resist involvement in what they perceive as feminized school contexts, and their preferred literacy engagements are often devalued in classrooms. The classroom as a literacy site privileges certain performances of literacy, and many boys have potentially powerful literacy skills that are not recognized or validated.

The façade of passivity associated with aesthetic reading disguises the very active underlife of the engaged, aesthetic reader wherein there is a “covert, but active, thought process” (Almasi & McKeown, 1996, p. 126). Children and adults who are avid readers “get lost” (Nell, 1988, 1994) in a book. The engaged involvement in achieving this type of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) becomes a purpose for reading (Guthrie & Anderson, 1999). “Reading, particularly silent reading is a meditative state, profoundly and pleasurably engaging for the committed reader – yet mystifying and antisocial to the
outsider who has never entered what Sven Birkerts has called ‘the reading state’’ (Newkirk, 2002, p. 64). Achieving this reading state involves active engagement on the part of the reader. This state, this level of engagement, is a mystery to the nonreader and a taken-for-granted condition of the reading experience for the engaged reader.

Exploring the Power of Story

Why should we encourage aesthetic reading? This question is partially addressed in Sylvia Scribner’s (1988) metaphor of literacy as a state of grace in which she proposes that the self-enhancing power of literacy transcends the limits of spatial, temporal, political, and economic boundaries. Deanna Bogdan (1992) has distinguished between literary literacy, which is the politics of engagement, and the literary experience, which is a state of grace. Commenting on Scribner’s metaphor of literacy as a state of grace, Bogdan (1992) has said, “Each reading experience becomes an occasion for enlightenment, in which the individual reader enjoys increased awareness and psychic growth, participating in the fulfillment of human desire simply by attending to the story” (p. 54). Aesthetic reading, then, is important because it is transcendent and leads to enlightenment and awareness. The question is also partially addressed through the metaphors of literature as mirrors and as windows (Bishop, 1990; Galda, 1998). Some stories serve as mirrors that reflect our personal experience. We can see our lives reflected and validated in these mirrors. Other stories serve as windows that illuminate the experience of others. Through literature we can observe and come to know other ways of being in the world that we might not encounter in our lived reality.
Our lives are enhanced by the multiple powers of story: to afford vicarious experiences, to provide interludes of solitude and escape, to connect us to others, and to help shape our identity and our perception of reality. Stories provide escape from life, and they also enhance the experience of life (Nell, 1988, 1994). Northrop Frye (1964) has explained this phenomenon through perspective, which he believes is what prevents literature from being purely escapist. He contends that because of perspective, “literature does not reflect life, but it doesn’t escape or withdraw from life either: it swallows it” (p. 80). Life is “swallowed” by literature through a horizontal and a vertical perspective. The horizontal perspective reflects the way literature relates to real life and allows us to look straight out at life. If this were the only perspective afforded through literature, then it might indeed always and only provide escape. The vertical perspective, on the other hand, invites us to look both up and down at life. It “stretches us vertically to the heights and depths of what the human mind can conceive” (Frye, 1964, p. 101). We are able to find escape by viewing life from a horizontal perspective, but we are also led to discover and explore the realities and the possibilities of the human condition through a vertical perspective.

Wolfgang Iser (1989) recognized art, or literature, as escape from reality. He wrote that art is “simply a response to man’s oppressive awareness of the temporal nature of his existence; by giving him moments of rapture, it can make him forget everyday life and its transitoriness” (p. 203). Sven Birkerts (1999) also recognized the power of story to invoke vicarious experiences and to initiate the formation of imaginary spaces that we inhabit as havens or zones of refuge. Susan Cooper (1999) related a story about her childhood reaction to the picture of a futuristic vehicle. It was a one-person, glass sphere
in which she fantasized rolling through life “self-contained, protected, safe” (p. 64). She
compares this sphere to children’s experiences and engagement with books:

Without knowing quite what they’re doing, they put themselves inside a
protective vehicle that will help them get through life without being damaged. …

While children are inside it, reading, they have left the real world and are living
another. They have escaped (p. 64).

Books can provide us with safe havens, zones of refuge, and escape from the real world.

This idea of escape, however, is mitigated by another aspect of the power of story.
Jon Stott (1994) argues that although many people view the primary purpose of story as
entertainment or escape from real life, the power of story resides in the fact that stories
“relate to and are a part of, not an escape from, life” (p. 246). Asselin, Pelland & Shapiro
(1991) have stated that “the emotions highlighted in literature are often those that have
meaning in our own lives and, as we identity with them, we are drawn into books” (p. 9).
Galda (1998) has also emphasized the impact of stories to “transform words-on-a-page
into emotional experiences” (p. 1). So another dimension of the power of story must be
considered. Stories not only take us into safe havens, but they also bring us into reality:
the reality that exists within us and the reality that exists in the world around us.

Dennis Sumara (1998) studied the relationship between the reader’s identity and
the reader’s knowledge and believes that the act of reading is an important avenue for the
negotiation of identity: identity that is constantly shifting and transforming. He argues
from a poststructuralist perspective that identity is relational:

Identity is not some hard kernel that is embedded deeply inside of us, nor is it
located in various bits and pieces of knowledge floating around inside us. Identity
exists in the remembered, the lived, and the projected relations of our daily experiences (Sumara, 1998, p. 205).

This matrix of knowledge and identity includes our interactions with stories. The characters, their dilemmas, and their decisions become significant on a personal level as the reader shapes her identity. “Whether looking at mirrors of ourselves or through windows into the lives of others, our experience during aesthetic reading affords us the opportunity to reconstruct ourselves, to understand living better. This is the transforming power of engagement with story” (Galda, 1998, p. 4). Reading is not only an act of transforming the text into personal meaning but also an act of using the text as a vehicle for the transformation of the reader.

Dudley Barlow (1997) recalled the first experience he had with a book that truly touched him. He realized that there was something “vital and real” (p. 32) about the story: that it was about something “transcendent and enduring in the human spirit” (p. 32). He sensed that the events and people from the past, as reflected in this book, were connected to him in an important way. “Books reach across time and space to speak to our present condition” (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1998, p. 230). Stories have the power to integrate the past, present, and future into a negotiable reality in which we, as individuals, determine our identity and role. Literature “transcends time and place and culture and helps us re-view the past, interpret the present, and envision the future” (Bishop, 2000, p. 73). So the power of story takes us not only into ourselves, but outside ourselves as well. Stories enable us to see ourselves not only as individuals in our presentness of time and space, but also as a part of an historical continuum and as members of the human community.
A power of story resides in its ability to open up new ways of thinking, new ways of seeing, and new ways of negotiating the reality that surrounds the reader. Escaping into a book can be a pleasurable experience and can also be a defense against the threats and pressures of lived reality. While this could be viewed as evasion or avoidance, Birkerts (1999) argues that “a complete lack of this aptitude leaves the individual strangely – and sadly – marooned in the here and now” (p. 143). He believes that individuals who do not read are likely to become literalists without the ability to gain a reflective distance or to adopt the detachment necessary to view and evaluate a given situation. Barlow (1997) said that stories “can bring us up against life’s realities and stand a kind of vigil as we choose our lives for ourselves” (p. 35). Lawrence Sipe (1999) continues this line of thought with his assertion that stories defamiliarize life and make the reader aware of new possibilities and alternative ways of perceiving reality. Aesthetic reading is important and should be encouraged because of the myriad and multiple powers of story.

Creating Space in Classrooms for Engaged, Aesthetic Reading

In today's educational climate, driven by business and political, national and international interests, high stakes testing, and calls for student and teacher accountability, it may seem that to talk about a love of reading would be frivolous at best and blasphemous at worst. Despite and beyond the aforementioned powers of story, teachers and students are increasingly held accountable for educational progress determined by and confined to data-driven documentation. Programs that focus on skills-based instruction and are designed to improve test scores are more and more frequently the norm in districts and
individual classrooms. We have increasingly adopted a “limited, secular, utilitarian view of literacy …[and] have invented a kind of teaching that cuts literacy off at the roots, diminishing both its appeal and its capacity to empower” (Brown, 1991, p. 90). This reduces literacy to a practical, technical endeavor. Burnett & Myers (2002) have urged that “in the light of an increasingly prescriptive curriculum, it seems appropriate for those involved in literacy education to explore what purposes and contexts drive such innovation” (p. 56). I contend that research that counteracts the data-driven approach to reading instruction is needed and that we need to highlight and explore the aesthetic, engaged nature of reading.

Children are customarily placed in reading groups based on their performance and the kind of literacy learner those in authority perceive them to be in relation to the sanctioned definition of being literate. This “placement of students in reading groups positions students as particular kinds of literacy achievers” (Egan-Robertson, 1998, p. 457). Children who do not experience early success with literacy are often destined to engage in the less rewarding activities of basal instruction, isolated skill and strategy practice, and worksheets than are their more capable peers. This begins a cycle of reciprocal interactions, referred to as the “Matthew effect” (Stanovich, 1986) in which negative self-beliefs are compounded by diminished opportunities to engage in authentic ways with quality texts and to enter into dialogue with other readers. Not only do children struggle to learn to read but they are also denied the meaningful, pleasurable engagement with stories that serve as motivation for reading. In essence, those who read become
better readers, and those who have difficulty learning to read, who chose not to read, or who are denied the right to read, do not develop as readers but lag further and further behind their peers.

Lee Galda (1998) also recognized that readers are often denied pleasurable engagement with story in classrooms. Some teachers view literature merely as a substitute for basal readers. In this venue, literature is:

skilled and drilled exhaustively with little or no attention to the pleasure and power of the story. … The children who are reading … are not learning to become engaged readers. They may be learning how to read, but they are learning in an atmosphere that mitigates against reading for the joy of it (p. 5, italics added). When literature is basalized, the aesthetic, lived-through experience of story is sacrificed in the name of skill development.

Despite the current educational climate, fostering a love of reading is exactly what a majority of teachers identify as a primary goal of literacy education. Linda Gambrell (1996) wrote that the "most important goal of reading instruction is to foster the love of reading" (p. 14), and it was consistently cited by teachers at all levels when Nancy Lacedonia (1999) surveyed them about why they read aloud to children and when Chapman and Tunmer (1997) asked teachers to rank the primary goals of reading instruction. Asselin, Pelland, & Shapiro (1991) stated that “in addition to fostering the ability to read for information, the paramount goal of the literacy curriculum is to develop an enjoyment of reading” (p. 10). With the acknowledgement of this widely held belief, a related question begs to be asked; Why do teachers consider fostering a love of reading to be a priority?
Sylvia Scribner (1988) explored three metaphors for literacy: literacy as adaptation, literacy as power, and literacy as a state of grace. Literacy as adaptation refers to the functional literacy necessary for survival. Literacy as power pertains to the socio-economic advantages that literacy may afford. Literacy has been an avenue through which the hegemonic elite maintain power, while for those who have been disenfranchised, literacy is promoted as an opportunity to claim, reclaim, or proclaim power. Finally, through the metaphor of literacy as a state of grace, “the literate individual’s life derives its meaning and significance from intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual participation in the accumulated creations and knowledge of humankind, made available through the written word” (p. 77). This metaphor emphasizes the aesthetic, lived-through experience, which can enhance and enrich our lives.

Many teachers see educational value behind and beyond a pleasurable reading experience. Recreational reading has been found to improve skills such as reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development (Gallik, 1999; Miall, 1993) and to generate emotional connections that enhance cognitive aspects of reading (Murphy, 1998). One reason for fostering a love of reading, then, is to improve literacy skills. Children who read frequently and widely increase their reading skills and abilities while those children who do not choose to read tend to lag further and further behind.

Engagement with literature suffers when it is basalized or simply used as another vehicle from which facts are to be extracted. However, if teachers focus first on children's personal and emotional response to the literature and follow with content study, learning can be enriched and enhanced. Teachers are often so concerned with transmitting facts
and content that they neglect to encourage children to establish an emotional connection between the facts and their lives. Learning is enhanced when the teacher’s first priority is to encourage children to inhabit a text. Children should “be involved in the world they create while they read, and then use references to this virtual world” (Many & Wiseman, 1992, p. 272) when they learn about author’s craft or content material. "Literature can foster the linkage between intellectual perception and emotional drive that is essential to any vital learning process" (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995, p. 174). Children arrive at deeper understandings and alternative perspectives when aesthetic engagement is encouraged. Insights are much richer if they develop from children's aesthetic engagement, from which they can easily move to analysis while the reverse rarely occurs (Kelly & Farnan, 1994). Therefore, another reason to foster a love of reading is to contribute to growth across the curriculum.

According to Daniel Hade (1993), teachers hold four "different and disparate" (p. 642) beliefs about the role literature should play in the lives of children. These include promoting reading proficiency, initiation into the discipline, increasing self-understanding and self-actualization, and fostering social responsibility. Yet Thomas Newkirk (2000) argues, "We enter the reading state to experience a form of pleasure … not to become better citizens, or more moral human beings, or more efficient workers" (p. 20). While recognizing the varied benefits of fostering a love of reading and reading for pleasure, it is the aesthetic, lived-through experience of the text that is paramount and upon which all else depends. I contend that those children who love to read are actively
engaged in the reading process. Despite the outward appearance of passivity, what marks and makes avid readers is their active engagement with the text and their ability to create and enter the world of the story.

Transaction with the Text

Readers construct a set of beliefs about texts and about their role as readers based on their previous experiences with texts, the literacy instruction they have received, and the messages conveyed within their sociocultural environment. Schraw and Bruning (1996) studied readers' implicit models of reading and concluded that readers develop an "epistemology of text" (p. 290). Different readers may read the same text in different ways and with different purposes depending upon their epistemology. Schraw and Bruning's work is based on three distinct models of the reading process that have been articulated by literary and reader-response theorists: transmission, translation, and transaction. Those who ascribe to the transmission model view the reader as passive, with meaning transmitted directly from the author to the reader through the text. In the translation model, the reader is expected to decode the message of the text because “meaning resides in the text independent of the author’s intended meaning or the readers ability to construct alternative interpretations” (Schraw & Bruning, 1996, p. 293). These two models position the reader as passive and the author or the text as the conveyors of meaning.

It is the transactional model that is of particular interest in a consideration of engaged, aesthetic reading. According to this model, readers construct different meanings based on the interplay between their personal understandings, authorial intent, and textual
content. This is the only model that emphasizes the reader's *active construction of meaning* as she calls on prior knowledge, previous literacy experiences, and current purpose to inform her understanding. Janice Almasi (1995) has stated that “by its very nature, engagement in the literacy act assumes an active reader whose interpretations are not stagnant but continually shaped by the influx of new information and the connections made between this new information and one’s previous interpretations” (p. 315). Readers whose implicit model of reading is consistent with the transactional model engage actively, critically, and personally with the text.

Michael Smith (1992) has discussed the difference between submission to and control of the reading event. Readers who submit to the text expect the text to transmit knowledge to them without their active engagement while readers who exert control “assert power to have meaningful transactions with texts” (p. 144). According to Smith, certain behaviors characterize readers who exhibit control. They appreciate and appropriate their role as active creators of meaning, build upon the framework of the text to selectively attend to ideas and images, and reflect upon their immediate experience with the text in order to extend their evocation or envisionment.

Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1995, 1978/1994) developed the transactional theory of reading in which the evocation of a poem is seen as an event involving a recursive process between the reader and the text which occurs at a particular place and time in the life of the reader. This transaction involves the reader's past experiences as well as her present interests and preoccupations. Readers approach texts with a "linguistic-experiential reservoir" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 1062) that reflects their cultural, social, and personal history. Lee Galda (1998) has said that “we share referents within our language,
so there is always some amount of shared meaning, while there also may be considerable variation in meaning across readers” (p. 3). The reader’s linguistic-experiential reservoir, combined with the reader's past experience with texts, cues in the text itself, and expectations reflected in the socio-physical setting, influence the reader to develop expectations that establish the reading experience as a choosing activity. This choosing activity, or selective attention (Rosenblatt, 1978; Hade, 1992), enables the reader to focus on certain possibilities for meaning-making within the text while relegating other aspects of the text, other possibilities, to the background. While the meaning that is constructed is determined in large part by the reader and the reader’s purpose, the text also informs the reading. During the reading event there is a concurrent stream of reactions as the reader generates an evocation and simultaneously reacts to it. This influences selective attention and expectations about what is forthcoming, and it helps the reader transact meaning as reading proceeds.

Transaction with the text involves adopting a stance and selecting responses relevant to the text. Stance suggests a "readiness to respond in a particular way" (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 43) to the text and involves selectively attending to aspects of the text which the reader deems important to her purpose. Through selective attention, certain aspects of the text will be foregrounded while others will be suppressed or ignored. When the primary goal is to carry away information, the reader adopts an efferent stance, focusing on "what will remain as residue" (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 23). The reader's attention is directed outward toward concepts to be retained or actions to be performed after the reading event, and she attends to referents that can be publicly tested. When the reader adopts an aesthetic stance, the lived-through experience or the evocation
of the poem is the goal. Of central importance is "the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself" (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 28). When a reader adopts an aesthetic stance, private meaning of language is primary as the reader's purpose "heightens awareness of the words as signs with particular visual and auditory characteristics" (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 29). The sensations, feelings, and images that result from the transaction are the focus for the reader.

Strands of Research

Researchers have attempted to document readers’ engagement with texts in a variety of ways and from multiple perspectives. Research has focused on children’s motivation to read, their attitudes toward reading, and their perceptions of themselves as readers. These areas of research deal with what Victor Nell (1988, 1994) identified as the antecedents of reading. For children to engage in reading as a pleasurable activity, they must have a sense of efficacy and anticipate that reading will, indeed, be pleasurable. This anticipation is normally the result of prior, positive reading experiences and the social and cultural sanctioning of the reading event.

Researchers have also explored the reading event as an aesthetic phenomenon that stands outside lived reality. Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Michael Benton (1979, 1983, 1992), Wolfgang Iser (1978), and Victor Nell (1988, 1994) have attempted to explain how readers become so engrossed in a book that they seem to step outside reality and enter the world of the story. It has been proposed that this experience is the primary reason people engage in pleasurable, leisure reading (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Since creating and inhabiting the text world may be the foundation for both literary and
nonliterary reading throughout life, other researchers have attempted to understand aesthetic response and ways teachers can encourage children to assume an aesthetic stance in classrooms as a harbinger of life-long aesthetic reading habits (Cox & Many, 1992; Farnan, 1997; McClure, & Zitlow, 1991; Murphy, 1998; Sanacore, 2000; Spink, 1996). This strand of research emphasizes the fact that aesthetic reading is a valued, socially sanctioned activity as it relates to habits of life-long reading.

Research has also looked at the actual reading event in an attempt to document the specific ways in which children’s engagement styles, orientations, and stances influence their engagement with text and their ability to construct meaning (Enciso, 1992, 1998; Langer, 1990, 1995; Sipe, 2000; Wilhelm, 1997). This strand of research recognizes the “unpredictability, complexity, and power of the act of reading (Galda, 1998, p.1). Exploring the reading event itself recognizes and affirms the dynamic involvement of the reader whereby reading is a transaction between the reader and the text and is an active rather than a passive pursuit.

This study stands as an extension of the research that attempts to understand and document children’s engaged reading experience. It contributes to our understanding of engaged reading by disclosing, from the perspective of the children themselves, the activities that are central to their reading experience. Children were involved as co-researchers as they identified, explored, and analyzed the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. Penny Oldfather (1993, 1999) set the precedent for working with children as co-researchers in studies of motivation, but to date, children have not been active and equal participants in studies of engaged reading.
If we are going to encourage and invite children to “join the literacy club” (Smith, 1988, 1997), and if we are to dispel the negative associations that stem from the perception that reading is a poor substitute for experience and action, then we must illuminate the active engagement that aesthetic reading necessitates. As Many and Wiseman (1992) have stated, “Continued examination needs to be conducted regarding the process of creating literary worlds” (p. 273). Similarly, Janice Almasi (1995) has said that “if students are to become capable of constructing thoughtful interpretations of text, it is essential that they engage with text ideas and that teachers and researchers explore the underlying processes … that are most conducive to enhancing engaged reading (p. 314). We must articulate the attraction and activity that cause some children to love reading. We must illuminate what is rewarding and engaging about reading for these students. We must reveal what avid readers do as they read that makes the experience satisfying and engaging for them. “We need to find a language to talk about the reading state” (Newkirk, 2000, p. 20). Only when we understand why some children choose to read and document and articulate how they enter and sustain the story world, can we begin to understand why other children choose not to do so.

Through this study I sought to understand and document the themes and dimensions fourth grade children who are avid readers report regarding their engaged, aesthetic reading. This was a focused study, situated in a Readers as Researchers Club. Gay and Airasian (2000) believe that in qualitative research, “each setting and its participants are viewed as being unique, making the researcher’s task to describe the reality of the participants in their own, unique context” (p. 204). This study looked at situated truth:
how and what this particular group of children identified as their personal, engaged reading experience within the context of the club. My goal was to explore with children ways in which the private act of engaged, aesthetic reading could be made public and comprehensible in order to document that engagement.

This research attempted to answer the following questions:

- How do the children who participated in this study describe their experience of engagement as they create, enter, and sustain the world of the story?
- What are the themes and dimensions of the children’s engagement in the world of the story?
- What were the characteristics of the children’s discussions as they constructed knowledge as a group, and what was my role in that process?
- What might be the generativity of children as co-researchers as a methodological anchor?

Mediating Method

Glesne & Peshkin (1992) stress that “the research methods we choose say something about our views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and our perspective on the nature of reality” (p. 5). Three sociocultural positions influenced and informed the design of this study: reader response, feminist poststructuralism, and constructivism. The premise of the study, that children actively engage with texts to create the story world and to construct meaning, is grounded in the transactional model of reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995, 1978/1994). The evocation of a poem is seen as an event involving a recursive process between the reader and the text. Transactional reading also
involves a wandering viewpoint (Iser, 1978), meaning that the reader’s perspective changes during the course of the reading. According to Iser, the text contains gaps, or blanks, that must be filled in or elaborated upon in order for the reader to construct meaning. He believes that “what is said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is not said” (p. 169). Eco (1979) has also recognized this need to fill in gaps in the text in his metaphor of the reader taking interpretive walks and writing ghost chapters. The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of children’s engagement during transaction with the text. In particular, I hoped to understand more about their position and perspective in relation to the text.

The ethics of feminist poststructuralism informed many of my decisions about procedure and methodology. A basic poststructuralist assumption is that we socially construct our understanding of the world, and are ourselves constructed, through language and discourse. Poststructuralist assumptions about subjectivity, knowledge, and truth center on the fact that language constructs social reality rather than reflecting it (Weedon, 1997). Key considerations in feminist poststructuralism are subjectivity, agency, voice, and resistance and how these are influenced by and how they can influence structures of power in socially, historically, and culturally specific contexts. This study was designed to disrupt the adult/child, researcher/participant power binaries and to encourage children to assume positions of power as knowing subjects as they endeavored to understand their engaged, aesthetic reading.

A social constructivist position is complementary to feminist poststructuralism. The constructivist paradigm assumes that there are multiple local and specific realities, that meanings are co-constructed, that the result of knowledge construction is an
interpretive understanding of meaning, and that knowledge is both pluralistic and plastic (Charmaz, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Schwandt, 1994). In research, constructivism calls for shared control between the researcher and the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), which is reflected in the design of this study.

Epistemologically, constructivism relies on the metaphor of construction rather than on that of a mirror. It is important to recognize that constructions do not simply appear nor do they come into existence without human intervention but are purposefully constructed "outside the head between participants in social relationship" (Hruby, 2001, p. 51). Constructions are not customarily the result of individual effort but are the result of the efforts of a group of individuals. Therefore, constructivism is concerned with the way knowledge is produced within dialogic interaction. Jonathan Potter (2000) has stated that descriptions and representations are "built in the course of interaction" (p. 104). Constructivism highlights the importance of negotiation in the creation of knowledge and reality as the participants mediate what they believe to be factual rather than what exists, a priori, as such. With this in mind, the goal of constructivist inquiry is consensus rather than unquestionable truth, and constructions of knowledge are dependent upon the information available and are always and only as reliable as the constructors’ abilities to deal with that information (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The knowledge generated through consensus is always "open, tentative, and generative" (Whitin, 1996, p. 138) and unfinished (Potter, 2000).

My belief in these premises was reflected in and fundamental to the design of this study. The relationships among the children in the Readers as Researchers Club were the backdrop that supported them as they jointly constructed understanding of their engaged
reading experiences. In the context of the research, they came together to create knowledge about and understanding of their active engagement during reading and their construction of and position in the world of the text.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
CREATING AND EXPERIENCING THE WORLD OF THE STORY
AND CREATING UNDERSTANING THROUGH DIALOGUE

Linda: What is it that’s so good for you about reading?
Leah: Well, you just like get carried away in the book, and when you’re really into the book you don’t get distracted or anything.
Labranda: Sometimes if you really like the book you might put yourself in the book and you could imagine what’s happening better.
Chris: When you’re reading a book and get to an exciting part it’s like you never want to stop. It’s like you’re tied to the book. It’s like everything around you disappears, and only you and the book are left.

This literature review is divided in to two distinct sections that reflect the questions addressed in this study. The first consideration involves aesthetic reading and reader response. The transactional model of reader response was examined in Chapter 1 of this document, and the implications of the model are explored in this chapter. Two questions asked in this research are: How do the children who participated in this study describe their experience of engagement as they create, enter, and sustain the world of the story? and What are the themes and dimensions of the children’s engagement in the world of the story? To inform these related questions, research that documents how children approach and engage with texts and research concerned with how children create and enter the world of the story are reviewed. The second distinct section of this chapter deals with
how children create understanding through dialogue and discussion. When reading is viewed as a transaction and when knowledge is viewed as socioculturally constructed, it becomes important to explore how discussions might shape the ways in which we think about and respond to texts. The design of this study involved children as co-researchers and recognized the group of children as the case. The children explored their aesthetic, engaged reading experience as a group through memory work (discussed in Chapter 3) and through group discussions. The other questions raised in this study were: What are the characteristics of the children’s discussions as they constructed knowledge as a group, and what was my role in that process? and What might be the generativity of children as co-researchers as a methodological anchor? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to consider epistemologies of knowing, how children position themselves and are positioned through dialogue, and the characteristics of dialogue and discussion. Finally, since the children illustrated their engagement through metaphor, an exploration of metaphor construction and metaphorical thinking concludes this chapter.

Aesthetic Experience and Response

Approaching and Engaging with Texts

The manner in which a reader approaches a text is referred to as a stance or an orientation. It is important to recognize that stances are not simply a reflection of a reader’s proclivity or an individual’s decision regarding the reading event. They are “shaped by the reader’s understanding of the situation in which the reading is occurring. Stance is bound in the transactional relationship between reader, text, and context” (Hade, 1992, p. 198-199). Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1995, 1978/1994) identified aesthetic
and efferent stances, and Judith Langer (1990a, 1995) explored literary and nonliterary reading. Each pair of stances denotes a qualitative difference between reading experiences based on the reader's purpose. In aesthetic or literary reading, the reader focuses on private response and becomes personally involved in the world of the text. On the other hand, in efferent or nonliterary reading, the reader strives for public meanings and looks for analytic understanding. While it is instructive to conceive of separate stances, there is also the danger of viewing them as polarities or binaries, thereby essentializing the reading experience. The fact that Rosenblatt emphasized that aesthetic and efferent stances exist on a continuum minimizes this possibility as it identifies infinite positions along the continuum at which a reader may position herself.

David Miall and Don Kuiken (1995) developed a questionnaire to assess aspects of literary response. They identified seven different aspects of readers' orientations toward literary texts, and they found that the aspects clustered to describe two broad approaches to reading. Some readers approach reading as experience. This involves personal connections and emotional involvement as the reader focuses on the aspects of insight, empathy, imagery vividness, and leisure escape. Readers who focus on story-driven reading are concerned with literal comprehension and analysis of the text. These two approaches to reading align with and support the notion of aesthetic and efferent stances and literary and nonliterary reading.

Judith Langer (1990a, 1995) has built on Rosenblatt's work in her study of reading. She identified two orientations and four stances, or ways readers relate to texts, in order to create envisionments. Langer (1995) has stated that “the primary orientation we engage in is socially situated; it isn’t the orientation that is our focus, but the
particular social activity” (p. 26). Orientation, then, arises from one’s perception of the socially sanctioned ways of reading particular texts and the activities of mind associated with those ways of reading. As mentioned previously, the two orientations Langer identified are literary and nonliterary reading.

Once the reader has oriented herself toward the text, there are four stances she may assume. According to Langer (1990a, 1990b 1995), readers seek information from the text in order to establish a context for understanding. This stance is “being out and stepping in.” The reader looks for features of the text with which she is familiar and uses these textual cues to guide her reading. The second stance is “being in and moving through” which "describes the engaged moments when readers [use] their personal experiences and knowledge as well as the text to push their envisionments along … where meaning [begets] meaning” (Langer, 1990a, p. 241). When readers have been immersed in the text and interrupt their envisionment to use their growing understanding to reflect on their lives and knowledge, they adopt a stance of “stepping back and rethinking what one knows.” This differs from the other stances because readers use the text to understand and reflect on their real world, while in the previous stances, the reader’s world was used to understand the text. Finally, readers can adopt a reflective stance by “stepping out and objectifying the experience” when they consider the reading activity, their understanding, and their personal reaction. They evaluate the reading experience itself. Langer found that these stances are recursive during a reading event. They change over time as the reader develops meaning, and each stance adds a different dimension to the reader’s understanding of the text. These four stances indicate the level of engagement and the activity that is involved as readers create envisionments.
Langer’s (1995) work indicates that readers are guided not only by their personal envisionments but also by a sense of the text as a whole. We are conditioned by social practice to approach certain texts in certain ways under certain circumstances. During nonliterary reading, the reader's sense of the whole provides a steady “point of reference” (Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995). This is in contrast to literary reading during which readers construct a sense of the whole as a constantly moving and expanding “horizon of possibilities” (Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995). In considering a horizon of possibility, readers are driven by inquisitiveness, and the horizon expands and changes as the reader clarifies new understandings.

Iser (1978) postulated that the reader can never perceive the entire text at any given time and used the metaphor of travelers on a stagecoach to illuminate the reader’s perspective. According to Iser, the reader must pay attention to each phase of the journey in order to establish a pattern of consistency and reliability based on textual content. The reader establishes a “wandering viewpoint” in order to accomplish this. The reader interprets each stage of the journey against the backdrop of previous and anticipated stages but can never view the journey in its entirety. The reader is positioned, or positions herself, within a particular perspective at each stage of the journey. This perspective is not confined to only the present perspective, however, but is formed and informed by past perspectives and future potentialities. This encourages scanning the horizon and considering the possibilities of the journey.

Lawrence Sipe’s (2000) work builds on that of both Rosenblatt and Langer, and is based on theories unified by the recognition that literary understanding is a social construction. He identified five aspects of literary understanding and how children situate
themselves in relation to the text. One aspect is analytical. In this aspect the child situates herself within the text, dealing with the text as an aesthetic, literary object to be critiqued. Another aspect is intertextual, wherein the child situates herself across texts in order to make connections from one text to another. Sipe notes that language and culture determine both the possibilities and the boundaries for these intertextual connections. In the personal aspect, connections are made to or from the text to help the reader create understanding. The reader moves through the text when she enters and becomes one with the world of the story, and this is the transparent aspect of literary understanding. The text becomes the reader’s identity as she merges with the text, perhaps feeling that she has become one of the characters. Finally, the child can manipulate the world of the text for her own purpose and, in essence, perform on the text reflecting the performative aspect. Both the transparent and the performative aspects are manifestations of an aesthetic stance. "In its receptive form, this orientation results in the lived-through experience of a work of literature, as we aesthetically surrender, for the moment, to the power of the text" (Sipe, 2000, p. 270). The transparent aspect involves reception while the performative aspect involves expression.

Using Symbolic Representation Interviews (SRI’s), Patricia Enciso (1990, 1992) documented the subtle yet complex nature of the strategies readers employ as they construct meaning. She views the reader’s orientations, strategies, and stances as indicative of her efforts to create, maintain, and engage with the story world. Enciso identified three orientations: reader’s story world, reader’s world, and narrative. When oriented in the story world, the reader changes focus, addresses various elements of the story, and participates in diverse ways. This reflects the reader’s awareness that she
indeed inhabits the space or world of the story. When the reader refers to personal experience or makes textual connections, she is in the reader’s world. Narrative refers to the reader’s analytic observations about author’s craft and how the story was written. Enciso (1992) developed twenty participation codes that function “within the larger act of reading … which can make reading a powerful, worthwhile activity” (p. 91). While Rosenblatt identified two stances, aesthetic and efferent, Enciso considers these umbrella terms and documented twenty-nine stances. Enciso’s work supports the transactional nature of reader engagement and highlights its complexity.

Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading, Langer’s stances assumed by readers when creating envisionments, and the techniques developed by Enciso to uncover the subtleties of children’s engagement inform Jeffrey Wilhelm’s (1997) work. According to Wilhelm:

Engagement means that the reader uses a variety of moves and strategies to enter and involve herself intensely in worlds of meaning. In these ‘story worlds’ the reader interprets characters, setting, events, and thematic possibilities through her interaction with and movement through that world (p. 144).

He found that “the response of engaged readers is intensely visual, empathetic, and emotional” (p. 144). As a result of his research, Wilhelm identified ten different types of responses and organized them into three dimensions.

In the evocative dimension children enter the story world, show interest in the story, relate to characters, and visualize the story world. The reader prepares to read and anticipates what the reading experience will be like, develops initial interest through literal comprehension, develops relationships with the characters, and creates visual
images of the characters, settings, and situations. The connective dimension involves elaborating on the story world and connecting literature to life. The reader may go beyond the meaning suggested in the text by filling in gaps and creating personal meaning through connections and associations in this dimension. The reader uses her life to inform her reading as well as using her reading to inform life. In the reflective dimension readers consider the significance of story elements, recognize literary conventions, perceive the reading event as a transaction, and evaluate the author’s skill as well as the self as a reader. In this dimension the reader recognizes the presence of the author as well as the moves and the craft employed by the author to tell the story. The reader also evaluates the author’s literary effectiveness and, recognizing that authors write from a particular standpoint, critiques the author’s effectiveness in promoting a particular agenda. The reader may also evaluate the effectiveness and the impact of her own reading strategies and meaning construction.

Wilhelm (1997) stressed the sociocultural nature of literacy and the importance of children working together to construct meaning. “When readings are shared, students have the opportunity to create response together, to compare response and ways of reading, and to learn from each other about these ways of reading” (p. 73). Wilhelm’s work highlights the active nature and the various strategies children employ as they create the story world and engage with text.

Readers are likely to experience and engage with rather than merely process the story when they approach texts with a transactional epistemology. Adopting an aesthetic stance to create an evocation (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995, 1978/1994), being in and move through an envisionment during literary reading (Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995), and
moving through and on texts (Sipe, 2000) all make the lived-through experience of the text possible. When the reader adopts these stances her world and the world of the story merge. This is where the lived-through experience (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994), the secondary world (Benton, 1983), the literary space (Jacobsen, 1982), the reading state (Newkirk, 2000), and presentness (Iser, 1978) are created, and readers become lost in a book (Nell, 1988, 1994).

**Merging the Self and the World of the Text**

Jerome Bruner (1986) called for research that would discover how texts affect readers. Those who promoted psychological processes argued that the reader’s identification with the characters or the fact that characters represented our unconscious or subconscious needs, desires, and selves could explain how texts affect readers. Those who advocated a linguistic process promoted the idea that it was the tropes, such as metaphor, employed by the author that evoked “zestful imaginative play” (p. 4), thereby producing the effect. Bruner proposed, however, that these explanations merely skimmed the surface of the issue and failed to provide “an account of the process” (p. 4). The following section documents the attempts of researchers and theorists to provide this account. The focus necessarily changes from the text to the reader, however, for it is not the text alone that creates or produces an effect, but it is the transaction between the text and the activity of the reader that results in engagement and may produce profound effects on the reader.

Reading is one of the most widespread activities in which people engage for sheer enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi hypothesized that reading
is enjoyable because the reader experiences a novel state of being as reading changes the parameters of the real world by altering the reader's consciousness.

When people enjoy whatever they are doing, they report some characteristic experiential state that distinguishes the enjoyable moment from the rest of life … We call this experience a flow experience, because many of the respondents said that … it felt like being carried away by a current, like being in a flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 127).

Louise Rosenblatt also recognized the experience of being carried away by a book. She said that "in its highest form … absorption in what we are evoking from the text produces feelings of being completely carried out of oneself" (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995, p. 265). Csikszentmihalyi developed a model of the flow experience to describe how people enter into and what occurs during total engagement in an activity.

During flow, the person's skills are fully engaged, and action and consciousness merge. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), "We become what we do" (p. 127). Attaining flow involves a clear goal enabling feedback, which in turn leads to maintained involvement. The goal is not sought, however, as an end; it is sought because it makes the activity possible. Engagement in the activity is what matters. In the case of reading, the reader's anticipation of the experience serves as the motivation. The activity must require actions that match the person's skill level in order to achieve flow, and when this match occurs, attention becomes so focused on the activity that extraneous concerns are completely ignored. Flow creates a feeling of liberation. "No longer restricted to the
confiness of one's self-image, it is possible to transcend the boundaries of one's being" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 131). With attention focused exclusively on the task, there is not enough attentive energy left to contemplate the self.

Readers attain flow when they are actively engaged. Four characteristics distinguish the active nature of engaged, aesthetic reading and aesthetic response (Cox & Many, 1992). Engaged readers focus on aspects of the story and on what they experience and/or feel. They focus on the lived-through experience “in that their selective attention to the experience [becomes] the stuff from which they [construct] a reality of their own” (Cox & Many, 1992, p. 111). Active engagement also involves a focus on imaging and picturing. Clear visualizations indicate that the reader’s attention is on the evocation of the work. Visualization allows readers to feel that they are present in the story world or that they have actually become one of the characters. Active readers also focus on hypothesizing, extending, and thinking retrospectively. This enables them to move their evocations along and maintain their interest and presence in the story world. Finally, readers focus on creating intertextual relationships to justify and intensify the feelings and associations their reading evokes. When making these connections, the reader’s life can serve as a text along with the written and visual cultural texts with which the reader is familiar. These intertextual connections serve two purposes: to enrich the reader’s understanding by helping them visualize the secondary world of the text and by highlighting the reader’s personal understanding of the text (Many, 1996). Making intertextual connections involves making connections between the text and life to explore feelings, verify understanding, and create and understand the world of the story.
Victor Nell (1988) studied the psychology of reading for pleasure and defined ludic, or pleasure, reading as a form of play that is situated outside ordinary existence and which absorbs the player completely. The reader is intrinsically motivated, and reading is "paratelic … pursued for its own sake" (Nell, 1988, p. 7). He found that "pleasure reading breeds a concentration so effortless that the absorbed reader of fiction [is] transported by the book to some other place and shielded by it from distractions" (p. 41). Similarly, Langer (1990a) recognized this phenomena when she wrote, "When readers treat texts in a literary manner … from the very first few words they are drawn into the text, leaving the everyday world behind" (p. 232). Nell enumerated three preconditions of ludic reading. Ludic readers are skilled readers, they anticipate that reading will be pleasurable based on their previous encounters with literary reading, and they know how to select books in which they can become immersed. He identified several unconscious, physiological changes that occur during reading that "feed back to consciousness as a general feeling of well-being" (Nell, 1994, p. 49). Cognitive changes also alter the focus of attention from the self to the text, making the reader oblivious to other internal and external demands. The antecedents of reading along with the changes that occur for the reader during reading allow the reader to get “lost in a book” and are consistent with Csikszentmihalyi's conditions for and characteristics of flow.

Stasis is the term first used by Northrop Frye and expanded by Deanna Bogdan (1992) to describe the merging of the text and the reader. “Stasis resides in the instinctual and instantaneous apprehension of – and union with – the art object in terms of its imaginative and emotional impact” (p. 113). Awareness of the self disappears as the reader surrenders to the text. The reader simultaneously perceives and experiences the
story during stasis and achieves “a psychological state to be prized and luxuriated in” (Bogdan, 1992, p. 115). As such, it is a very private and personal experience. Bogdan believes that stasis is achieved when three human imperatives, the search for truth, the fulfillment of desire, and the impulse to action, are resolved.

Norman Holland referred to the concept of “potential space” as a “space which is neither inner psychic reality nor external reality” (as cited in Jacobsen, 1982, p. 25). He stated that the suspension of disbelief is an intense and imaginative involvement in reading during which the reader ceases to pay attention to what is external to the text, concentrates attention on the text, and loses track of the boundary between the self and the text. People are "gathered up, carried along, absorbed, and taken out of themselves" (Holland, 1968/1989, p. 66). In essence, the work of art and the self merge. Jacobsen (1982) explored Holland’s concept of potential space and discovered that the reader does not merely perceive the story world but contributes attention, memory, imagination, and feelings to create it and suspends awareness of herself while entering into it.

The interaction of “dual landscapes” and the creation of a “virtual text” may also enable the reader to create and enter the world of the story. Jerome Bruner (1986) identified two landscapes that are present in all texts. The first is the landscape of action. The plot or the story grammar comprise this landscape. The reader may become involved with the actions and the plight of the characters through the landscape of action. The second landscape is that of consciousness. This is where the reader sees through the perspective of the character and is transported out of herself and into another way of knowing.
Bruner (1986) expanded on Iser’s idea of a virtual text in which the reader goes beyond the actual text when filling in gaps and blanks to create meaning. Bruner proposed that there are three features of discourse that enable the reader to create this virtual text: presupposition, subjectification, and multiple perspectives. Presupposition deals with the fact that writers often imply meaning rather than making it explicit. Explicitness of meaning cuts off interpretation, but implied meaning allows the reader to create or construct personal meaning from the text. Subjectification involves the “depiction of reality not through an omniscient eye that views a timeless reality, but through the filter of the consciousness of the protagonist in the story” (p. 25). This embodies the aforementioned landscape of consciousness and allows the reader to enter the life and the mind of the protagonist. Multiple perspectives complement, extend, and trouble the idea of subjectification. The fact that some texts, or the accumulation of texts, present us with multiple perspectives allows us to develop more than a single perspective on the world and view differing perspectives “simultaneously through a set of prisms each of which catches some part of it” (p. 26). Bruner uses a mapmaking metaphor for the reader’s creation and her journey into and through the world of the story. Creating this virtual text is like “embarking on a journey without maps” (p. 36). Yet we have experience with and knowledge of other journeys and we know about maps, and we can use that preexisting knowledge to inform the current journey. As our current journey proceeds, however, it becomes increasingly distinct and separate from our previous journeys; it becomes a unique experience. The reader creates the world of the story through this journeying and mapmaking.
Wolfgang Iser (1978) stated that when the reader is present in the text, “meaning is no longer an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced” (p. 10). Since the reader’s perspective is that of a wandering viewpoint, constantly shifting between the past, the present, and the future, the reader perceives the text “as an ever-expanding network of connections” (p. 116). Thus, the dimension of space is added to that of time in the reader’s creation and experience of the story world. In Iser’s conception of presentness, the reader is lifted out of reality through her own production of and absorption in imaging. He stated:

Presentness means being lifted out of time – the past is without influence, and the future is unimaginable. A present that has slipped out of its temporal context takes on the character of an event for the person caught up in it. But to be truly caught up in such a present involves forgetting oneself (1978, p. 156).

The text is experienced as an actual event, as something real, in this dynamic way. The reality of the reading event is created by the fact that the reader continually processes new information that is simultaneously stable and unstable, definite and indefinite. She reacts to what she has produced, and she cannot escape from what she has imagined. In essence, she is caught up in her own production of the text. This creates the illusion that reading is an actual event and contributes to the reader’s impression that she may indeed assume the identity of one of the characters. Thus, the reading event happens for the reader and she becomes involved and engaged.

Iser has also theorized a time-axis for the reader’s presentness in the text. The images created by the reader form a sequence. The greater the number of blanks in the text, the greater the number of images that will be created by the reader. Each image is
created against the backdrop of previous images and the possibility of newly emerging ones. Each image is built and subsequently abandoned in the face of new information as a more comprehensive image is created. According to Iser (1978):

Meaning itself, then, has a temporal character, the peculiarity of which is revealed by the fact that the articulation of the text into past, present, and future by the wandering viewpoint does not result in fading memories and arbitrary expectations, but in an uninterrupted synthesis of all the time phases (p. 148-9).

As the reader forms imaged objects along the time axis, she creates meaning through an integration of the phases of reading (past, present, and future) and justifies personal imaging with textual content.

Stanley Fish (1980) proposed that all texts are, to one extent or another, about their readers, so the experience of the reader should be the subject of analysis. He argued that it is at the word and sentence level that reading takes on the quality of an event. The meaning of the sentence “happens” (p. 25) in conjunction with the reader. In the course of reading, the reader asks not what words mean but, rather, what they do. Considering what words do involves “what assumptions [the reader] is making, what conclusions he is reaching, what expectations he is forming, what attitudes he is entertaining, what acts he is being moved to perform” (p. 92). The reader’s response is continually developing as each word relates to and qualifies preceding and subsequent words. The reader’s response to any given word in a sentence is a product of previous responses. This results in the “temporal flow” (p. 27) of the reading experience.

J. R. R. Tolkein (1964) first referred to the reader’s creation of a secondary world, which can be entered imaginatively. Michael Benton (1983) adopted the term and refers
to the secondary world as "the virtual world of the text … created in the space between
the writer's inner self and outer reality, [and] recreated in the space between the reader's
inner self and the words on the page" (p. 69). These shifting boundaries make it possible
for the reader to enter the world of the text and inhabit it as literary space. Benton (1992)
discusses four aspects of the secondary world that contribute to its creation: location,
structure, viewpoint, and substance. The location of the secondary world is “a sort of
mental playground” (p. 28) that the reader creates and enters as a result of her
construction of the text. The structure of the story world is conceptualized on three
psychic planes that are discussed below. Viewpoint involves the intersection of the three
structural planes at any specific moment in the creation of the secondary world. Finally,
substance is the phenomenon of mental imagery that contributes what seems to be actual
color, sound, and movement to the secondary world.

Benton described the reader's construction of the secondary world in terms of
three psychic planes that contribute to its structure: level, distance, and process. These
planes correspond to our perception of the length, breadth, and height that constitute the
three-dimensional nature of the actual world. Psychic level "gives depth to the world we
imagine" (Benton, 1983, p. 71). It establishes the boundaries of the conscious and
unconscious beyond which the secondary world disappears. Psychic distance determines
the various degrees of involvement the reader experiences. It regulates the degree to
which the reader establishes a relationship with the fictional world. The psychic process
gives a qualitative sense to the concept of time in the secondary world. A sense of
fictional time is created as the reader alternates between anticipation and reflection. The
"changing images of the secondary world give us the illusion of fictional time passing at a different rate from the actual time-flow of the primary world" (Benton, 1983, p. 74). The shifting viewpoint of the reader is the point of coherence for the three planes.

Imagery, or visualization, is a primary activity in the creation of and engagement with the story world. The ability to create images of what one is reading increases comprehension and interest (Guthrie & Anderson, 1999; Many & Wiseman, 1992), and, as Benton (1983) stated, gives substance to the secondary world. The more readers are able to elaborate on the images they have created, the more concrete the story world becomes for them. Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003) observed that engaged readers spontaneously visualize what they are reading. In fact, these readers recognize a breakdown in images as an indication that they need to monitor their comprehension.

Iser has said that “meaning is imagistic in character” (1978, p. 8). Both he and Benton have discussed how the stream of images the reader creates establishes the perception of time within the story world as distinct from time within the real world. Iser elaborated on the way in which the gaps and blanks within a text contribute to imaging. “Perception requires the actual presence of the object, whereas ideation depends upon its absence or nonexistence” (1978, p. 137). Imaging, visualization, or ideation endows that which is not present with the impression or illusion of presence. Once again, this is a result of the fact that present images are related to past and future images as each view may “overlap, restrict, or modify it” (Iser, 1978, p. 138). The images we create, then, are constantly shifting, as is the viewpoint from which we construct these images.

Eco (1979) also proposed that the reader must reconcile the tension of presence and absence within a text. In part, this involves comparing the reader’s known world with
that presented in the text, which positions the reader as an active interpreter of the text. Similar to Rosenblatt’s selective attention, the process of interpreting the text establishes certain aspects as relevant and pertinent and “narcotize[s]” (p. 23) others. Eco also distinguishes between the plot and the fabula of the text. The plot is the story as it is told, while the fabula is the “basic story stuff” (p. 27). The fabula is always experienced in a step-by-step, sequential manner with each step constituting a change of the reader’s state of consciousness and a perceived lapse of time. This encourages the reader to wonder about the next step of the story. Eco refers to this wondering as “forecasting” as the reader uses prior knowledge about life and about story grammar to make predictions about what will happen next. This is accomplished through intertextual frames as the reader engages in what Eco called inferential walks. “To identify these frames the reader [must] walk, so to speak, outside the text, in order to gain intertextual support” (p. 32). Thus the reader is an active interpreter who reconciles the tension between that which is present and that which is absent to understand the fabula of the text.

Creating and maintaining participation in the story world through engagement with the text are the underpinnings of the pleasurable reading experience. Readers adopt an aesthetic stance in which the primary purpose of the reading event is the lived-through experience of the evocation (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995, 1978/1994, 1994), are oriented as being in and moving through (Langer, 1990), or transparently move through or performatively act on the text (Sipe, 1990). When readers are actively engaged, they enter a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), become lost in a book (Nell, 1988), achieve stasis (Bogdan, 1992), or experience the presentness of the text (Iser, 1978). The space they create and inhabit has variously been called a secondary world (Benton, 1983), the
literary space (Jacobsen, 1982), or the reading state (Newkirk, 2000). Whatever its name, it is the primary motivation and reinforcement for pleasure reading, and it involves the reader’s active engagement in and construction of the story world.

Creating Understanding through Dialogue and Discussion

Epistemologies of Learning

The ways children read, respond to, and talk about texts are influenced and shaped by their prior experiences with story, by messages embedded in culture, and by the formal instruction they have received.

Students learn to respond to literature as they acquire various social practices, identities, and tools not only through participation in interpretive communities of practice, but also through experience in acquiring social practices and tools and in constructing identities within specific cultural worlds (Galda & Beach, 2001, p. 66).

The very meaning of literacy is dependent upon the social context, the text itself, the activities that bracket the reading event, and the reader herself. Literacy is always situated in and becomes meaningful in social and cultural contexts where it is negotiated as a social practice and where readers are positioned as being literate in particular ways (Bloom & Katz, 1997; Egan-Robertson, 1998; Hammerberg, 2003; Myers, 1992). This means that total subjectivity of interpretation is an impossibility because the reader is a communal entity rather than an isolated individual (Fish, 1980). Although adopting an efferent or an aesthetic stance involves a personal orientation toward a text, it also
involves the expectation that other readers will adopt a similar stance. Stance can be viewed as an event during which readers “compose the public definition of what literature is, who can read it, and how it can be read” (Hade, 1992, p. 199). Sociocultural theories of literacy acknowledge that factors within the environment as well as within the individual shape the ways in which meaning is constructed.

Children develop an epistemology of text and view the text/reader relationship as one of transmission, translation, or transaction (Cazden, 2001; Rogoff, 1994; Schraw and Bruning, 1996). The epistemology children develop is dependent upon their experience and instruction. Galda (1998) has stressed that the reader’s creation of meaning “both shapes and is shaped by other texts – those we have read and those we have lived” (p. 3). The way children use language as a text cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and historical situations that constitute their language. Furthermore, the language through which education is conducted can never be neutral but creates and conveys a point of view regarding knowledge and how the mind should be used in relation to that knowledge. Patterns of discourse with which children are familiar shape the way they read, the way they think, and the way they respond to texts (Bruner, 1986; Dyson, 1992; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995; Parsons, 2004). The roles of teachers and students are defined and their relationships are established through enacted patterns of discourse.

Children submit to the text (Smith, 1992) and accept a passive role in relation to the text and in the construction of meaning when they adopt the transmission model. They are likely to engage in story-driven reading where their goal is literal
comprehension and analysis of the text (Miall & Kuiken, 1995). The transmission epistemology usually results from and signifies a lecture model of instruction (Peterson & Eeds, 1990) which situates knowledge elsewhere (Boomer, 1987) and positions the reader as the passive recipient of that knowledge. This establishes a dyadic relationship between the teacher and the student, with the teacher as one half of the dyad and the children collectively representing the other half (Rogoff & Toma, 1997). It is fostered when teachers ask display, or inauthentic questions (Cazden, 2001), or challenge questions (Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001). These are questions to which the teacher expects a particular, correct answer based on her understanding of the text and wants the reader to display, or prove, that she has correctly understood the reading. These questions may be worded so that it appears that there is no indisputable answer, yet it is obvious that there is a favored answer.

Four features, which exist on a continuum, determine the parameters of the instructional frame for classroom discussions: the stance that is encouraged, where interpretive authority is situated, who controls turn-taking, and who controls topic selection and shifts (Chin, et al., 2001, Marshall, et al., 1995). An epistemology of reading and responding that is based on the transmission model relies on a “three-turn pattern of teacher question – student response – teacher evaluation” (Marshall, et al., 1995, p. 6). Commonly referred to as initiation, response, and evaluation (I/R/E), this pattern discourages authentic dialogue about the text. Interpretive authority rests with the teacher who opens the discussion, poses questions and evaluates answers, controls topic shifts, and brings the discussion to a close. “Thus, student’s voices are silenced and their identities within the community are marginalized” (Almasi, 1995, p. 318). This
encourages procedural engagement (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) wherein the participants attend to rules and procedures that govern classroom behavior and task completion in an attempt to ascertain the “correct” answer or the “right” way to respond rather than participating substantively in the joint construction of understanding.

Those who adhere to a transactional epistemology of text stand in stark contrast to those who develop a transmission epistemology (Schraw & Bruning, 1996). Stanley Fish (1980) makes the distinction that in transmission, skilled reading is defined as seeing what is in the text while in transaction, skilled reading is defined as knowing how to produce or construct what can be said to be there. When children have been encouraged to experience, analyze, and actively construct their own knowledge and interpretation of a text, they exert control over their reading (Smith, 1992). They view reading as experience and make personal connections, experience emotional involvement, create vivid imagery, and view reading as an event (Miall & Kuiken, 1995). This epistemology is fostered when teachers encourage children to actively construct their understanding of story and when they ask authentic (Cazden, 2001) or genuine questions (Chinn, et al., 2001). Through authentic questions, the children and the teacher explore the possible meanings of the text, and they are positioned as constructors of knowledge. Authentic questions foster dialogue and emphasize the active construction of knowledge as it is co-produced by all participants.

Dialogue about texts can contribute to knowledge in several ways (Alvermann, 1999, Cazden, 2001). Children experience a deeper processing of information because they must clarify and then articulate their thoughts through language. Dialogue creates a reciprocal relationship between one’s own understanding and that of others as the
participants develop an awareness of multiple points of view and the ways in which divergent ideas can contribute to and enhance their personal understanding. Participants see themselves as capable of creating knowledge as well as benefiting from the knowledge of others, thus distributing the cognitive burden. Engaging in dialogue also leads to an “increased awareness of self in relation to others” (Alvermann, 1999, p. 142), which in turn contributes to the realization that socially constructed knowledge is valued and valid. Finally, active engagement in discourse can serve as a motivation to acquire knowledge, and as participants engage with more knowledgeable peers they gain a better understanding about literary elements and how to develop a critical stance.

Thought processes that are usually hidden are made public through dialogue. The goal of dialogue is not to discover or formulate universal truths but to explore possible truths. Dialogue undermines the sanctity of dominant ideologies, and imbues personal experience and group construction of knowledge with truth-value (Gitlin, 1990). Students comment on, create, and compare responses, control topic shifts, and discover different ways of reading. They also engage in student – to – student turns rather than filtering their comments through the teacher (Chinn, et al., 2001; Wilhelm, 1997). When children are engaged in dialogue, when they ask and are asked open-ended, authentic questions, and when their responses are built upon rather than evaluated, they are much more apt to engage substantively (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) and exhibit a personal commitment to and investment in understanding (Guthrie & Anderson, 1999). Meaning and understanding are viewed as tentative and shifting when the participants transact with the text, engage in dialogue about what was read, build upon each other’s interpretations, and explore ever-expanding possibilities of meaning.
Positioning in Dialogue and Discussion

At this point, it is important to consider the terms used to describe the act of a group of people engaging in thoughtful talk about books. In using the term thoughtful talk, I have been purposefully enigmatic. Webster’s New World Dictionary & Thesaurus (1999) defines talk as expressing something in words or making a statement. Therefore, I view talk as the basic production of a coherent speech utterance. The articulation of an isolated idea becomes significant when it is considered in its sociocultural context. Three terms are used interchangeably in the literature to describe the meaningful confluence of talk in ways that promote the construction of understanding within a group: dialogue, discourse, and discussion. Dialogue is defined as the interchange and discussion of ideas especially when open and frank, as in seeking mutual understanding or harmony. Discourse is the communication of ideas and information through conversation. Finally, discussion is defined as a conversation in which the pros and cons of various aspects of a subject are considered.

I will use dialogue and discussion interchangeably throughout this study to describe thoughtful talk about books and reading. Using the word discourse risks interpretation as Discourse, referring to the multiple ways of being and thinking that are embedded in and promoted through cultural language and practice. Dialogue is relevant because it emphasizes open and frank engagement with others in an attempt to understand multiple viewpoints or to create mutual understanding. Discussion is also appropriate because it highlights that the pros and cons of ideas are deliberated and considered. Although individuals construct personal meaning as they read, their meaning
is refined and enhanced by sharing it with others. Rogoff & Toma (1997) contend that “cognition involves a collaborative process as people engage in thinking with others” (p. 471), and it is through dialogue that “we test, alter, and enlarge our constructed meaning” (Galda, 1998, p. 3). Furthermore, the social nature of dialogue and discussion requires that participants engage in shared thinking rather than merely being in the presence of each other. Almasi, O’Flavahan, & Arya (2001) stress that a discussion is a social and cultural event, which may take a variety of forms depending upon the content and the participants’ goals. Dialogue and discussion stress the socioculturally mediated nature of understanding.

Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism is pertinent to a consideration of the sociocultural construction of knowledge. Placement and position are crucial to dialogism, which stresses that as individuals in relationship we occupy “simultaneous but different space” (Holquist, 2002, p. 21). This creates a foreground and a background, both of which are necessary for the perception of and the creation of meaning. The idea of simultaneity puts individuals in relationship rather than in equal or identical positions. We can view the world from closely related positions, yet each individual and only that individual can occupy a particular temporal and spatial location. Consequently, we observe our world from a unique position, which necessarily shapes our observations of the world and the meaning we construct. As humans, we have a “drive to meaning [that is] understood as something still in the process of creation, something still bending toward the future as opposed to that which is already completed” (Holquist, 2002, p. 24). Our drive to
meaning combined with our unique yet simultaneous positioning results in dialogic interaction. Thus, our point of view always involves our personal standpoint as it is conceived in relation to as well as in opposition to other possible perspectives.

Bakhtin identified three components of dialogue: an utterance, a reply, and the relationship that exists between them. It is the relationship between the utterance and the reply that infuses them with meaning. “An utterance … is always an answer to another utterance that precedes it, and it is therefore always conditioned by, and in turn qualifies, the prior utterance” (Holquist, 2002, p. 60). Thus, the utterance is composed as both active and constrained. Each utterance is informed by heteroglossia, which can be thought of as the myriad conceivable and possible replies that be made to a given utterance. Heteroglossia is the composite of the multiple and competing discourses that surround and shape us, which Holquist (2002) describes as “a plurality of relations, not just a cacophony of different voices” (p. 89). Therefore, our utterances can be chosen from innumerable possibilities while they are concomitantly restricted to the probable responses incorporated and embodied in our discursive histories. Bakhtin’s concept of addressivity (Cazden, 2001) also comes into play as speakers anticipate, hope for, and need a response to their utterances. It is in this way that language is always social as “people act and react” (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993) to each other, and each language act is shaped by the participants and by its relationship to the preceding and subsequent language acts.

Utterances and replies are “drenched in social factors” (Holquist, 2002, p. 61) because of the relationships between speakers and listeners. These social factors include how the speakers position each other and how they are positioned through dialogue.
Values regarding power and voice are expressed “through the process of scripting our place and that of our listener in a culturally specific social scenario” (Holquist, 2002, p. 63). This scripting involves the who and the how of speaking rights. These rights are also defined in the culture at large beyond the boundaries of the group. A first constraint on selfhood may be the cultural texts that provide “guidance to speakers with respect to when they may speak and what they may say in what situations” (Bruner, 1986, p. 66). These rules of precedence are further refined within the group: how the dialogue should be initiated and ended and what constitutes an appropriate utterance in the specific situation. Dialogue does not describe or reflect a situation; dialogue is a situation.

Identities are improvised within dialogic situations. We are products of cultural patterns of thought and language, so identity devoid of cultural and historical existence is an impossibility. According to social constructivism, as we engage in dialogue we “not only convey messages but also make claims about who we are relative to one another and the nature of our relationships. When we speak we afford subject positions to one another” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2001, p. 26). We create positional and practiced identities through dialogue (Holland, et al., 2001). Positional identities involve and reflect relations of power. The space we occupy and the speaking rights we claim are dependent upon who is present in a given situation and our perceived relationship to them. What we say is shaped by our past experience and also by the responses and social consequences we anticipate, and what is said is an expression of how we position ourselves and how we are positioned in relation to others in that particular, historical place and time (Dyson, 1992; Egan-Robertson, 1998). Positional identities may be contested sites if one’s personal attempts at positioning are countered or contested by
others in the situation (Bloome & Katz, 1997). Furthermore, according to Harré & Van Langenhove (1991), people differ in their capacity to position themselves and others, in their willingness and intent to position and be positioned, and in their power to achieve acts of positioning.

Reasons behind the choices that we make when speaking out or remaining silent are inherently tied to how we perceive ourselves in relation to others, to what we are willing to reveal about our own interests and desires, and to whether or not we believe we can make a difference by adding our voices to the mix (Alvermann, Young, & Green, 1999, p. 224).

The issues of voice and power are inextricably tied up with our positional identity.

We constantly form and reform our identities as we constitute ourselves and others through discursive practices over time in social contexts (Egan-Robertson, 1998), and this has implications for our practiced identities, which differ according to contexts of activity. Contexts of activity include existing and newly formed figured worlds and a space of authoring. Figured worlds develop through the work of participants and are socially organized and reproduced. They are “social encounters in which participants’ positions matter” (Holland, et al., 2001, p. 41). Participants practice identity within figured worlds as they configure and reconfigure their positional identities. This may involve using language as a mask. Through certain uses of language, the speaker may be “putting on a certain face, conveying a certain attitude, positioning him – or herself, as it were, in a certain social place” (Dyson, 1992, p. 5). Practiced identities also involve a space of authoring. This involves Bakhtin’s concepts of heteroglossia and addressivity in
that “the world must be answered … but the form of the answer is not predetermined” (Holland, et al., 2001, p. 272). The final context of a practiced identity is to bring new figured worlds into being. Humans are constantly making worlds to inhabit in ways that reflect the tension between who they perceive themselves to be and who they would like to become.

Characteristics of Classroom Dialogue and Discussion

The teacher’s role in dialogue about texts is crucial, since the participants should not enter the discussion with an agenda but should allow the discussion to develop naturally and spontaneously. According to Peterson and Eeds (1990), teachers should “have some ideas about direction and purpose. But … maintain a healthy uncertainty, and ability to live within the moment which leaves them open to respond to whatever emerges within the encounter” (p. 22). As mentioned earlier, the types of questions that teachers ask encourage the use of particular forms of language and particular ways of reading and thinking about texts (Marshall, et al., 1995). Stance markers (Bruner, 1986) are forms of language and speech that give us clues about how to think and how to respond. Stance markers that encourage dialogue are invitations to thought, and they entreat students to negotiate, speculate, and become constructors rather than receivers of knowledge. Authentic questions and open dialogue empower students and lead to substantive engagement. Gitlin (1990) stresses that a characteristic of dialogue is that all participants have a vested interest in the topic at hand and an equal voice in determining the course of the discussion. Ellsworth (1989) furthers the importance of interest, identifying it as the
Several categories of talk occur during literature discussions (Almasi, et al., 2001; Eeds & Wells, 1989). These categories reflect the concepts of aesthetic and efferent reading and the transmission or transactional epistemologies of knowledge. The first category is used to construct simple meaning from a more efferent stance and usually follows the initial reading of a text. In studies conducted by Eeds & Wells (1989), this involved the use of conjectural phrases and approximations of thought signaling “considerable community and risk-taking within the individual groups” (p. 17). The second category focuses on personal involvement and aesthetic experience. Participants develop the personal significance of the text by making connections and oblique references to the text as it relates to their lives. Inquiry is the third category. Participants actively question, hypothesize, interpret, and verify their meaning construction. Another category, critique, involves the participants in exploring and substantiating personal preferences as well as the validity of the multiple interpretations that were presented during the discussion. Finally, through metatalk, the participants reflect on and analyze the circumstances surrounding and the procedural issues concerning the enactment of the discussion. Metatalk may address such concerns as turn-taking, gaining the floor, participant interaction, control of topic shifts, and elaboration of ideas.

Marshall, et al. (1995) contend that classroom discussions about texts share characteristics to such an extent that they can be viewed as speech genres. Conventions such as hand-raising, turn-taking, patterns of questions and response, and power relations
distinguish the genre. A reciprocal relationship exists, however, as the genre influences
the participants’ behavior and the participants simultaneously constitute the genre.
Marshall, et al. identified five language categories of discussions: direct, inform,
question, respond, and elaborate. Utterances that are directives move others toward an
action or change participants’ focus as in topic shifts. Informational utterances are
representations or expressions of the speaker’s knowledge. Questions invite a response
from a particular individual or from the group in general. Responses can take many
forms. They may serve as acknowledgement that the prior utterance has been heard,
restate or revoice the prior utterance, provide either positive or negative evaluation, or
request explanation, elaboration, or clarification. Elaborations, in turn, clarify and build
upon previous utterances.

Marshall, et al. (1995) contrasted large-group, teacher/student discussions with
those in adult book clubs and documented fundamental differences. In large-group
discussions in classrooms, student responses tend to be filtered through the teacher, and
the floor is returned to the teacher after each student turn. Students rarely address one
another directly; “child narrators face the problem of speaking to a dual audience. Peers
are visually obvious, but it is often only the teacher who responds” (Cazden, 2001, p. 12).
Students tend to look at the teacher as they speak rather than at their peers, implying that
they consider her to be the official addressee. The goal in large-group, classroom
discussions is generally toward consensus.

Classroom discussions stand in contrast to adult discussions wherein participants
gain the floor, address each other directly, and are more interested in exploring difference
than in reaching consensus. Parallel and cooperative turns characterize adult discussions.
In parallel turns, speakers overlap turns without ever fully gaining the floor. Parallel turns may be used to contest or support another’s idea. Cooperative turns involve speakers thinking and working together to make a point. They may participate in parallel turns, adding to and completing each other’s thoughts until an aggregate thought has been expressed.

While Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith (1995) distinguished differences between large-group classroom and adult discussions, other researchers (Alvermann, O’Brien, & Dillon, 1990; Alvermann, et al, 1999; Chinn et al, 2001; Oldfather, 1993, 1995, Oldfather, et al, 1999) have documented turns in small-group discussions that are similar. Children make comments, referred to as backchannelling (Chinn, et al, 2001) in which they indicate that they attended to and understood what the previous speaker said. Backchannelling usually takes the form of an interruption, but it is a customary part of everyday conversation and does not impede the flow of the discussion. Children also co-construct ideas by building positively on a previously expressed idea. Revoicing (Cazden, 2001) is closely related to backchannelling in that it affirms the previous statement. It is the repetition of a participant’s statement in a way that rebroadcasts it to the group. Although teachers usually engage in revoicing, any member of the group may do so. Revoicing positions students and their ideas in relationship to each other. It is often necessary and beneficial to revisit previously considered ideas and interpretations as knowledge evolves and is constructed and reconstructed. Concepts “continually evolve with each new occasion of use, because new situations, negotiations, and activities inevitable recast it in a new more densely textured form” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid,
Recursivity (Almasi, et al., 2001) is the tendency to revisit topics over the course of a single discussion or over the course of several discussions thereby emphasizing the fluid and unfinished nature of understanding.

It is often difficult for teachers to encourage natural dialogue even when they are interested in and committed to doing so. Alvermann, et al. (1990) documented the types of discussions that occur in middle school classrooms. They determined that three types of discussions exist on a continuum and are influenced by the teacher’s purpose. Discussions tend to take the form of recitations when the goal is review of material. When students are expected to supply missing information or define terms, lecture/recitations tend to occur. These two types of discussions are based on the initiation, response, evaluation (I/R/E) pattern. When teachers want students to comprehend material, however, they are more likely to engage in open forums. Open forums are characterized by the presentation of multiple perspectives, student – to – student turns, longer student responses, and interjections and interruptions as understanding is constructed. “The tenor of each discussion is strongly influenced by teachers’ need to control, sustain, and pace a discussion, as well as their sensitivity to audience” (p. 319). Alvermann, et al. found a disconnection, however, between what the teachers intellectualized regarding discussion and the actual enactment of discussions in their classrooms. Alvermann, et al. concluded that the immediacy of concerns such as the urgent need to cover content, the pressure to use time in ways that are perceived to be effective and efficient, and issues of classroom management contributed to the prevalence of recitations and lecture/recitations. Even though teachers wanted to engage in dialogue with their students, the demands of the system and the curriculum often prohibited them
from doing so. Rogoff and Toma (1997) would argue that these differing discussion models are not hierarchical, but are important discourses in which students should learn to engage. They contend that different discourses are “likely to be useful or even necessary in the complexity of everyday life in today’s world (p. 492), so it is important for children to learn to engage in different forms of discussion for different purposes.

It is difficult for both teachers and students to adopt new non-recitation instructional frames for discussion (Alvermann, et al., 1990; Cazden, 2001; Chinn, et al., 2001; Rogoff & Toma, 1997). Classroom discussions not only serve as venues for knowledge construction but are “equally important as tools of social control that empower teachers” (Alvermann, et al., 1990, p. 320). Teachers and students must negotiate new roles if they are to engage in true dialogue. It is difficult, for example, for students to replace such ingrained habits as hand-raising with self-initiated turns. A corollary concern of teachers is that of ceding control of turn – taking to their students. Teachers worry that certain students might be reluctant to speak if they must gain the floor without assistance. Bruner (1986) contends that “silence is interpretable” (p. 86), and there are several possible explanations for silence among group members (Alvermann, et al., 1999; Chinn, et al, 2001). Participants may indeed have difficulty gaining the floor when they have to compete for speaking rights. However, they may also believe that others have adequately expressed their views, they may be reluctant to dispute others’ ideas, or they might simply prefer to speak only when they feel that they have something significant or substantive to say.

Another concern teachers acknowledge is that too many students may talk at once. “Then it becomes important to try to understand when overlapping speech is an
interruption and when it expresses peer solidarity and support (Cazden, 2001, p. 86). Teachers also express concern that particular students might monopolize the discussion. A final concern is that the discussion might stray from what the teacher believes to be productive and on-topic discourse. Straying from the topic is referred to as topic drift (Almasi, et al., 2001) and usually occurs when a segment of the discussion is tangentially related in one way to the preceding segment and in another way to the ensuing segment. The conversation slowly drifts from the topic at hand. While the shift in topic may at first and on the surface appear to be unrelated, there are often powerful personal connections between the topics that inform knowledge construction.

Several facets of dialogue characterize talk about texts. Many of the ideas expressed during dialogue are approximations (Peterson & Eeds, 1990) or exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001). This is talk that is truly speculative and conjectural in nature as the participants in the discussion speak “without the answers fully intact” (Cazden, 2001, p. 170). As various members of the group speak, the ideas they express develop more fully as they are considered, supported, contested, and refined by other members of the group. Approximations diminish the idea that participants in the discussion are competitors and emphasize the fact that they are working together to create understanding. As approximations lead members of the group toward consensus, intersubjectivity suggests that the emphasis is not on creating identical understanding but on understanding the multiple viewpoints expressed and how they might inform each other (Rogoff & Toma, 1997). The sociocognitive conflict (Almasi, 1995) or cognitive dissonance (Chinn, et al., 2001) that arises when people propose, support, and contest
interpretations encourages participants “to reflect on a variety of interpretations rather than to rely on a single response” (Almasi, 1995, p. 314). Ideas constantly shift as approximations are refined through dialogue.

Another facet of dialogue is demonstration. “By thinking openly and making their judgements visible to the children, teachers demonstrate a way for children to find their own voices” (Peterson & Eeds, 1990, p. 24), but it is not only the teacher who provides a model for thinking and expressing ideas. Children engaged in the dialogue who have developed voice and agency provide powerful peer models. The final facet of dialogue, practice and feedback, builds on and extends the idea of demonstration. Children need practice expressing ideas, sharing interpretations, listening to others, and extending others’ ideas. This is directly related to establishing voice and speaking rights within the group and is enhanced when the teacher or other participants provide positive feedback to the speaker by building upon, questioning, or revoicing their thoughts. An emphasis on dialogue has implications for “who has the authority to produce knowledge, the methods of knowing, and the knowledge produced” (Gitlin, 1990, p. 448). Dialogue removes knowledge from elsewhere and places it within the individual and the group to be considered and constructed. Therefore, the issues of voice, who can speak, and who can be heard are crucial and are modeled through demonstration and developed through practice and feedback.

The participants in dialogue engage in accountable talk which is “the kind of talk needed in a community of learners” (Cazden, 2001, p. 172). Several different levels of accountability come into play during a discussion. Accountability to knowledge involves providing evidence for the thoughts one expresses by using specific and accurate
reference to the text under consideration. Accountability to standards of reasoning pertains to the rational strategies employed when presenting an argument, interpretation, or conclusion as well as the right and the ability to challenge the quality of another’s conclusions. Accountability to knowledge and standards is reflected in Eeds & Wells (1989) suggestion that dialogue involves both inquiry and critique. An inquiring struggle to know must be followed by a judgement regarding the conclusions drawn. Finally, participants in dialogue are accountable to the group or learning community. It is imperative that “students [learn] how to ask, add to, and even disagree with what their peers have said, and to do so politely, in ways most likely to be heard” (Cazden, 2001, p. 171). “When meaning is interactively constructed, then comprehension involves negotiating many possible meanings, not only in your own head, but also with the heads of others, who all have unique backgrounds and ways of constructing meaning” (Hammerberg, 2004, p. 650). Listening to and responding to other students signals that the participant is cognitively engaged. Accountable talk impels the participants to engage actively and thoughtfully in the dialogue, to listen attentively and respectfully to each other, and to clarify, expand, or contest the ideas under consideration.

Dialogue makes visible children’s use of interpretive tools, strategies used by readers in their personal transactions with text in order to construct understanding (Almasi & McKeown, 1996). The three categories of interpretive tools include making connections between the text and personal experience, creating predictions and hypotheses based on textual information, and using the text to support or reject earlier predictions. There is a reciprocal relationship between engagement and the use of interpretive tools, which simultaneously distinguishes and constitutes engaged reading.
Each participant in a discussion brings information regarding her use of interpretive tools to the event, thereby creating a “cognitive worktable” on which pieces of information can be displayed and considered. Almasi and McKeown (1996) found that:

Each piece of information that was placed on the cognitive worktable almost seemed to become a manipulative item that could be moved about the worktable to see how it fit into the whole. These manipulations represented students and teachers organizing the information that they had acquired toward the ultimate goal of meaning construction (p. 131).

The cognitive worktable makes the individual use of interpretive tools visible to all participants in the discussion. It also promotes approximations (Peterson & Eeds, 1990) and exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001) as the students employ phrases of conjecture which signal their willingness to appear vulnerable within the group. When ideas are expressed before they are fully formed, the speaker acknowledges the possibility of having her thoughts not only supported but also of having them critiqued and modified; yet this is a prerequisite for the joint construction of knowledge.

Children learn to read, think, and talk about texts in ways promoted in and sanctioned by their sociocultural environment. When teachers employ invitational stance markers (Bruner, 1986) such as authentic questions (Cazden, 2001) to encourage children to view themselves as creators of knowledge, the children learn to exert control over their reading experiences (Smith, 1992) and engage substantively (Nystrand & Gamora, 1991). Children who participate in dialogue learn that knowledge is not positioned elsewhere (Boomer, 1987) but is situated in the individual and the group. This is apparent when they engage in conjectural thinking (Almasi & McKeown, 1996), approximations
(Peterson & Eeds, 1990), and exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001) to formulate ideas. Knowledge emerges, shifts, and is refined during this type of discussion. Each individual’s knowledge and thought processes are available for inspection, critique, support, and revision as components of the cognitive worktable (Almasi & McKeown, 1996) allowing children to consider and benefit from multiple perspectives. Children form and reform their identities and position themselves and are positioned in relation to others through dialogue (Alvermann, et al., 1999; Bloome & Katz, 1997; Dyson, 1992; Egan – Robertson, 1998; Harré & Langenhove, 1991). While classroom discussions share such significant characteristics that they constitute a speech genre (Marshall, et al., 1995), teachers can encourage forms of participation that are more egalitarian by ceding authority and power to the children and allowing them to control topic selection and shifts, to claim the floor, to engage in student – to – student turns, and to enhance group construction of knowledge through parallel and cooperative turns.

Moving in to Metaphor

Metaphorical thinking is consistent with the sociocultural and constructivist theories upon which this study was grounded. “To be a metaphorical thinker is to be a constructive learner, one who actively builds bridges from the known to the new” (Pugh, Hicks, Davis, & Venstra, 1992, p. 5). Metaphor also resists objective truth and points, instead, to multiple truths as it deals in “human possibilities rather than in settled certainties” (Bruner, 1986, p. 26). Metaphor is also linked to transmediation (Suhor, 1984) as connections are created across sign systems in order to generate new meanings. One of the most common uses of metaphor is to link the familiar with the unfamiliar in order to
create understanding in ways that are simultaneously rational and intuitive. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believe that “metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally … aesthetic experience” (p. 193). Therefore, it is particularly salient in a consideration of engaged, aesthetic reading experiences. Metaphor can move the concept under consideration from abstraction to a more understandable, concrete reality. Metaphors allow us to understand abstract concepts in more human terms.

Language and thought processes are particularly significant in metaphorical thinking. Northrop Frye (1964) discussed three distinct but interrelated levels of mind: the level of consciousness and awareness, the level of social participation, and the level of imagination. The level of consciousness and awareness involves the language of self-expression and establishes and separates the individual “me” from the rest of the world. It creates an objective world through speculative and contemplative thought and monologue primarily involving nouns and adjectives. The level of social participation utilizes the language of practical sense. The use of verbs with their action and movement construct the uniquely human world of our existence as separate from the natural world. Finally, the level of imagination involves literary language. The realm of possibility is explored and the associative nature of concepts is validated at this level. This is the level at which metaphor is created.

There are several elements that define metaphor: grounding, structure, and correspondence (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Pugh, et al, 1992). Metaphors are grounded in our experience with the concept and with the compared object. In order to create metaphor, we must have a conception of the two referents of the metaphor as well as an
understanding of the workings of metaphor itself. The metaphors we create can only present a concept in terms of our personal experiences. While comparisons created through metaphor are based on personal perspectives, they are also based on cultural perceptions. The representations available for metaphor construction are culturally mediated (Eco, 1979; Siegel, 1995), and metaphors are both enhanced and constrained by the representations available as cultural constructs. The culturally mediated nature of metaphor is often seen in the use of conventions.

The structure of the metaphor refers to the general commonalities of the things being compared, while correspondence refers to multiple points of comparison. The quality of a metaphor is based on the resemblance(s) between the two referents. Certain aspects of a concept are emphasized while other aspects are obscured through the structure and correspondence of metaphor. The aspect of a concept that is highlighted through metaphor is referred to as metaphorical entailment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Eco (1979) defined acceptable metaphors as those in which the comparison is immediately evident, while rewarding metaphors have “tension, ambiguity, and beauty” (p. 83). Thus, their structure and correspondence are not immediately evident but offer a unique comparison. We recognize the implication of new knowledge in rewarding metaphors “without knowing how to demonstrate the legitimacy of the argument” (Eco, 1979, p. 87). Our intuitive understanding of the metaphor can only be legitimized as a result of reflection and analysis. Defaulting metaphors are contorted and offer no new creation of understanding. We expect metaphor to enrich our knowledge or understanding of one or both referents, yet the truth-value of a metaphor is not as important as the way it enhances our perception or the actions that may be sanctioned through its use.
There are some caveats that must be considered, however, when thinking about reading in terms of metaphor. We routinely think and speak in metaphor and must beware of “taking the metaphorical as the literal” (Pugh, et al, 1992, p. 84). Smith (1988) has called metaphors the “refracting lenses of language” (p. 93) and says that although they often enable us to understand abstractions more clearly, they are also capable of distorting our understanding. Additionally, we must examine the origin of metaphors and question who benefits from the acceptance of certain metaphorical thinking as they are often imposed and promulgated by those in power (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). There are several metaphors that are commonly associated with the reading process and that construct reading in terms of other endeavors (Pugh, et al., 1992). If considered and accepted in isolation, these may limit our view of reading and restrict the possibilities of positions for children to assume as readers.

One common metaphor for reading is that it is decoding. This is derived from the world of espionage and implies that cracking the code is the reader’s primary and ultimate goal. Another metaphor is that of reading as transaction. This is based on capitalist values and reflects reading as a commercial enterprise: one in which both parties (the reader and the text) are satisfied through the terms of the “agreement.” The interaction metaphor for reading has a scientific origin and refers to the joining of two elements: the text and the reader. From theater and drama, we have the idea that texts may become a script for life: that we can learn how to act and how to be in the world through texts. Finally, schema theory grows out of the view that relates reading to
architecture. This metaphor suggests that the author is the architect and the reader is the builder who uses her prior knowledge to construct meaning and to consummate the author’s intent.

Each of these metaphors can inform our thinking about reading, but subscribing to only one view can limit and impoverish the actual experience. Furthermore, Anne Haas Dyson (1990) has proposed that we should rethink the instructional metaphor of scaffolding and consider weaving instead. She believes that scaffolding suggests vertical growth and indicates that the child is expected to make closer and closer approximations to the behavior expected and sanctioned by adults possibly negating the richness and diversity of potential and alternative literacy interactions. The warp and weft of weaving consider both horizontal and vertical growth recognizing and respecting the varied experiences and knowledge that children bring with them to any literacy experience and creating space for the sociocultural construction of knowledge.

Summary

It is not the cognitive act that makes reading a pleasurable activity; it is the altered state of consciousness that readers experience. Newkirk (2000) says that "the challenge for the reader … is to construct and happily inhabit this 'interior space,' to give it acoustic and visual properties that absorb the reader's attention … even to the point of feeling disembodied" (p. 19). Theories have been developed and studies have been conducted to describe the different ways readers engage with texts as well as the space they inhabit while reading. The use of metaphor highlights certain aspects of reading while obscuring others. Frank Smith (1988) suggests:
If just one aspect of reading … must be highlighted then perhaps it should be the creation and sharing of experience – the generation of possibilities of knowing and feeling. Authors create landscapes of ideas and experience through which they and their readers may travel and explore” (p. 97).

Miall and Kuiken (1995) found readers to be "sufficiently self-aware to describe their own reading activities" (p. 37). It is time to place the theories alongside practice. It is time to stretch methodology and recognize and involve children as equal participants in the construction of knowledge and understanding of engaged reading. It is time to hear children who avidly read for pleasure and who actively construct story worlds describe the specific themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN

*Linda: How did we come to an agreement when we were trying to decide something?*

*Greg: It was actually fun because you really felt like you were a debater and you could do what you wanted and it wasn’t like in class where you would be in big trouble if you said, “No, that’s not right.”*

*Chris: Well, we pretty much said all of our ideas. Then we talked about them and stuff. It’s kinda like when you find a rock ... like a dirty rock, and then you scrub it with soap and then wash it off. You do all that stuff to kind of knock off a couple of ideas until you pretty much get down to a good idea.*

Nine sections constitute this chapter which details the rationale for and the methodology utilized in this study. A brief overview of the pilot study is presented in the first section of the chapter. The next two sections explain site and participant selection. The fourth section explores the relationship between the researcher and participants. In an attempt to diminish the hierarchical relationship inherent in much traditional research, the study was designed so that the participants acted as co-researchers. The requisite responsibilities and envisioned benefits of this role are delineated. The methods employed for data collection are described in the fifth section. These methods included memory work, group discussions, and a visual protocol. A description of the data sources and the data analysis techniques that were employed are discussed in the sixth and seventh sections.
respectively. Finally, the ways in which trustworthiness was ensured and the ways in which the ethical conduct of the study was guaranteed are discussed in the eighth and ninth sections.

Pilot Study

The primary methods of data collection and analysis were tested in pilot studies conducted February through May, 2002. During February and March, a series of six sessions were conducted with a group of five avid fifth grade readers, and transcripts of the discussions were made. Through this initial experience, I refined the focus of the study, adjusted the memory work methods to fit the age of the children and the topic of the research, and gained experience with and made decisions regarding the transcription of group discussions. Memory work, discussed at length under data collection, was not successful with this group of children for several reasons. I asked the children to write their memory stories independently rather than allowing time during a session for them to do so. Consequently, on the day we were to share stories and begin coding, only half of the children had written, or remembered to bring, their stories. Also, I had not anticipated that we would need copies of the stories that were visible to all the children. I considered this a valuable learning experience.

In April and May, I worked with another group of six avid fifth grade readers, changing and refining the sequence of memory work and group discussions and adapting the memory work method itself. The children were given time during group sessions to write their memory stories. After their stories were completed, each child’s story was written on chart paper and displayed so that all group members could easily read it.
simultaneously. This facilitated comparison of stories and identification of passages that should be coded in the same categories. We completed Stages 1 and 2 of memory work, but time prohibited movement to Stage 3.

Through this group’s work, I was able to determine that memory work was a viable method and that children could code and categorize phrases from their memory stories and then theorize about their engaged reading experience by creating thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The children first coded the reading engagement activities and behaviors they saw in the memory work stories. Then, they organized the coded passages into categories and themes: categories represented the dimensions of their engagement and themes were overarching. Time prohibited as much thematic networking as I had hoped to do, but I was confident that they would be a suitable and significant way for children to visualize their findings.

The children identified three themes that described their engaged, aesthetic reading experience.

1) They picture the story in their head.
2) They anticipate, wonder, and predict.
3) They enter the world of the story.

In Stage 4 of memory work analysis, I realized that their themes closely resembled the dimensions of the secondary world described by Benton (1979, 1983, 1992). Their theme of “anticipating, wondering, and predicting” correlated with his psychic process, wherein the reader fluctuates between anticipation and retrospection. Their theme of “picturing the story in their head” suggested active imaging which is the foundation of Benton’s psychic level and the interplay between the conscious and unconscious with its emphasis
on visual imagery. And finally, their theme of “entering the story” was closely aligned with Benton’s psychic distance, which determines the reader’s level of involvement with or detachment from the story. Based on this pilot study, it was tempting to focus on Benton’s work as an a priori theory. However, I realized that another group of children might identify and focus on different themes and dimensions. Establishing an a priori theory would have restricted the view and limited the possibilities of another group’s analysis and interpretation.

Site Selection

The site selected for this study is an elementary school in a large city school district in the Midwest. With an enrollment of over 13,000, it ranks in the top 20 districts in the state. According to 2002-2003 data, the graduation rate for the district is 92.7%. The ethnic composition of the district is 77.9% white, 14.1% African American, 0.2% American Indian, 1.4% Hispanic, and 2.4% Asian or Pacific Islander. 14.2% of the students in the district are economically disadvantaged and 10.3% are students with disabilities.

The specific site for the research was an elementary school with an enrollment of 493 students of whom 79.9% are white, 13.3% are African American, 2.2% are Asian or Pacific Islander students, and no viable subgroup is identified as American Indian or Hispanic. 17.3% of the students in the school are identified as economically disadvantaged, and 10.2% are students with disabilities. Both the district and the school are rated as "effective" on the state's rating scale which identifies schools as excellent, effective, needing continuous improvement, under academic watch, or under academic emergency. Site selection was heavily influenced by the fact that I was assigned to the
building as a fourth grade teacher. Although Glesne & Peshkin (1992) warn of conflicting roles in what they term “backyard” (p. 22) research, my role as researcher proved to be complementary rather than contradictory to my role as teacher. The importance of my dual roles is made clear and is discussed further under participant selection.

Participant Selection

Purposive sampling was used in this study as fourth-grade students who viewed themselves as avid readers were invited to self-nominate into the Readers as Researchers Club. Alvermann, Young, Green, and Wisenbaker (1999) and Alvermann (2000) set a precedent for self-nomination of avid readers in research. A self-nomination method of sampling addressed and alleviated issues about which I was concerned: the importance of empowered and invested participants and the elusive nature of engaged reading.

It was imperative that the children involved were interested in engaged reading and were willing to explore it in depth and in various ways. Therefore, it was important that the children viewed themselves as avid readers. I have taught in intermediate classrooms for many years and have worked with a variety of students whom I viewed as avid, engaged readers. They were unique individuals with distinct personalities and reading habits. However, for reasons unknown to me, when I think about the avid readers in my intermediate level classes, the ones who come most clearly to mind and the ones who have left the most lasting impression could generally be placed in one of two groups. In one group were very bright, articulate males who were not particularly good students because they read to the exclusion of teacher and school expectations. The other group was comprised of females who were extremely responsible and conscientious students.
who loved to read during sanctioned times in school and also read extensively outside of school. I am disturbed by the gender bias I recognize in my stereotyping of these avid, engaged readers, yet I have seen it play out in my classroom experience again and again. I was concerned that my vivid memories of the avid readers who constituted these groups would cloud my vision and prevent me from seeing the rich variety of children who might identify *themselves* as avid readers.

Memory work was the foundational methodology used in this study and is discussed at length later in this chapter. Regarding memory work, Crawford, et al, (1992) have stated, “We have preferred to set up groups in which the individuals are reasonably homogenous on some criterion which, a priori, we regarded as relevant” (p. 44). I established avid, engaged reading as the relevant criterion for this study. Self-nomination ensured membership of children who considered themselves to be avid readers and reflected the fact that this study was designed to elicit the *children's perceptions* of their own reading and of themselves as readers.

Morse has suggested that a minimum of six participants is necessary in research where the goal is to "understand the essence of experience” (as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780). Patton (1990) reinforced the notion that small numbers can result in strong data when he said, “In-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information rich” (p. 184). With this in mind, I decided to begin the study with ten participants, believing that there would be some attrition. I reasoned that ten was a sufficient number to construct trustworthy knowledge and also be within a parameter of manageability. It was important to me that the children felt their voices were heard within the group and that they were free to express their
thoughts and opinions in an informal, conversational manner. The atmosphere I intended to foster was one that would encourage the natural dialogue of a small, relaxed group rather than that of a teacher-controlled, large-group classroom discussion. In addition to my concerns about issues of voice and agency, I was also aware of issues concerning data management and tape transcription as I established the size of the club.

The original research design called for the recruitment of fifth grade students. This was the inaugural year for Fox Run Elementary (a pseudonym), and I intended to work with fifth graders because they would not have been influenced by my instruction as a fourth grade language arts teacher. Despite two attempts, I was not able to recruit a viable group of fifth graders. Due to the fourth grade and fifth grade schedules, the group needed to meet either before school, after school, or during a 40-minute overlapping lunch/recess time. I was concerned about trying to schedule a time after school due to the myriad activities in which many children in the attendance area are involved. I met with the fifth grade teachers to discuss logistics, and they concurred. They believed that if I held the meetings before school I would have significant interest.

Although meeting before school would have necessitated parental transportation to school 45 minutes early one day a week for the duration of the study, they questioned how I would select the ten students who would be chosen to participate from the number they anticipated would be interested. We considered simply including the first ten children who expressed an interest, but there was concern that it would be difficult to determine the exact order in which interest was signified. We reached consensus that the fairest way to select those who would participate would be through lottery.
I first scheduled our meetings one-day per week before school and recruited students accordingly. Only three students expressed an interest in participation. Next, I recruited for the lunch/recess hour. This time, only four students indicated interest in participation in the study. I realized that during the lunch/recess time I was competing with math club, chess club, kindergarten helpers, and safety patrol, not to mention the fact that I was asking the children to give up their recess.

After these two unsuccessful attempts, I altered the design of the study to involve fourth graders instead of fifth graders. We could meet for an hour during our common lunch/recess time, and I hoped that I would have significant interest to constitute a viable group for research. I had initially targeted fifth graders primarily because I had no prior relationship with them. My concern about conducting research with fourth graders stemmed from the fact that I was teaching language arts and social studies to half of the fourth grade class. I came to realize that this concern was unfounded given the focus of the study. Language arts instruction at the fourth grade level concentrates on the use of reading strategies to create, extend, and sustain comprehension of text and on responding to text: not specifically on the dimensions of engaged reading. A benefit of working with fourth graders was that there were no scheduling conflicts since I shared their schedule, and fourth graders were not involved in any lunch/recess extra-curricular activities except chess club. When I recruited fourth graders, twenty-nine children submitted forms indicating interest.

Two things were clear as a result of recruitment. There were several other competing choices for the fifth graders' time, and I had no established relationship with
them that would incite their interest in participation. With the fourth graders, however, few other activities competed for their time, and I did have an established relationship with many of them. For half, I was their language arts/social studies teacher, and for the others, I was at least familiar as a teacher in their grade level. It is evident that the relationship I had with the students affected their desire to participate in the study.

With twenty-nine possible participants, the next dilemma was how to narrow the group to the specified ten who would be in the Readers as Researchers Club. I divided the interested students according to homeroom and chose participants by lottery. I was still somewhat concerned about my role as teacher/researcher, and I decided to weight the group with students I did not teach directly. Six were chosen from the two classes that I did not teach, and four were chosen from the classes I taught. I had hoped that the demographics of the school population would be reflected in the participants of this study, and that was not necessarily the case. Two African-American children and three economically disadvantaged children indicated an interest in participation, but none were chosen through the lottery. No child identified as disabled expressed an interest. Therefore, none of the participating students were African-American, economically disadvantaged, or disabled. Of the original ten students, nine were European American, and one was of Pacific Island descent. All participants were from middle to upper-middle class families. The initial group consisted of six girls and four boys.

During the course of the research, two students chose to leave the Readers as Researchers Club. Because of the time lost recruiting fifth graders, we were meeting twice a week during the lunch/recess hour. Both of the students who opted out of the study were girls and students I did not teach. The reason both gave for leaving the study
was that our activities did not hold their interest, and they preferred to have lunch and recess with their peers. Four girls and four boys completed the study. Once again, I believe that participation in the club was considerably and positively influenced by the personal relationship that existed between the children and myself prior to the study.

The children functioned as co-researchers throughout the study, as will be discussed at length later in this chapter. As I began writing and considered the importance of demographic and personal/personality information about each of the children, I realized that these statements should not and could not be in my voice. As a result of this conviction, I asked the children to write biographical paragraphs about themselves. To prepare for this writing, I read biographies to them from a research article (Carico, 2001), and then we brainstormed the components of such biographies. Their list included their school strengths and weaknesses, family members, parents' occupations, a description of their personality, hobbies and interests, and a statement about their reading preferences.

The biographical statements, in the children's voices, follow. The biographies were written during one of the follow-up sessions and are written by the eight children who completed the study. It should be noted at this point that various levels of parental consent were granted for this study. The levels of consent included whether or not a pseudonym would be used for the child’s name with the understanding that a pseudonym would be used for the school and only first names would be used to identify the children. Therefore, in the following biographies and in the balance of this dissertation, five children’s names are their given names, and three are pseudonyms.

*My name is April. The school I go to is Fox Run Elementary. In school I'm good at reading and math. I'm not that good in social studies, and I'm okay in science. There*
are five people in my family: my mom, my dad, my sister, my brother, and me. My dad owns his own business, and my mom works there a couple days a week. We have lots of pets, too. I like to tell stories to people, and I always like to have a good laugh. When I'm around people I don't know, I am shy, but otherwise I'm myself 😊. I like to play soccer, tennis, and I like to swim. When I'm home and I have nothing to do I always go on the computer and play games. I love to read realistic stories about kids my age like *Notes From a Liar and Her Dog* (Choldenko, 2001).

Hi! My name is Chris. I go to Fox Run Elementary. My school strengths are writing and geometry. I don't do so good in social studies. My mom stays at home with me and my sister, and my dad works at NPC. I am very creative. I like to build tents. I am very, very talkative. My favorite types of books are the Magic Tree House books. I decided to join this group because I like to read.

My name is Corey. In school my strengths are math, reading, and science, but I don't like science too much. My weakness in school is social studies. In my family, I have a dad who works as a financial advisor, a mom who stays at home, a younger brother, a dog named Joepa, and me. I like watching sports and playing them, collecting football cards, and going to amusement parks and movies. I like reading fantasy and realistic fiction books. I like the series *Harry Potter*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and *The Spiderwick Chronicles*.

My name is Eric. I talk a fair amount if I'm with people I know and like. In school, my weakness is writing. My strengths are reading, math, and science. My family is my mom, my dad, my two older sisters, my two dogs, and my four fish. My mom is a lab technician, and my dad is a pilot. I like to play baseball and hockey with my next door
neighbor. Also, I like to have my friend spend the night at my house. When I read I almost always get into the book. Then I start seeing through the bird's point of view.

My name is Greg. My school is Fox Run Elementary. I have school strengths and weaknesses. My strongest strengths are social studies, writing, math, and reading. My only weakness is science. My family sometimes can be annoying. My sister is nice sometimes. My mom and dad both work, and my brother takes care of me if my sister is away. My personality (the type of person I am) is talkative, and funny, and serious. I have a ton of hobbies. Some of my hobbies include Gameboy, Nintendo, computer, playing with friends, and reading by myself in my closet. As a reader I read a lot of books. I probably read five books a week. I read Harry Potter, A Series of Unfortunate Events, and mystery books. As a reader I do more than just read.

Hi! My name is Leah. I go to Fox Run Elementary. I don't like math, writing, or spelling. In school I like reading, social studies, and science. I have a mom, a dad, a brother, and a sister. My mom is a preschool teacher, and my dad works with computers. My brother is in seventh grade, and my sister is in the Army in Georgia. I also have two dogs, a Guinea pig, and a fish. I like to shop, play with friends, watch TV, and read. I like to play soccer and watch other kinds of sports. I also like to swim. I like adventure and funny books. If I have a book I really like to read, then I don't want to stop reading. I like chapter books more than any other kind of books.

Hi! My name is Meg. I'm 10, almost 11, and I am going to fifth grade at Fox Run Elementary. My favorite subjects are math and reading. There are five people in my family. There's my mom, my dad, my brothers, Marr and Tommy, and me. I also have a puppy, Annie, and four fish. My mom is a homemaker, and my dad is a lawyer. My older
brother, Marr is going to eighth grade, and my little brother, Tommy, is going to second grade. I like to read, play with friends, and go to the pool. My hobbies are soccer and piano. I like to read many books, especially funny books and adventurous books. Each week I probably will only finish one book because I read longer books that take longer to finish. My personality can change a lot. If I'm meeting someone new, I'm usually a bit shy, but if I know someone, like my friends, I can be talkative and outgoing.

My name is Paige. I am ten years old and go to Fox Run Elementary. In school, I prefer math, science, and reading. I have five people in my family, and I'm the middle child. My dad is a fire fighter and a paramedic. My mom is a sales representative. I have many pets and play many sports. I love to talk, play, be silly, and laugh. I am pretty good at making new friends, including everyone, and being fair. I love to read medium sized, challenging books like *Half Magic* (Eager, 1999).

The Relationship between the Researcher and the Participants

Other researchers have involved students as co-researchers (Clark & Moss, 1996; Oldfather, 1993, 1995; Oldfather, et al., 1999; Whitin, 1996) and have documented the goals, processes, and benefits of such research. The design of this study allowed me to conduct research with children instead of conducting research on children. Involving the children as co-researchers addressed my concerns regarding the children's empowerment and efficacy. A primary impetus for empowerment is the realization that no truth exists that is unquestionable or universal (Greene, 1986), and this is a fundamental premise of constructivism, which was a theoretical underpinning of this study. Spaulding (1995) has said that empowerment involves power, ability, and right entailing not only the capacity
to accomplish a task but also the opportunity to do so. Furthering the notion of empowerment, Oldfather & McLaughlin (1993), Oldfather (1995), and Oldfather & Dahl (1995) have discussed epistemological empowerment, which involves intellectual agency and the ability to know. It is a powerful catalyst for intrinsic motivation. Oldfather and Dahl (1995) have enumerated several characteristics of those who are epistemologically empowered. They experience knowledge as a construction rather than as a simple transmission, do not view external authorities as the sole source of knowledge, are driven to make sense of experience, respect others’ processes of knowledge construction, understand and respect multiple viewpoints, and make critical judgments regarding developing understandings. Epistemological empowerment was a goal and a result of honoring the children as co-researchers. In other words, the children determined what could be known and what could be counted as knowledge.

The epistemological shift that resulted from establishing the participants as co-researchers encouraged the children to position themselves as the originators of knowledge and helped them overcome "elsewhereness" (Boomer, 1987). Boomer has described two disparate world-views regarding knowledge. Those who are epistemologically empowered believe that they are capable of possessing and generating knowledge. Those who lack empowerment believe that knowledge exists "elsewhere" and is not to be possessed or created. The shift from viewing knowledge as elsewhere to viewing it as generated has a powerful and positive impact on one's sense of self as knowledgeable and agentic.

These excerpts from exit interviews show the epistemological shift that occurred as the children became creators of knowledge:
Linda: You keep saying “when we had it right” What do you mean by that?

Greg: Like when we finally, actually made up our minds and we thought the same thing, then we had it right.

Linda: So, it was what you guys created?

Greg: And what we thought was right.

Linda: Good, good. Not that there was a right answer that you had to come up with. Did you ever feel like there was a certain answer I wanted and you had to find it?

Greg: Not really, ’cause the group wasn’t really about that. It was more like making your own answer. It wasn’t a test type thing. At least I hope it wasn’t.

*****

Linda: When I talked with the other kids from the group, they talked about coming up with the right answers. I’ve asked each of them what they meant by the ‘right answer.’ Did you get a sense that we were searching for a ‘right’ answer?

Eric: I thought we were more searching for a whole bunch of different answers that added up to the equivalent of the right answer.

Linda: Ok. And who determined if an answer was right?

Eric: All of us. We sort of pitched in and decided all together.

Involving the children as co-researchers also complemented my theoretical grounding regarding the subjective and constructed nature of knowledge and addressed various issues associated with feminist and poststructuralist thought: voice, reciprocity, and subjectivity as legitimate forms of knowledge (Oldfather, et al., 1999). The issue of voice goes beyond a mere ability to express thought to a sense of personal agency. In addition, establishing children as co-researchers reduced the hierarchical relationship that even qualitative studies often establish between the researcher and the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1989) and recognized the children as experts about their own
experience. Potter (2000) persuasively examined our perceptions of the relationship
between who can know and what can be known when he said that "certain categories of
actors are treated as entitled to know particular sorts of things, and their reports and
descriptions may thus be given special credence" (p. 114). Honoring children as co-
researchers established them as knowledgeable and expert: as epistemologically
empowered.

I hoped to foster what Rex and McEachen (as cited in Cazden, 2001) termed
emergent inclusion which is "the gradual and tenuous process of building an inclusionary
culture … achieved by shifting the focus from what to know as an individual performer
to how to know it as a member of a literate group (p. 150). According to Schwandt
(1994), the focus of constructivist understanding "is not on the meaning-making activity
of the individual mind but on the collective generation of meaning" (p. 127). Thus, in
keeping with the constructivist paradigm, what the group constituted as knowledge
superseded individual understanding, and all participants were valued and respected as
members of the group.

In his exit interview, Corey expressed his understanding that the group constituted
knowledge:

*Linda: That’s one reason why I wanted to work with a group rather than
individual readers. ... because you are the ones defining what’s true. Remember you said we kept finding the right answer? It makes you feel really powerful ‘cause it’s not me telling you what the right answer is.*

*Corey: It’s because you’re part of the group and usually the group makes the decision not just one person.*

Prior to and throughout this study, the children and I did occupy particular
positions in relation to each other that were impossible to deconstruct. They knew me as a
teacher and knew themselves as students. They relied on me to take up a certain position and to fulfill a particular role that, in turn, made it possible for them to work from a position within which they were comfortable and familiar. Therefore, during any given session, I assumed a “leadership” position by raising the opening question, bringing us back to topic when the conversation strayed too far afield, and summarizing my understanding of the knowledge they were constructing. Although the children became increasingly comfortable with addressing each other rather than filtering their comments through me, several never broke the habit of raising their hands to be recognized to speak. To an onlooker, our roles may have looked like the traditional positioning of researcher and participant. What broke the power hierarchy, however, would not have been visible to an observer. It was the children’s perception of their role in the research. As stated previously, they became epistemologically empowered. They viewed themselves as, accepted the position of, and fulfilled the role of co-researchers in this endeavor.

Penny Oldfather's (1993, 1995, 1999) work served as an exemplar, explicating the power and the limitations of children as co-researchers. She also noted that to an outside observer, the work the children did initially in her six-year study looked akin to that of any qualitative research participant. The difference was in the children’s perception of the work they were doing together. Oldfather (1995) stated that “the critical difference [lay] in the perception of the co-researchers about their participation, and how those perceptions … affected their ownership of the research and the insights gained” (p. 133). Oldfather and McLaughlin (1993) have made an important distinction between the researcher and the co-researchers that is applicable to my study. They remind us that the
prefix "co" means together. Therefore, the researcher and co-researchers are working together toward their common goal of understanding and knowledge construction. Their roles are not identical but are concordant.

In the first phase of Oldfather's (1995) and Oldfather and McLaughlin's (1993) research, the children did not take field notes, conduct interviews or participate directly in data analysis. They did, however, identify critical issues and questions, and they participated in group discussions. They elaborated on, verified, and clarified the primary researcher's data analysis. They also examined their own thinking, made connections, and contributed insights. Oldfather (1999) repeatedly stated that the children were empowered because of the multiplicity of voices that were honored throughout the study and because of the children's perception that "their voices counted" (p. 290). This was the phase and these the roles my research approximated with the significant exception that the children in my study were active participants in the initial phase of data coding, analysis, and interpretation of their memory stories.

Intrinsic motivation is a consequence of basic psychological needs being met in the course of interactions (Guthrie, 1999; Oldfather, et al., 1999), and this was another underlying premise for establishing children as co-researchers. Their roles in the research process addressed competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Competence is the desire to do things of value and to be viewed as effective. Relatedness concerns the desire for security and a sense of connectedness with others, and autonomy involves a sense of agency and voice. Whitin (1996) also realized similar values as a result of establishing children as co-researchers. She felt the children became more vocal in developing their
ideas, realized that their thinking was valued, developed a "collective spirit of inquiry" (p. 132), and were empowered through participation and engagement in the research. The roles of student co-researchers as described by Oldfather, by Whitin, and as established in this study met these needs and empowered and motivated the children who participated to become active in constructing knowledge that is situated, subjective, and based on their experience.

In his exit interview, conducted in September of his fifth grade year, Corey expressed this sense of empowerment as he articulated that he had knowledge that would surprise his current teachers:

*Linda: So, how did it make you feel? I mean, like when you came out of this group, how did you feel about yourself being a part of it?*

*Corey: Good. Because you have like a whole different ... like reading vocabulary in your mind and if someone's ... and if someone's saying something, like your teacher, or you have to write something on what you just read, you can use those words. Like, "I predict that this and this will happen, or I had a great picture in my mind."

*Linda: Right, right. Or, I felt like I was here in the story ...*

*Corey: I had a lot of emotions ...*

*Linda: Some of the stuff we talked about, I bet your fifth grade teachers don’t think about. You know how we talked about being different things as a reader? Most people don’t think about that kind of thing.*

*Corey: Like a bird or a camera.*

*Linda: That would be one of those things that if you said something to them they’d go, “Oh, yeah, I never thought of that.”*

*Corey: Yeah. You’d like surprise them that a fifth grader would know that.*
Data Collection

Methods of data collection in this study illuminated the private act of engaged reading and made it visible for public consideration. Cox (1992) stated that “the question of methodology is an overriding one. How do we get inside the head of a reader?” (p. 199). Similarly, Almasi & McKeown (1996) have stated that “it is often difficult to ‘see’ overt instances of engagement … There are often no clear behavioral or uniform manifestations of engagement” (p. 108). As a result of my review of the literature, my study of qualitative research, and the completion of a pilot study, I identified three viable methods of data collection: memory work, group discussions, and a visual protocol. Although these methods are presented in this chapter as distinct, in actuality, the boundaries of the methods blurred as they overlapped and were interwoven during the study.

Employing multiple methods of data collection allowed for the examination of engaged reading from different perspectives and promoted transmediation (Suhor, 1984), the process of moving information from one sign or communication system to another. Short, Kauffman, & Kahn (2000) have said:

In the process of taking our ideas public through a sign system we create new ideas that go beyond our original conceptions. Once these ideas are in a stable public form, we can critique, think and reflect critically, and revisit and edit those ideas. If we view an experience from the perspectives of different sign systems, we add to the complexity of our thinking through new connections because each sign system offers a distinctive way of making meaning (p. 167).
Each sign system does indeed offer a unique way of creating meaning as well as enriching and extending understanding through the “non-redundant potential” (Whitin, 1996, p. 115) of employing different systems. Transmediation also encourages “generative and reflective thinking because learners must invent a connection between the two sign systems” (Siegel, 1995, p. 455). The methods used to examine engaged reading encouraged children to explore their experience through the sign systems of written language, spoken language, and symbolic representation. Multiple methods were needed to make this phenomenon visible and researchable, and they contributed to the trustworthiness of the data.

Memory Work

Memory work (Crawford, et al, 1992; Onyx and Small, 2001) was employed to help children recreate the experience of engaged reading and befitted the theoretical beliefs on which this study was grounded. It is a "feminist social constructionist method in that it breaks down the barriers between the subject and the object of research. Everyday experience is the basis of knowledge" (Onyx & Small, 2001, p. 775). It also facilitated the children’s positioning as co-researchers, because I was positioned as a facilitator/member of the group, thereby diminishing, but not dismantling, the power hierarchy of researcher and participant.

Memory work is a technique for data collection that incorporates analysis, interpretation, and reinterpretation of the data. Memory work is accomplished in four stages:
Stage 1: The participants individually and independently write in third person about a memory (in this case a memory of engaged reading).

Stage 2: Participants work together to code and analyze the individual memory stories, looking for common threads of experience.

Stage 3: The participants rewrite their memory stories with the goal of integrating the knowledge that was constructed by the group. (In this case, the participants chose to create diagrams and posters instead of rewriting their memory stories.)

Stage 4: The primary researcher assumes the final burden of analysis and interpretive responsibility.

The Readers as Researchers Club first met on February 20, 2003. A data collection time line of the meetings can be found in Appendix A. We spent that first meeting getting to know each other and talking about reading in general. The children and I also negotiated what days of the week we would meet, ensuring that no conflicts existed that would prevent members from attending. Over the next two meetings, February 25 and 26, 2003, the children wrote their memory stories. Making slight modifications to memory work (Crawford, et al., 1992; Onyx & Small, 2001), I used the following protocol.

Stage 1

The children were given the following directions:

“I’d like for you to close your eyes and do some mental imaging with me. Think about a time when you were totally engaged with a book. Remember the book itself and where you were reading it. How did you feel as you were reading this book? What was going on in your head? What were you thinking? How did your body feel? What emotions did you experience? Where did you feel you were? Did
you feel alone or in the presence of others? Now, I’d like for you to write about this memory. Write in as much detail as you possibly can. Tell me everything you possibly can about your reading experience. The hard part is that I want you to write in the third person. Step outside yourself and look at yourself reading. Instead of writing ‘I’ you’ll write ‘he’ or ‘she.’ Pretend that you are someone else who can see the inside and the outside of you.”

The memory stories the children wrote can be found in their entirety in Appendix B.

There are compelling reasons why written memories are preferable to spoken ones and why writing in the third person is beneficial. Adopting the third person encouraged the children to "create personal distance and view the memory from the outside" (Onyz & Small, 2001, p. 776). This exemplifies Langer’s (1990a, 1990b, 1995) stance of “stepping out and objectifying the experience” and also Iser’s (1978) assertion that “the ability to perceive oneself during the process of participation is an essential quality of the aesthetic experience; the reader finds himself in a strange, halfway position: he is involved and he watches himself being involved” (p. 134). It immediately and naturally positioned the children as researchers as they began to observe their own reading experiences. Writing in the third person enabled and encouraged the children to reflect on their experiences from another perspective and encouraged attention to detail while it discouraged interpretation. Furthermore, “written text gives the everyday experience of our lives, the ‘unimportant and uninteresting’, a status, a significance that is worth exploring” (Crawford, et al, 1992, p. 48). As they wrote in the third person, the children as co-researchers were both the subjects and the objects of knowledge.

The following excerpt shows the children's negotiation and joint construction of themselves as knowledgeable and able to take up positions as researchers. They name themselves as such with my affirmation. The children had spent one session writing their
memory stories. This discussion occurred at the beginning of the next session during which they were going to engage in follow-up writing.

_Linda_: What was it like? What was it like for you to try to recreate what your reading experience was?

_Multiple voices_: It was kinda hard.

_Corey_: It was hard. The third person narrator. It's hard for me to write about myself ... I... I... I.

_Leah_: It was sort of weird ... because we couldn't write "I" and we had to use a name or he or she ...

_Meg_: I wanted to write about someone else. I didn't want to write about myself.

_Paige_: Me, too. Like say, make up somebody and it could be yourself but you're making up a totally different person.

_Labranda_: Like a pen name.

_Meg_: And so it doesn't feel like it's you.

_Linda_: What you're telling me, though, is actually exactly what I hoped would happen. ... What I wanted you to do was not stay inside yourself to write this, but I wanted you to kind of be outside yourself.

_Paige_: Another person?

_Linda_: Almost like you had become somebody else and you were observing you reading.

_Paige_: Is that why it's third person?

_Linda_: Yeah. That's why it's third person.

_Meg_: Like reading someone's mind.

_Eric_: We were researching ourselves.

_Linda_: Oh, did you hear what Eric just said? Say that again, Eric.

_Eric_: We were researching ourselves.
Paige: Are we the reading researchers?

Linda: You are!

Stage 2

After the memory stories were written I rewrote them on chart paper. We were able to use a small, unused, and empty storage room off the media center where the stories were displayed on the walls for the duration of the memory work. I rewrote the stories on chart paper and hung them in the room so that they would be in view of all the participants for coding purposes.

To begin the coding of the memory stories, each child in turn read his or her story orally. Then the children were initially given the following directions:

“I’d like for you to look carefully at each of the memory stories. What is going on in these stories? What do you see that people are doing as they read? Let’s try to name what people are doing and see if we can color code what is going on.”

The children read and reread the stories, looking for and coding recurrent patterns, grouping codes into categories which represented the dimensions of their engaged reading, and identifying overarching themes in their experiences. As they coded with colored markers on the reproduced memory stories, they created a codebook on a separate sheet of chart paper to define and separate codes. First they worked on one child’s story at a time. As the codes emerged, they would return to stories, working back and forth between stories, to add coding. Finally, we took a careful look at each story one last time to be sure that we had coded all pertinent passages. This coding process spanned three sessions. The categories the children created included:

- physical reactions
- in the book
• connecting with the characters
• losing time, surroundings, and self
• emotions
• visualizing
• making predictions.

The children's initial coding of the passages in their memory stories can be found in Appendix C.

After the initial coding, the children copied each coded passage out on a single sheet of paper. These individual passages were then posted on the wall according to categories. The children actively and enthusiastically negotiated and debated the placement of many of the passages. We spent the next five sessions analyzing the initial coding in this way and creating thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Prior to beginning the thematic coding, the children were given the following directions:

“Let’s look at the codes we’ve created that tell about what you do while you’re reading. Are there codes that could fit together in some way? Are there ways we could group some of these? We’re going to start creating a web of these codes and see which ones we think might fit together or how they might be related.”

The thematic analysis of the children's coded memory stories is shown in Appendix D.

I used thematic networks as the tool for analysis because of the children’s familiarity with webbing and the similarity of webs to the networks. The children were familiar with creating webs as a prewriting activity as part of the writing process. In a web, the theme or concept is identified and placed in the middle of a piece of paper. Lines are drawn out from the center and main ideas are listed, and then supporting details are placed so that they surround each main idea. To create thematic networks, the
children basically worked backward. They identified the supporting details from their coded texts, combined the details into categories, or main ideas, that represented the dimensions of their reading, and finally created encompassing, global themes that summarized and made assertions about the data as a whole.

The visual representation of the thematic network discouraged hierarchical thinking and emphasized fluidity and connectivity. This emphasis was especially salient in the exploration of children’s engaged reading experience because their involvement is holistic rather than a series of linear phenomena. The thematic networks served as a visual representation of the children’s developing knowledge and also served as a springboard for the follow-up group discussions that enabled children to delve deeper into and clarify the themes and dimensions of their engaged reading.

This collective, thematic analysis dovetailed perfectly with children in the position of co-researchers and with issues of voice, reciprocity, and subjectivity as a legitimate form of knowledge. The children engaged in active debate regarding the creation of categories and the placement of phrases within those categories. There was considerable agreement, disagreement, support for ideas, and collaborative negotiation as they achieved consensus. The focus was on comparing and contrasting the memories and examining them until common elements become evident. This search for a common understanding emphasized the sociocultural aspects of reading and the constructed nature of knowledge.

It was at this point in the coding and analysis process that the children initiated questions that, to various degrees, guided our discussions and thoughts throughout the remainder of the study. These questions were:
• Is being in the book the main thing? (the primary goal of engaged reading)
• What is the difference between being next to the character as a shadow and being next to the character as an active participant?
• Do emotions lead to a physical reaction? Why do we experience emotions?
• Is there a difference between watching and seeing?
• Does wondering lead to predicting?

Stage 3

In follow-up sessions of the Readers as Researchers club, held in July and August of 2003, the children were given the opportunity to rewrite their memories if they chose to do so. The purpose of rewriting was to give them a chance to enhance their original writing and also to create a more collective, or co-constructed, memory. I anticipated that the rewriting would take the form of a collective, summative piece. In place of individually rewritten memories, I thought it would be powerful for the children to select an audience and write a summary or report of their findings. This could have been an opportunity to incorporate creative writing or other creative representation in the study. I envisioned that the children could choose to create a literary work, a play, or a poem to illustrate and represent their engaged, aesthetic reading experiences. As with certain other aspects of the study, however, because of my commitment to honor the children as co-researchers, I speculated about but could not predict with certainty what form this would take. In addition to serving as documentation of their knowledge construction, this rewriting, or summative writing, would honor the children’s voices and also bring a sense of closure to the study.
What the children actually created were graphic organizers that reflected their knowledge construction of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. These organizers are shown in Appendix E. The children also created posters that showed emotions and physical reactions, tuning out, being in the book, and the dimensions of visualizing (picturing, watching, and seeing). At first, the children wanted to share their findings with their parents and fifth grade teachers. They decided, however, that sharing their knowledge with their new, fifth-grade teachers would be too intimidating. In the end, they did not even formally share their understandings with parents due to time constraints, scheduling conflicts, and the fact that they developed a level of indifference with regard to sharing their knowledge. I believe this indifference was a result of the time that had elapsed. When we were meeting regularly, the chemistry between group members was something magical. They were empowered through collaboration and the friendships that developed. It has been suggested that we had, perhaps, achieved a state of flow (J. Hickman, personal communication, March 12, 2004), but with the passage of time the intensity and immediacy of the experience subsided.

**Stage 4**

In Stage 4 I further analyzed and interpreted the written memories and the thematic analysis developed by the children, assuming the final burden of analysis and interpretive responsibility. I merged this information with other data sources and considered the findings in terms of existing and developing theory. I developed the concept of three levels of immersion in envisionment: creation, observation (EYE), and participation (I). This phase and the levels of immersion in envisionment are discussed in the analysis section of this chapter and in the synthesis section of Chapter 4 respectively.
**Group Discussions**

Group discussions were the forum during which we explored in-depth and continued to negotiate the themes that emerged through analysis of the memory work stories and our subsequent reading of *Into the Land of Unicorns* (Coville, 1994), which will be discussed in greater detail in the visual protocol section. Since we were meeting during the lunch/recess hour, we usually used the time while we were eating to discuss our developing understandings and to clarify ideas that had been formulated during the previous session. This was also a time, however, when the children engaged in social talk, which I viewed as important and productive in developing a sense of camaraderie and in fostering friendships within the group. During our discussions about reading we continued in our roles as co-researchers. I did not intend to lead or dominate the discussions, imposing my beliefs and biases onto the children's experiences, but to follow them into their world of experience through unstructured group discussions. In reality, I found it necessary to pose a preliminary question to focus and initiate the day's discussion. It was also necessary for me to refocus the discussion at times when the talk strayed too far off topic for a significant length of time. I believed, however, that what initially appeared to be off-topic talk might be tangentially connected, so I tried to respect these segments of conversation as possible and potential venues of knowledge construction. My typical role was to question, prompt, expand, and clarify the children's responses as we engaged in dialogue.

Cazden (2001) made a distinction between display or inauthentic, and authentic or metaprocess questions. Inauthentic questions are those to which the teacher, or other authority figure, already knows the answer or anticipates an answer that lies within a
particular parameter of acceptability. In contrast, metaprocess questions "ask for different kinds of knowledge and prompt longer and more complex responses" (Cazden, 2001, p. 46). Metaprocess or authentic questions focus the children's thinking on their own knowledge rather than on anticipating a correct and acceptable response. By asking metaprocess questions I emphasized the children's position as experts, empowering them and opening possibilities for knowledge construction. My feedback to and revoicing of their statements served to "assign competence … [through] …specific, positive, public evaluation and recognition" (Cazden, 2001, p. 151). Through authentic questioning and feedback, my goal was to reinforce the children's positioning as knowledge makers.

The children engaged in shared thinking during group discussions; they became a community of thinkers (Boomer, 1987). They shared common goals for knowledge construction and their thought processes and the vigor and vitality of their thinking were thereby increased. Similar to the findings of Bean and Freppon (2003) the children jointly "created understandings that went beyond [that] of individual members" (p. 51). The children reasoned together, were open to disagreement, respected differences, and verified their developing understandings in relation to that of others in the group (Galda & Beach, 2001). Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) concept of progressive subjectivity is appropriate here. They define it as “a continual process of monitoring the inquirer’s own developing constructions where the inquirer’s constructions cannot be given privilege over that of anyone else” (p. 238). Progressive subjectivity ensured that knowledge was jointly constructed within the group and contributed to trustworthiness. These processes are evident in the following excerpt.
Linda: I noticed when you guys talked, a lot of times somebody would say something and somebody else would build on that ...

Corey: Or disagree.

Linda: Or disagree. So, what happened when we’re having a talk and somebody said something and somebody else disagreed? How did we handle that? From your perspective, what did we do when people disagreed about things?

Corey: Um ... I think that we’d all say our opinions about what it is and what we think and kinda in ... hear a reason ... and we could ... if someone ... if you were disagreeing with somebody and they had a really good reason then you could agree with them and say, “Oh, I never thought about that.”

Linda: Yeah, I do think we did that. Was it ok for us to disagree?

Corey: Yes. ‘Cause you had to disagree to get the right answer.

There are some idiosyncrasies of group discussions that led me to choose this format over individual interviews. The group was a safe environment that was more gratifying and stimulating for the participants than one-on-one interviews. The multivocality of the group provided a social counterpoint to the isolation necessary for reading for pleasure. The interaction between the members of the group served as another way to break hierarchical power relations and decenter my role as facilitator, emphasizing the participants' opinions and establishing them more firmly as constructors of knowledge. The group also fostered the collaborative construction of knowledge upon which the research was based. According to Cazden:

Like a group of musicians improvising together, speech events, including classroom discourse, can only be accomplished by the collaborative work of two or more persons. In this sense, school is always a performance that must be constituted through the participation of a group of actors (2001, p. 40).
Although my goal for the Readers as Researchers Club was to create an atmosphere of informal discussion rather than that of a formal, hierarchical classroom, Cazden's metaphor of improvisation and performance is apt for the group's collaboration and dialogue.

Patricia Enciso (1998) found that “children are often reluctant to describe the worlds of reading that matter most to them in the company of all of their classmates and teacher, whose power and social positions often determine who can and cannot speak about reading” (p. 46). The fact that these children self-selected in to the study and that they all viewed themselves as avid readers promoted acceptance and valuation of their engagement and established it as the sanctioned norm. It granted all students "speaking rights" (Cazden, 2001).

A corollary benefit of group discussions was apparent when I read Donna Alvermann's (2000) statement that in her research, a group provided a "liminal space of openings and closings in which adolescents who liked to read could enjoy the company of other readers like themselves, isolated from the taunts of peers who viewed them as nerds because they were avid readers" (p. 115). This benefit was apparent when, after our fourth meeting, we were walking back to the classroom area and Greg commented, “I like the group because we can express ourselves without anybody laughing.” Because reading is often a solitary pursuit, one way for me to give back to the children was to provide a space where they could get to know other children who shared their ardor and where they could hear and participate in each other's stories.
**Visual Protocol**

As I considered the methods of data collection for this study, I constantly questioned to what degree “responding after reading [is] an authentic indication of what actually transpired during the reading event” (Cox, 1992, p. 119). A visual protocol approximates what Benton (1979) referred to as introspective recall, which he believed to be the “nearest we can come to primary responses” (p. 69). A visual protocol was important not only as another vantage point or perspective from which children could view and document their engagement but also as another way to decelerate my role as researcher.

Wilhelm (1997) observed:

> The use of artistic response as a springboard for literary discussions decentered the teacher as the authority, and foregrounded the students as conversants and generators of discourse. That the students often explored and developed their private visions as they created their artistic renderings, and that these visions continued to be negotiated and developed during small group sharing, allowed the readers to experience themselves as productive theorizers of an evolving literary landscape and meaning (p. 139).

There were several formats for visual representation that I considered as possible protocols for this study. Ultimately, what the children created was a composite of all three.

**Think-Aloud (Wilhelm, 1997)**

As children are reading, they stop whenever they form a strong visual image or impression and draw a picture of their mental imagery. This chronicles the ongoing
nature of their engagement through a segment of text, and it provides concrete documentation that is available for analysis as data.

**Symbolic Representation Interview (SRI) (Enciso, 1992 & 1998)**

A child selects a favorite passage of a favorite book and makes a symbolic representation for each character out of construction paper. The child then reads a segment of text and immediately tells what was going on in her mind as she read. As the child identifies specific experiences, she makes a cutout to represent that facet of reading. Using cutouts of the characters, setting, and of her ways of participating in the construction of the story, the child proceeds to read sections of the text and manipulate the cutouts to “show what the characters are doing and … show what *she* is doing amidst the relations and movements of the characters” (Enciso, 1998, p. 47). The sociocultural aspects of reading are addressed in the SRI because the child is asked “Where are you?” implying agency concerning the possibility of assuming alternative positions that may challenge socially imposed and/or sanctioned positioning.

**Potential Space (Jacobsen, 1982)**

The child reads a favorite passage and is then asked to describe her experience during reading, referring to bodily, mental, and emotional aspects of the experience. She is asked where she felt she was during reading in contrast to her usual sense of self and in relation to the real, outside world. She is also asked if she felt alone or in the presence of others. Then, the child is asked to draw a picture or diagram of herself during reading. By analyzing the pictures, it is possible to see where the reader is positioned during reading. Jacobsen found that this method revealed "what happens in the minds of readers who get
caught up in a story world" and "the paradoxical geography of the literary space that is neither inner nor outer" (p. 35).

Visual Protocol Development

I was committed to honoring the children as active and acknowledged co-researchers and this was an area where I thought they would make decisions about the research instrument. I planned to describe and model each protocol, and then the children would decide which they would like to incorporate into the study. The visual protocol would be completed by individual children and observed and analyzed by all members of the group. In actuality, I did not model the three methods. On two different occasions, I talked about the three different methods, and during one session we read the opening chapter of *Into the Land of the Unicorns* (Coville, 1994), and I modeled an SRI protocol. After modeling the SRI, I was uncomfortable with the sense that, even with three choices, I was imposing a protocol on the children, and I was also very cognizant of the limited time we had remaining.

Gitlin (1990) has suggested that “procedures should not only be allowed to evolve within a particular research study, but also to change given the needs and priorities of a particular population” (p. 447). It was at this point of data collection that I realized the children had needs that took precedence over my own. The children expressed a strong desire to read together. This was, after all, a readers’ club, and the children wanted to read. The following day, I talked with the children about what I hoped we could accomplish and asked them how they would like to proceed. The first decision was whether to read short stories or a novel. The children overwhelmingly expressed the
desire to read a novel together. Meg articulated that she achieves a higher level of involvement with a novel than with a short story. At this point, the children developed ground rules regarding how they wanted to proceed with the visual protocol. This protocol evolved as we engaged in the reading of a common text and evidenced components of each of the three protocols (Enciso, 1992, 1998; Wilhelm, 1997; Jacobsen, 1982).

The children asked me to select 3-4 novels from which they could choose. Accordingly, at our next meeting I presented them with *What Jamie Saw* (Coman, 1995), *Journey* (MacLachlan, 1991), *Tiger Rising* (DiCamillo, 2001), and *Into the Land of the Unicorns* (Coville, 1994). In selecting these titles, I considered reading level, anticipated interest value, and titles the children were unlikely to have encountered on their own. The children chose to read *Into the Land of the Unicorns*. I am certain that their choice was influenced by the fact that we had read the first chapter for our visual protocol training. Nevertheless, their choice indicated their interest and investment in the novel we would read together to document their engaged reading experience.

The children set other guidelines for this part of the study. They were adamant that I should read the story aloud while they each followed along in personal copies of the book. I questioned whether engagement while listening to a story read aloud would be significantly different from engagement while reading silently. The group felt that my reading aloud was the best option since the group was the case. They said it would help them stay focused and that we could work together to clear up any confusions. Also, if they read individually, their personal reading rates would not be the same. They wanted to be at the same place at the same time to complete visual representations. However,
when asked if we should create a standard symbol for the various dimensions of engagement, Paige voiced the opinion of the group when she said, “We should do what we think expresses us best.”

A final consideration was when we would stop the reading to create visual representations. My concern was that if we stopped too frequently the children’s engagement would be broken. Leah countered this concern with, “If we don’t stop and talk right then, we’ll forget what we did.” We agreed to stop at the end of chapters and that any individual could ask us to stop whenever a particularly vivid image or engagement occurred for him/her.

Through the first half of the book, we stopped at the end of chapters, and on a large index card, each child recorded symbolically what he/she was doing as a reader. They also indicated where they felt they were in relation to the main character, Cara. My directions were:

“I want you to draw what you’re doing as a reader. Show me where you are in relation to Cara and what you’re doing.”

Then, at the end of the session, we created a group representation.

This evolved through the second half of the book. We ceased the individual representations and created only group representations. I found that the children were so eager to read the book that they were becoming resistant to stopping and exploring their engaged reading. Also, I felt that I was not getting any significantly new information because the children seemed to merely be listing the themes or dimensions we had developed during the coding of their memory stories. A group representation allowed us to stop less frequently and emphasized the construction of knowledge as a group. In these
representations, the children showed where they were in relation to Cara and what they were as a reader. At this point my directions were:

“On this paper, show where you are in the story and what you are as a reader.”

The children had engaged in reflective thought through memory work and were now trying to capture their ‘in the moment’ engagement. As the children’s thought processes were becoming more sophisticated, I encouraged them to think metaphorically about themselves as readers. This was consistent with Siegel’s (1995) observation that “metaphors … are often produced when learners engage in transmediation, especially when they move from language to some form of visual representation” (p. 472). Metaphor encouraged the children to focus on the essence of their experience, enabling them to “categorize the experience, understand it, and remember it” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 83). This movement encouraged a higher and a deeper level of thought as the children necessarily crystallized their experiences. It was also another way to make their invisible literacy experience observable and to position the children as knowledge makers. We had relied on reflection and introspection to try to illuminate their engagement so I asked them to “use metaphor to describe the insights gained from that introspection” (Cox, 1992, p. 112). The metaphors the children created are discussed at length in Chapter 4.

A final consideration was when data collection should end. Because this study was structured as a Readers as Researchers club, there was not necessarily a clear-cut termination of the club itself; clubs are open-ended. I intended to let the children be my guide as to when we really understand their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. Glesne & Peshkin (1992) have stated that “ideally, you should stop collecting data
because you have reached redundancy, and … the data you have seem complete and integrated” (p. 132). This seemed to describe the stopping point. What actually happened was that the end of the school year necessarily ended data collection. We completed the book we were reading together with one meeting left before the end of the school year. I called the study done by default. As I engaged in Stage 4 of memory work, continuing analysis throughout the summer, however, I realized that there were still things I needed to know. Also, we hadn’t progressed to Stage 3 of memory work. Therefore, we met four times during the summer. During these two-hour sessions, the children created graphic organizers and posters as Stage 3 of memory work.

As I progressed through Stage 4 of memory work and through analysis and synthesis of the other sources of data, I realized that I didn’t know enough about how each individual child perceived his/her experience as a member of this group and how each child discerned the functioning of the group. Also, throughout the course of the study several of the parents had approached me with comments about their child’s participation. These unsolicited comments convinced me that I needed to talk to parents before I called data collection done. With this in mind, I conducted exit interviews with each child individually as well as with one of the child’s parents. The exit interviews were conducted during September and October of the students’ fifth-grade year, and served to get each child’s perception of his/her experience in the group and of how he/she experienced the group’s construction of knowledge. It also allowed me to get the parent’s perspective on his or her child’s participation in the study.
Data Sources

The following provided data for this research:

- the children’s written memory stories: Stage 1 of memory work

- videotapes, audiotapes, and transcripts of the children’s coding and collective, thematic analysis: Stage 2 of memory work.

- audiotapes and transcripts of the group discussions during the Readers as Researchers meetings

- posters and graphic organizers created by the children: Stage 3 of memory work

- the concrete, visual representations created by the children as the visual protocol and the audiotapes and transcripts of the children’s discussion during reading and their analysis of the visual protocols

- exit interviews conducted with each child and a parent

- fieldnotes kept throughout the study. I kept three kinds of field notes: descriptive, reflective, and analytic (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 1990; Richardson, 2000).

  - Descriptive notes helped me recreate and visualize each session and included a description of the totality of the experience in as much concrete detail as possible. These notes included descriptions of the dynamics that developed between members of the club and how their developing relationships contributed to knowledge construction.

  - Reflective notes included my personal feelings, ideas, impressions, reactions, and problems, as well as notations to myself about how to proceed. My
reflective notes included methodological concerns.

- Analytic notes were “a type of data analysis conducted throughout the research process” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 49). Analytic notes included my developing insights, interpretations, and initial hypotheses.

Data Analysis

The issue of transcription is one with which I wrestled, realizing that analysis begins during transcription and that transcription is both interpretive and constructive (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999, Poindexter, 2002). “The real issue that researchers face in transcription is not how to represent everything exhaustively in the text … but rather how to selectively reduce the data in a way that preserves the possibility of different analyses and interpretations” (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999, p. 69). I realized the difficulty of transcribing multivoice group discussions during the pilot study, yet I believed then and continued to believe that it was important to transcribe as carefully and accurately as possible. I also believed that it was important to personally transcribe the tapes to ‘relive’ the session and to immerse myself in the dialogue in a purposeful way. A concession to complete transcription that I made was to indicate, but not transcribe, off-topic conversations and long summaries of book plot. If these became pertinent, they would be recoverable from the original tape.

With these concerns and commitments in mind, I transcribed each session of the Readers as Researchers Club before the succeeding session. This permitted me to clarify my understanding of the developing knowledge the children were constructing and also allowed me to determine the opening question for the next session. This question
generally asked them to build upon, to explain, or to confirm what had been discussed during the previous meeting. After the school year ended, I went back through all of the tapes of the Readers as Researchers club and refined my transcription. I found that I was far better able to identify speakers and that I heard more and heard more accurately than I had during the initial transcriptions. I made corrections and additions to the transcripts accordingly.

Data analysis proceeded concurrently with data collection as an iterative process (Alvermann, et al, 1997; Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Gay & Airasian, 2000). In Stage 2 of memory work as well as throughout group discussions and the creation of metaphor during the visual protocol, the children and I engaged in analysis and interpretation. We employed inductive analysis allowing patterns, categories, and themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing a priori codes or categories (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1990). Throughout analysis the group constituted the case. This was in keeping with and a reflection of the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

Miles and Huberman (1984) conceive of analysis as consisting of “three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification” (p. 23). During Stage 4 of memory work and the merging of all data sources, I employed the constant comparison method, constantly comparing the codes and categories to determine their distinctive characteristics (Gay & Airasian, 2000). These codes and categories were the ones the children established during memory work and the visual protocol. I was committed to honoring their analysis, and as such, focused on their categories during data reduction of the transcripts of memory work, group discussions, and the visual protocol. Patton (1990) also encourages attention to
internal and external homogeneity within categories. Internal homogeneity considers the extent to which the data hold together within a category, while external homogeneity deals with the extent to which the differences among categories are bold and clear. Both were evident in the categories developed by the children. These three flows of reduction, display, and conclusions were interwoven throughout the study.

Analysis proceeded in the following way:

- The memory stories and the children’s analysis constituted a ‘chunk’ of data. This data was initially coded and analyzed by the children.
- Group discussion transcripts constituted another ‘chunk’ of data. The group discussions elaborated on the analysis and thematic mapping of the memory stories. I moved back and forth between the children’s analysis and the group discussion transcripts looking for ways the data ‘fit’ into the patterns and themes identified by the children. I also searched for discrepant cases.
- The visual protocols and the children’s analysis of them were a separate ‘chunk’ of data. The metaphors the children devised allowed another dimension to emerge through the visual sign system. Subsequent analysis merged this data with the memory work and group discussion data.
- The exit interviews conducted with the children and their parents provided information about the workings of the group and about the benefits the children perceived. They informed my understanding of the efficacy of the methodology of recognizing the children as co-researchers, of constituting the group as the case, and of the theoretical bases of the study.
• Throughout the entire process of analysis and interpretation I relied on my field notes to fill in gaps and further inform my thinking.

In addition to documenting the children’s experience of engaged reading, I was also interested in determining the characteristics of their discussions. This was a parallel concern of the study, and as such, constituted a separate stream of analysis. I relied heavily on the work of Bloome & Egan-Robertson (1993), Cazden (2001), Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner (2001), and Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith (1995) to inform my understanding of dialogue. From their work I created a graphic organizer (see Appendix G) that synthesized my understanding of discursive moves and used that organizer to guide me through my initial readings of the transcripts. Since a consideration of the entire data would have been overwhelming I selected three discussions, which I believed would be representative of our dialogue. The selections represented discussions that occurred from early in the study to one of our last sessions. I repeatedly listened to the taped discussions and read the transcripts looking for patterns of turns and eventually created a second graphic organizer (see Appendix G) of the types of questions and statements I identified. Next, I created a table and charted the turns in each of the three discussions in order to create a visual representation of our discussions so that the patterns would be recognizable. I augmented this analysis with my personal experience of the discussions, using the tapes, transcripts, and my field notes to bolster my memory, because it would have been impossible for me to quantify all aspects of our discussions. This created a blending of analysis that was at once quantitative and qualitative, honoring the spirit of the study and my theoretical grounding.
Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1989) established the parallel criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability for qualitative research: criteria that are recognized as valid indices of trustworthiness. These are the criteria I endeavored to establish in this study, paying especial attention to credibility and dependability. In addition, Gitlin (1990) has stated:

The ‘truthfulness’ of the data can no longer be understood as something extracted by an individual armed with a set of research procedures, but rather as a mutual process between researcher and subject. … The researchers’ knowledge is not assumed to be more legitimate than the subjects’. … Rather, the researcher and subject attempt to come to a mutual understanding (p. 446).

With this in mind, the mutual construction of understanding along with the parallel criteria established the trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility concerns “establishing the match between the constructed realities of respondents and those realities as represented by the evaluator” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Credibility is enhanced by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity, and member checks (Evans, 2002; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I believe that since data collection ran from February through October, 2003, sufficient time was devoted to the study for it to be considered credible. Because of the collaborative nature of the study, member checks were built in to the methodology and served to keep the focus on the developing knowledge as constructed by the children. Trustworthiness was enhanced by the fact that transmediation (Short, Kauffman, & Kahn, 2000) was a research anchor of the study, and
children explored their engaged, aesthetic reading through the perspective of three different sign systems as the data was compared and cross-checked for “consistency of information derived at different times and by different means” (Patton, 1990, p. 467). As discussed in the analysis section, I actively and consciously searched for negative and disconfirming cases to strengthen the categories that were developed by the children and the assertions that were made (Evans, 2002; Patton, 1992). Time spent in research, built-in member checks, transmediation, and careful, responsible analysis established credibility and dependability and, therefore, the trustworthiness of this study.

Transferability is necessarily relative. Since this was a study that examined the engaged reading experience of a particular group of children in a particular context, the extent to which the findings may be transferable is difficult to predict. Cherland (1994) believes that even in highly contextualized studies, findings may be transferable beyond the specific setting. Even though findings may be specific to a certain local context, they may also be representative of that situation in other contexts. Newkirk (2002) contends that “as in all qualitative research, the true test … [is] made by readers who test [the] claims against their own observations” (p. xviii). With clear, detailed descriptions, others may see characteristics of the participants’ engaged, aesthetic reading experience that are recognizable and applicable in other contexts and settings. Transferability also depends upon my ability to develop thick descriptions and the extent to which I am able to document the analytic and interpretive process so that others can determine whether their conclusions would fall “in the same general ‘truth space’” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 22).
In addition to the parallel criteria discussed above, Guba and Lincoln’s (1989, 2000) authenticity and ontological criteria are appropriate considerations for the trustworthiness of my study. Authenticity criteria include fairness and voice. Given my commitment to collaborative research and social construction of knowledge, the failure to fairly include all voices would signal a severe shortcoming. I trust that not only my voice is evident and authentic in the text, but the children’s voices are also present and, when possible and appropriate, they are heard speaking for themselves. I presume that this commitment to voice is evident in this document.

Since the social construction of knowledge was at the foundation of the study, ontological authenticity was another criteria of trustworthiness. It concerns “the extent to which individual respondent’s own emic constructions are improved, matured, expanded, and elaborated, in that they … possess more information and … become more sophisticated in its use” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 248). The members of the Readers as Researchers club had a greater understanding and knowledge of the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience at the end of the study than they had at the beginning. Not doing so would have signaled a lack of trustworthiness in the study. Greg expressed this in his exit interview:

*Linda: Do you feel like you learned anything about yourself as a reader?*

*Greg: Yea, because when I was reading, I really didn’t think of all this stuff and I learned ... more things that I do in reading, I just thought I was reading and I wasn’t visualizing, having certain reactions, and things.*

*Linda: You were doing those things, but you just didn’t think about them?*

*Greg: Yeah.*
Ethics

The issue of ethics in research has traditionally revolved around informed consent. In social science research, this has entailed ensuring that the participant understands the nature of the study, that participation is voluntary, that the participant is aware of any aspect of the research that would affect her well-being, including issues of privacy and confidentiality, and that the participants know that they are free to end their participation at any time (Christians, 2000; Gay & Airasian, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). A script for my initial contact with prospective participants is attached in Appendix F, as is a copy of the recruitment letter and the consent form. To insure confidentiality, only the children's first names were used in writing this dissertation unless parents requested pseudonyms, and at no time will the children's identity be disclosed. Tapes and transcripts have been kept in a secure location. Excerpts of videotapes of memory work may be compiled for use in professional presentations per parental permission.

The issue of consent goes beyond these concerns in collaborative research, however, wherein the researcher and co-researchers form close working and personal relationships as they construct knowledge together. “Fieldwork methods in collaborative research must be flexible, sequential, and conditional so that consent is a continual process [italics added], dependent upon mutual learning and development” (Clark & Moss, 1996, p. 523). That all voices were recognized, that each member was honored as a knowing subject, that all members of the club were treated with dignity, and that we shared a concern for personal integrity were ethical expectations I had for all members of the Readers as Researchers club.
This study was designed as a collaborative endeavor primarily because of my commitment not to exploit the children. Despite my best intentions, the bottom line is that I will benefit from this study. My academic career will be furthered and this dissertation will fulfill partial requirement for my doctoral degree. Earlier in this document, I discussed the possible benefits for the children. It met the basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Guthrie, 1999; Oldfather, et al., 1999), established each child as a member of a community of readers (Alvermann, et al., 1999; Alvermann, 2000), and contributed to the children’s positive self-concepts as their voices were acknowledged and their knowledge was validated (Oldfather, et al., 1999; Onyx & Small, 2001). I sincerely hope that these benefits balance what I gained through this study.

Due to the nature of the study, I did not anticipate any “dangerous knowledge” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 23) surfacing that would create ethical or political dilemmas. However, it was impossible to predict with certainty what might have transpired. I agree with Glesne & Peshkin that “solutions to ethical dilemmas can not be prescribed by absolute guidelines but have to be produced creatively in the concrete situation at hand” (p. 125). In my role as researcher, as in my role as teacher, if any ethical dilemmas would have arisen, they would have been dealt with honestly, professionally, and with integrity, and district guidelines for ethical behavior would have been followed precisely. In the course of the study, however, no ethical dilemmas arose.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

PERSPECTIVES AND POSITIONS IN THE WORLD OF THE STORY 
AND CHILDREN’S NEGOTIATION OF KNOWLEDGE

*Eric*: To be in a book ... It looks like in my mind I’m in a black room looking through a camera at what’s going on or sometimes I’m right in the story.

This study was designed to honor and recognize children as constructors of knowledge and to invite them to position themselves as co-researchers. The children were intimately involved with the first two questions of the study: How do the children who participated in this study describe their experience of engagement as they create, enter, and sustain the world of the story? and What are the themes and dimensions of the children’s engagement in the world of the story? Data was collected through memory work (Crawford, et al, 1992; Onyx and Small, 2001), through metaphors created as part of a visual protocol, and through group discussions.

Memory work is a method that incorporates analysis, interpretation, and reinterpretation of the data in four successive stages (see Chapter 3). The first sections of this chapter present the children’s documentation, analysis, and interpretation of their engaged, aesthetic reading experiences as knowledge was constructed through Stages 1-3 of memory work. I also present a discussion of the metaphors they created through which
they represented themselves as readers and reflected their perspective and position in relation to the characters in the world of the story. It is ethically imperative that the children’s findings are presented and that their voices are represented as faithfully as possible because of the children’s active and significant role in the study. I consciously and purposefully included extensive excerpts from our discussions in the sections that present the children’s findings in an attempt to show their negotiation of understanding and also to ensure that their voices tell the story. My obligation in Stage 4 of memory work was to assume the final burden of analysis and interpretive responsibility. This necessitated merging all of the data sources in order to create a comprehensive picture of the children’s knowledge construction. This synthesis revealed that there are three levels of immersion in envisionment: the level of creation, the level of observation, and the level of participation. My synthesis of their findings in light of existing theory is presented after the children’s findings.

Secondary concerns of this research dealt with the impact of discussion on the construction of knowledge and children’s role as co-researchers. Questions asked regarding these concerns were: What are the characteristics of the children’s discussions as they constructed knowledge as a group, and what are the implications of my role in that process? and What might be the generativity of children as co-researchers as a methodological anchor? These questions are addressed in the final sections of this chapter.
Themes and Dimensions of Children’s Engaged Reading Experience

In Stage 2 of memory work (Crawford, et al, 1992; Onyx and Small, 2001) the children engaged in thematic mapping (Attride-Stirling, 2001). They coded and categorized phrases and sentences from the memory stories they had written in Stage 1 in an effort to document their experience as engaged readers. The children’s memory stories may be found in Appendix B, their initial coding is in Appendix C, and their thematic coding is in Appendix D. While coding and categorizing, they simultaneously explored and expanded their understanding through group discussions. The following is a presentation and discussion of the identified themes and dimensions of their engagement. We interpreted theme to be an overarching category of experience, and dimensions were the components that generally describe their perspective, their location within the story, or the strategies or maneuvers they employ as readers in order to establish and experience the theme. The following themes and dimensions describe the children’s active engagement that enables them to create, enter, and sustain the world of the story.
Table 4.1: Themes and Dimensions of the Children’s Experience of Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the book:</td>
<td>• general feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• as umbrella term for all</td>
<td>• being in the setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themes</td>
<td>• being next to the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• as entrance into the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world of the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to the</td>
<td>• interacting with the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characters</td>
<td>• becoming the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing emotions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and physical reactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering and predicting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualizing</td>
<td>• picturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• seeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuning out</td>
<td>• losing sense of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• losing sense of surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• losing sense of self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Book

The children identified achieving a feeling that they were indeed “in the book” as the main objective and reward of reading. It became the umbrella term that encompassed all of the themes and dimensions of their engaged reading, and on a more limited scale it
simultaneously represented their initial entrance into the world of the story. The following excerpt illustrates their belief that it is an umbrella term that encapsulates their reading experience.

Linda: What do we still need to know? (significant pause ... no response) This is what I want to know. Remember when we were talking about 'in the book' and you kept saying, "In the book that's the main thing," and everybody pretty much agreed with that. Lately, when we've talked though, we've talked about where you feel like you are and how you might be visualizing what's going on. What I'd like to hear you guys talk about is how that fits into being in the book and if you still think that's the main thing?

Corey: I think it’s the main thing.

Linda: Ok, Corey. Talk about that.

April: 'Cause that's how it works.

Corey: You need to do everything to get in the book. Or you have to be in the book to do everything.

Paige: No, when you're in the book you're doing everything. That's how you have to do everything.

Eric: That's the connection to do everything.

Linda: I think part of the reason you love to read is because you get so into the book.

Multiple voices: Um hum


Linda: Yeah, not every book, right? And not all the time?

Paige: Not into books you make us read.

Greg: But most of the time.

Linda: Yeah, Greg, talk about getting into the book.

Chris: I can talk about that! In the book ... I think in the book is the main thing. Are we still talking about that question? I think being in the book is the
main thing because ... well reading is kind of like being partners with the book. So, I think in the book would be the main thing.

Meg: When you're reading you get into the book.

The children identified three dimensions of being in the book as the entrance into the world of the story: a general feeling of entering the setting, becoming the setting, and being next to the character. The general feeling the children identified is reflective of entering Holland’s potential space (1968/1989), Benton’s virtual or secondary world (1983, 1992), or Jacobsen’s literary space (1982). When describing this experience, the children used the following phrases in their memory stories:

- It had so much detail he felt part of it.
- She would lay on her bed and fall deeply into the book.
- Eric felt inside the book.
- She got so caught up in it ...

The complete list of phrases that were included in this category, as well as the subsequent categories, may be found in Appendix D. The children believed that these phrases indicated the phenomenon of entering the world of the story in a general way.

The children also believed that it was possible to attain the feeling that you had not only entered the story but had, more specifically, entered the setting itself. They felt that there was a subtle but significant difference between being in the book and being in the setting. Phrases from their memory stories that indicate they had entered the setting were:

- He felt he was really there.
- She felt like she was in the book at their school for a science project.
- He felt he was there on the island.
- He felt he was really there.
The final dimension of being in the book is being next to the character. Labranda explained the difference between being in the setting and being next to the character. She said, “If you were like a shadow, you’d be with the character the whole time and you could see what was going on with them, but if you’re just in the setting, you may not be with the character the whole time.” This concept of being next to the character became a significant dimension throughout the study as the children distinguished what I came to understand, during Stage 4 of memory work, as three different levels of immersion in envisionment. Being next to the character also figured significantly in their subsequent metaphor construction. Phrases the children used in their memory stories to indicate their presence next to the character included:

- *He was right beside Ragweed when he got killed.*
- *He was standing right beside Poppy and her father.*
- *When he was reading, he was right under the oak tree where Mr. Ocax was.*
- *He was with them.*

The children constructed the understanding that if you are next to the character you are like a shadow. You are quiet and invisible to the characters in the book, following (or perhaps mirroring) their actions. In the following excerpt from one of the sessions during which they were thematically coding memory stories, they initially negotiated and created this understanding. During thematic coding, each initially coded phrase was copied on a separate sheet of paper and manipulated and arranged in thematic networks. As this excerpt begins, I’m asking the children about the dimensions they are creating as they arrange the papers.

*Linda: What about this? Here we've got this general feeling of being in the book. Here we've got this feeling that you are being in the setting. Here we've got what?*
Meg: Next to the character. Wouldn't that be interacting with the character?

Greg: You're not really doing anything. You're not really interacting. If you were interacting you'd be doing something.

Labranda: You'd be like talking to them or ...

Greg: Yeah, I know but still I'm standing there. I'm not interacting. I'm not talking to them.

Linda: You have entered the book and you are ...

Greg: Next to them.

Corey: Watching them.

Greg: The only reason is that they don't notice you because you're in the story kind of, but you're invisible, but you can see them. I'm not visible to them.

Paige: It's like he's not even there ... but he's just like watching.

Linda: Yeah. Greg, tell me one more time because I want to understand this. Tell me what this one is.

Greg: I'm right next to them, but I'm not visible at all. I can see them, I could even talk to them but they don't hear me.

Labranda: And you're watching. Well, I think you're sort of like a shadow.

Linda: What did you say, it's like you're a shadow?

Paige: Yeah, like a shadow, like you're watching ... You're following them wherever they go.

Greg: I wasn't like Poppy or anybody in the story. I was just myself right there.

Labranda: He was watching them.

Paige: He was watching and following.

Corey: If you're standing right next to them then you're shadowing them. Like if you're with them then you wouldn't be shadowing them.
Connecting with the Characters

The next theme the children identified was connecting with the characters. They distinguished this from being next to the character. As stated above, when you are next to the character, you are a silent and invisible shadow, watching and following the character’s actions. On the other hand, if you are connecting with the characters you feel that you can talk with or interact with them, or in the extreme, you can achieve the identity of a character. The children identified interacting with the character and becoming the character as the two dimensions of connecting with the characters in the story. In the first dimension of connecting, they are able to interact with the characters as if they themselves have entered the cast of the story while retaining their own identity. Phrases from their memory stories are as follows:

- ... encouraging the Baudelaires to climb the ladder
- She wanted to tell Rye not to go to the beavers’ home again to save Poppy.
- ... trying to tell them not to do that or don’t go there.

In this dimension, the children feel they have actually entered the story as themselves. Corey believed that sharing experiences with the character facilitated this positioning. He said, “If the situation had already happened to you then you are connecting to the character. And you like try to talk with them and tell them … give them advice like what to do and how to do it.” In this dimension, the children retain their personal identity, but feel that they are able to see and be seen, speak to and be heard by the characters in the story.

The second dimension of connecting to the characters involves the illusion of actually assuming the identity of one of the characters in the story. Although the children wrote and talked about this dimension, they rarely achieved it during our joint reading of
a text or during metaphor construction. The children and I believe this was attributable to the fact that they were frequently “stepping back and objectifying the experience” (Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995). The children were constantly examining their experience as part of the research agenda, and they were never afforded the solitude, space, and time necessary to become totally immersed in and to merge with the story and the characters. They discussed the phenomenon of becoming a character but seldom achieved it during our readings and discussions. In their memory stories they included the following phrases that indicate they assume the identity of a character:

- *It was like she was Laura.*
- *When Riley read this book she felt like she was the little girl Emma who was in the story.*
- *She put herself in the situation of the main character.*

**Experiencing Emotions and Physical Reactions**

When they initially coded their memory stories, the children established two separate categories labeled emotions and physical reactions. However, in the course of their thematic mapping they created the understanding that there is a cause/effect relationship between these two concepts. They experience emotions because they are “in the book,” and their emotions sometimes lead to actual physical reactions. The following are some of the memory story phrases they identified that relate to emotions and physical reactions.

**Emotions:**

- *He was feeling scared when Mr. Ocax was going right for Ragweed and Poppy.*
- *She felt so sad …*
- *Eric felt mad, sad, happy, excited, and puzzled at certain times in the book.*
Physical reactions:
- *His body shook.*
- *She kind of jumped.*
- *Her eyes widened.*

This was a difficult theme for the children to negotiate, because they had trouble separating and distinguishing the initiating emotion from the resultant physical reaction. The following excerpts reflect this sociocognitive conflict (Almasi, 1995) or cognitive dissonance (Chinn, et al., 2001) as the children attempted to negotiate this theme.

*Linda:* *This is my question to you ... what is something that someone said they do while they're reading? What do you see?*

*Greg:* *On mine it says shook. Cause when he was coming down these stairs ... 'cause I knew Ragweed was in another book ... and I was kind of scared that he would get killed again.*

*Linda:* *Ok ... but you said that your body actually shook. So that's ... what can we call that?*

*Labranda:* *Vibrating*

*Paige:* *Emotion*

*Linda:* *Is that emotion if your body does it?*

*April:* *No.*

*Paige:* *An emotion is a feeling.*

*Corey:* *A physical emotion?*

*****

*Greg:* *Cried is the same thing as an emotion.*

*Paige:* *But jumped isn't an emotion, is it?*

*Linda:* *What is it?*

*Paige:* *Maybe if you're scared and you jump.*

*Eric:* *The emotion is the scared part and the physical reaction is that you jump.*
After negotiating that emotions are something you feel and that they can lead to actual, physical reactions, the children mapped each phrase that described a physical reaction with the possible, causative emotion.

In a subsequent discussion, we revisited this theme as part of the recursivity (Almasi, et al., 2001; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) of knowledge construction. During this discussion, the children talked about how they experience emotions when reading a book.

*Linda:* As you're reading, what is it ... why do you experience those emotions? I mean, you're just reading a book ...

*Paige:* The words are strong. You enter the book and you feel like you're right there and sometimes it's like it's happening to you. You kind of do what you would do if it happened to you.

*Eric:* Reading a book is ... just ... well ... it's not just reading a book ... it's more.

*Linda:* What is it?

*Paige:* You're experiencing.

*Eric:* ... having fun and ... learning ... depending on the type of book you're reading.

*Paige:* You're not just reading it you're experiencing it.

**Visualizing**

This theme was the most complicated for the children to conceptualize, and it proved to be more “open, tentative, and generative” (Whitin, 1996, p. 138) than any other theme. We began discussing the possible dimensions of visualizing during the thematic coding of memory phrases when Corey asked, “Is there a difference between watching and seeing?” and continued to revisit the concept until our final, follow-up session. I have not
included the phrases from their memory stories here because of the drastic and dramatic evolution of the dimensions over the course of the study. The thematic coding can be found, however, in Appendix D. The following excerpt is from one of the initial discussions during which the children considered the difference between watching and seeing. At this point in the study, they had not developed the dimension of picturing.

_**Linda:** Look at the visualizing part. Do we still agree with what we did yesterday? Does it still make sense?

_**Corey:** We figured out that there's a difference between watching and seeing. Watching is like what's outside of you and seeing takes place inside of you.

_**Labranda:** It sounds like they're practically the same because you're still visualizing.

Multiple, unintelligible voices debate.

_**Meg:** Watching is like in front of you.

_**Linda:** When you're reading, do you sometimes feel more like you're observing or watching and then other times you feel like it's more internal in your head?

_**Corey:** I do both. I can like get brainwashed seeing me in the setting with the main character and sometimes it's like I can see it in my head. Watching is wanting to. Seeing is just seeing.

_**Labranda:** Like you're not really in the book, you're just watching it.

_**Chris:** Watching and seeing are different because seeing is like you're visualizing, but if you're watching you're following the person's eye ... like you're seeing what they're seeing.

_**Corey:** Could I look them up in the dictionary?

_**Greg:** It's like watching a movie ... like if you're sitting on a couch and you're just watching it.

_**Labranda:** Some times it's like you're inside the person and you're kind of visualizing it and seeing it through their view. It's kind of like you're inside the character.
Linda: So, if you're inside the character and you're doing the visualizing, are you watching or seeing?

Labranda: Seeing?

Linda: I don't know, I'm asking you.

Labranda: I think you're seeing because you're the character and just like looking.

Linda: So what if you're reading it and you just feel like you're yourself but you're creating pictures?

Paige: I think that would be watching.

Meg: Seeing it is in your head and watching is like in your face.

Linda: These guys wanted to actually look the words up. What did you find?

Corey: Watch - To look at something carefully ... it's the same thing as to look ... to look at something ... like TV
See - To become aware of something by looking at it. To have the power of sight ... to live through or experience something ... That's the best one!
To live through or experience something.

Labranda: So, if you experience something, that's seeing, right?

Paige: So, when it says you experience something, when you become the main character, you're seeing because you're experiencing something. So, Labranda was right.

Weeks after establishing and beginning to negotiate and define the differences between watching and seeing the children began to explore the possibility of a third dimension to visualizing. This began in response to my questioning. Data analysis was concurrent with data collection, and through my transcription and analysis I began to question their use of the word “seeing.” It seemed to me that they were actually using the word in two different ways and that there might actually be a third dimension. The
following discussion occurred as we were reading *Into the Land of Unicorns* (Coville, 1994).

Linda: Yeah, Eric, what?

Eric: Well, I saw in my head some things. The dragon circling around the mountain top. And then moving down close to Cara and blowing fire.

Linda: You could really see that? Eric just made me think about something I’ve been wondering. We’ve talked about visualizing and the difference between watching and seeing. But, are there times when you’re just creating pictures? And is that different?

Paige: Yeah, because it’s not moving. It’s just there.

Meg: You’re kind of drawing your own pictures.

The following excerpt shows how fluid and shifting this understanding was and the sociocognitive conflict that arose as we discussed it.

Linda: Now, this is what I heard for the first time last week, but you've been saying it all along. You'd say something like, I've got a picture in my head of the mountains, or I'm picturing this. I realized that what we had originally called seeing isn't what we've come to call seeing.

Eric: Picturing in your mind what we think ...

Paige: I don't understand what you're saying.

Linda: This is what I thought. (referring to prepared paper) I thought that if you said you felt like you were watching you were next to the character, or Greg, once you said you felt like you were behind a bush watching what was happening. You're sort of there, but you aren't involved, you're watching what's going on. Now, if you were seeing you were actually present right there where things are happening and you can see it like you were one of the characters seeing it. Eric, like the day you felt like you were the Squijum up in the tree and you could actually see what was happening. That's what I have thought was the difference between watching and seeing. But what I heard last week was a third thing. And that was simply creating pictures in your head, and that's what we originally had under seeing. (refers back to coding of memory story phrases)
Paige and Meg: That's picturing.

Linda: What I want to hear you guys talk about is do we now have three different ways of visualizing?

Eric: The third one is picturing.

Leah: Before we thought seeing was like what picturing is. But instead, seeing is like moving. Sometimes picturing is still.

April: The pictures don't move.

Meg: You have a still picture, like a camera picture. Picturing is when you're making your own pictures.

Paige: Well, when you're watching TV, don't you see pictures, though? Hey, I just used all three! When you're watching TV don't you see pictures!

Linda: Yes, you did!

Eric: It seems like to them picturing is still pictures in your mind, but to me the pictures in my mind are moving and ...

Paige: Like a TV?

Eric: Yeah.

Linda: But if you're picturing, is there a more inward focus? It's not like you're seeing out there what's happening, it's pictures you're creating in here. Or maybe there's no difference. Maybe I thought I heard something I didn't hear.

Meg: I think there's a difference. There is a difference between watching and seeing, but then I still think seeing and picturing have a ... well, I don't know.

Linda: I don't know either. I had this thought when I realized I keep hearing you guys saying, “I can picture that. I can picture what the Dimblethum looks like, or I have a picture in my head of ... Thomas' wagon.”

April: I can't picture Thomas' wagon. It's way too complicated.

Leah: I can picture it wallet sized.

Meg: I kind of picture this small little guy carrying this huge thing.
Paige: At first when he talked about the cart I thought it was like a regular shopping cart.

Corey: I thought it was like those bird houses things.

Meg: I thought it was just like a wagon.

Linda: So, what we're talking about now does sound more like Meg's isolated pictures. You've created like a photograph in your head of what Thomas's cart looks like or what ...

Meg: Like a drawing. 'Cause in your head you're drawing your own pictures.

The children intuitively knew that there was a qualitative difference between what they eventually named as the three dimensions of visualizing: picturing, watching, and seeing, yet it was difficult for them to agree on the subtleties and nuances that distinguish the dimensions. During my analysis of their understanding in Stage 4 of memory work, I came to understand that the three dimensions of visualizing reflect and embody the differing perspectives and positions they occupy as readers in the world of the story.

The children experienced significant sociocognitive conflict as they mediated this understanding. Here, more than with any other theme, intersubjectivity came into play (Rogoff & Toma, 1997). The children did not reach consensus regarding the dimensions, and they certainly did not reach identical understanding. They did, however, come to a mutual agreement through which they could accept and merge their multiple and differing perspectives regarding visualizing. This excerpt regarding visualizing is from the discussion during Stage 3 of memory work when the children began to design the graphic organizer.

Linda: Remember that just because we said something before doesn't mean that we haven't come to understand it differently. When you talk about seeing, it's like you're right there and you can see exactly what's happening and everything that's happening.
April: Yeah, like when ... I don't know who said it, but he felt like the Squijum in the tree watching everything ... that would be like seeing.

Linda: um hum... that would be like seeing.

Paige: I think that seeing is the same as picturing but watching is different. They're still different, but picturing and seeing are the same. He said that “occurs inside your head” should be seeing ... well they should because they're the same thing.

Corey: I think they're different ... if you had one of those graphs with circles like that, watching would be over here, seeing would be over here, and picturing would be here in the middle.

Linda: You mean a Venn diagram? You know what he's talking about? If you had two circles, he says that watching would be over here, seeing would be over here and picturing would be in the middle where they overlap. Is that what it is?

Leah: Yeah.

Paige: That would be like saying that watching and seeing are the same thing.

Linda: No. Because watching and seeing ... if you've got those two circles, one circle is watching and one circle is seeing. And where they overlap, that's picturing?

Paige: I think we should do that. I think we should make a Venn diagram and put all these in it.

Linda: I'm just real confused by this whole thing about watching and seeing and picturing.

April: Seeing and picturing are different. It seems like picturing is like you're trying to picture something that you really don't know what it looks like and seeing is like you have an idea of what it looks like and you know all the details about it.

Linda: Somebody said one day ... it was you, Corey. You were talking about how you couldn't be a bird because you didn't know enough about the surroundings yet ... about the setting.

Corey: Yeah.
Linda: I'm wondering ... does the picturing come first and once you've been able to create these pictures, then you can actually see what's happening?

___: Yeah!

Meg: In real life, there is a difference. If I went to Utah and saw Salt Lake City, maybe when I was here in Ohio I pictured it as being ... something. Then when I actually go and see it for like real life, it's different. Paige, I think that you said that like ...um ...picturing was that you really don't know what it looks like ... picturing is I mean, and then seeing is when you have an idea of what it looks like ...

Greg: Could I go check the dictionary and see if maybe they're all the same?

Paige: You could do like ... If we did a Venn diagram, picturing, if it's in the middle, that has to be both of them. I think you need to have three circles hooked together.

Leah: You could have three circles.

Linda: Um hum. And if you did that, would one circle be picturing and one would be watching and one would be seeing?

Paige: But what would be in the middle?

Corey: All of them have the same qualities.

Meg: In the middle where all the three circles meet, that'd probably be visualizing.

Linda: So, what you're saying is that if we have these three circles, (drawing) this one is watching, this one is seeing, and this one is picturing.

Meg: And the totally middle where all three of the circles meet would probably be visualizing.

Chris: We found picture in the dictionary.

April: (reads definitions) Picture: to draw or paint, to describe very clearly in words, and to form a mental image of ... 

Meg: It said to form a mental image!

Linda: So, if you're picturing, you're forming a mental image? If you're seeing you're living through the experience, and if you're watching, it's like
you're observing. Does that make sense if we use these? Here you're forming mental images, here it's like you're actually living through the experience, and you can do it because you've formed mental images.

Corey: Is there a process between these? To go from picturing to seeing or ...could they all lead to each other? I don't think that you can go right to this (seeing) I think you have to go from here (picturing) then to here (watching) to here (seeing).

Linda: Corey is saying that picturing can lead to both of these. But this has to come first. You have to have a picture in your head about what things are like before you can see or watch.

Paige: I think he's right.

Corey: You have to get a picture of the ...you have to observe the setting to be living in it ... because there's other stuff ... so you're picturing so you form a mental image and once you've formed a mental image there's more stuff you can observe ...then you can finally jump in the book and live through the experience, like be with the characters.

The children continued to revise and develop the graphic organizer during our next session, further negotiating and refining their understanding of the three dimensions of visualizing. The final version of the graphic organizer the children created during Stage 3 of memory work is in Appendix E (see p. 262).

Linda: As we were talking about visualizing the last time we got together, you made some suggestions about making a Venn diagram. So, I want you to look at this (graphic organizer created during discussion) and ... does it seem to be right? (significant pause)

April: Well, you could go from like seeing to picturing to watching to picturing, too.

Linda: You're saying that the arrow could go this way, as well? That these could be like double arrows? What do the rest of you think? Does it go both ways?

April: Yeah. Because you could be like seeing it, and then there's something hard to imagine so you just picture it you don't like see it.

Linda: So, you go back and forth between the two.
Meg: If you really look at it and you can understand it and everything, you can see that it can ... like any three of them can lead to the other two.

Overlapping talk discussing that double arrows should lead between all three boxes.

Eric: I disagree that picturing is still ... ‘cause I think they're moving like you're watching. It involves movement.

Linda: So, you think that picturing can involve movement as well.

Eric: Yeah.

April: Picturing is like a picture. You don't see a picture moving.

Meg: Yeah. If you're looking at a picture of your dog or something your dog's not moving. It's just standing still.

Linda: You've talked about it being like a picture you've drawn in your mind. But, Eric, you've said all along that you think that 'picturing' pictures can move.

Meg: That would be like a flip book.

Corey: A flip book would still be pictures.

Meg: But they're like moving.

Linda: What about that, Eric? Does that give you the movement you need?

Eric: Yeah, I think so.

April: ‘Cause a flip book, it's not really moving. Well, it is, but it's a whole bunch of pictures and each picture's a tad different and when you flip it ...

Linda: It gives you movement.

April: Yeah, but it's not really moving.

Linda: So, when you're first getting into the book and you're trying to figure everything out, that's when you do most of the picturing? Or, like April said, you might be seeing and you're so involved but then something new comes into the story ...
April: And you don't really know how to see it in the way you did, so you just picture it.

Picturing involves creating or “drawing” mental images in the form of still pictures that are created according to the reader’s developing and personal understanding. The children came to understand that this occurs when they are creating initial understanding or when their envisionment has been interrupted. These “drawings” may have the quality of a photograph, a slide, or a flip-book. Watching, on the other hand, occurs “in front of you” and involves movement. The children feel like they are watching when they have entered the setting or are next to the character as an observer. The children feel they are actually seeing when there is an inner focus as though they themselves are living through the experience. It also involves movement and occurs when they feel they are a participant in the setting of the story and have joined the cast of characters but have retained their personal identity or when they have the feeling that they have actually become one of the characters.

Wondering and Predicting

The children established wondering and predicting as separate categories during the initial coding of the phrases of their memory stories. Each category had only one coded phrase:

**Wondering:**
- ... wondering where they could have come from and who they were sent from ...

**Predicting:**
- He tried to make predictions of what was going to happen next from events in the text.
During the thematic coding, however, the children merged these into one theme. Their rationale for this was that wondering might lead to predicting. They believed that there is a causative relationship between the initial act of wondering and the possible, subsequent act of predicting. They decided that wondering is a general speculation about or a desire to know what might happen in the story, while predicting is a much more specific and agentic postulation about what might happen. The following excerpt from a discussion that took place during the thematic coding shows their negotiation of this theme.

*Paige*: Well, is wondering an emotion?

*Meg*: Curious ... he was curious

*Paige*: Yeah, but look, he was curious ...

*Multiple unintelligible voices*

*Greg*: I have an argument, people. Curious is an emotion ...

*Meg*: But then wondering is a prediction ...

*Greg*: If you're curious, that's an emotion. But wondering ...

*Meg*: I agree with him that curious is an emotion. But wondering isn't a prediction.

*Corey*: Wondering leads to a prediction. There's no set prediction for wondering. Like you're not guessing what's going to happen. You're just going to let yourself read it and then know.

*Labranda*: Wondering I think is you don't know what's going to happen but you want to know.

*Paige*: But it's the same thing with predictions. You don't know what's going to happen.

*Riley*: If you make a prediction ... it says, “He tried to make a prediction about what was going to happen next” ... but wondering isn't making a prediction, it's just wondering. You're thinking about what's going to happen next you're not ...
Multiple voices debate

Corey: Um, making a prediction is like trying. Wondering is just like letting what happens flow into your mind. I mean you're not really saying this and this is going to happen, you're just going to wait and see what's going to happen.

Paige: I think … I think wondering leads to making a prediction. Cause if you're wondering then you start to like make a prediction.

Eric: See, you try to make up theories.

Linda: Oh, good Eric. You're making theories.

Labranda: Cause when you wonder, um, it kind of ... cause you're ... all these ideas pop into your head and then you settle with your best one and make it into a prediction.

Chris: It makes sense to me, but I still disagree because you could be wondering about something but still not make a prediction. I would not be making a prediction if I'm just wondering.

Corey: Wondering is a question and predicting is a statement.

Chris: Right, but you have to get enough of wondering. It isn't wondering alone that makes a prediction.

Meg: And sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't.

Paige: Wondering is starting a theory and then that leads to more information, and then you have your prediction.

Eric: ...wondering you sort of have a little bit of information and if you keep reading you get more and then you end up having a prediction.

Linda: To answer our question though, wondering can lead to making predictions?

Multiple voices: But not all the time.

In addition to the discussion about wondering and predicting, the children also discussed wondering as an impetus for sustaining reading as the following excerpt shows.
They cited several reasons for reading, but one is that they continue to read because of the problems the characters face and because they wonder what will happen.

*Linda:* I want to ask you something else about this whole idea. What is it usually ... that really keeps you reading?

*Meg:* In the book.

*Labranda:* Usually if you get into the book and you're really getting it, then you start making predictions and visualize and do all the other stuff that we are doing.

*April:* In every chapter ... or like near the end of every chapter ... it gets so exciting that like ... you just want to know what happens next so you keep reading. And then you want to know what's happening next, so ...

*Paige:* I want to keep reading because I always like wonder what's going to happen so I never stop and ... um ... um... I'm always wondering about my book and what's going to happen.

*Corey:* I think problems keep me reading ... like unsolved problems. Like in the book that I was reading, there were like a billion problems. It is called *There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom* ...

*Linda:* Oh, yes.

*Corey:* And like the birthday party is one problem, Carla moving is another, and there are like bunches more.

*Chris:* Well, what keeps me reading is just the thought of reading because if you're just getting to an exciting part, you're pretty much thinking, "Ok, a good part's coming up." So just the thought of reading tries to keep me reading.

**Tuning Out**

The children also identified tuning out as a theme of their engaged reading. Dimensions of tuning out included losing a sense of time, losing a sense of one’s surroundings, and losing a sense of self. The theme of tuning out is reflective of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 
being lost in a book (Nell, 1988, 1994), stasis (Bogdan, 1992), and presentness (Iser, 1978). Due to the methodology of the study and their constant need to step back and objectify the experience (Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995), the children did not experience this theme during our reading together, but they did report achieving it during their personal reading. When the children’s envisionment of the story is at the deepest level of identification and engagement, they enter the story so completely and so intensely that the reality of time, environment, and self are subsumed into that of the story. The following excerpt documents their negotiation of this theme and its dimensions. This discussion occurred while the children were coding and categorizing phrases from their memory stories in order to develop thematic maps during Stage 2 of memory work.

Linda: What is this all about? You lose track of yourself, and you lose track of time, and you lose track of your surroundings?

Paige: Because you're like so ... um ... you're so involved with the book it's like you feel like you're in the book so when you're in the book you feel like you're not at home and you lose like everything.

April: You're in the book and you don't care what's happening. You just like do it automatically and you don't know you're doing it.

Linda: How are you able to get so into the book?

Paige: When you're focused on the book you're not focused on everything around you.

April: If there's like ... you're in a room and a party's going on and you're trying to read, you can't really get into the book because you can't block it out cause it's like too loud.

Eric: But if you start out in a quiet room when you're reading and you get into the book just enough that when the party starts and gets really, really loud, it doesn't affect your reading, because you've already gotten so into the book.
Linda: You're already there.

Greg: It's kind of like April said, if you're in a room and a party starts it's like you have these walls around you and it's quiet, but when noise comes it's like breaking the walls down.

Labranda: It's like you're in shock.

Meg: Well, you get kind of ... you tune everything out. It's not just only time or only surroundings ... it's everything.

Corey: That's tuning out in my opinion. Losing everything ... forgetting like what you have and where you live ... you even forget that you're reading.

Linda: So, is tuning out the most? I mean, some times you lose track of yourself, and sometimes you lose track of your surroundings, but if you've truly tuned out ... is that like the most? That's the most you can ever be in the book?

Corey: Yeah

Paige: When you're ... When you lose everything that is all of it. If you're tuning everything out ... so tuning everything out is the main topic and it's all these things.

Corey: Tuning out is like losing your brain. We should change the theme to tuning everything out. Or tuning out.

Paige: All of this is tuning everything out.

Eric: I think you just lose everything.

Paige: Everything's like ... it's gone.

Leah: It's just like losing everything ... suddenly everything's gone.

One dimension of tuning out is losing the awareness of your surroundings. This includes the physical surroundings and also those who might be present in the physical environment. Some of the phrases the children included in their memory stories were as follows:

- She felt like she was the only one in the room.
- He felt all by himself in a good way.
• *All she was thinking about was what was happening in the book.*
• *She still (kind of) knew she was in her room.*
• *She tuned everything out.*
• *She couldn’t hear them.*

These phrases indicate that the children have entered the world of the story to the extent that their perception of the reality of their physical surroundings is altered. Their experience reflects Langer’s (1990a) recognition of this phenomenon. She wrote, "When readers treat texts in a literary manner … they are drawn into the text, leaving the everyday world behind" (p. 232). The children do indeed leave the objects and people in their physical surroundings behind as they enter the world of the story.

The children also reported that they lost a sense of self. This does not necessarily mean that they have merged their identity with that of one of the characters but that they have ceased to exist in light of their engagement with the book. The phrases from their memory stories that indicated this were:

• *Eric had a blank mind.*
• *… like he was just a pair of eyes.*
• *He felt like he did not have a body.*
• *She felt like she wasn’t really herself.*

In this dimension, the children are so carried away by the story that consciousness of the self disappears for them. They experience what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explained in relation to flow. Their attention is focused exclusively on their envisionment of the story to the extent that there is not enough attentive energy left to contemplate the self.

Another dimension of tuning out involved losing a sense of time. April wrote in her memory story: “April felt like there was no such thing as time.” This phenomenon
has been explained as the time-axis for the reader’s presentness in the text (Iser, 1978),
temporal flow (Fish, 1980), and the fictional time of the secondary world created through
the psychic process (Benton, 1983). Time in the story world proceeds differently and is
experienced differently than that in the real world, and the reader experiences the
sensation that real time has ceased to exist.

The Reader as Metaphor
The children read Into the Land of Unicorns (Coville, 1994) together toward the end of
the study, and they created visual representations of themselves as readers, framing these
representations as metaphors. The metaphors signify their perspective and position in the
world of the story and relate back to and incorporate some of the themes they identified
during memory work. Visualization and their relationship to the characters were
especially salient themes in their construction of metaphor. Visualization was directly
linked to the perspective from which they could view the story world, and their
relationship to the characters was indicative of their position in the world of the story.
Their emphasis on perspective and position is suggestive of Bakhtin’s visual metaphor.
He believed that “what we see is governed by how we see and how we see has already
been determined by where we see from” (Holquist, 2002, p. 164). Furthermore, the
creation of metaphors through visual representation enhanced transmediation as the
children worked across language to create new connections and meanings and then
translated those new meanings into visual representation.

It is important to recognize that these metaphors convey multiple truths (Bruner,
1986) regarding the children’s experience of engagement and that they do not necessarily
convey all possible truths. The children created visual representations on three different occasions, and each time they depicted themselves through differing and different metaphors. In other words, they did not collectively occupy the same position or perspective at any given time, signifying their individuality as readers. It is also most likely that there are other possible perspectives and positions that the children did not attain or document during this study. The visual representations the children created document and exemplify their multiple and diverse viewpoints. It is important to recognize the metaphors as representational rather than literal indications of the children’s experience. When they wrote their memory stories, they were writing from a “rational” perspective; they were writing about their reality as a reader as they knew and understood it. When they created metaphors, however, they were working on an imaginative or intuitive level (Frye, 1964; Eco, 1979; Siegel, 1995). It is also significant to realize that the children’s metaphor construction was necessarily grounded in their experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Pugh, et al., 1992). Cultural conventions with which the children are familiar both constrained and enriched the possibilities for metaphor construction and are apparent in the metaphors the children created. These metaphors are based on and informed by the children’s experience and their cultural knowledge. Table 4.2 summarizes the perspectives and positions indicated by the metaphors, and a discussion of each metaphor follows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Perspective: conveyed through visual dimension</th>
<th>Position: location in the world of the story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>Picturing, creating initial images</td>
<td>Outside the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>Watching: mirroring what the character can see</td>
<td>In the book: next to the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Watching: from in front of the story</td>
<td>In the book: as a distant observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Watching: from multiple perspectives</td>
<td>In the book: as the setting: story is “on” you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Seeing: all encompassing ability to see, also able to foresee</td>
<td>In the book: above the setting and characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>Seeing: able to document action as participant</td>
<td>In the book: shifting locations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Perspectives and Positions Indicated through Metaphors

**Builder**

As we read *Into the Land of Unicorns* (Coville, 1994) together, I heard the children raising questions and making connections to both life and other cultural texts in an attempt to create initial understanding or to regain understanding throughout the reading of the text. When I asked them about these strategies and maneuvers, they responded by
creating the builder metaphor. This is the only metaphor that was not represented in the visual representations, but it was one we discussed on several occasions. When children are builders of their understanding, they are outside the story in the stance Langer called “being out and stepping in” as they create fundamental and requisite understanding in an attempt to enter the story or when they have been in the story and must step out because their comprehension has broken down and they need to resolve confusion. Visually, being a builder involves the dimension of picturing, or forming mental images to facilitate meaning construction. The following excerpt is from a discussion during which the group negotiated being a builder.

Linda: This is something we've never talked about before ... but I noticed how much as you're trying to understand what's going on, you relate it to things you already know. Remember when we first saw the delver and it described him with a mushroomy head and big eyes and you talked about Gollum in The Hobbit or Lord of the Rings and Doby in Harry Potter? And last week they described the Dimblethum as being a loner, and Greg, you immediately went to the book The Loner that we're reading? You do that a lot and it's something we've never talked about.

Corey: It's called a connection like book to book.

Linda: Yeah, it is. But we've not talked about that. When you're trying to make those connections in order to understand what you're reading, what are you then? What could it be?

Corey: A builder?

Linda: Explain builder. How are you a builder when you're reading?

Corey: Like it's sort of like Legos. You put each piece together and you're building.

Meg: You get something so you keep building like what you know about the book.

Corey: You take from other books and add on what you already ...
Greg: Corey stole my word building … I was going to say that too. Like with Legos … when you go like this you're covering the outside and when you're halfway through and then when you get three-fourths of the way you're like building it and then you start to see how you build this and it turns in and you see what happens … and how it ends.

Linda: I like the way you've made the connection between a builder and what you do because you're building understanding. You're building what you know about the story.

___: Knowledge about the story.

Linda: You seem to do this when you're first getting into the story or when something unexpected or confusing happens.

Corey: It's kind of like a mystery. The Lego would represent like a clue and you keep building up the clues on Legos and then they like connect and like create a building or in this case an understanding.

April: You're building your way into the story.

Corey: You're trying to relate to the character.

Meg: Yeah. You're building your way into the story.

April: Like you want to get involved but there are too many things to distract you so you're not really getting into the book.

Linda: And is that when you're picturing things? Because you're trying to create that understanding so you're creating pictures that will eventually allow you to watch or see?

April: I think a builder would be a picture person because like they're trying to get into the book … like they're building their way. So like it would lead to seeing or watching.

Eric: You're building your understanding in the pictures. So I think it's picturing.

Shadow

The metaphor of being a shadow of a character first developed during the thematic coding of memory stories when the children discussed being next to the character, and it
continued to be a major dimension when they created their metaphors and visual representations. Shadowing occurs when the children have entered the story in a general way and follow or mirror the actions of the character. As a shadow, the children believe that you are next to one character, but your actual position may fluctuate between being close and being farther away. At times, the shadow fulfills the function of bodyguard (or perhaps guardian angel), attempting to protect and guide the character although there can be no actual interaction between the reader and the character. Watching is the visual dimension involved when the reader is a shadow. In the following excerpts the children talk about what it is like to be a shadow as a reader.

Linda: Yesterday when we were almost done and I asked you, "If you were going to compare yourself to something else as a reader, what would it be?" and a couple of you said, "I'm like a shadow right now." I wonder, somebody who said you were a shadow, tell me what that means and where you feel you are in the story.

Paige: On top of her.

Corey: I'm right next to her.

Linda: Tell me what that means. What are you doing that makes you a shadow as a reader?

Paige: You're following her.

Leah: You're following them without them knowing.

April: I know my shadow follows me.

Linda: Paige, you said you're a shadow too. Where are you?

April: You said you were protecting her.

Paige: Do I draw myself? This is my shadow. I'm a shadow because I'm following her ... I don't know. I'm just following her. I'm just like her shadow because I'm the same thing. I said that I was protecting Cara, and that's why I did it like right on top of her.
*****

Greg: I'm shadowing her and I'm like right next to her but the problem is I'm far away as like next to her.


Greg: I'm kind of doing something different. I'm switching ... like I could be next to her ... I might be next to her ...

Linda: So are you moving close and away, close and away?

Greg: Yeah, like on an elevator if you go up and then you go down. That's what I'm doing. Maybe at the end of the story I'll be right on top of her. It depends.

*****

Paige: Well, I said that I was a shadow. I felt like when I was a shadow I was kind of protecting her from any danger and following her like a bodyguard.

Corey: For a shadow, I felt like I was invisible but then following her around.

Paige: You were there but invisible.


Corey: I was right next to her. I couldn't be heard or be seen ... I don't know.

TV

The metaphor of being a TV developed during our thematic coding of memory stories when the children began talking about the difference between watching and seeing. When functioning as a TV the reader is a distant observer and is stationary rather than capable of movement in the setting. The reader as a TV is constrained to a single perspective, looking straight ahead as if one were actually watching the plot unfold on a TV screen. Visually, being a TV involves the dimension of watching. I came to understand that the
children are not the actual TV, but a TV viewer. Their description seemed to indicate the actions of someone watching a TV rather than the TV itself. In the following excerpts Leah discusses being a TV as a reader.

_Linda_: So, if you're visualizing what's going on, what are you, Leah? It doesn't have to be something on our sheet already, but what would you compare yourself to?

_Leah_: I'd say like watching a movie and you're there like the audience. Like just watching a TV. I drew ... uh... a TV because I'm not shadowing them or anything but I'm watching everything.

_Linda_: So, it's like you're in one place watching what's happening?

_Leah_: Yeah.

*****

_Meg_: I don't get how you can be a TV. I was thinking that the story is like the show or whatever.

_Leah_: It was a symbol for watching.

_Linda_: So the TV isn't so much what you are but what you're doing.

_Leah_: It stood for watching.

**Setting**

One member of the group consistently expressed his role as a reader as that of the setting, and another member came to adopt that position during the course of our reading of _Into the Land of Unicorns_ (Coville, 1994). Characteristics of being the setting are that you view the action and the characters from multiple perspectives, and you have complete understanding of the setting and the story with no conscious confusions. Being the setting entails watching the characters and induces the sensation that the action is unfolding “on” you.
Chris: Well, what I mean by being the setting is ... I'm kind of like watching everything that's happening from a different angle. Like, when I saw that evil guy, that goblin-like creature, I saw him from the head ... like I was a bird or a cloud looking down at his head seeing how his skull was like as white as a mushroom. And I was looking at him from her angle. It's kind of like if you've ever played a computer game where you can turn the camera, it's kind of like that where you can see from all angles.

Linda: So, if you're reading and you feel like you're the setting, what that really means is that you're getting different perspectives.

Chris: Um hum.

*****

Chris: I was the setting again still.

Linda: What's that like, Chris. When you're the setting, tell us more about that, 'cause I've never really understood.

Chris: When I'm like the setting it's like I can see all different points of view because it's like I'm the dirt looking up at the dragon, I'm the ... um ... cavern ceiling looking down at Cara. I'm the walls looking at her father, the Dimblethum, Squijim, and Lightfoot. It's kind of like you have all different points of view.

*****

Linda: Corey, what ... where were you as you read this?

Corey: I was probably the setting.

Linda: Interesting. Because you've never said you were the setting before. What was that like for you?

Corey: It's like different because ... lots of characters are there all talking. Like you have Firethroat and Cara's dad and Cara ... and then you can just see everybody kind of from different angles.

Linda: So that seems to be the key about feeling like the setting. You see from different angles.

Corey: Yeah. And you see everything that goes on.

Linda: So, if we go back to the seeing, watching, picturing thing ... if you're feeling that you're the setting where the story's taking place, Chris and
Corey, this is especially for you. If you feel like you've become the setting and you have all these different perspectives, what do you feel like you’re doing visually?

Corey: I think I'm watching.

Linda: As opposed to seeing?

Chris: I'm watching too.

Linda: Yeah. Watching makes sense to me in the way we've talked about it.

Bird

Another metaphor the children developed to express their perspective and position was that of a bird. Being a bird as a reader entails being able to see everything and to be involved with more than one character at a time. The perspective and position is “above” the action. The reader must have a clear understanding of the setting in order to assume the characteristics of a bird, and the reader is better able to foresee or anticipate what is to come in the story because of their perspective and their level of comprehension. Visually, a bird actually sees what is happening to the characters in the setting because it is personally experiencing the story.

Linda: If you were going to compare yourself as a reader to something right now in this passage, can you think of something you would be?

Eric: I feel almost like a bird that's flying over her seeing what’s going on.

Linda: Good. So ... so Meg is feeling like a shadow and Eric is feeling like a bird ... what do you think is the difference between being a shadow and being a bird?

April: A bird is like on top and you're looking down on everything what's going on and a shadow is like following.

Greg: On the bottom like on the bottom
Corey: A shadow is with one person and a bird is looking down at everything.

Linda: Seeing everything ... good.

*****
Linda: Eric, if you're a bird and that's where you are, explain to us what you're doing as a reader.

Eric: I'm seeing everything. I'd be like looking down and following her and I'm in the book. I'm just like following her everywhere.

April: But on top of her.

Linda: Ok, so you're following but you're following from above while the shadows are following next to her.

Corey: I couldn't be a bird because I don't know enough about the setting to see where she is and stuff around her.

Linda: Corey, you're a bird too?

Corey: No, I can't be a bird because I don't know enough about what's around her to see like what she's going to and what she's doing.

Linda: And you feel like a bird would have that broad kind of vision.

Corey: Where you can see in a far distance.

*****
Linda: What about the bird?

April: It's like you see everything happening.

Leah: You're looking like from up. You're looking down on what's happening.

Greg: You're like an airplane but ...

Leah: It's not quite like you're next to them or anything but you're looking down.

Paige: I think he kind of meant ... he might have been protecting her because he sees what's coming before she does.
Linda: I think he did say something about seeing what was coming. And Corey, you said you have like an overview. Now, you told us last week that you couldn't be a bird right then because you didn't have a good enough sense of what everything ... what the setting was like.

Paige: to picture the setting.

Linda: Do you remember saying that? Do you still agree with that?

Corey: Now that we're sort of deeper in the book and they've described most of what we heard about ...

Paige: Yeah, like they've described the flowers and the trees...

Corey: I could be a bird.

Linda: But you couldn't earlier.

Corey: Yeah

Linda: So, if you're going to feel like you're a bird, what do you have to have as far as understanding?

April: You have to have an idea what's around you ... what's around the characters.

Paige: You have to understand the setting.

Camera

The final metaphor to be discussed, although not the final one the children developed is that of being a camera. The children began talking about the qualities of a camera when they negotiated the differences between watching and seeing. From early in the study, a TV represented watching and a camera represented the ability to see. When the children first used the metaphor of a camera, I thought of a photographic camera, but I came to understand that they meant a video camera. Also, as with the TV metaphor, I came to believe that it was not so much the camera as the videographer that the children were
describing. When they assume the characteristics of the camera, they feel they are present in the setting and are capable of action and movement. The camera is capable of viewing or filming multiple perspectives and shifting locations in the world of the story unlike the TV, which is stationary. The camera can actually see what is happening in the story because of its presentness in the setting.

*Greg: If you're a camera you can move. If you're a camera you can see more things than a TV because a TV looks straight ahead. But a camera can turn around.*

*Linda: So, a TV is stationary.*

*Greg: Yeah.*

*Paige: What kind of camera? The kind that takes pictures?*

*Greg: A video camera.*

*Linda: So, a camera is moving.*

*****

*April: Oh, a camera is like you're seeing it ... you are the camera ... you're seeing it. A TV is like you're watching it like you watch a show.*

*Linda: Do you guys agree? A camera sees and a TV watches?*

*Paige: And a camera you're in the book because like with a camera you're taping it. So you are in the book.*

*Linda: Yeah, I think you're saying is that if you're the camera, it's like you're doing the filming.*

*Paige: Yeah, and you have to be there.*

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, it is important to view these metaphors as representative of the various perspectives and positions the children assume during their reading experience. I came to understand that they are indicative of the level of envisionment the children have attained at any given point in their reading, but that no
hierarchical relationship is implied nor is one resultant from their metaphorical perspective and position. The children led me to this understanding through the following discussion.

Linda: Mrs. McClellan asked me an interesting question this morning. I was telling her about your work with metaphors, and she said, “So, do they prefer one over another?” In other words, when you ... what is your goal as far as in getting in to this book? Is there one you would rather be than something else ...

Leah: I don't get that.

Linda: ... or are they all good?

Paige: I don't think so because this is what you're doing. It's not what you want to do it's just what you're doing.

Greg: It's like nothing's your favorite. You can't decide. It's like all of them to be the same amount.

Paige: It's your perspective. It's just what you're doing. It's just all different things.

Linda: So, if you're reading and you feel like a bird, for right then, that's what's right and that's ok. And another time if you feel more like a camera, that's ok too. It's not like you want to get to one of these things.

Corey: Depending on what's happening and what you feel like ...

Linda: So, Corey, you're saying that what's happening in the book has an effect on it and how you yourself are feeling?

Corey: Yeah, that will trigger your opinion.

Linda: Trigger! That's a good word. It will trigger you to be one of these things.

Paige: Well, like if I feel like I'm a bird right now, I think that's your ... I don't want to be something else because right at that moment I wouldn't know what it would feel like to be something else.

Corey: Or you have to be in the setting. Or the character has to be in where you're reading because otherwise you wouldn't know what he's doing, how you're going to feel about what you're reading.
Greg: What I'm saying is like you can be the setting, you can be ... um ...

Paige: You can be whatever you want.

Greg: Yeah, like you can do whatever you want, you can transform into this, that, and this... I can transform into the setting, I can transform into this and transform into that. It's like there's everything you can do.

Synthesis of Findings: Levels of Immersion in Envisionment

During final data analysis I repeatedly read through the transcripts of the Readers as Researchers Club sessions, comparing and merging data sources in order to reduce the data into a coherent representation of the children’s findings and also to discover the meaning embedded below the surface of their work. My goal at this point was to capture the essence of their experience rather than to describe its totality in exhaustive detail. A synthesis of the children’s findings reveals that they experience three levels of immersion in envisionment: the level of creation, the level of observation, and the level of participation.

Level of Creation

The level of creation is crucial to initiating an envisionment as the children are positioned outside the text and produce initial understanding in order to step into the world of the story. This occurs not only at the beginning of the story, however, but is recursive during reading as the children enter and reenter the story. The children are at the level of creation whenever they are confronted with new information that causes them to rethink, question, or clarify their developing understanding of the story. At times, they feel wrenched out of another level if their understanding is suddenly compromised. At
other times, they may be in the level of observation or the level of participation and simultaneously fortify and strengthen their position in the level of creation, indicating that they can experience levels of immersion concurrently. In other words, they engage in strategies that are characteristic of the level of creation, but their position as observer or participant is their focus. In this instance, there is a natural flow between levels that results in a symbiotic relationship.

There are multiple strategies and maneuvers that children use at the level of creation with the usual result being a perspective and position in the story. They raise questions and make connections to known cultural texts as well as to personal experiences in order to create meaning and understanding. They also clarify unfamiliar vocabulary in an attempt to understand the author’s meaning. The children wonder, predict, and hypothesize about the story justifying what they know about story schema with their developing understanding of the current story. At the level of creation the children are analytically aware of the author and the impact of the author’s decisions and craft on their personal engagement. The children use their previous knowledge and their developing understanding to create mental images or engage in picturing at this level. The pictures may resemble a photograph or a slide or they may take on the kind of movement achievable with a flipbook.

This level became apparent during Stage 4 of memory work when I was merging and reducing data sources. In retrospect, vestiges of the level of creation can be seen in their memory stories, but the children did not talk about or identify it specifically. It surfaced again in their metaphor construction in the guise of a builder. The children also hinted at it during a discussion of how they resolve confusion about the text. Meg said,
“You're kind of like trying to make a puzzle and you're missing a part and you can't find it.” This indicates her search for the puzzle pieces that will allow her entry into the world of the story. It became most evident, however, as I read and reread the transcripts of our joint reading of Into the Land of the Unicorns (Coville, 1994). During this phase of the study the children were actively engaged in constructing knowledge of the story and attempting to enter the story world. They were indeed at the level of creation and returned to this level repeatedly during our reading, as they needed to clarify their understanding. I have come to understand that at the level of creation the children analyze the author’s craft, make personal and intertextual connections, ask questions, make predictions, clarify vocabulary, and create mental images.

The following discussions occurred at the end of the first chapter of Into the Land of the Unicorns (Coville, 1994) and later in the book after the Squijum was introduced. The children first discuss the moves the author makes to draw them into the book and they make reference to their knowledge of story schema as well as intertextual connections. In the second excerpt the children discuss Coville’s use of sensory detail. The excerpt regarding sensory detail makes it clear that previous instruction does shape the way children think and talk about their reading experience.

Corey: I think they gave away too much in the first chapter.

Paige: I don't think so. They give you ... a lot of information.

Greg: When someone's in danger it's very obvious that some way they escape and my brother's like, "Let the villains win for a change."

Meg: But sometimes the first paragraph is too boring, so I like this book.

Linda: This one gets you right in it, doesn't it?
Leah: Like some books are really good, but you don't think it's a good book at first …

Paige: It's kind of like *Holes*. It gets you right in.

*****

Linda: Corey, as we were getting ready to come inside you said something about that this book is really full of sensory detail.

Corey: Yeah, like, our teacher has these writing terms like blue line and sensory detail. Sensory detail is an adjective that describes the noun ... describes something. It's like red is a sensory detail and it's like ... almost ... it's the same thing as an adjective describing a noun.

Linda: So, what does sensory detail do for you when you're the reader?

Corey: It makes a clearer picture in your mind. Like it describes the animals or creatures.

This next excerpt, also from an early chapter of the book, shows Corey and Greg trying to justify what they understand about word meaning with its use in the book. They are trying to establish whether the internal logic of the book has been compromised. They use their knowledge of vocabulary and also intertextual connections to create understanding.

Linda: Corey, you're thinking. What are you thinking about?

Corey: I'm thinking that the Dimblethum might be ... what does a loner mean?

Linda: It just means that you like to be alone. You don't like to be around a lot of people.

Corey: Then why would he care for her?

Linda: That's a good question. If he's a loner, why would he try to help her out?

Greg: That's what our book's about ... A loner. (reference to the current read-aloud book in his language arts classroom)
The following excerpts are examples of the children’s use of intertextual connections to foster their understanding. In the first, Greg and Eric are trying to create a mental image of the Delver and they use their knowledge of other texts to facilitate this.

In the second excerpt, Paige is making connections to media texts during her immersion in the level of participation. This example reflects the symbiotic nature of the levels.

Greg: I imagined ... um ... in Lord of the Rings, Two Towers, I could imagine it looking like Sméagol or Gollum. Yeah, what I'm doing is I'm pretending that I'm doing like a special system thing like a monkey and a squirrel together, trying to visualize it.

Eric: What I pictured was an evil Doby in Gollum's clothes.

*****

Paige: Oh, well, at that part it reminded me of ... um ... Shrek. “You’re a girl dragon!” because he said she was pretty.

(and later in the same discussion)

I felt like I was Cara. Like falling down the cliff looking down. And I thought of the Roadrunner where the Coyote ... he tries to play this trick on him and he falls face down, and I just saw that cartoon picture.

April and Paige became confused later in the story when they did not understand the sarcastic humor between Cara and Thomas the Tinker. This confusion caused them to step out of the story and return to the level of creation.

April: I'm confused where it says he fell in by accident.

Paige: Yeah, I didn't get that.

April: ... he fell in by accident. Who's she talking to?

Linda: She's talking to Thomas the Tinker. Because he's human, she's asking him how he got in to Luster.

April: Oh, ok. I thought it meant like fell in the cart or something.

Linda: Oh, no. Fell into the world of Luster by accident.
Paige: I get that but then (s)he said, “I'm going to be 92 on my next birthday.”

Leah: She was just being sarcastic. And she was just kind of joking around.

Paige: I thought that was somebody else ...

April: She was just joking around.

Leah: She was like, "Oh, sure, then I'll be 92 on my next birthday." She's just joking around.

Paige: I didn't know it was her talking. Now I guess I get it.

The following discussion occurred near the end of the book and shows the children creating understanding through intertextual connections and knowledge of story grammar. This dialogue indicates that the children have been in the story but have returned to the level of creation as they reflect on what they know and what they expect.

Meg: I was kind of freaked out when the dragon came. Like she would do something to them.

Paige: It sounded exactly like *Rowan of Rin*. On the cover there's a picture of a red dragon on it.

April: I don't know who that guy is. Like I wanted to know.

Meg: Obviously the grandma knows.

Leah: Well, what I think of then there's like some person and there's two books about the same thing ... I think they can't do anything too bad ... 'Cause they're in that picture (referring to cover of sequel)

Another example of the level of creation shows Chris applying his understanding of the strength of human bones and unicorn horns. He is attempting to justify his preexisting knowledge with information crucial to the author’s story line. This indicates
that although the children as readers do suspend disbelief, they also expect internal and external logic in the story. This logic enables them to accept the author’s creation and enter the world of the story.

*Chris:* What’s really strange is I thought the unicorns’ horns were stronger than that because human bones are kind of strong but not that strong so if his horn hit her breastbone and snapped, it must be a really weak horn.

These final examples show the children occupying two levels of immersion simultaneously. In the first excerpt, Meg feels literally split in two as a result of the duality of her immersion. Yet in the second, Corey is moving naturally and symbiotically between levels. He has been reading and is shadowing the character, which is indicative of being in the level of observation, yet he is also aware of building knowledge through intertextual connections at the level of creation.

*Meg:* Could I only draw a little corner of myself? I’m a little confused. It’s like there’s two of me. One is really close and one’s far away.

*****

*Corey:* Can I draw two things? ‘Cause I’m a shadow and a builder.

*Linda:* So, you’re shadowing. In what sense are you shadowing, Corey?

*Corey:* I’m invisible.

*Linda:* Invisible … which makes you a shadow. Where does the builder come in?

*Corey:* I’m sort of making connections. I’m thinking what the people could look like and trying to think of another book. I’m also taking a problem and trying to think in my head about another problem that is basically the same as this one and thinking about how … like what end.

All of the above excerpts show the strategies and maneuvers in which the children engage in the level of creation. They are positioned outside the story and create understanding in an attempt to enter the world of the story. They analyze the author’s
craft, make connections, ask questions, make predictions, clarify vocabulary, and create mental images in an attempt to enter the story world. They are at the level of creation as they approach the text at the beginning of the story and also recursively throughout the story as they resolve confusions or fortify their position in other levels. This level is crucial to entering the other levels as the lynchpin of meaning that enables them to move from picturing to watching or seeing.

**Level of Observation (EYE)**

Once the children have entered the world of the story they may take on the characteristics of an observer. They are in the book and moving through the story but are doing so not as a participant in but as an observer of the action. There are three positions they assume at the level of observation. They may simply feel that they have entered the setting, they may feel that they have actually become the setting, or they may be next to a specific character. All of these positions involve the visual perspective of watching. The combination of being an observer and the illusion of watching led me to conceptualize this level as EYE. The eye is the instrument of vision, and as such is the object that enables us to visually register and apprehend our environment. It signifies the passive reception indicative of the children’s conception of watching. We have many colloquialisms emphasizing the use of the eye. Being “all eyes” emphasizes that we are attentive, aware, and perceptive. This characterizes the children’s experience in the story world as they are positioned as an observer and watch the action. Other idioms regarding the eye include “have an eye to, keep an eye on, and keep one’s eyes open” (Webster’s New World Dictionary & Thesaurus, 1999). These indicate that the observer is watching
out for, being mindful of, attending to, looking after, watching over, protecting, and becoming aware of that which she is watching. The children most frequently identified being next to the character, or metaphorically being a shadow, as their position in the level of observation, and these idioms reflect their experience of this position.

When children feel that they have entered the setting in the level of observation, they are merely present as a distant observer and often feel that their metaphorical perspective is that of watching a TV. In the following statements, the children describe their experience of watching in the setting.

_Labruna: For watching, it's like a videotape and you're watching it like a TV._

_Meg: Like in front of you._

_****_

_Paige: You're watching it like outside._

_Linda: Ok, so Paige, if you're watching it, you're kind of watching it over there._

_Paige: Yeah, like a TV._

_****_

_Leah: I'd say like watching a movie and you're there like the audience. Like just watching a TV._

At the level of observation, the children may assume three positions: in the setting, near a character, or as the setting. Due to the nature of our discussions, many of these concepts were developed in conjunction with and in contrast to each other rather than independently. Thus, in the first of the following excerpts, the children not only explore their understanding of what it is to be in the setting, but contrast it with what it means to be next to the character as a shadow.

_Linda: What's the difference between being next to the character and being in the setting?_
Meg: If you're just in the setting you could be anywhere in the setting.

Leah: If you were like a shadow, you'd be with the character the whole time and you could see what was going on with them, but if you're just in the setting, you may not be with the character the whole time.

*****

Greg: It's watching. Yeah, it's watching it. I'm watching everything that was happening to the Dimblethum. He was getting hit by all these spears and he doesn't even look like he was alive. I was like behind a bush.

Another position in the level of observation is that of becoming the setting. As the setting, the reader is capable of watching the story from multiple perspectives. In order to achieve the position of the setting, the reader must have a clear understanding and mental image (picture) of the author’s description. Chris in particular assumed the position of the setting, but Corey came to do so.

Chris: Well, what I mean by being the setting is ... I'm kind of like seeing everything that's happening from a different angle. Like, when I saw that evil guy, that goblin-like creature, I saw him from the head ... like I was a bird or a cloud looking down at his head seeing how his skull was like as white as a mushroom. And I was looking at him from her angle. It's kind of like if you've ever played a computer game where you can turn the camera, it's kind of like that where you can see from all angels.

*****

Chris: When I'm like the setting it's like I can see all different points of view because it's like I'm the dirt looking up at the dragon, I'm the ... um ... cavern ceiling looking down at Cara. I'm the walls looking at her father, the Dimblethum, Squijum, and Lightfoot. It's kind of like you have all different points of view.

*****

Linda: So that seems to be the key about feeling like the setting. You see from different angles.

Corey: Yeah. And you see everything that goes on.

Linda: So, if we go back to the seeing, watching, picturing thing ... if you're feeling that you're the setting where the story's taking place, Chris and Corey, this is especially for you. If you feel like you've become the
setting and you have all these different perspectives, do you feel like you're watching or are you seeing?

Corey: I think I'm watching.

Chris: I'm watching too.

Linda: Yeah. Watching makes sense to me in the way we've talked about it.

*****

Corey: Once you know like the forest, the cave, once you know what they all look like you can become the setting and then you're all the characters' point of view. Not just like Cara.

Linda: So, if we take that back to watching and seeing, if you are the setting, and everything is taking place like right on you, is that watching or seeing?

Corey: Watching. I think it would be watching because you probably haven't lived through the experience and it's like right in front of you watching.

The final position in the level of observation is next to the character as a shadow. At this level, the children are more involved with the characters yet do not interact with them. Being quiet and invisible are defining characteristics of a shadow or a position next to the character. From this position the children watch what the character sees, may feel emotions similar to those of the character, and may experience the desire to protect or guide the character. The children construct this understanding in the following excerpt.

Greg: I'm right next to them, but I'm not visible at all. I can see them, I could even talk to them but they don't hear me.

Labranda: He was watching them.

Paige: He was watching and following.

Corey: If you're standing right next to them then you're shadowing them. Like if you're with them then you wouldn't be shadowing them.

Eric: You're a shadow there because you're quiet, you're ... 

Paige: You're like following them and if you're a shadow, it's like you're not there.
Linda: If you're reading right now and you feel like you're a shadow, tell me what that means.

Paige: You're following her.

Leah: You're following them without them knowing.

Linda: Ok, you're following without them knowing. Paige, you said you're a shadow too. Where are you?

April: You said you were protecting her.

Paige: This is my shadow. I'm a shadow because I'm following her ... I don't know. I'm just following her. I'm just like her shadow because I'm the same thing. I said that I was protecting Cara, and that's why I did it like right on top of her. To protect her.

Paige: Well, I said that I was a shadow. I felt like when I was a shadow I was kind of protecting her from any danger and following her like a bodyguard.

Corey: For a shadow, I felt like I was invisible but then following her around.

Paige: You were there but invisible.


Corey: I was right next to her. I couldn't be heard or be seen ... I don't know.

Linda: Do you experience what she experiences?

Paige: I kind of did because when the horn was coming closer I was like (Paige draws back indicating her physical reaction to the story and laughs)

The preceding section details the children’s perspectives, positions, and strategies and maneuvers in the level of observation. They are present in the book in one of three ways. They may simply be in the setting, they may become the setting, or they may be next to a character. When they are in the setting, they may be positioned anywhere. In
order to become the setting they must feel that they have a complete understanding of the author’s creation of the story world, and when this occurs, they can view the events from multiple perspectives. The final position is that of a shadow who is positioned next to the character and mirrors her actions. As a shadow, the reader watches the story world from the character’s perspective, may feel protective of the character, and yet remains silent and invisible. The unifying characteristics of these positions contributed to the conceptualization of this level as “EYE.” The children are present inside the story, they are there merely as an observer, and there is the visual illusion that they watch the events unfold.

Level of Participation (I)

Another level of a reader’s immersion in the envisionment is that of participation. At this level, the children move from observation to the feeling that they figuratively become participants in the world of the story. The visual quality of actually and actively seeing the events and characters in their envisionment is a result of their feeling of participation. I have conceptualized this level as “I” because of the children’s personal involvement. Meanings of the word participation include to take part in, to share with others, and to enter into (Webster’s New World Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1999), all of which the children do as participants in the story world. One meaning of the word see is to witness as when one lives through or experiences something. This definition proved to be the key that crystallized the children’s distinction between watching and seeing. According to their conception, the focus of seeing is inside on the reader’s personal perception and experience rather than focused outwardly as with watching when one is merely
observing. Synonyms for experience include involvement, participation, encounter, and feel: stressing and reflecting that the children have entered a level of immersion in envisionment in which they live through the experience, participate with the characters, and see the world of the story.

One way the children interact with the character is through a general connection and the ability to communicate verbally. This connection often emerges as a result of perceived similarities between the character and the reader. The reader, then, is driven to aid the character with advice, guidance, or warning based on that personal experience. This position was evident in their memory stories. In the following excerpts the children discuss connecting with the characters in this interactive way and the feeling that they can see at this level.

Corey: I just noticed that everything with connecting with the characters is seeing.

Linda: Why do you think that is?

Meg: Seeing is like living through the experience so if you're connecting with the characters, you're living through the experience.

Linda: Otherwise you're observing? Rather than living through it?

(long pause)

Meg: Maybe it's because like when you're connecting with the characters you see the characters, you see all the other characters, you see the setting, and you're in the book, ... like you can see yourself with the other characters.

*****

Linda: I want to go back to connecting with the characters. Are there other things that you do when you read that make you feel this connection with the characters?

Labranda: The words!
Linda: Talk about that, Labranda, what do you mean?

Chris: Well, it's kind of like what she said, like the words, because maybe some of the words in the book really describe the character to you and you could match the personality of the character with you and pretend to be that ... Or maybe if you're doing the same thing the character's doing you could feel like you're a character.

Linda: So finding similarities between yourself and the character is another way to connect. Do you ever do that when you read? Do you ever think, "Oh, that's just like me?"

Labranda: I do.

Corey: If the situation has already happened to you then you are connecting to the character. And you like try to talk with them and tell them ... give them advice like what to do and how to do it.

Linda: So, you're relating that to talking with them. Because you've had that experience, you want to give them your advice. Is that right?

Labranda: Sometimes you'll have different similarities in your personalities. Like if you're clumsy and your character is clumsy, you'll kind of relate because you'll know what they're feeling.

The second position in which the children connect to the character is to actually feel that they have assumed the identity of the character. The children seem to shed their personal identities and take on that of one of the characters, retaining their participatory role in the story world and the accompanying ability to see the events. This involves heightened personal and intertextual connections with and sharing the emotions of the character.

Labranda: Sometimes it's like you're inside the person and you're kind of visualizing it and seeing it through their view. It's kind of like you're inside the character.

Linda: So, if you're inside the character and you're doing the visualizing, are you watching or seeing?

Labranda: Seeing?
Linda: I don't know, I'm asking you.

Labranda: I think you're seeing because you're the character and just like looking.

*****
Paige: Oh, well, at that part it reminded me of ... um ... Shrek ... "You're a girl dragon!" because he said she was pretty. I've got a real good picture of the scale with three drops of blood on it. ... I felt like I was Cara. Like falling down the cliff looking down. And I thought of the Roadrunner where the Coyote ... he tries to play this trick on him and he falls face down and I just saw that cartoon picture.

Linda: So, you were so involved in that scene that you felt you had actually become the main character.

Paige: Yeah.

Leah: You were connecting a lot.

Meg: Like with Shreck and the cartoons.

Linda: Yeah, lots of connecting. I wonder ... do you think that helped you become Cara? That you were making so many connections to it?

Paige: Yeah. When you see the picture it's easier to become involved with the story.

Linda: It's interesting you used the word 'see' because we've talked about when you actually become the character, that's when you can actually see what's happening.

*****
Linda: Greg, what about you? Where did you feel like you were you when you read that?

Greg: I felt like I was the Squijum.

Linda: Really! Why did you feel like you were the Squijum?

Greg: I was kind of mad like the Squijum was kind of mad before.
The metaphors the children created to represent the level of participation in their immersion in envisionment were a bird and a camera, and on the surface, they do not seem to continue the theme of connecting with the characters. However, the essence of each metaphor indicates a participatory role in the world of the story and the important visual dimension of seeing. The bird has an all-encompassing ability to see and even to foresee the action and is positioned above the characters. The camera has the ability to actively document the action and sequentially shift locations to attain different perspectives. Both the bird and the camera are active participants in the world of the story and have the ability to see the events occur.

In order to be a bird, the children said that they had to know enough about the setting to conceptualize it from a broad perspective. The bird is present in the setting and actively flies over the events. It is, in essence, a witness to or is living through the experience of the characters. In the following excerpts the children discuss being a bird and seeing and foreseeing what is happening.

*Corey:* I can't be a bird because I don't know enough about what's around her to see like what she's going to and what she's doing.

*Linda:* And you feel like a bird would have that broad kind of vision.

*Corey:* Where you can see in a far distance.

****

*Linda:* What about the bird?

*April:* It's like you see everything happening.

*Leah:* You're looking like from up. You're looking down on what's happening.

*Paige:* I think he kind of meant ... he might have been protecting her because he sees what's coming before she does.
The other metaphor for connecting with the characters was a video camera. As the bird participates in the setting by flying overhead, the camera participates by documenting the action. Its ability (or the ability of the videographer) is to shift perspectives. As with other discussions, the children’s conception of a camera as a metaphor for seeing and connecting was constructed in relationship to that of a TV, which was the metaphor for watching in the level of observation.

April: A camera's sort of like a bird.

Leah: With the TV it's kind of like you're watching and not like ...

Paige: And the camera's seeing.

Leah: You're not shadowing or you're not next to the person

Corey: The camera's wide away

Greg: If you're a camera you can move. If you're a camera you can see more things than a TV because a TV looks straight ahead. But a camera can turn around.

Linda: So, a TV is stationary and a camera’s moving.

Greg: Yeah.

Linda: I got ya. So, let's talk a little more about the difference between a TV and a camera.

April: Ok, a camera is like you're seeing it ... you are the camera ... you're seeing what's going on. A TV is like you're watching it like you watch a show.

Linda: Do you guys agree? A camera sees and a TV watches?

Paige: And a camera you're really in the book because like with a camera you're taping it. So you are in the book.

In the level of participation the children feel that they have actually entered the world of the story and have joined the cast of characters. When they simply connect or
interact with a character, they retain their personal identity and tend to want to guide, advise, or warn the characters. At other times, they relinquish their personal identity and appropriate that of a character. Personal and intertextual connections and personal emotions serve to heighten the children’s immersion at this level, and they live through the experience feeling that they can actually see what is happening. This level is conceptualized as “I” because of the emphasis on personal involvement and seeing the action as a witness and as participant.

Children’s Construction of Knowledge as Co-researchers

This study was designed to disrupt the child/adult, student/teacher, and subject/researcher hierarchies as was discussed at length in Chapter 3. One methodological decision that fostered this disruption was establishing children as co-researchers. In parallel decisions I recognized the group as the case and kept the group relatively small to promote dialogue. These three decisions as well as the theoretical foundations of this study (reader response, feminist poststructuralism, and constructivism) recognize the importance of and necessitate the joint construction of knowledge. Our dialogue enabled us to document the themes and dimensions of the children’s engaged, aesthetic reading experience and to create understanding of that event. Therefore, secondary concerns of this research were to consider the characteristics of the children’s discussions and their negotiation of knowledge through dialogue and to explore the implications of the children’s participation as co-researchers. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of these concerns.
Dialogue in the Readers as Researchers Club

The type of dialogue in which children and their teacher engage determines the type of knowledge that will be sanctioned. As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers can enact a transmission of knowledge or a transaction of knowledge construction. Four features determine the location of any given discussion on the continuum between pure transmission and transaction. These include the stance that is encouraged, where interpretive authority is located, who controls turn taking, and who controls topic selection and shift (Chinn, et al., 2001; Marchall et al., 1995). Another feature is the focus of the speaker. The teacher is often the official addressee in classroom discussions, student comments are filtered through her, and students rarely address each other directly (Cazden, 2001; Chinn, et al., 2001; Marshall et al., 1995; Wilhelm, 1997). The more students are in control of these features the more authentic the dialogue. When children are invited to create understanding they work across sign systems to articulate their thoughts, understand that multiple points of view can enhance their personal understanding, and explore possible truths (Alvermann, 1999; Cazden, 2001). As characteristics of our discussions, stance, interpretive authority, turn taking, topic selection and shift, and focus will be discussed in the rest of this section. I found that our discussions were a blend of what I considered “schooled” behavior and spontaneity that approximated authentic dialogue. The characteristics discussed below are evident in the excerpts of our discussions presented elsewhere in this document, so for the sake of brevity, I have not repeated them here.
Stance

Stance markers (Bruner, 1986) give us clues about how to think and how to respond, and those that are invitations to thought encourage dialogue. They authorize children to negotiate, speculate, and become constructors of knowledge. The types of questions that are asked and who asks them indicate the sanctioned stance. I first adopted the stance of inquisitiveness and made it clear that in this case I did not have answers; the children were the experts. In our discussions, I asked authentic questions that encouraged the children to view themselves as the possessors and creators of knowledge. While we strove for mutual agreement we also focused on the processes that enabled our knowledge construction. To this end I also asked metaprocess questions (Cazden, 2001) that asked children to explore their development of thought and knowledge construction. Metaprocess questions encourage “discussions in which students control the direction and the teacher’s primary role is to encourage students to explain how they have gone about their journey, rather than to make certain that everyone has arrived at the same destination” (Marshall, et al., 1995, p. 134). The following are representative questions that invited children to construct knowledge:

- *Yesterday I had asked you to write a story about your reading. What was that like?*
- *Do you still agree that your passages fell into those two categories? Do the categories still make sense?*
- *Look at the visualizing part. Do we still agree with what we did yesterday? Does it still make sense?*

Although I posed questions with much greater frequency, the children also did so. Their questions included:

- *Is there a difference between watching and seeing?*
• *Is there like a process to get to these things? To go from picturing to seeing or watching?*

The fact that the children viewed themselves as experts was evident in the fact that they occasionally posed authentic questions to the group for consideration and exploration. Their willingness to raise questions indicates that they recognized their right and their ability to construct understanding. The most striking indication of the children’s inquisitive stance occurred in the exchange during which they named themselves as the “reading researchers.” An excerpt of that discussion may be found in Chapter 3 (p. 96) in the section about Stage 1 of memory work.

**Interpretive Authority**

Because of the inquisitive stance the children assumed, they understood that interpretive authority lay with them. They were the final arbiters of knowledge and understanding. As a result of their control of interpretive authority, the children engaged in knowledge construction through their dialogue. In their exit interviews, the children indicated that they felt they had equal speaking rights. This was not reflected in the number of turns taken by individual children but by the fact that each child felt her voice was honored and heard by the others in the group. The children exhibited what has been termed conjectural thinking (Almasi & McKeown, 1996), approximations (Peterson & Eeds, 1990), or exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001). This is evident in the preceding excerpts in which the children negotiated and documented the themes and dimensions of their reading experience. The discussions clearly convey the children’s respect for multiple points of
view and their ability and willingness to take their ideas from initial, vague thoughts to consensus: usually resulting in well-formed and articulated understanding. This topic is revisited later in the discussion of the implications of children as co-researchers.

**Control of Turn-Taking**

Gaining the floor rather than being recognized to speak as a result of hand-raising was the most difficult schooled behavior for the children and me to overcome. The difficulty for both teachers and students to adopt new non-recitation instructional frames for discussion has been documented (Alvermann, et al., 1990; Cazden, 2001; Chinn, et al., 2001; Rogoff & Toma, 1997). The children and I were conditioned by our experience to “take turns” and to be recognized to speak. One observation in regard to turn taking involves invitations to speak. I usually addressed the group at large, but at times I would invite a particular child to answer. Sometimes it was a request for the child to elaborate on a previous statement or to clarify an idea. Sometimes I invited specific children in response to their hand-raising. At other times I attempted to control turn-taking and invite in a student who had been especially quiet. It was difficult for me to break the habit of monitoring the participation of individual students and assuming the responsibility for assuring their voices were heard. This may be one of the areas, however, wherein the children and I benefited by my retention of vestiges of my teacher role. Although I attempted to disrupt the usual adult/child, teacher/student binary, it may be that an important aspect of my new role was to ensure that all children had the opportunity to speak. I was the only group member who directly invited participation. The children made no such invitations during our discussions.
Some children were less willing than others to independently gain the floor. One possibility is that certain students wanted to exhibit what they have been taught as polite behavior. In exit interviews, several students mentioned their reluctance to interrupt another student in order to claim speaking rights. They also cited their concern when everyone seemed to be talking at once. Some students were simply quieter than others and did not attempt to gain the floor as frequently as the more vocal participants. The children talked about gaining the floor in their exit interviews in response to my question, “When you had something really important to say, how did you get to say that?”

Chris: I pretty much waited my turn. When everyone in front of me that you called on was done speaking and then you’d call on me and then I’d just say it. There were a few times that all of us just started shouting out because it was funny or something or we got excited about an idea.

Paige: Well, that was kind of hard because everybody was talking at once trying to get their two cents in and I’d be sitting there (raising hand). You’d see me and you’d tell everybody one at a time, and you’d call on me and we’d say our ideas and people would listen.

Corey: Well, if it was really important you could ... uh ... you could say it, or if it wasn’t that important and it could wait, you could just wait.

(and later)

I think it was different than like in class. And like, you don’t have to raise your hand. Sometimes in class you can have something really important and the teacher doesn’t call on you so you can’t say it. But for us, we could all express our opinions about something.

Eric: Um ... Well, I’d wait until somebody was done talking and then I’d start and um .. hopefully, everybody would hear that I was starting and I could fit my sentence in and then once I was done, or when somebody thought I was done because I stopped for a second to think or something, somebody else started and then I kept that idea in my head until they were done.

As the children’s comments indicate, our discussions were characterized by a combination of hand-raising and the granting of speaking rights and by spontaneously
gaining the floor. Whether they independently gained the floor or waited to be recognized, the children felt their voices were heard and their ideas mattered.

**Topic Selection and Shifts**

The children and I spent the first fifteen to twenty minutes of each session eating and engaging in social talk. During this time, the children controlled the topic selection and shifts in topics almost without exception. This was a time to establish relationships in a social way while during our “meaningful, analytical talk” (Carico, 2001) the children learned about each other through their ideas. Also without exception, I signaled our move from social to analytical talk by posing a question to open the discussion. I found as did Alvermann, et al. (1999) that the students expected me to ask questions, maintain order, and keep our discussions on track. There was an established relationship between us that afforded a level of security when sanctioned and expected roles were fulfilled. Greg’s mother commented on this in her exit interview:

*An open-ended observation, you were asking about leading (the discussion). At their particular age, if an adult ... this is just my perception ... if an adult is sitting there, the adult is the leader. You aren’t all equals particularly since you were their teacher. It may have been something different if you had selected from a different grade where they didn’t know you as much. But they looked to someone ... someone is always the leader, and you’d be the designated one. I just know Greg always looked forward to it, always had a positive attitude, but I can’t imagine ever most kids not having you be the leader.*

As is indicated throughout this discussion, however, we did successfully blur the boundaries of these roles. As Alvermann et al. (1999) also discovered, once a topic was introduced, the children would build upon each other’s comments and carry the discussion. They would also make connections that lead to topic drift and the
consideration of new topics. But suddenly their discussion would come to an abrupt end. They had said everything they wanted to say and were at a loss for how to proceed. At that point, it was up to me to make tangential connections to shift the topic slightly or to introduce another topic.

**Focus**

My role in discussions was decentered to a degree because the children adopted a stance that recognized and sanctioned their construction of knowledge and because they knew they held interpretive authority. Therefore, the children did not customarily filter their comments through me, make me their visual focus, or cede the floor back to me after each turn. The children engaged in substantial and significant student-to-student turns. During these turns, the children revoiced each others’ thoughts, built upon and contested ideas, and moved toward a consensus of understanding. After repeated readings of the three sessions I chose for careful analysis and after coding the turns in these discussions, two patterns emerged in the children’s student-to-student turns.

Marshall et al. (1995) identified cooperative turns as a characteristic of adult talk about books, but I found that the children who participated in this study also engaged in cooperative turns wherein they thought and worked together to make a point. The following excerpt exemplifies how the children used cooperative turns as they developed their thoughts about what it was like to write their memory story in third person.

*Linda: Leah, tell me how you felt when you were writing that. What was it like?*

*Leah: It was sort of weird ... because we couldn't write I and we had to use a name or he or she ...*
Meg: I wanted to write about someone else. I didn't want to write about myself.

Paige: Me, too. Like say, make up somebody and it could be yourself but you're making up a totally different person.

Labranda: Like a pen name.

Meg: And so it doesn't feel like it's you.

I also observed a pattern of turns not mentioned in the literature that I termed consecutive turns. In consecutive turns the children report their personal thoughts or ideas regarding an initial question. I viewed these turns as individual reports rather than working toward a mutual answer. The following is an example of consecutive turns.

Linda: So when you were writing yesterday, what kinds of things did you see yourselves doing while you read?

Corey: Visualizing

Linda: What did you visualize?

Corey: Like the setting ... where the author was describing it and the main characters.

Paige: I tried to put myself in the situation the main characters were in.

April: I wrote it out like how I feel and what I do.

Greg: I visualized I was right under a tree in a thunderstorm with Mr. Ocox. And when he said you couldn't go in because your daughter went to the hill without permission ...

*****

Corey: How come most people like reading alone instead of like reading ....

Linda: I don't know. Why is that?

April: When I'm reading out loud I get nervous in case I mess and sometimes even if it's a really easy word I miss it 'cause I'm nervous.

Paige: The only thing I don't like about reading is when you have to answer questions.
Meg: *I like to read books alone.*

The nature of the question did have an impact on whether the children engaged in cooperative or consecutive turns. There were occasions, moreover, when consecutive turns became cooperative and led to knowledge construction. The children would first report their own ideas and then move to negotiate and construct knowledge together.

Another pattern that was discernible in our discussions was a particular kind of teacher-student turn. These involved repeated turns between a particular student and myself, usually because I was trying to get the student to elaborate or clarify an idea. I was encouraging one child to build an answer. The following is an example.

*Greg: I'm shadowing her and I'm like right next to her but the problem is I'm far away as like next to her.*

*Linda: So draw yourself. Where are you? And what kind of shadow? Draw yourself in the picture.*

*Greg: I'm kind of doing something different. I'm switching ... like I could be next to her ... I might be next to her ...*

*Linda: So are you moving close and away, close and away?*

*Greg: Yeah, like on an elevator if you go up and then you go down. That's what I'm doing. Maybe at the end of the story I'll be right on top of her. It depends.*

These teacher-student turns focused the discussion on the two of us as individuals. Although one student occasionally asked another for clarification or explanation this usually did not involve repeated turns beyond their request, the answer, and an acknowledgement. Another observable pattern in teacher-student turns involved my invitation to a particular child that was responded to by another. This occurred quite frequently.
Linda: Yeah, Greg, talk about getting into the book.

Chris: I can talk about that! In the book ... I think in the book is the main thing. Are we still talking about that question? I think being in the book is the main thing because ... well reading is kind of like being partners with the book. So, I think in the book would be the main thing.

I believe this indicates that the children did not necessarily cede to me the right to control turn taking, and would gain the floor even though I had addressed another student.

Children as Co-Researchers
The children who participated in this study were invited to and subsequently positioned themselves as co-researchers who worked together as a group rather than as individuals to document the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. As an individual, each child could have merely conveyed her knowledge as culturally transmitted or as individually perceived. Since the group was the case, however, the children were positioned robustly and decidedly as constructors of knowledge. They necessarily merged their individual understandings to create new meaning through a combination of schooled and authentic dialogue. The characteristics of their dialogue were discussed in the preceding section.

The fact that the children positioned themselves as co-researchers had an appreciable effect on the knowledge they constructed and on their ownership of the study, but of equal importance are the children’s perceptions of themselves as knowledgeable and agentic. The generativity of children as co-researchers was manifested in two distinct ways: in the group construction of knowledge and in the personal benefits realized by the children. I believe the data and results of this study are richer, deeper, and more
trustworthy because the children were co-researchers rather than mere subjects of observation. The generativity is indicated by and reflected in the benefits the children realized through participation in the group. While there was no control group in this qualitative study to serve as a counterpoint, I can confidently report my perceptions, the children’s comments, and the parents’ observations regarding their children’s participation. Exit interviews were conducted with each child and a parent at the end of the study to gauge each child’s perception of how the group created knowledge, her perception of her participation within the group, the possible benefits realized as a result of participation, and the parent’s thoughts regarding participation.

Ann Egan-Robertson (1998) has written that “the placement of students in reading groups positions students as particular kinds of literacy achievers” (p. 457). I contend that although this was not a classroom based reading group, the students who participated in this study were positioned as particular kinds of literacy achievers as well. First, they identified themselves as avid readers by signifying their desire to participate in the study, and when they were selected to participate (even though it was through a lottery) I validated that identity. Potter (2000) discussed the different positionings that establish who can know and what can be known when he said that "certain categories of actors are treated as entitled to know particular sorts of things, and their reports and descriptions may thus be given special credence" (p. 114). Once the children accepted the position of co-researchers, they established themselves as experts capable of knowing about their reading experience as well as experts whose voices could be heard. They were empowered. Spaulding (1995) asserted that empowerment involves power, ability and right. The children’s positions as co-researchers met these criteria giving them the power
to know, the ability to construct knowledge, and the right to do both. In the following excerpts, the children discuss their perception of self in relation to their participation in this study. When I posed the question that initiated this topic, I mentioned that we engaged in thinking that was beyond what they normally did in classrooms, and I asked each child what that said about her. Their responses indicate that one benefit of their positioning was a positive sense of self and self-worth. The following segments are representative of the children’s answers.

Paige: It was just fun to sit back and relax and read that book in the library ... and ... um ... it was nice to hear everybody else’s ideas and how many different ideas we came up with and how smart everybody is. And I thought maybe they should all be in an A&T (able and talented) class.

Linda: The kind of thinking you did, did make you feel smart?

Paige: Yeah. Yeah, because it made me feel special and I still think I’m special. I used to think that I wasn’t a very good reader at all, and I was so slow and everything. It made me feel smart. I will admit I am more of a math and science person than a reader and ... but this group made me feel like a math and science reader!

*****

Linda: What kind of person are you, then? If you’re the kind of person who can be asked to do this, and you do, what does that say about you?

Eric: Well ... I can accomplish things without the teachers really explaining the whole meaning of what we’re supposed to do. We can ... well ... to be in the group we had to like reading and be fairly good. We weren’t just lost in all the ... um ... in all the other kid’s ideas. We were all on basically the same level.

****

Greg: Like I sort of felt special ... we all did ... because there were certain times when we learned new things and like ... huh! ... ... that was sort of it. We learned a lot of new things and sometimes we were just like ... “I didn’t know I did this while I was reading!” Um ... it was also fun because we got to make new definitions and understandable new words. You only knew them if you were in the group. If you weren’t in the group, you’d be
like ... what are they talking about? Being in the group made me feel good ... You have like a whole different ... like reading vocabulary in your mind

The children often expressed their feelings of self-worth in conjunction with their increased knowledge, and Greg’s comment merges with and moves into another benefit of participation. Through participation in this study, the children learned about themselves as readers and developed vocabulary that helped them articulate their experience of engaged reading. Guba & Lincoln (1989) established ontological authenticity as a criterion of trustworthiness in qualitative research. This means that the participants possess more knowledge at the end of the study than at the beginning, and that they are able to use this knowledge constructively. Similarly, Jeffrey Wilhelm (1997) asserted that readers must become aware of and alert to their behaviors to be in control of them, and this is often accomplished through the acquisition of metacognitive vocabulary. Through participation in the study, the children did indeed become more aware of their reading behaviors and also developed a vocabulary through which to express them. This acquisition is reflected in the following excerpts.

Linda: Do you feel like you learned anything about yourself as a reader?

Greg: Yea, because when I was reading, I really didn’t think of all this stuff and I learned ... more things that I do in reading. I just thought I was reading and I wasn’t visualizing, having certain reactions, and things.

April: When I read I normally didn’t think about what I was doing when I read. I normally didn’t think about going into the book, and imagining things, shadowing, and following the character or being a camera.

Linda: So, what does that do ... now that you’re more aware of that ... does it change your reading in any way, or your experience of reading?

April: I think that when I imagine things like in the setting there’s more detail in it and I can picture more things. Like in the book I’m reading now, Midnight
for Charlie Bone, there’s a lot of things I can picture. He has this little apartment and I can picture the whole apartment ... the inside of it.

*****

Linda: Do you feel like ... um ... is there anything about your reading now that you think about differently or do differently as a result of being in the group?

Corey: Probably. Because if you’re at the end of a chapter and it was a really exciting one you could think in your head, “Wow, I had a really great visual image!”

Linda: So, you’ve got some language to use now.

Corey: Yeah. And you have the definitions and things like that.

Oldfather and Dahl’s (1995) concept of epistemological empowerment was evident in the children’s participation and was another benefit of their positioning as co-researchers. Those who are epistemologically empowered view knowledge as a construction rather than as transmitted from elsewhere and are driven to make sense of their experience. As part of this process they respect the perspectives of others in the group and come to understand multiple viewpoints. They also make critical judgements as they consider these multiple viewpoints in an effort to develop joint understanding. The children in the Readers as Researchers Club exhibited the components of epistemological empowerment in several ways. During the exit interviews, the children repeatedly used the phrase “when we got it right.” I was concerned that perhaps I had unintentionally conveyed that I expected a particular answer, so I asked them what they meant. The following excerpts indicate that the children who participated in this study viewed knowledge as a construction within the group and that “getting it right” indicated consent or consensus within the group. Interpretive authority rested with them.
Knowledge was not to be ascertained from elsewhere but was to be constructed by the group. Knowing that one is capable of creating valid and valuable knowledge, verbalizing one’s thoughts, and negotiating meaning are life-long skills that the children acquired and practiced during the study and may be seen as benefits.

Linda: You keep saying “when we had it right” What do you mean by that?

Greg: Like when we finally, actually made up our minds and we thought the same thing, then we had it right.

Linda: So, it was what you guys created?

Greg: And what we thought was right.

Linda: Good, good. Not that there was a right answer that you had to come up with. Did you ever feel like there was a certain answer I wanted and you had to find it?

Greg: Not really, ’cause the group wasn’t really about that. It was more like making your own answer it wasn’t a test type thing. At least I hope it wasn’t.

*****

Corey: I think if we all agreed on it and we had reasons to prove. Like for watching and seeing we all had our reasons and we even checked in the dictionary to make sure. Um ... and for other things, we could spend like a couple of classes just writing down what you think or saying why you think that and ... and we ... like it didn’t matter how long it took we would all come to an agreement eventually. Then we’d move on to the next subject.

Linda: There were some subjects, too, that we kept coming back to ... like the watching / seeing thing. Remember, we kept coming back to that again and again and again? What was that like ... um ... to have something that you’d kind of think you had it and then we’d have to come back and think about it again?

Corey: Um ... I think it doesn’t really matter because your opinion can change over time. You could see if anyone else has the same opinion and if they have the same opinion you would discuss it with them and you would come up with like a mega-answer.

*****
Leah: We always ended up getting to an agreement when we debated. Well, not really always, but most of the time we ended up agreeing.

Linda: How do you think that happened? When we started debating, people had different ideas and yet we seemed to eventually come to some kind of agreement. How did that happen?

Leah: Well, like after you talk it out, it helps you understand. So, if you were wrong or if you were right, you talk it out and figure if you’re wrong or right and go to an agreement.

Linda: Do you think people … were there things people said that were wrong?

Leah: Well, it wasn’t necessarily wrong it was just what they were thinking and maybe someone else was thinking something totally different. No one was really wrong or right, they just had their own opinion. What ended up being right was what people finally agreed on.

*****

Eric: I thought we were more searching for a whole bunch of different answers that added up to the equivalent of the right answer.

Linda: Ok. And who determined if an answer was right?

Eric: All of us. We sort of pitched in and decided all together.

As the above excerpts indicate, the children respected differing opinions. They did not view difference as right or wrong, but rather as an opportunity to merge ideas. During their participation in this study, the children listened to multiple viewpoints and respected them as valid and as individual constructions of knowledge. The children also respected the right to disagree and saw it as an avenue to increased understanding rather than as a personal affront. This provided them with the opportunity to make critical judgements and create joint understanding. These abilities are also important in the long-term and are benefits the children realized through their participation as co-researchers in this study. In the following excerpts, the children express their belief that disagreement and respect for differing viewpoints are necessary to knowledge construction.
Meg: A lot of times when everybody said something, a lot of people would agree. Then sometimes half of the group would think something and half of the group would think something else, and we’d debate on it and figure something out.

Linda: So, did you feel like it was ok if you didn’t agree with other people?

Meg: Yeah. We just had different thoughts.

*****

Linda: So, what was it like for you when we were debating all that stuff?

Greg: It was actually fun because you really felt like you were a debater and you could do what you wanted and it wasn’t like in class where you would get in big trouble if you said, “No, that’s not right.”

Linda: So, let’s say you were in one of these big debates … how do you feel about the way people did or didn’t hear what you said?

Greg: It was ok with me because later I would actually say it and they would go, “Ohhhh,” and it would actually be right maybe once or twice, but not always.

Linda: How did we finally come to a point, or did we come to a point, where people could agree?

Greg: When we … um … when we eventually all agreed and we satisfied each other with sort of the right answers and … in some cases we just stopped eventually we just stopped

*****

April: Sometimes we’d change our minds because someone would say something and that made sense so we changed our minds. And kind of the whole group decided together.

Linda: How did you feel when part of the group felt one thing and part of the group felt something else?

April: Well, When … um … when I wasn’t very sure and someone from one side and someone from the other side said something and both of them made sense I kind of be stuck … like … I think I agree with both of them.

Linda: And was it ok for them to have different opinions about something?

April: Yeah. I didn’t think we argued a lot … and like … like there weren’t like
two sides and one side didn’t like the other and the other side didn’t like
the other. So, I think ... so, we disagreed on things ... but we didn’t argue.

*****

Linda: I noticed when you guys talked, a lot of times somebody would say
something and somebody else would build on that ...

Corey: Or disagree.

Linda: Or disagree. How did we handle that?

Corey: Um ... I think that we’d all say our opinions about what it is and what
we think and kinda in ... hear a reason ... and we could ... if someone ... if
you were disagreeing with somebody and they had a really good reason
then you could agree with them and say, “Oh, I never thought about that.”

Linda: Yeah, I do think we did that. Was it ok for us to disagree?

Carelton: Yes. ‘Cause you had to disagree to get the right answer.

The children also exhibited intrinsic motivation (Guthrie, 1999; Oldfather, et al.,
1999), which I believe was a result and benefit of their positioning as co-researchers. I
began this study with ten children and ended with eight. We were meeting two days a
week during the lunch/recess hour, and that necessitated that the children give up lunch
with their classmates as well as recess on those days. This was a significant sacrifice for
these children. Two children chose to leave the study, and the reason they gave was that
they wanted to participate in recess activities with their friends. The children who
remained in the study were very responsible regarding attendance at sessions. They only
missed sessions if they were absent from school, or on extremely rare occasions when
they “forgot” about our meeting. Conscious decisions not to or “forgetting” to come to
the Readers as Researchers club were uncommon. Eric expressed his feeling of
responsibility toward the group and the fact that what we were doing mattered by
comparing it with his participation in chess club. His thoughts convey his belief that what
he was doing as a participant in this study was of value. This feeling of agency contributed to the children’s intrinsic motivation and, thereby, to their positive sense of self.

_Eric:_ It felt nice being in the group 'cause it was another type of group thing other than the chess club. The chess club was more like just this group for people who really didn’t have much to do.

_Linda:_ How was our group different from that?

_Eric:_ It was different because it was ... um ... it wasn’t just ... like a ... just a ... do what you want group. The chess club was pretty much a free thing to do, and you didn’t have to go. But ... um ... the group we had to tell you if we weren’t gonna be there that day because we needed to do something else or if we just needed a break.

_Linda:_ Why do you think it was so important for you to be there?

_Eric:_ Because we wouldn’t be ... um ... questioning about what was going on and taking up a little bit of time from everybody doing all the stuff we were supposed to accomplish that day. And ... I thought it was more organized that the chess club.

The children also developed a sense of relatedness involving security within the group and connectedness with other members. This is another component of intrinsic motivation and was an outcome for which I hoped. I knew that I was benefiting greatly by their participation, but I hoped that they would benefit as well. As discussed previously, their positive self-concept and increased knowledge were benefits, and another benefit was the social interaction and the friendships created through participation in the study (Alvermann, 2000). As the following excerpts indicate, these friendships were on a personal level, united the children within the group as members, and supported the process of knowledge construction.

_Linda:_ What about the people in the group? Can you talk to me a little bit about how you got to know them?
Paige: I got to know them by their ideas. I got to know Chris ... he had lots of ideas ... he kept going and going and going (laughter). We got to know everyone by their ideas and by what they talked about at lunch.

*****

Greg: We learned a lot about each other and we sort of grew together ... like as a group ... not just like ... not like knowing each other.

*****

Chris: And I pretty much liked the reading group also because most of us didn’t know each other. It was like one or two people were friends and then the other people didn’t know much people. But by the end when summer came and we came in ... by the end we all became good friends.

*****

Linda: Did you know everybody pretty well when we started?

Corey: Not really. But you like build to know them. You can kind of judge ... um ... you can kind of judge their personality on what books they read.

*****

Eric: Most of us became friends, and ... um ... that helped with the decision making.

Linda: Were you friends when we started the group, or did you become friends because you were in it together?

Eric: We became friends because of being in the group.

Linda: Tell me more about how that helped us come to decisions.

Eric: Well, um ... um ... we understood what everybody was trying to say more instead of just having to explain pretty much everything. They could understand and then if you didn’t understand they could explain it to you.

The children also developed autonomous voices and a sense of agency, which are further indications of intrinsic motivation. Their voice and agency are evident in the previous excerpts, however, it bears a brief and specific mention here. The children felt that their voices were heard within the group and that an indication of this was that their ideas were often built upon. April expresses this sentiment in the following excerpt.
Linda: Um ... when we were having some of our discussions ... we tried not to raise hands and stuff, we tried to talk like a group of adults would talk, or any group of people. Um ... did you feel like people listened to you when you had something to say?

April: Yeah, I did because sometimes after I said something someone would comment on it or say something about it.

Linda: So, not only did they hear what you said, but you thought that they were really thinking about it and it was important.

April: Yeah.

Finally, the parents voiced insights regarding their children’s participation in the study, and without exception viewed it as a positive and worthwhile experience. Their observations reflect those reported by the parents whose children participated in Oldfather’s, et al. (1993) study: the benefits of gaining new insights, enhanced self-esteem, and the opportunity to make a difference. Once again, I believe that the children’s positioning as co-researchers catalyzed this and increased the benefits the children realized. The parents were very astute in their observations regarding their child’s participation, supporting and also extending the benefits I had identified. In their comments they mentioned that the group was a new experience and presented a challenge to which their children were eager to respond. They felt that this was a unique opportunity for their children to engage in authentic dialogue and to develop communication skills including the ability to listen to and respect differing views that would be important throughout life. The parents also felt that their children had developed increased awareness of themselves as readers. Finally, they felt that the
children developed a sense of pride and ownership of the endeavor that was heightened by the sense of camaraderie that developed between the members. The following excerpts express some of these observations.

LY: He enjoyed being part of the group. He was very excited to come in and read, be with that particular group, be with you … this was something new and different. It was uncharted territory. So, from that perspective, Greg was very excited.

K: To me, it wasn’t so much a reading group. It was more a chance for him to sit down with other kids and talk in a non-teacher, non-classroom environment. I think that’s what he liked the most. He was very possessive of the group as the ‘traitors’ who dared leave … I mean, you know, he took great ownership of the group. But for him it wasn’t a reading group. It was the kids and the ideas and the neat things they did. It was good for him. There were peers and they worked together and he had to allow that some people perhaps sounded right even though he didn’t think they were right and he had to allow that. Which was good for him. He misses it. He’d do it again in a heartbeat if you did it.

L: Paige’s experience with your whole project was amazing. She’s very quick and very bright, but she doesn’t have a lot of confidence in herself in her reading and writing. But what happened was because she was part of this special little thing, she became so much more excited about reading. It was like a challenge … you know she’s very competitive and likes a challenge … and she was part of this special little group. She loved the social aspect as well … the camaraderie, the social … So, she finally became excited about reading. She really … she cared. She all of a sudden cared a whole lot more. And I think she got a lot out of it … I really do. And she was excited about it. She just today or this week at some point, had to take in something special for some project they’re working on (in fifth grade). And she took the bookmark you gave her. That’s what she took for her special thing. This was a very positive experience for her. A very positive experience.

C: Um … I think it was a great experience for him in the fact that it’s setting him up to be an outstanding reader … more of an active reader. He always read, but this makes him think about what he’s doing and he gets much more involved in the process. Um … so I think it’s to his advantage to have had that pause and the opportunity to reflect more on what he’s
doing. I think it will help him more in studying and enjoying books for leisure ... anything else he’s choosing books for. I’m very grateful he was a part of this, and I know he’s grown from it tremendously. And he’s much more ... (addressing Corey) you know, you carried yourself very well here. You spoke your thoughts extremely well. That was very interesting to me. That’s a life-long skill you have to have... getting your points across, swaying other people to your idea or coming up with a new idea. This is very impressive. I had absolutely no idea that happened, and that he recognizes it. That he knew what had to be done ... waiting versus speaking at once if it wasn’t that important ... waiting for the right moment. I’m thrilled. That is really good. You’ll become a persuasive speaker, Corey. Thank you again, we really appreciate it.

Summary

The dialogue in which the children engaged as participants in the Readers as Researchers Club blurred the traditional positioning of classroom discourse and attempted to disrupt the child/adult, subject/researcher hierarchies. Ellsworth (1989) argued that “strategies such as student empowerment and dialogue give the illusion of equality while in fact leaving the authoritarian nature of the teacher/student relationship intact” (p. 306). Although certain aspects of the teacher/student relationship remained intact, the children’s perception was that they were equal partners in this endeavor and that they were epistemologically empowered (Oldfather & Dahl, 1995) as experts capable of creating valued and valuable knowledge. As Oldfather (1995) has commented, the difference lies not so much in reality but in the children’s perception of the reality of their work as co-researchers. Furthermore, Oldfather and McLaughlin (1993) remind us that the prefix "co" means together. The roles of the researcher and co-researchers are not identical, but they construct knowledge together.
The children adopted a stance of inquisitive constructors of knowledge with whom interpretive authority rested, and they exhibited intrinsic motivation (Guthrie, 1999; Oldfather, et al., 1999) because of this stance and position. Their personal knowledge about themselves as readers increased as a result of their participation reflecting ontological authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and led to an enhanced sense of self and self-worth. They gained the floor independently and by hand-raising, but they also let me know by answering for each other than they did not grant me unquestionable rights to control turn-taking. The children did rely on me to select and shift topics when we engaged in analytical talk, yet once the topic was introduced they engaged in student-to-student turns that removed the focus from me. These turns were both cooperative and consecutive. Although we were not able to totally disrupt the child/adult hierarchy, we attempted to do so and made progress toward that goal. With the children as co-researchers, we opened up a space where we could construct knowledge together, build relationships together, and illuminate their experience of engaged, aesthetic reading together.
CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

CREATING WORLDS FROM WORDS ON A PAGE
AND LEVELS OF IMMERSION IN ENVISIONMENT

“When I’ve come home and said stuff ... when Mom’s asked about the group and
stuff and [my sister’s] been listening, I remember her saying once that she never
gets in the book. She’s just seeing the words on the page and processing them
through her mind. She just reads words. It’s just words on a blank piece of
data” (Eric, exit interview).

In the epigraph to this chapter, Eric describes his sister’s experience of reading which is
substantively different from his own. When Eric reads, he creates worlds from words on a
page, yet his sister merely processes words. My desire to understand how children such
as Eric engage with a text to the extent that they create, enter, and sustain the story world
was the impetus for this study. Iser (1989) suggests that the transaction between the
author, the text, and the reader emphasizes the performative aspect of the reading event
and turns it into a “way of worldmaking” (p. 249). I worked with children who are avid
readers to explore the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading
experience in order to discover how they do indeed create worlds from words on a page.

The first section of this chapter is a summary of the children’s negotiated
understanding of the themes and dimensions of their engaged reading experience. After
merging all the data sources, I realized that the children experience three levels of
immersion in envisionment. Through the level of creation, the level of observation (EYE), and the level of participation (I) they create, enter, and sustain the world of the story and experience it as an event. A summary of this synthesis constitutes the second section of this chapter. The next sections review the generativity of children as so-researchers. Subsequent sections of the chapter link the findings of this study to existing theory and research, suggest implications for the classroom, and explore the limitations of the study as well as the opportunities they suggest for further research.

**Summary of Children’s Findings**

The children who participated as co-researchers in this study negotiated understanding of their experience of engaged reading through memory work, group discussions, and a visual protocol during which they created metaphors to represent themselves as readers. The children established the themes and dimensions of their reading experience, and some of these, in turn, were reflected in their metaphor construction. The children and I came to understand theme as an overarching category of experience. Most themes had component dimensions that describe the children’s perspective, their location within the story, or the strategies or maneuvers they employ as readers in order to establish and experience the theme. The following summarizes their construction and understanding of the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience.

The children first take on the role of a builder as they create mental images in order to initiate understanding of the story world. They are usually positioned outside the story at this point, but they are creating understanding in order to enter the world of the story or, as they would say it, “to get in the book.” They may also assume this role in an
attempt to regain their position in the story world if they have been reading and their understanding is compromised. As a builder, the children use clues in the story to create understanding, and they create mental images or pictures to aid in their knowledge construction. Their developing understanding, then, is the gateway that allows them to enter the book.

Consequently, the children established entering the story world, or being “in the book,” as a major theme of their engagement and employed two different manifestations of the theme. First, “in the book” was an umbrella term that symbolizes their experience of being interested, caught up, or immersed in the world of the story (She would lay on her bed and fall deeply in to the book.). In this interpretation of the theme the children talked about the importance of being “in the book” in this global way as the main goal of reading.

The second interpretation of “in the book” represents their entrance into the world of the story in an experientially different way. As such, the dimensions they identified were a general feeling that they had entered the story (It had so much detail he felt part of it. and Eric felt inside the book.), a feeling of being in the setting in a specific way (He felt he was there on the island.), and a feeling of locating themselves next to the character (He was right beside Ragweed when he got killed. and He was with them.). When the children feel next to the character they are a shadow metaphorically. This means that they mirror the actions and the perspective of the character, but they cannot be seen by nor can they speak to the character in the story. They were adamant that being a shadow is indicative of being in the book rather than a dimension of connecting with the characters because they are present in the story but the character is not aware of their presence nor
are they able to interact with the character in any meaningful way. In this position, the
children are able to parallel the actions of the character they are shadowing and can watch
the action from their location next to the character.

There are several perspectives and positions the children can occupy upon
entering the world of the story that were revealed through their metaphor construction
and that involve the children as observers of the story. They feel they watch the story
unfold. One perspective and position in this category involves the children as distant
observers of the action. It is as if they are watching TV, and the action is taking place in
front of them. Another possibility is to assume the role of the setting. This involves the
illusion that the action is taking place “on” the reader and that the reader can view the
action from multiple perspectives. The children specified that in order to become the
setting, they must first have created clear pictures of what is entailed in the setting and
they must have a complete understanding of it. The metaphors of being a TV or the
setting involve the sense that the reader is watching what occurs in the story.

Another theme is that the children connect to the characters. The first dimension
of this theme involves retaining personal identity while gaining the ability to interact with
the characters. The children feel as if they can warn the characters of danger or direct
their actions in some way. They are a part of the story, but they are still themselves rather
than a character. In the second dimension they can connect with a character so absolutely
and completely that they feel they have actually become one of the characters in the
story. When the children reach the point where they actually become a participant in the
world of the story, they feel that they are no longer watching the story as a distant or as a
close observer, but that they have figuratively entered the world of the story as a
participant and are able to see the action. The children represented this metaphorically as being a bird or being a camera. The reader as a bird has an all-encompassing ability to see in the world of the story and is also able to foresee what might befall the characters. The reader as a bird is positioned above the characters and the action. The reader as a camera, on the other hand, is able to document the action as a participant in the setting and can shift locations to get different perspectives. The camera can appropriate different perspectives sequentially while the bird discerns multiple perspectives simultaneously.

Another theme is that the children experience emotions and physical reactions. When they are in the book and are feeling connected to the characters they experience emotions and in the extreme may even have physical reactions related to these emotions. Examples of this would be to feel surprise and actually jump, or to feel sadness and cry. The children experienced significant cognitive conflict (Almasi, 1995) as they attempted to differentiate emotions from physical reactions but decided that emotions are feelings and physical reactions are resultant actions.

Wondering and predicting comprise another theme. There are two implications of wondering. One implication is that wondering is a maneuver in which the children engage as they read. They defined wondering as the desire to know or a general speculation about possible outcomes. As they construct understanding this drive to know may lead to a prediction about the outcome. The children defined prediction as a specific hypothesizing statement about what might occur. Eco (1978) refers to this manifestation of wondering as forecasting. The children use their prior knowledge about life, their knowledge of story grammar, and their developing knowledge of the current story to make predictions about what will happen next. A second, broader implication of
wondering is that it serves as the impetus for continued reading. As the children become involved with the characters and invested in their problems and conflicts, they want to continue reading to find out what happens.

Finally, the children identified the theme of tuning out. Three interrelated dimensions comprise this theme: losing sense of time, losing sense of surroundings, and losing sense of self. The overall theme of tuning out is reflective of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), being lost in a book (Nell, 1988 & 1994), stasis (Bogdan, 1992), or presentness (Iser, 1978). The children “tune out” when they are actively engaged cognitively and emotionally with the text, and their surroundings recede into the background, as the world of the text becomes their foreground. The dimension of losing self does not mean that the children become a character in the story but that they are so immersed in the experience and the event of reading and their energy and attention are focused so completely that their consciousness of self and often that of their physical surroundings disappear. The phenomenon of losing track of time while in the world of the story has been explained as the time-axis for the reader’s presentness in the text (Iser, 1978), temporal flow (Fish, 1980), and the fictional time of the secondary world created through the psychic process (Benton, 1983). It is created as a result of the brain’s processing of mental images, which results in the illusion that fictional time operates independently from and within a different frame than real time.
Summary of Levels of Immersion in Envisionment

The Reading Event as Envisionment

The act of engaging and transacting with a text has been called an evocation (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995) and an envisionment (Langer, 1995). The concepts share important characteristics, but they are also distinct. Both Louise Rosenblatt and Judith Langer stress that the experience of engaged reading constitutes an event in time occurring in the space where the reader and the text come together as the reader brings past life and text experiences along with her present identity and current purpose to bear on the event. Each reading experience is unique in a particular time and place in the life of the reader, and all of the component parts of the event: the reader, the text, the context, and the purpose reciprocally shape and are shaped by the others. Langer stresses, however, that envisionments are subject to modification and change as the reader fills in gaps in her understanding and changes perspective as the event proceeds. Furthermore, she distinguishes between local and final envisionments stressing the importance of dialogue and discussion in the creation of meaning during the reading event as well as in the continued refinement, modification, and enhancement of the envisionment after the event.

As I learned about the children’s experience of engaged reading and heard them document the importance of visualization in their creation of the story world, I have increasingly come to think of their experience and creation as envisionment. The children distinguished three dimensions of visualizing: picturing, watching, and seeing. The children’s perspective and position in the world of the story influence how they visualize, and their visualization seems to be a lynchpin in their understanding and creation of the
story world. While the concept of an evocation has changed the way we think about engagement and is a fundamental concept of reader response theory, I have come to believe that it is a starting point rather than the destination in our understanding of aesthetic engagement. I believe that to think of the experience merely as an evocation limits the scope of the event. Rosenblatt defined an evocation as “the product of creative activity carried on by the reader under the guidance of the text” (1938/1995, p. 266). Webster’s New World Dictionary and Thesaurus (1999) defines evocation as an evoking or a calling forth, which entails drawing out or eliciting a particular mental image or response. While the children’s experience was indeed a creative activity and they did elicit mental images, the experience of reading is far richer and far more complex than is implied by a product or an elicited response: even if these embody the reader’s lived through experience. The experience of engaged reading is an active, ongoing, ever-shifting process of conceptualizing and reconceptualizing, of entering and reentering, and of visualizing and revisualizing the world of the story.

I use the term envisionment because the totality of the concept approximates the children’s experience, which was highly visual, and because it aligns with existing theories of reading engagement that also stress the important role of visualization (Benton, 1983; Enciso-Edmiston, 1990; Enciso, 1992; Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995; Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003; Iser, 1978, 1989; Wilhelm, 1997). Webster’s New World Dictionary & Thesaurus (1999) defines “envision” as to imagine or to picture in the mind. This in and of itself constitutes a simplistic description of the children’s engagement, yet I find the synonyms given for “envision” particularly compelling in light of this research. Words synonymous with envision include anticipate, construct,
contemplate, foresee, imagine, and visualize. These reflect and crystallize the themes and
dimensions the children identified as their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. Langer
(1995) defines envisionments as “text-worlds in the mind” (p. 9) and states that while
they are visual they also encompass the reader’s thoughts, feelings, and sensory
experiences. The children do indeed create text-worlds, and they take up perspectives and
positions that allow them to experience those worlds thoughtfully, emotionally, and with
sensory detail.

According to Langer (1990a, 1990b, 1995), children consider and contemplate a
horizon of possibilities when they read in a literary or aesthetic manner. This involves
taking various perspectives, and the understanding negotiated and constructed by the
children in this study highlights the importance of and the multiplicity of perspectives
they can assume as they approach, enter into, and move through the world of the story.
In her discussion of a horizon of possibilities, Langer emphasizes that the term “horizon”
implies a constantly shifting and elusive point of reference. The use of the word
“possibility” indicates that openness and inquiry characterize literary reading. The
children in this study identified shifting and multiple perspectives and positions they
could occupy in the world of the story. The parallels between their reported experience
and Langer’s definition of a horizon of possibilities are cogent.

Iser’s (1978, 1989) work is also pertinent in light of the children’s reported
experience and my subsequent conceptualization of it as an envisionment. Iser postulates
that the reader necessarily views the world of the story from a wandering viewpoint. This
substantiates the children’s identification of the multiple perspectives and positions they
can assume in the world of the story. Iser believes that as the reader progresses through
the story, changing perspectives are necessitated by the shifting and merging of past understandings, present knowledge, and future possibilities which induce wondering and predicting as well as reflection. During the reader’s journey through the story, the current segment shapes and is shaped by preceding and succeeding segments of the text. When the reader’s expectations are confirmed, the horizon of possibilities narrows, but when the reader’s expectations are refuted the horizon must be modified and a new horizon must be envisioned. Thus, the images created by the reader are fluid. Comprehension or understanding normally establishes a subject/object relationship, but this relationship is subverted when, during the reading experience, the reader is situated inside the text thereby disrupting and complicating the subject/object binary. Therefore, as the children in this study indicated, the reader’s perspective must shift and change as reading proceeds in order to create an envisionment and comprehend the text.

Levels of Immersion in Envisionment

My reasons for choosing the term envisionment were discussed above, and similar consideration and deliberation led me to conceptualize the children’s levels of engagement or experience as immersion. I have organized the children’s experience into three levels that indicate the depth to which they have entered the story. The data indicate that they become figuratively immersed in the world of the story. To be immersed is to be deeply absorbed or engrossed or to plunge into so as to be covered completely (Webster’s New World Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1999). Synonyms for immerse include absorb, engage, involve and submerge. The children become absorbed in the world of the story,
engaged in their envisionment, involved in the problems and situations of the characters, and submerged in the experience and event of reading. At times, they plunged into the world of the story to such an extent that their reality was covered completely.

Each level of immersion in envisionment indicates the unique perspectives and positions from which the children view and experience the story world and describes the extent to which the children are immersed in that world. I do not mean to imply, however, that there is a hierarchical value assigning one level more importance than another. The levels do indicate depth of immersion, but do not indicate preference or significance as more or less desirable. In fact, I have come to understand that the levels of immersion are both recurrent and concurrent: each one building upon and depending upon the others. See Figure 5.1 for a visual representation of the movement between levels.

Figure 5.1: Movement between Levels of Immersion
At the level of creation the children are positioned outside the story and use various strategies and maneuvers to build sufficient understanding to enter or reenter the world of the story. They are forming mental images or picturing in an attempt to create or recreate understanding. In the level of observation, the children have entered the world of the story but have not become part of the cast of characters. They may feel that they are in the setting in a general way, that they are shadowing one of the characters, or that they have indeed become the setting. Their perspective is that of an observer because they feel that they are a step removed from and are passively watching the action. I have conceptualized this level as “EYE” because of the importance of observational watching.

The third level of immersion is that of participation. At this level of involvement the children feel that they are actually participating in the story world. At times this involves interacting with the characters and at other times it involves such close alignment between the character and the reader that their identities merge. I conceptualized this level as “I” because of the reader’s personal participation and involvement with its emphasis on actually and actively seeing what is happening in the story. Table 5.2 summarizes the levels of immersion and the associated perspectives, positions, and strategies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present in the setting</td>
<td>Interacting with the characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming the setting</td>
<td>Becoming the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Next to the character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies and Maneuvers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Analyze author’s craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make predictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarify vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create mental images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Levels of Immersion in Envisionment

Summary of Characteristics of Dialogue in the Readers as Researchers Club

Analysis of three of the discussions of the Readers as Researchers Club revealed that we participated in a blend of “school talk” and spontaneous dialogue. The children and I found it difficult to completely disrupt the student/teacher roles that have been ingrained
through our participation in the culture of school. We did, however, blur the lines, which enabled the children to take an active role in our discussions and to construct knowledge as they interacted with each other through dialogue.

I posed authentic and metaprocess questions (Cazden, 2001) that served as stance markers (Bruner, 1986) inviting the children to adopt an inquisitive stance. My questioning also placed interpretive authority with the children who had equal speaking rights with each other and with me. They participated in conjectural thinking (Almasi & McKeown, 1996), approximations (Peterson & Eeds, 1990), and exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001) as they negotiated understanding of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. During our discussions they negotiated turn-taking through a blend of hand raising and spontaneously gaining the floor. My role in our discussions was to ask questions, maintain direction, and keep the discussion on track. I invited children to speak if I thought they were uncomfortable gaining the floor without assistance. I also controlled topic selection and shifts when we were engaged in meaningful, analytic talk (Carico, 2001). The children, however, controlled topic selections and shifts during social talk.

We were able to shift the focus of address from the teacher/researcher to the discussants. The children did not filter comments through me, make me the visual focus, or cede the floor back to me after each comment. In fact, the children engaged in significant student-to-student turns. Through cooperative turns (Marshall, et al., 1995) the children took an initial idea and jointly developed it until they reached a mutual
consensus. Through consecutive turns the children reported their personal ideas in response to an initial question. At times these consecutive turns evolved into cooperative turns as ideas were clarified and understandings reached.

Children as Co-Researchers

The generativity of children as co-researchers was manifested in two distinct ways. The first related to the group construction of knowledge. In this sense, methodology had a profound effect on the data collected and the knowledge created. The children worked together to construct understanding about their engaged, aesthetic reading experience which was richer and deeper than would have been possible had they responded as individuals or had I merely observed them. The second manifestation deals with the benefits the children realized as a result of their roles as co-researchers. They were positioned and subsequently positioned themselves as a particular kind of literacy achiever (Egan-Robertson, 1998), and their feelings of self-worth were tied to their increased knowledge. Through this positioning they came to see themselves as experts capable of knowing.

The children were empowered in several ways. They claimed the power, the ability, and the right to construct knowledge about their personal reading experience. They were epistemologically empowered (Oldfather & Dahl, 1995) through this positioning as well. This resulted in intrinsic motivation (Guthrie, 1999; Oldfather, et al., 1999) involving relatedness, competence, and agency. The children developed skills through participation in the Readers as Researchers Club that include the ability to create knowledge, to verbalize thoughts, to negotiate meaning, to consider multiple viewpoints,
to respect the right to disagree, and to make critical judgments. Furthermore, the children formed friendships that did not exist at the beginning of the study. These friendships were evident in three ways. The children formed personal relationships in a one-to-one manner. They also became united as members of the group and as such shared an identity. They also used these friendships and this identity to support their knowledge construction.

Relationship of Findings to Existing Theory and Research

This study looked at situated truth: the themes and dimensions of the reading experience of the children who participated in this study. This “truth” was not imposed from or discovered “elsewhere” (Boomer, 1987) but was constructed by the children as they worked together to negotiate their shifting and fluid understanding. The “truthfulness” of this data cannot be understood as something extracted from or transparently mirrored in a preexisting reality but resides rather in the intersection of the children’s creation and negotiation and my understanding and interpretation of their knowledge.

Although these findings are specific to the participants in this study, they may also be representative of other children’s engaged reading experience in other contexts (Cherland, 1994; Newkirk, 2002). I believe that the essence of the children’s experience is representative of the experience of other readers and that those who read this research will see their own engagement or that of children with whom they have worked “in the same general ‘truth space’” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 22) as that of the children in this study. My synthesis of the children’s findings reveals that they experience three levels of immersion in envisionment: the level of creation, the level of observation, and
the level of participation. These three levels reveal the essence of their engaged reading experience, and it is here that others may recognize the experience of engaged, aesthetic reading.

The children’s construction of the themes and dimensions of their engaged reading and my subsequent synthesis of their findings support and extend the findings reported in other research. While the findings of this study are unique to this particular group of children in this particular setting, the alignment with other research contributes to the trustworthiness of the results and serves to reciprocally validate existing assertions about children’s experience of engaged reading as well as the current findings. I have been particularly influenced by the work undertaken by Judith Langer (1990a, 1990b, 1995), Lawrence Sipe (2000, 2002), Patricia Enciso (1990, 1992), and Jeffrey Wilhelm (1997) regarding children and their engaged reading experience. While the specific focus of each researcher’s work is different, there are significant threads in their findings that can be woven together to create a tapestry of the essence of children’s engaged, aesthetic reading experience.

Judith Langer (1990a, 1990b, 1995) identified four stances as a result of her work with eleventh grade students as they engaged in think alouds. The first stance she identified was “being out and stepping in,” and this stance shares characteristics with the level of creation. Both Langer and I stress that children pose questions and make connections in order to create initial meaning, however, the children in my study identified other strategies as well. I believe that this is because “being out and stepping in” primarily involves the selection of an orientation while the level of creation involves the creation of understanding in order to create and enter the story world. In addition to
questioning and making connections the children in my study analyze the author’s craft, make predictions, clarify vocabulary, and create mental images. Another point of agreement is that children normally “step in” or are at the level of creation at the beginning of reading, but it also occurs when the reader encounters unfamiliar vocabulary or confusion. I disagree with Langer, however, that the knowledge children create as they attempt to enter the story is superficial. She believes that when children adopt the stance of “being in and moving through” they continue to develop understanding “beyond the superficiality of being out and stepping in (1990a, p. 242). I agree that children continue to develop understanding at all levels of envisionment but I believe that it is profound rather than superficial insofar as it is in service to their creation of the story world. Langer’s model stops short of accounting for the experience of being in the world of the story. In the stance “being in and moving through” she hints at it when she states that the reader may be caught up in the story and is immersed in developing understanding. The findings of my study extend her work by identifying how children enter and move through the story through the levels of immersion in envisionment.

Lawrence Sipe (2000) explored the construction of literary understanding during read-alouds with second grade children. He identified three impulses: the hermeneutic, the personal, and the aesthetic. These impulses are reflected in the levels of immersion in envisionment. The hermeneutic impulse is the drive to understand the story and is enacted when children deal with the text as an object for analysis and when they make intertextual connections to enhance their construction of meaning. The personalizing impulse is realized through the personal connections children make between texts and life. The hermeneutic and personal impulses encompass some of the strategies the
children use in the level of creation as they construct understanding in order to create and enter the world of the story. The aesthetic impulse is expressed in Sipe’s transparent aspect of literary understanding and involves the child’s desire to merge with the text and live through the experience of the story (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995, 1978/1994, 1994) or enter the secondary world (Benton, 1979, 1983, 1992). The levels of immersion in envisionment expand on the transparent aspect by distinguishing two different ways children enter into and merge with the story: the level of observation (EYE) and the level of participation (I).

Sipe (2002) also created a typology of expressive engagement, identifying five categories of literary responses: dramatizing, talking back, critiquing/controlling, inserting, and taking over. Two of these categories were particularly evident in this study. The children talked about wanting to warn the characters, or in essence control the direction of the story, as they interact with the characters in the level of participation. This involves the ability to figuratively talk to the characters and is reflected in Sipe’s category of talking back wherein children have entered the story and talk back to the story or address characters directly. Sipe also found that children insert themselves in the story, and this corresponds with the level of participation as the children assume the role of a character.

Patricia Enciso (1990, 1992) has documented the engaged reading experience of readers, and compelling parallels exist between the experience of the children with whom she worked and the children in my study. Although Enciso and I organized our findings in very different ways, there is a level of consistency in the results of the two studies. Enciso identified three “worlds” that describe a reader’s orientation: the reader’s world,
narrative, and the reader’s story world. The reader’s world and narrative are consistent with the level of creation. In these orientations and in this level the reader makes connections, creates understanding, and considers the impact of the author’s craft on her envisionment. The reader’s story world is consistent with the level of observation and the level of participation. Enciso created twenty participation codes for the reader’s story world. While I strove to capture the essence of the children’s engaged reading experience, Enciso documented it in detail. For example, her participation codes reflect the distance the reader perceives between herself and the characters, the various ways in which the reader adopts perspectives, the ways in which she associates with the characters, the reader’s activities relative to the characters, and the reader’s presentness in the story world. These participation codes are particularly salient in light of my study and are consistent with and complementary to my findings.

Adapting the techniques developed by Enciso (1990), Jeffrey Wilhelm (1997) studied the reading engagement of eighth graders. The students in his study emphasized the highly visual nature of engaged reading as did the students in my study. Wilhelm’s analysis revealed ten different dimensions of response that fell into three distinct categories: the evocative, the connective, and the reflective. These three dimensions share important characteristics with the levels of immersion in envisionment. In the connective dimension the reader builds up clues to create meaning and makes connections to and from the text. In the reflective dimension the reader considers author’s craft and literary conventions. These two dimensions involve the strategies and maneuvers indicative of the level of creation. The third dimension Wilhelm identified is the evocative. In this dimension children enter the story world, relate to characters, create mental images and
envision the story world. The level of observation and level of participation expand on this to explain the perspectives and the positions children occupy while in the world of the story.

Although the studies discussed above have distinct particularities, there are compelling points of commonality. As children approach a text they engage in activities that foster comprehension and understanding as a first step in envisionment. This first step has been discussed as “stepping in” (Langer, 1990a, 1990b, 1995), the hermeneutic and personalizing impulses (Sipe, 2000), the reader’s world and narrative (Enciso, 1990), the connective and reflective dimensions (Wilhelm, 1997), or the level of creation in envisionment. Once children have established understanding they are able to enter the world of the story. This is hinted at in Langer’s “being in and moving through.” It is Sipe’s transparent aspect of understanding, Enciso’s reader’s story world, Wilhelm’s evocative dimension, and the levels of observation and participation in envisionment. The findings of this study complement and extend these other studies of children’s engaged, aesthetic reading experience and contribute to our understanding of this elusive and complex event.

Implications for the Classroom

Teachers are conditioned to teach in particular ways based on their personal experience as an elementary and secondary student, their preservice teacher training, the sociocultural climate in which they teach, and their ever-evolving and developing pedagogy: all of which shape and result in beliefs about the purpose of education in general and literacy or reading in particular. There are two positions regarding the
purpose of reading which stand as extremes on a continuum. These “extremes” correlate with the efferent and aesthetic stances conceptualized by Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1995, 1978/1994, 1994). One view is that the goal of reading is to comprehend, and the other view is that the goal of reading is to experience. These two views result in teaching approaches that are efferent or aesthetic, and the type of instruction that is delivered conveys messages to children regarding sanctioned ways to and reasons for reading (Many & Wiseman, 1992). Janet Hickman (1983) found that “the role of the teacher proved to be a powerful determiner in children’s expressions of response to literature” (p. 13). Efferent teaching fosters the attitude that the purpose of reading is comprehension, and the reader is to extract information and analyze texts. Aesthetic teaching, on the other hand, encourages the lived-through experience of the text and validates the individual’s response as constructed meaning. Ruddell (1995) studied the characteristics of influential and noninfluential teachers and found that the teachers whom students view as noninfluential focus primarily on extrinsic motivation and efferent reading. Conversely, the teachers whom students identify as influential foster intrinsic motivation to read and encourage students to adopt an aesthetic stance. Zarillo and Cox (1992) assert the primacy of aesthetic teaching based on three premises: 1) when children are given freedom of choice, they tend to read aesthetically, 2) it supports the constructivist view of learning, and 3) it establishes as germane the relationship between children and books as works of art.

Zarillo and Cox (1992) observed 27 teachers in diverse settings in K-6 classrooms and found that “efferent teaching was more fully realized than aesthetic teaching”
(p. 245), with aesthetic concerns regarding literature considered to be secondary if not incidental. They identified the types of activities and instructional decisions that encourage children to adopt an efferent stance toward reading. These include teacher moves that focus on the structure of language (word recognition, grammar and usage, and word form), focus selective attention on literary devices, emphasize understanding and using features of text, assess the student’s level of comprehension, encourage the application of information from literature to other subjects, promote analysis of the text, and use the text as a model for student-generated writing. When teachers adopt an aesthetic approach to teaching they encourage student choice regarding book selection, reading context, and response form. They also focus selective attention on the reader’s favorite parts of the text, encourage imaging and picturing, sanction children’s connections to and feelings based on the text, and foster hypothesizing and extending.

Zarillo and Cox identify two influences that they believe contribute to the emphasis on efferent teaching and the paucity of the aesthetic. The first influence is the tradition of instruction in secondary schools that has relied on the transmission model and epistemology, and the second is the reliance on basal readers at the elementary level with methodology aimed at teacher-proofing literacy pedagogy. I would add that since Zarillo and Cox’s research was conducted a third influence has been added: the emphasis on high-stakes testing and educational results that can be documented by quantitative data.

Stance does matter if our goal is to encourage children to become lifelong readers. In a study of middle school readers, Beers (1998) identified five different reading identities (avid, dormant, uncommitted, unmotivated, and unskilled) that highlight the range of reasons children chose to and chose not to read. Avid readers enjoy reading and
make time to read, consider entertainment to be the purpose of reading, and experience aesthetic transactions with books. Although dormant readers do not make time to read, they do consider entertainment to be the purpose of reading and read aesthetically. The final three categories, uncommitted readers, unmotivated readers, and unskilled readers do not make time to read nor do they view themselves as readers. They define reading primarily as word recognition and view comprehension as the goal of reading as they engage in efferent reading regardless of genre. Beers’ work indicates the importance of promoting an aesthetic transaction and the lived-through experience of the text if we want children to identify themselves as readers.

The findings of my study highlight the depth and the richness of children’s engaged, aesthetic reading experience and point to the importance of promoting and sanctioning aesthetic reading in classrooms. Validation of aesthetic reading in classrooms will translate into validation of reading as a life-long habit wherein readers first adopt an aesthetic stance toward any genre of book. In taking a position that promotes aesthetic teaching and reading, I do not mean to imply that we should ignore comprehension, and the books mentioned below make valuable contributions to our knowledge about teaching reading. I do believe, however, that we must begin with aesthetic experience, which will in turn enhance and enrich the student’s perception of efferent concerns regarding texts. My synthesis of the findings of this study indicate that there are three levels of immersion in envisionment, and children actively construct meaning in all three levels, but it is in service to their aesthetic experience rather than standing as the goal of their reading. As I considered the classroom implications of this research and the continuum of efferent and aesthetic teaching, I was drawn to my professional bookshelf to see what was promoted
as good literacy teaching in both college texts and professional books. I found an
overwhelming emphasis on efferent teaching and promoting reading as comprehension.
While most books acknowledge the existence of an aesthetic stance, browsing the tables
of contents and the indices makes it clear that we, as practicing teachers, are to view,
sanction, and enact reading as comprehension.

Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6: Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and
Content Literacy (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) is a contemporary staple on the desks or
professional shelves of many teachers. In this 648-page book, the index lists four pages
on which aesthetic reading is discussed yet there are four chapters dedicated to
comprehension instruction. While Fountas and Pinnell concede that one reason for
literature study is to contribute to students’ appreciation of “the aesthetic qualities of
literature” (p. 253) they also state that “reading is a complex, multifaceted process that
begins and ends with meaning” and that “reading for meaning – comprehending – is the
goal of every reading episode as well as of our teaching” (p. 302). Routman’s
Conversations: Strategies for Teaching, Learning, and Evaluating (2000) is a 613-page
book in which two pages are listed that discuss aesthetic reading and an additional two
pages discuss the transactional view of reading. Similarly, while Rasinski and Padak
(2000) discuss engagement and state that “students need to be reading and writing to
solve their own problems and to satisfy their own hunger for enjoyment” (p. 11), they
propose efferent instructional moves. In the chapter “Developing Positive Attitudes
About Reading,” the lived-through experience of the text is never mentioned.

Books written to serve as college texts also convey the message that reading is
comprehension. In Teaching Reading in the 21st Century (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004),
only one page is listed in the index as pertaining to aesthetic reading. Under the heading of reader response, one paragraph is devoted to Louise Rosenblatt. However, separate chapters are devoted to comprehension strategies and to higher level thinking. The emphasis on comprehension over experience is even more apparent in Lenski & Nierstheimer (2004) in whose index aesthetic reading does not even appear. They discuss early, interpretive, and critical readers as developmental levels of reading and discuss appropriate comprehension instruction at each level. In the section on interpretive readers, the authors discuss the transactional theory of reading and subhead separate sections of Chapter 7 as the reader, the text, and the context, but never mention an aesthetic stance nor the reader’s engagement in or lived-through experience of the text.

Since aesthetic and efferent reading and teaching do exist on a continuum, there are those who reside somewhere in the middle. An example of this position would be that of Harvey and Goudvis (2000). They state that “the aim of comprehension instruction … is to help readers interact more completely with their reading, bringing themselves to the text to engage in a richer, deeper, more thoughtful reading experience” (p. 1). However, they later ask, “If the purpose for reading is anything other then understanding, why read at all?” (p. 6). Their assertion that the use of strategies results in increased engagement and interest led me to position them in the middle of the continuum. The children in my study identified strategies such as making connections, questioning, and visualizing as critical to their immersion in levels of envisionment. In Short & Pierce’s Talking About Books: Creating Literate Communities (1990) one of the twelve chapters is devoted to aesthetic reading. In the chapter “Entertaining a text: A reciprocal process,” Karen Smith states that “the ultimate goal [of reading] is to have students live with the character so
that they experience the essence of the character” (p. 19). She contends that teachers must learn to and allow themselves to have a lived-through experience of the text in order to encourage children to do so. Similarly, it is not the volume of the text that is devoted to aesthetic reading but the specific comments regarding it that led me to view the college text Literacy for the 21st Century (Tompkins, 2003) as positioned in the middle of the efferent/aesthetic, comprehension/experience continuum. In this 531-page text, only 4 pages are devoted to aesthetic reading, however, what Tompkins says about it is significant. She states that in aesthetic reading, students “are encouraged to step into the story and become a character and to ‘live’ the story” (p. 6). The problem with these texts is that although they acknowledge the importance of aesthetic reading one must search for that endorsement.

Toward the other end of the spectrum are proponents of a more purely aesthetic stance toward reading. Wilhelm (2001) states that his “goal for students is engaged reading – that emotional and cognitive state when you are involved in a text to the fullest …” (p. 27). He suggests using think-alouds with a visual component to make the reading experience visible and understandable, and he has created a visualization checklist to help readers think about their visual creation of and experience in the story world. Also, the chapters in Reader Stance and Literary Understanding: Exploring the Theories, Research, and Practice edited by Many & Cox (1992) promote engaged, aesthetic reading and explore the associated implications of teacher education and practice.

In the epigraph to this chapter, Eric contrasted his reading experience with that of his sister. His comment gets to the heart of this study. While Eric tends to adopt an aesthetic stance and become immersed in the text, his sister reads for comprehension
only. If we want children to become life-long readers we must foster reading as experience and as event in our classrooms. Visualization is a key to the levels of immersion in envisionment, yet not all children visualize as they read nor do they know that it is possible and that they might move beyond comprehension to experience. For avid readers, the lived-through experience is a natural consequence of reading, but many reluctant readers have no concept of the experience. During his exit interview Eric, his father, and I engaged in the following discussion and explored possible classroom implications of the study.

\textit{M: Talking about this, I can remember me as a kid reading and basically being part of what was going on. I still ... and I read a lot ... I still kind of visually in my mind ... get in to what’s going on. It’s just kind of amazing. I could experience what he did, but nobody asked about it when I was his age. I was like, “Wow! This is neat!” When you get this done, what are you looking to do with the information ... beyond obviously the thesis?}

\textit{Linda: I’d like to think that this whole idea of children’s engagement with a story could become something that teachers would talk about in the classroom. We do approximate it. We talk about children visualizing. We talk about that but we need to do more.}

\textit{Eric: When I’ve come home and said stuff ... when Mom’s asked about the group and stuff and [my sister’s] been listening, I remember her saying once that she never gets in the book. She’s just seeing the words on the page and processing them through her mind. She just reads words. It’s just words on a blank piece of paper.}

\textit{M: Could it maybe be turned into a reading assistance program? That’s kinda what was coming across to me. These guys could help kids who don’t get into it like they do.}

\textit{Linda: Eric, if you were in a classroom and had read a story and the teacher asked you to draw where you are in the story ... like we did ... and everybody could see everybody else’s and talk about it. Do you think that sort of thing would make a difference?}

\textit{Eric: I think it’d make a difference. If the teacher carried it out a little longer and helped all the kids a little more with their reading.}
M: Do you think it would help your sister?

Eric: If I told you and mom about ... explained it more thoroughly than what I have then you could help teach [my sister] how to understand the book more.

Linda: And, see, people who don’t do it, don’t know that other people do. That’s the rub.

M: Um-hm. And people who do, don’t know that people who don’t, don’t.

Linda: Yeah! Because it’s so much a part of what we do when we read, that we assume everybody does it. I do think there’s a place in classrooms for ... for encouraging children to ...

Eric: ... to try and get in the book a little more than just seeing the words on the page.

M: I think especially kid-to-kid would be instead of an adult saying, “Now, visualize that.” Maybe kid-to-kid would be extremely beneficial.

Linda: I think you’re absolutely right, it could be a very powerful thing.

Approximating the power of the kid-to-kid approach to aesthetic engagement discussed in the preceding excerpt involves several increments. The first step in promoting aesthetic reading is an aesthetic approach to teaching as discussed above. Second, this study indicates that giving children the opportunity to explore their reading and their identity as readers in small, informal discussions is conducive to an aesthetic stance. Teachers need to adopt a transactional discussion model (as discussed in Chapter 2) that will encourage children to adopt an aesthetic stance and transact with texts. When teachers ask authentic questions (Cazden, 2001), they help children position themselves as constructors rather than receivers of knowledge. As constructors, children engage in exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001), and as this research indicates, will consecutively and cooperatively develop knowledge. Through consecutive turns, children present their
varying viewpoints for consideration, synthesis, and refinement. Through cooperative
turns (Marshall, et al., 1995), they collectively develop an idea from inception to fruition.

Based on the three levels of immersion in envisionment that were identified in my
study, the following questions might be used as discussion points or response prompts.
They are authentic questions that encourage children to construct knowledge and reflect
on and share their engaged, aesthetic reading experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you picture in your mind while you were reading?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think it would be like to be in the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While you were reading, did you ever feel that you were actually in the story? Where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you think about as you were reading this story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did you feel you were as you were reading this story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel particularly close to any character while you read? What was that like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were to compare yourself to something else as a reader, what would it be?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: Questions to Encourage the Experience of a Story
The teacher’s role must be that of facilitator rather than transmitter, and modeling is extremely important. Many teachers read to their students daily and use that time for multiple purposes. Reading aloud establishes a sense of community and lays a foundation of common story experience. It is also a time when teachers share their love of story and the aesthetic experience as well as model fluent reading and the metacognitive activity in which good readers engage (Hahn, 2002; Lewis, 2001; Serafini & Giorgis, 2003). During read-aloud time as the teacher models her thinking she should also model her visualization of, creation of, and position in the world of the story and encourage children to share their experience as well. The teacher and her students could use this time as an opportunity to explore the levels of immersion as a community of readers and to develop a common vocabulary through which to formulate and communicate their experience.

As Eric and his father pointed out, this would be most effective if it were accomplished “kid-to-kid.” Just as children discuss and respond to literature itself in literature circles (Daniels, 1994), they could discuss their reading experience in circles. Many teachers initially have children fulfill roles as they learn to participate in literature circles. The roles suggested by Daniels include a discussion director, a literary luminary, an artful artist, a connector, a summarizer, and a vocabulary enricher. These roles could be expanded to include a “metaphor maker” who would compare herself as a reader of a section of story to something else. Another role might be a “level locator” who would discuss whether and at what points in the story she felt like a creator, an observer, or a participant. As Daniels suggests, these roles would only be used while children are
learning to discuss their reading, and as soon as possible the children would abandon specific roles and become spontaneous discussants in dialogue about their reading experience.

Finally, visual representations created by readers encourage a deep level of thought and provide for transmediation of meaning. Visual representations could be created in various literacy contexts. A representation could be created following read aloud, prior to literature circle discussions, or following independent reading. Having children draw group pictures representing themselves during the reading event would encourage the kid-to-kid interaction that would help those who do not experience deeper levels of immersion to see that others do so and perhaps enable them to do so as well.

Limitations and Possibilities
This study looked at the situated truth constructed by a group of eight fourth grade students. Their construction of the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience differed slightly from that of the group in the pilot study. While I believe that the essence of their experience is representative of a more global experience, different groups of children would create subtly different meanings. Reproducing this study with other groups of children would confirm the current findings or might lead to refinement of the findings. Working with children of a different age, race, or socioeconomic background might result in additional information about the experience of immersion in levels of envisionment. Furthermore, I treated this group of children as gender-neutral. As indicated in Chapter 1, there are socially and culturally sanctioned ways for girls and for boys to approach and to respond to texts. Looking at the data for
gender difference was beyond the scope of this endeavor, but it would provide additional and rich information about engaged reading. The data from this study could be further analyzed for the impact of gender on engagement and on discussion. A final consideration is that the children and I focused on the reading of fiction. Many children adopt an aesthetic stance toward reading informational books, so a study that documented the themes and dimensions of children’s experience reading informational books would be enlightening and would add to our body of knowledge about the impact of aesthetic reading on efferent understanding. Cox (1992) stressed that “understanding the role of efferent reading, and response to nonfiction and informational literature is also critical, given the heavy emphasis of both in schools” (p. 119). Regardless of the focus of future research, I believe that children should be involved as co-researchers. The epistemological empowerment (Oldfather & Dahl, 1995) that co-researcher status engenders results in increased ownership through the development of intrinsic motivation, emphasizes that knowledge is fluid and a construction of the group rather than something finite and discovered elsewhere, and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings.

The above paragraph delineates my personal understanding of the limitations of this study and the possible directions of further study. It is the children themselves however, who know what we still need to understand and where we need to go from here. I could not end this dissertation without returning to the voices of my co-researchers who were the experts regarding their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. During our last session of the school year, I asked them what we still need to know. They clearly
articulated that we constructed “unfinished” knowledge and that there are issues still to be explored. Among those issues are:

1) the importance of and construction of personal connections:

    Chris: When I am reading ... like I read a Magic Treehouse book where they talk about the Revolutionary War and Annie gets separated on the boat with George Washington. I'm thinking about like if it were my sister stuck on the boat and I'm thinking, "Oh, no, what do I do?"

    Leanna: You relate your life to the story.

2) how the children resolve confusions as they read:

    Greg: What I tend to do is sometimes if I don't get it I tend to check back.

    Paige: I do that a lot. I read things over again. Like five times.

    April: When I get confused or something I'll read the same thing over and over again until I get it or if I don't get it I just keep going.

    Eric: If there's a confusing part in the book I might go back to where it tells me that, but after ... where it tells me the answer to the part that comes after that and it helps me understand what's happening.

3) and the importance of predicting:

    Corey: I think we need to learn more about predicting. Like taking stuff from the text and using it for a prediction.

    Linda: Do you guys do that a lot when you're reading? Predict what's going to happen?

    Multiple voices: Yeah, kinda

    Eric: No.

    Linda: You don't, Eric?

    Eric: No.

    Corey: Sometimes it ruins the fun if you predict.
In the following excerpt from this discussion, the children discuss the fact that their knowledge is still under construction and that the main reason for reading, to be lost in the book, was not fully explored:

*Linda:* So, here's my final question. If we weren't at the end of this, and if we were going to continue, what do you feel like we haven't learned yet? What would we need to explore to really understand ...

*Paige:* We didn't really do losing everything a lot. Like we didn't lose anything.

*Linda:* Why do you think that in this group we really didn't talk much about getting ... losing track of time and self.

*Eric:* I do that all the time.

*Corey:* I did.

*Chris:* I think it was because ... it was because we kept stopping and going and stopping and going there was no chance for us to get in a trance and lose track of time.

*Paige:* I think that's true.

*April:* We're at school. We're at school and school's more distracting because there's other people around you.

*Linda:* Yeah. And I've thought too that we've been working on being really aware of what we're doing and so we didn't allow ourselves to get lost. So, if we were continuing this ... what are some other things that we really could learn more about if we had the time to do it?

*Paige:* I think we're missing something. I know we have like seeing and watching and all but I think ... I think we're just missing something. I'm not sure what that is.

*Greg:* Something ... it just doesn't feel right.

*Meg:* Something we do when we read but we can't spit it out? I think losing our self. We just didn't have enough time really to read enough to get into the book.
Conclusion

As Meg said, to get into the book was the “main thing” for this group of avid readers. They identified it as the umbrella term for the themes and dimensions of their engaged, aesthetic reading experience. The goal of reading for them was not mere comprehension but the lived-through experience of the story. Comprehension was critical, but it was the vehicle that enabled their experiential journey rather than the destination. The metaphors they created indicate their perspective and position in the world of the story describing how they are in the book. Their division of visualization into picturing, watching, and seeing also indicates that there are different ways to be in the book. My subsequent synthesis of the data revealed three levels of immersion in envisionment. At the level of creation, the children are outside the story and create mental images or pictures to facilitate their understanding of the story world in order to enter it. At the level of observation (EYE) the children are positioned inside the story world as observers of the action and watch from varying distances and perspectives. At the level of participation (I) the children are present inside the story in a more substantive way. They can interact with or even become one of the characters and see the story world as a participant. These levels of immersion in envisionment indicate the richness and the depth of experience for children who create, enter, and sustain story worlds. As educators we owe it to our students to adopt an aesthetic approach to teaching and transactional discussion techniques in order to validate children’s construction of knowledge and response and to foster the lived-through experience of the text. We must exhibit our own engagement and sanction our students’ engagement so that they will indeed create worlds from words on a
page. Comprehension will then be a result rather than a goal of reading. As Thomas Newkirk (2000) has written:

The great dividing line between reader and nonreader may be more than what are considered skills; rather, readers know what it feels like to enter a state of engagement, and they want to reenter it as often as they can (p. 20).
APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION TIME LINE
February 20, 2003
- The children and I met for the first session of the Readers as Researchers club. We established days to meet and, as a way to break the ice and begin to know each other, talked about reading in general.

February 25, 26, 2003
- The children wrote their individual memory stories: Stage 1 of memory stories.

March 4, 5, 11, 2003
- The children coded their memory stories. As they read each story, they worked together to establish codes and underline phrases that fit in specific categories using a color coding system: Stage 2 of memory stories.

March 12, 2003
- The children copied the passages they had coded on separate sheets of paper for further analysis: Stage 2 of memory stories.

March 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, 2003
- The children analyzed their initial coding of passages from the memory stories. They arranged the coded passages around the theme and the dimension to which they thought they pertained. Codes were refined and passages were moved when the children deemed it necessary: Stage 2 of memory stories.

April 1, 2, 2003
- The children attempted alternative mappings of phrases as a way of checking that what they had stood up to their scrutiny.

April 8, 2003
- I introduced the children to the idea of a visual protocol, discussing briefly the three models I was considering. We practiced the SRI using the first chapter of Into the Land of Unicorns.

April 9, 2003
- We discussed visual protocols further. The group established initial guidelines for their visual protocol and determined that they wanted to read a book together.

April 22, 2003
- I presented the children with four books, and they selected the book they would read together. We discussed and refined the visual protocol.
April 23, 29, 30
May 6, 7, 13, 14, 27, 28,
June 3, 4, 2003
  • We read Into the Land of Unicorns together, completed visual protocols, and discussed our growing understanding of engagement.

July 30
August 14, 15, 21, 2003
  • Follow-up sessions of the club were held to refine and clarify the knowledge the children created. The children created graphic organizers and posters to show their understanding: Stage 3 of memory work.

September 22, 26, 30
October 1, 3, 2003
  • An exit interview was conducted with each child and a parent. Since the group was the case throughout this study, this gave me the opportunity to talk with the children individually about their perceptions regarding being a group member and how the group functioned. I wanted to know more about group dynamics and knowledge creation. Including a parent gave me the opportunity to learn about the child’s participation from the parent’s perspective.
APPENDIX B
MEMORY STORIES
Story #1

Once Leah read a great book called *Poppy and Rye*. She got so caught up in it she used a flashlight to read with. When she read this book she was on a trip to see her aunt and uncle. Leah did not read at the house but she read a lot in the car on the way there and the way back. She wanted to tell Rye not to go in the beavers' home again to save Poppy. When she read she felt she was alone. She also felt she was in the book trying to tell them not to do that or don't go there.

Story #2

One week Riley was reading a great book called *The Boy Trap*. She loved that book and read it for about 45 minutes every night in her bedroom with nobody but her dog around. When Riley read this book she felt like she was the little girl, Emma, who was in the story. Also, she felt like she was in the book, at their school for a science project called "The boy trap." Instead of catching mice in a mousetrap, Riley caught boys in a boy trap.

Story #3

One day Eric was reading *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Eric felt inside the book with the people. He felt like he did not have a body - like he was just a pair of eyes. He felt all by himself in a good way. Eric had a blank mind. Eric felt mad, sad, happy, excited, and puzzled at certain times in the book.
Story #4

When he was reading *The Vile Village*, he had a visual picture in his mind wherever the setting was throughout the story. For instance, when the Baudelaires were in jail, he had a picture in his mind how the child escaped. And when their guardian and the Quagmire triplets were on the mobile hot air balloon he had a picture in his mind that he was with them and encouraging the Baudelaires to climb the ladder. He was curious when poems were being sent from crows' feet wondering where they could have come from and who they were sent from. He tried to make predictions off what was going to happen next from events in the text.

Story #5

One day Meg was reading *Rascal* in her literature group. She was at the end of the book. At the very end, she felt so bad, and even cried. She really felt she was just watching the whole book happen right in front of her. All she was thinking was about what was happening in the book. She still (kind of) knew she was in her room, but it was just like the whole book was taking place in her head. She was alone, and not with anyone but it was like sitting right in front of the story.

Story #6

One day Chris was reading *Robinson Crusoe*. It had so much details he felt part of it. He felt he was there on the island. He felt he was really there.
Story #7

One day Labranda was reading. She was reading Little House on the Prairie. She was into the book so much that she tuned everything out. It was like she was Laura. When Labranda's parents called her to do something she couldn't because Labranda couldn't hear them. She felt like she was the only one in the room. At the same time, Labranda could picture every little single detail. When something unexpected happened, she kind of jumped. She felt like she wasn't really herself.

Story #8

When Greg was reading the book Poppy, he was into the book because he must have really liked how it was. When he was reading, he was right under the oak tree where Mr. Ocax was. He was standing right beside Poppy and her father. He was right beside Ragweed when he got killed. He was feeling scared when Mr. Ocax was going right for Ragweed and Poppy. His body shook when he went for an attack on Ragweed and Poppy.

Story #9

For several nights April was reading a book called The Doll People. She was really into it. April felt like there was no such thing as time. When her mom told her to go to bed she would secretly turn on the lights and read. She would stay up way past her bedtime reading. She would listen to her favorite song on her CD player, and she felt
relieved when she read the book. April also felt like a camera watching the dolls around their dollhouse and the human's house. She would lay on her bed and fall deeply into the book.

Story #10

One night Paige was reading a book. Her book was called Princess in the Spotlight. Paige got so involved with the book her eyes widened and she tried to put herself in the situation of the main character. One night Paige was reading another book. This book was called The Doll People. Paige loved this book. Sometimes she even felt like she was in the story and she read till 11:00 that night.
APPENDIX C
INITIAL CODING OF MEMORY STORIES
Physical Reaction:
- His body shook
- She kind of jumped
- Cried
- Her eyes widened

In the book:
- He felt he was really there
- It had so much detail he felt part of it
- He was right beside Ragweed when he got killed.
- He was standing right beside Poppy and her father.
- When he was reading he was right under the oak tree where Mr. Ocax was.
- She would lay on her bed and fall deeply into the book.
- It was like she was Laura.
- She was into the book so much that she tuned everything out.
- Eric felt inside the book.
- She also felt she was in the book trying to tell them not to do that or don't go there.
- She got so caught up in it
- Also, she felt like she was in the book at their school for a science project called "The boy trap."
- When Riley read this book she felt like she was the little girl Emma who was in the story.
- She was in the situation of the main character
- Paige got so involved with the book
- Sometimes she even felt like she was in the story
- He was with them
- Encouraging the Baudelaires to climb the ladder

Connecting with the characters:
- He felt he was there on the island
- It was like she was Laura
- She wanted to tell Rye not to go to the beavers' home again to save Poppy
- She tried to put herself in the situation of the main character
- Encouraging the Baudelaires to climb the ladder

Losing time - surroundings - self
- April felt like there was no such thing as time.
- Eric had a blank mind
- He felt all by himself in a good way
- Like he was just a pair of eyes
- He felt like he did not have a body
- She felt like she wasn't really herself
• She felt like she was the only one in the room
• She couldn't hear them
• She tuned everything out
• When she read, she felt she was alone
• She was alone and not with anyone
• All she was thinking about was what was happening in the book
• She still (kind of) knew she was in her room
• She read until 11:00 that night

Emotions:
• He felt like he was really there
• He was feeling scared when Mr. Ocax was going right for Ragweed and Poppy
• She felt relieved when she read the book
• She was really into it
• She felt like she was the only one in the room
• Eric felt mad, sad, happy, excited, and puzzled at certain times in the book
• She felt so sad.
• He was curious when the poems were being sent from crow's feet, wondering where they could have come from and who they were sent from

Visualizing:
• He was standing right beside Poppy and her father
• April also felt like a camera watching the dolls around their dollhouse and the human's house.
• At the same time, Labranda could picture every single little detail
• Like he was just a pair of eyes
• He felt like he did not have a body
• Sitting right in front of the story
• The whole book was taking place in her head
• Watching the whole story happen right in front of her
• He had a picture in his mind
• He had a picture in his mind that he was with them
• He had a visual picture in his mind wherever the setting was

Making predictions:
• He tried to make predictions of what was going to happen next from events in the text
APPENDIX D
THEMATIC CODING OF MEMORY STORIES
In the book: (Is this the main thing?)
As umbrella term:
- She would lay on her bed and fall deeply into the book.
- She was into the book so much that she tuned everything out.
- She got so caught up in it
- Paige got so involved with the book

General feeling:
- It had so much detail he felt part of it
- Eric felt inside the book.
- She also felt she was in the book trying to tell them not to do that or don't go there.
- She was in the situation of the main character
- Sometimes she even felt like she was in the story

Being in the setting:
- He felt he was really there
- Also, she felt like she was in the book at their school for a science project
- He felt he was there on the island.
- He felt he was really there.

Next to the character: (shadow, quite, following, invisible?)
- He was right beside Ragweed when he got killed.
- He was standing right beside Poppy and her father.
- When he was reading he was right under the oak tree where Mr. Ocax was.
- He was with them

Connecting with the characters:
Being the character:
- It was like she was Laura
- When Riley read this book she felt like she was the little girl Emma who was in the story.
- She tried to put herself in the situation of the main character

Talking with / interacting with the character:
- Encouraging the Baudelaires to climb the ladder
- She wanted to tell Rye not to go to the beavers' home again to save Poppy
- Trying to tell them not to do that or don't go there


Tuning Out:
Losing Time:
- April felt like there was no such thing as time.
- She read until 11:00 that night

Losing Surroundings:
- She was alone and not with anyone
- She felt like she was the only one in the room
- He felt all by himself in a good way
- When she read, she felt she was alone
- All she was thinking about was what was happening in the book
- She still (kind of) knew she was in her room
- She tuned everything out
- She couldn't hear them

Losing Self:
- Eric had a blank mind
- Like he was just a pair of eyes
- He felt like he did not have a body
- She felt like she wasn't really herself

Emotions: (Do emotions lead to a physical reaction? Why do we experience emotions?)
- He was feeling scared when Mr. Ocax was going right for Ragweed and Poppy
- She felt relieved when she read the book
- Eric felt mad, sad, happy, excited, and puzzled at certain times in the book
- She felt so sad.
- He was curious when the poems were being sent from crow's feet, wondering where they could have come from and who they were sent from

Physical Reactions:
- His body shook (worried, scared, nervous)
- She kind of jumped (surprised)
- Cried (sad)
- Her eyes widened (surprised)

Visualizing: (Is there a difference between watching and seeing?)
Watching: (Focused outside, observing, active, choosing? Occurs next to the character?)
- Watching the whole story happen right in front of her
- April also felt like a camera watching the dolls around their dollhouse and the human's house.
- Like he was just a pair of eyes
- Sitting right in front of the story
Seeing: (Occurs inside your head and inside the character as lived-through experience? Occurs when you have become the character?)

- The whole book was taking place in her head
- He had a picture in his mind
- He had a picture in his mind that he was with them
- He had a visual picture in his mind wherever the setting was
- At the same time, Labranda could picture every single little detail

Making predictions: (Does wondering lead to predicting?)

- He tried to make predictions of what was going to happen next from events in the text
- … wondering where they could have come from and who they were sent from
APPENDIX E
GRAPHICS CREATED DURING STAGE 3 OF MEMORY WORK
Picturing
forming mental images

- still pictures, like a slide, like a flip-book
- "drawn" according to your developing, personal understanding
- occurs inside your head
- metaphor: builder

Watching
close or distant observer

- focus is 'outside' or in front of
- may be stationary or involve movement
- occurs next to the character or as an observer of the setting
- metaphors: TV, shadow, and setting

Seeing
living through the experience

- focus is 'inside'
- involves movement
- occurs when you become the character or are present as a participant in the setting
- metaphors: camera and bird

Figure E.1: Dimensions of Visualizing
IN THE BOOK

Next to the character:
- quiet, following, invisible
- more involved with the character
- metaphor: shadow
- watching

Entering the setting:
- anywhere, present
- watching

Becoming the setting:
- having multiple perspectives
- complete understanding
- watching

Connecting with the characters:

Talking with/interacting with the character:
- giving

Becoming the character:
- seeing

Figure E.2: Perspectives in Relation to the Characters
APPENDIX F
RECRUITMENT SCRIPT, RECRUITMENT LETTER, CONSENT FORM
Recruitment Script

“Most of you know that I’m a fourth grade teacher here in the building, and I wanted to talk to you today about a club that I’m starting. Are there any of you who really love to read? Are there any of you who try to read while your teacher is trying to teach math? Is there anyone in here who reads at least a book a week? Have any of you thought about what it would be like to do research? I know, you’re wondering where that came from, right?

The club I want to start is for those of you who love to read. This club will be a club about more than reading. It will also be about research. I’m interested in understanding more about what kids do while they read. What you think about? What strategies do you use? What goes on in your head? Where do you feel like you are while you read? So one of the main purposes of the club will be to have you help me research those kinds of things.

We’ll be meeting in the media center twice a week during the lunch/recess time. During the club meetings we’ll do some writing about your reading, a lot of talking and thinking about what you do, and even some drawing about you and your reading. I will be making audiotapes and sometimes videotapes of what we do in the club.

I’d like to have 10 of you in this club. I want you to know that you only need to join if you really want to. This won’t affect your grades in any way, and no one is going to say that you have to join. Your teachers know a lot about you as readers, and they may encourage some of you to join, but it’s completely up to you and your parents. If you do decide to try it, you’ll be free to quit at any time.
If you join the club, I hope that you’ll have a really good time. All of us will be people who really like to read and we’ll have a lot to talk about and share. You may even make some new friends and get to feeling really good about yourself because you’re doing some things you never tried before. Other children who participated in this type of research went on to co-author articles about what they learned and some even went to professional conferences to talk about their reading. That's something you might decide to do as a group. Have any of you ever thought about what it would be like to do research? Here’s your chance!

What questions do you have about the club or the research we’ll be doing?

(answer questions)

I have letters for you to take home to your parents that will help explain about the club and the research we’ll be doing. If you’re interested in joining the club, have a parent fill out the bottom part of this letter and bring it back to me. I’m really looking forward to getting to know you better and sharing our love of reading.”
Recruitment Letter

Dear Parents,

I will be organizing a club for fourth graders who love to read! The purpose of the club is to learn about what children who are avid readers do as they read for pleasure and how they create and enter the world of the story. The club and the data collected during our meetings will constitute the research for my doctoral dissertation, and the results may be presented at professional conferences and/or published in a professional journal.

The club will meet in the school media center one to two times per week during the lunch/recess period. We will begin on February 20 and meet through the remainder of the school year. I will limit membership to 10 students due to the nature of the club and the research. During club meetings we will write and analyze memory stories in which the children recreate a pleasurable reading experience. We will participate in focus group discussions to understand what the children do as they read, and we will create and analyze visual representations of what children experience as they read. During club meetings I will be using audio and videotapes and will be collecting writing samples.

I hope that if your child chooses to participate there will be several benefits for him/her. The children will fulfill the role of co-researchers, and a result should be increased intrinsic motivation and greater self-confidence as their knowledge is recognized and validated. In some studies in which children participated as co-researchers they co-authored the results of the study and presented their findings at conferences. I also hope that the members of the club will form personal bonds as children who share a love of reading.

Participation in the club is strictly voluntary. It will not have any bearing whatsoever on the children’s classroom grades. My hope is that they will be as fascinated by this topic as I and will enjoy the activities in which we participate. However, if your child chooses to participate, he/she will be free to withdraw from the club at any time.

If you have any questions about the club and the proposed research, please contact me in the evenings at (740) 983-3595 or via email at parsons.135@osu.edu. I would be happy to discuss this further with you.

If your child is interested and you consent to participation, please return the attachment to this letter by February 12. I will contact you to answer initial questions you have and then send a consent form home for you to read and sign.

Thank you for the opportunity to learn from and with your child.

Sincerely,

Linda T. Parsons                              Dr. Janet Hickman
(co-investigator)                           (principal investigator)

My child, _________________________________, is interested in participating in the Readers as Researchers club, and I’d like to learn more about it.

I can be contacted at ______________________ Signed: ______________________

267
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

Project Title: Fourth Graders as Co-Researchers of Their Engagement During Aesthetic Reading
Protocol Number: 02B0252
Principal Investigator: Dr. Janet Hickman Co-Investigator: Linda T. Parsons

I consent to my child's participation in research conducted by the above named investigator of The Ohio State University.

The investigator has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures that will be followed, and the amount of time it will take. I understand that writing samples will be generated and analyzed and that audiotapes will be made during the discussions of the Readers as Researchers club.

I understand the possible benefits of my child's participation.

I know that I can choose not to give consent without penalty to my child. If I agree to participation, my child can withdraw from the study at any time, and there will be no penalty.

Please initial one of the statements in each group below to indicate the level of participation to which you consent. The level of participation will impact the degree to which confidentiality can be guaranteed.

___ My child should not be included in videotapes made during discussions of the Readers as Researchers club.

___ I consent to the use of videotapes of the discussions of the Readers as Researchers club for the purposes of this study only.

___ I consent to the use of videotapes of the discussions of the Readers as Researchers club for the purposes of this study and for subsequent presentations at professional conferences.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

___ I do not want my child to participate in co-authoring the findings of this group.

___ I give permission for my child to co-author an article based on the findings of the group if a pseudonym is used. I understand that a pseudonym will be used for the school.

___ I give permission for my child to use his/her own name if the children co-author an article based on the findings of the club. I understand that a pseudonym will be used for the school.

I have had the chance to ask questions and to obtain answers to my questions. I can contact the co-investigator by phone at 740-983-3595 or via email at parsons.135@osu.edu. If I have questions about my child’s rights as a research participant, I can call the Office of Research Risks Protection at (614) 688-4792.
I have read this form and I sign it freely and voluntarily. My child’s signature indicates his/her assent to participate in the study, and my signature indicates my permission. A copy of the signed form will be given to me.

Date: __________  Signed: __________________________
Participant

Date: __________  Signed: __________________________
Parent/Legal Guardian

Date: __________  Signed: __________________________
Linda T. Parsons (co-investigator)

Date: __________  Signed: __________________________
Dr. Janet Hickman (principal investigator)
APPENDIX G
DISCURSIVE MOVES
**Inauthentic**: designed to elicit an answer known to the questioner

**Probing**: Request additional information to resolve confusion or clarify meaning

**Metaprocess**: Asking about the process of thought or knowledge acquisition

**Authentic**: Designed to elicit an answer known only to the respondent

**Requesting feedback**: to elicit individual/group opinion or consensus

---

**Questions**

**Digressions**:  
- related  
- unrelated

**Invitation**:  
- inclusive  
- directive  
- controlling  
- purposive

---

**Statements**

**Revoicing**:  
- To clarify, confirm, or affirm  
- To show relationship with another

**Concede, Dissent, Demand**

---

**Extensions**:  
- topic coherence  
- build upon previous comment  
- reply to indecisive statement or question  
- complete another's thought

**Knowledge statements**

**Overlapping talk**:  
- gain the floor  
- support previous comment  
- indicate consensus

---

*Figure G.1: Discursive Moves*
Figure G.2: Turns in Discussion

- Questions
  - Initiate or change topics
  - Resolve confusion or clarify meaning
  - Invite participation or include

- Statements
  - Knowledge statements
  - Support or elaborate on prior statements
  - Concede
  - Validate or affirm: revoice
  - Disagree, dispute, or oppose
  - Request additional information
LIST OF REFERENCES


Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings. Qualitative Inquiry, 5, 64-86.


Children's Books Cited


