Caught Between Regulations and Meaning: Fifth Grade Students and Their Teachers Respond to Multicultural Children's Literature

DISSERTATION

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

By

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2009

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Abstract

Many students are being taught by teachers who have little background in the children’s culture and language. This study explored how authentic ethnic literature could supplement core curriculum in the classroom in an effort to help teachers and students connect across their cultural and linguistic differences. This was a study of fifth-grade students’ responses to two different types of text. The two White (not Hispanic or Latino) fifth-grade teachers read aloud all stories to their classes of predominantly Mexican-American students. Following each whole-group read-aloud lesson, each teacher gave six students in their respective classes an opportunity to meet as a small group. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of the basal reading program on the teacher-led whole group discussions and the differences between whole group and peer group literature discussions of two different types of text. The eight-month research process revealed answers to these questions that can be contextualized in the light of the influence of laws, district mandates, and scripted curriculum.

Both fifth-grade teachers relied on core curriculum directives when reading aloud and leading whole class literature discussions around multicultural stories included in the basal. Pacing demands eclipsed expansion of literary understanding negotiated between
teachers and students during class discussions. However, implementation of the core curriculum varied significantly between the two classrooms.

Latino picture book read-alouds and discussion reflected a transfer of core curriculum directives. Peer group discussions demonstrated similarities to whole class discussions with regard to topics of discussion. Significant differences between peer group discussions and whole class discussions included negotiation of meaning among students, sophisticated critique of illustrations and sustained reading for enjoyment. Peer group discussions of Latino picture books were characterized by enthusiastic reading and playing with Spanish text together with shared understanding of story situations which resulted in students personal connections to story text.

This study found that teachers’ dependency on core curriculum influenced their use of children’s literature in the classroom. In addition, students benefitted from participating in peer group literature discussions and the use of culturally relevant texts.
Dedication

To Ruth

Thank you.
Acknowledgements

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to complete my doctoral studies at The Ohio State University, Columbus, under the guidance of a group of scholars who nurtured my strong desire to become a qualitative researcher and a reflective scholar in the field of Education. I am grateful to the Faculty of the department of Language, Literacy and Culture, and especially my dissertation committee members who supported my research in many ways and who worked closely with me throughout my doctoral program. Professors Pat Scharer, David Bloome, Pat Enciso and Barbara Kiefer inspired me with their commitment to education and to quality scholarship. I thank them for their interest in the focus of my research, their careful reading of my work, and their questions that pushed me to think beyond my initial interpretations. I am deeply grateful to Pat Scharer, my advisor and dissertation director, for her unconditional willingness to read my work and her promptness responding to it. Pat was an exemplary mentor who continually challenged me with her standard of excellence which I so admire. There were other readers who strengthened my work with their responses: to them my deepest gratitude, especially to Carolyn. I extend my thanks to my fellow graduate students who inspired me with their kindness and scholarship.

I was fortunate to find two classroom teachers who opened the doors of their classrooms to me for an entire school year. For that willingness, I thank Lisa and Pat who made possible the research design I had envisioned for my dissertation research. It
is with joy that I thank their students. They amazed me with their powerful and
thoughtful responses and fueled my passion in this research. I extend my thanks to their
parents who believed in the benefits to their children of having the opportunity to
participate in this study.

I want to thank the other students in my life that waited for me to complete this
project. Saul, Jasmine, Peewee, Norma, Marlen, Ana, Enrique, Ubaldo, Marina, Marco,
Mayte, Cristian, Gamaiel, Maritza, Karen, Jennifer, Nathaly, Sharlene, and Josue. I have
accomplished this task for them.

Finally, and first, I thank my husband and my parents for believing in me and
supporting me. Thank you, God, for gracing my life in all of these ways.
Vita

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Fields of Study

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Reading instruction in English for Hispanic students (students whose first language is Spanish) continues to be an important challenge for educators (Goldenberg, 2008; Banks, 2006; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Nieto, 2004; Reyes & Halcón, 2001). The increase in student population of second language learners (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008), the predominance of White (not Hispanic; not Latino/a) teachers teaching Hispanic students (Delpit, 1995; Howard, 1999), the achievement gap (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Escamilla, Chavez & Vigil, 2005), state and federal high stakes testing (Solorzano, 2008, Garan, 2004), and the implementation of state-adopted core reading curriculum (Dewitz, Jones & Leahy, 2009; Moustafa & Land, 2002) are all issues which confound reading instruction for Hispanic students. Research studies addressing reading instruction for second language learners inevitably offers tables and graphs with numbers to represent these students and their low scores. McDermott & Gilmore, (in press) posit that:

The hallmark of good ethnography is that it starts with the words and accounts of the people studied. Anthropologists entered the education scene 40 years ago largely in response to the pernicious deficit arguments about missing language skills of minoritized kids which dominated the educational discourse. With rich verbal data documenting the learning and mastery of complex skills, linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists debunked prevailing myths and demonstrated
instances of the virtuosity of underserved minoritized populations where others saw deprivation and disability (see, for example, Labov, 1973; Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1972; Gilmore & Glatthorn, 1982). The Goodmans insisted that the way to know what children know (about language, reading, themselves as readers, etc.) is to look at them carefully while they are actually in the production of understanding and learning.

Hispanic students show up at school where they continue to be counted and labeled “at risk.” I argue that a close and prolonged look at the day-to-day language of teachers and Hispanic students in mainstream English-Only classrooms where core curriculum is used for reading instruction is timely for research, for policy and for practice. Students’ seeming helplessness displayed in research literature discussions may be a learned response of resistance that is indicative of being marginalized and not indicative of students’ knowledge or understanding (Bloome & Nieto, 1992). What are the dynamics of English Only classrooms, particularly for students whose heritage language is not English? Are these students “deficient” because they lack background knowledge, or are there other factors significant to how children choose to engage with or resist literature? How might the nature of interactions between teachers of one culture and students of another culture around literature be significant to the labeling of these students as “at risk” or “resistant”?

The purpose of this study is to shed light on what happens behind the closed classroom door when teachers of a privileged culture teach students of a culture considered to be lower class, when teachers attempt to enact the prescribed and scripted
reading curriculum under the watchful eye of the district, when the students’ language is forbidden, and when these same teachers work with children’s literature that represents the children’s culture. The statistics indicate that there are achievement gaps between majority and minority students. But what is the story behind the statistics? After all, statistics about achievement are collected after the fact—after instruction has taken place, after the books are closed, after students are supposed to have mastered a certain body of knowledge or set of skills. What happens during instruction that may contribute to or change the achievement gap? What happens when students gather together to discuss literature without the teacher’s authority controlling their talk? How might a scripted curriculum influence the talk in the classroom, and is this influence constructive? After all, the state spent an enormous amount of money when it adopted this curriculum. I wanted to capture and analyze the talk of teachers and students in relation to reading both inside and outside of the curriculum in order to identify the interpersonal and curricular factors that could contribute to the achievement gap. When we have a significant amount of data at this level of the problem, perhaps teacher education, reading curricula, and other influences on the classroom and its discourse can be changed to address the achievement gap effectively.

Capturing and analyzing talk about literature was the overarching concern in this study. The following sections describe the full context of the study in terms of teacher and student populations, the achievement gap, and the core curriculum that had been mandated by the state and the district presumably to address the achievement gap. Finally, I will introduce the structure of the study.
**Hispanic Students**

The number of Hispanic students in the nation’s public schools nearly doubled from 1990 to 2006, accounting for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollments over that period. There are now approximately 10 million Hispanic students in the nation’s public kindergartens and its elementary and high schools; they make up about one-in-five public school students in the United States. In 2006 Hispanics were about half of all public school students in California, up from 36% in 1990 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008).

**Teachers of Diverse Students**

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 82.3% of all elementary and middle school teachers are White (non-Hispanic). In California, 222,816 (72.2 percent) K-12 teachers are white females while 48.15% of the students are Hispanic (California Department of Education, 2006). If this trend persists, the linguistic and cultural differences between the teaching force and student populations will continue. The data suggest research is needed to determine how White (non-Hispanic) teachers can effectively be prepared to teach reading to linguistically and culturally diverse students. Often, students of color feel alienated from the norms and behaviors of the school culture. Educational researchers and practitioners emphasize the need for teacher education programs to address diversity and equity when training teachers (Escamilla & Natheson-Mejia, 2003; Banks, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Banks (2001) exhorts teacher education programs to prepare teachers as “cultural mediators who interpret the mainstream and marginalized cultures to students from diverse groups and help students understand the desirability of and
possibility for social change” (p. 240). Yet, even though there is almost universal recognition of the need to be culturally sensitive among teacher educators and teachers themselves, the achievement gap remains. Obviously information about the need for cultural sensitivity is not sufficient for adequately addressing the differences in achievement among minority students and majority students. So, the question remains, what else could be done to help majority teachers become effective teachers for minority students?

Achievement Gaps

Teacher competencies in teaching diverse groups of students are but one area of concern. The huge disparities in achievement that exist among students have been a focus of debate largely as a result of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html, retrieved May 21, 2009). The law requires states to disaggregate student achievement data by racial subgroups of students so that performance gains for all students can be tracked. As a result, the U.S. Department of Education (2006) describes the achievement gap as “The difference between how well low-income and minority children perform on standardized tests as compared with their peers” (U.S. Department of Education Glossary of Terms http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/index/az/glossary.html, retrieved May 21, 2009). Accountability measures, such as “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) requires a minimum level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year (http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/index/az/glossary.html, retrieved May 21, 2009). California’s accountability system, the Academic Performance Index (API) is an
outcome-based system that uses assessment results to measure the success of schools in relationship to the achievement gap (O’Connell, 2007). For example, in California, fewer than 6 out of every 20 Hispanic/Latino students in grades two through eleven were proficient in English-language arts on the 2006 statewide test (O’Connell, 2007). The 2006 Academic Performance Index (API) of Hispanic/Latino students was 147 points lower than their white counterparts (O’Connell, 2007). The population of students that is growing the fastest in California is the population that has the lowest test scores.

Consideration of the complexity of the achievement gap has required negotiation of terms: second language, English proficiency, culture and multiculturalism (Salazar, 2007, McDermott, 1995). Causes for the achievement gap(s) have been attributed to Spanish-speaking Latinos, minority parents and their impoverished education and resources, bilingual education, the shortage of ESL and bilingual teachers, and the time required for attaining English proficiency (Escamilla, Chavez & Vigil, 2005; Batt, 2008, Anderson & Fowler, 2007; Carpenter, Ramirez, & Severn 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Suggested remedies to the “Hispanic problem” are as numerous as the arguments about who and what to blame. First language reading instruction, modification of reading instruction, rigor of the curriculum, a combination of interactive and direct instruction, vocabulary and academic English instruction, and use of culturally relevant literature are a brief listing of suggested “instructional treatments” (Goldenberg, 2008, Fitzgerald, Amendum & Guthrie, 2008; Barton, 2005; Nathenson-Meja & Escamilla, 2003; Cooke, 2002; Vecchio & Guerrero, 1995). In addition, inclusive learning environments, teacher education, professional development and teacher in-services focus on effective teacher
decision-making in relationship to Hispanic students’ literacy achievements (Grant & Gomez, 2001; Harste & Burke, 2001; Roberts, Jensen, & Hadjiyianni, 1997; Barrera, 1992).

In the classrooms of this study, the “Hispanic problem” was addressed through requiring students to speak English only and through the use of a scripted basal reading program. The students were provided with teachers who did not share their culture or language. The desire of those who made these decisions was for the school to become successful in the terms defined by the standardized tests by which effective teaching and learning are currently measured. The “Hispanic problem” was addressed with edicts from on high—the state, the district, the researchers who created the curriculum—and yet where things actually happen in the interactions between children and adults that become teaching and learning is the classroom. What happens between the edict and the test?

Core Reading (Basal) Programs

Approval of instructional materials which align with state-adopted content standards is another accountability measure aimed at the achievement gap. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Reading First mandate to use scientifically based reading-research curricula, core reading (basal) programs have replaced literature-based instruction and use of authentic texts in many states (Dewitz, Jones & Leahy, 2009).

Dewitz, Jones & Leahy (2009) report that 73.2% of the schools surveyed by Education Market Research either closely follow a basal program or use it selectively. Harcourt Trophies, Scott Foresman Reading, McGraw-Hill Reading, Houghton Mifflin
Reading, and Open Court Reading were the five most widely used core programs in 2007. The purchase of Open Court Reading has been favored especially in schools serving poor families (Coles, 2000; Taylor, 1998; Taylor, Anderson, Au, & Raphael, 2000). In January 2000, Open Court Reading was used in one of every eight (K-6) elementary schools in California (Helfand, 2000). Since that time it has been adopted and used exclusively in many urban school districts in California and around the nation. When elementary teachers contract to teach in California elementary classrooms, often they are agreeing to teach Open Court Reading.

When districts purchase Open Court Reading, professional development is available for training teachers how to implement the curriculum. The teacher’s manual provides teachers with a script for what they are to say verbatim during reading instruction when using Open Court Reading, and describes activities which are to be completed with the entire class at a prescribed pace. Given the nature and design of scripted curriculum, teachers are expected to exercise a limited amount of professional judgment about reading instruction; the curriculum, not the teacher, instructs reading (Moustafa & Land, 2002). The idea is to standardize the teaching of reading so that all children receive the same range and scope of instruction, using instructional strategies which have been determined in peer-reviewed research journals to be effective. In essence, these programs have been created to “teacher-proof” the teaching of reading—to prevent “ineffective” teachers from depriving students of appropriate instruction, particularly students in poor schools where they may be more likely to encounter poor teachers.
Classroom research has generally shown, however, that teachers make a larger impact in students’ growth as readers than the curricular methods those teachers use (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Hoffman, 1991). So standardization has not created equality of instruction across the nation or even across a particular city. At the same time, when curriculum manuals’ directives are substituted for teachers teaching reading, teachers’ knowledge and experience is devalued and their role in the classroom is reduced to controlling the delivery of the curriculum. So, there appears to be a double bind here: standardization of instruction does not appear to work and yet the teachers are working with a set of materials that removes their authority and judgment from the teaching process. The question becomes, what happens in a classroom centered around this particular dilemma?

*Story Read-Alouds and Multicultural Literature*

Core reading programs use stories to teach reading. Unlike the traditional Alice and Jerry basal reader of the 1950s and 1960s, depicting the activities of little white middle class children, modern basal readers reflect the recognition of the need for cultural sensitivity. In the case of Open Court, there was a unit of texts related to the theme of Heritage, which contained stories and informational text with characters from several cultures outside the U.S. white middle class norm.

Another way teachers often address multicultural needs in their classroom is to use children’s literature from a range of cultures. When children read about their own culture, they can activate their background knowledge more effectively so they comprehend what they are reading and they may become more highly motivated to read.
In this study, I provided the teachers with children’s books to read to their students, children’s books from the children’s own culture and which were often bilingual in Spanish and English. Ironically, children in these classrooms did not have access to this kind of literature on a regular basis due to district restrictions on the materials with which reading would be taught.

Teachers may choose to read aloud the stories to their students for a variety of reasons. The effects of reading aloud as a regular classroom practice on children’s literacy development have been investigated in numerous studies (i.e. Pappas, 1993; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). A classroom read-aloud can generate motivation to read. It also provides an adult demonstration of expressive, fluent reading for the listeners and reading aloud to students promotes their oral language development and develops their knowledge of written language syntax (Sipe, 1996).

Informal discussion of story read alouds gives students and teachers the opportunity to develop a sense of self as they compare themselves to characters, respond to situations and evaluate their own feelings in relationship to the story. Encouraged to use their imagination, students empathetically gain understanding of other people and ideas which build on their own historical experiences as well as their personal value systems and can become part of their own identity development. This is particularly true when the selected literature reflects the language and culture of the students (Freeman & Freeman, 2004; Medina & Enciso, 2002).

Yet another issue arises in relation to read-alouds. When most of the instructional time for reading is focused on read-alouds and other teacher-led activities, when do the
children read independently? Release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) in reading instruction is characterized by teacher support in guided reading and students’ opportunity for independent practice. Across the core reading programs analyzed by Dewitz, Jones & Leahy, 2009, release of responsibility was not employed with any consistency. This means that while the basal series provides teachers with a wealth of teaching activities and literature designed to reach a broad range of readers, students are apparently not reading in their reading classes. Since these basal series are adopted in large cities where there are many students at risk for failure, it seems more than a little ironic that students in classrooms that use these readers are doing very little actual independent reading. This situation also raises the question, how is it that reading can be taught without students reading? What happened to create a situation where there is no time for reading during reading?

*Small Peer Group Discussions*

Peer group discussions, where the emphasis is on making meaning instead of answering pre-established questions, gives students the opportunity to use their knowledge and to own their negotiation of sense-making (Martinez-Roldán, 2000). In classrooms dominated by teacher talk and teacher-controlled patterns of participation, peer discussions offer students an alternative way to communicate (Cazden, 1988). Classroom discourse situated in core curriculum discussions is characterized by the language register of the curriculum (Bloome & Nieto, 1992) whereas peer group discussions offer students the opportunity to use natural conversational exchanges.
Peer groups that are not supervised by the teacher are a source of information about the students’ attitudes toward language and reading as well as how the classroom works. And, since the students are in control of what happens in the group, the question becomes, how much of a corrective might these groups be for the negative effect of classroom dynamics on minority students?

*Social and Linguistic Dynamics*

Few studies have investigated teacher-student interactions in mainstream English-Only classrooms which use core programs for reading instruction for students whose language and culture is different from the teachers’ language and culture. Yet it is in these types of classrooms that achievement gaps are prevalent. One of the tensions between cultural sensitivity and the use of basal readers lies in the very definition of reading. Clay (1991), representing the strand of reading instruction that focuses on meaning, defines reading as an “on-going, sequential, message-grasping process,” (p. 243). Also, reading is “inextricably embedded in educational, social, historical, cultural and biological realities” (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998, p. 33). This definition suggests that the literature used in a reading class should be culturally appropriate, in order for meaning-making to happen, since it is challenging to both learn to read and to have to figure out the language of an unfamiliar culture.

Nevertheless, core curriculum programs assume reading to be word level decoding. While multicultural literature is placed in the reader, ghettoized in its own little unit, the basic reading philosophy represented by the Open Court Reading program is focused on decoding rather than constructing meaning. When reading is reduced to a
word-level decoding process, unwarranted optimism arises about solutions to the problems Hispanic children face when learning to read English. As a result, students of diverse backgrounds receive doses of reading instruction in isolated skills with little opportunity to engage in higher level thinking about text (Allington, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1995). And this instruction takes place in a foreign language. If one can argue that basal readers can too often make reading meaningless, how much more “meaninglessness” comes into play when this instruction takes place in a foreign language?

Secondly, the poor reading achievement of Hispanic students from low income families is explained with a cultural deprivation view which ignores students’ strengths and focuses instead on their weaknesses. Banks (1995) asserts that educators who hold this stance believe that teachers must help students overcome the deficits that arise from their home experiences. What do Hispanic students bring to the classroom that could be considered strengths and starting points for effective instruction? And even though most modern teachers know that overt prejudice against students is wrong, how might a deficit perspective influence interactions with students, particularly around culture?

Overview of the Study

This study captures complex classroom situations. Two teachers, who are socially, culturally and linguistically different than the majority of their students, act and react to their students, and their students to them, around multicultural stories situated within and outside of the reading curriculum. The stories included in the scripted basal curriculum are recognized by the teacher, the school, the district and the state as tools for
reading instruction. The five Latino picture books, representing the culture and language of Mexico, are recognizable by the students but are unfamiliar to the teachers who read them aloud as supplementary literature for their “heritage” unit of instruction. Given the contrasts in this setting, the focus of this study foregrounds what is happening between the teachers and students as they use language to communicate with one another about the classroom stories.

The purpose of this 8-month study was to investigate the teacher and student talk in two fifth-grade classrooms during reading instruction. I intentionally examined the responses of two White (not Hispanic or Latino) fifth-grade teachers and their students (predominantly Latino) to two different types of text (multicultural stories from the Open Court Reading curriculum and Latino picture books) in a California elementary school which had used Open Court Reading for eight years. Each week, for five consecutive weeks, the two fifth-grade teachers read aloud a basal story and a Latino picture book to their respective students. This study design provided teachers the opportunity to make decisions about preparing, reading aloud and discussing literature selections (Latino picture books) apart from the Open Court Reading scripted curriculum. Latino picture books also provided a potential source of relevance to the fifth grade students’ own life experiences, given the contrast in culture, language, history and day-to-day routines between and among teachers and students. This study allows a rare view of how non-Hispanic, non-Latino teachers responded to Latino picture books and their students’ responses to those books (both whole class and small group), as well as to the multicultural stories included in the reading curriculum.
Following the whole-group read-aloud lesson, each teacher gave six students in their respective classes an opportunity to meet as a small group, directing them to talk with one another about the story that had just been read. Neither the teachers nor I as the researcher participated in weekly peer group discussions of the stories read aloud by the teacher. This aspect of the study design afforded me an opportunity to compare the nature of the students’ interactions in peer group discussions with the teacher-student interactions in classroom story-reading events.

Although I have raised a multitude of questions in this introduction to the study, three research questions defined the scope of this study:

- How and when do the directives suggested in the Teacher’s Edition of a scripted basal program affect what teachers do when reading and responding to basal stories?

- In what ways, if any, do basal manual directives affect what teachers do when reading and responding to multicultural picture books in classroom story-reading events?

- Is the nature of teacher-students’ interactions around story-reading events in whole class settings similar or different than students’ interactions in peer group discussions about those same stories in which neither the teacher nor the researcher is present?

These research questions encompass many of the concerns discussed above and the collection of data around these research questions allows contemplation and speculation around the whole range of questions mentioned in this chapter.
The stakes are high in this study. In the name of accountability, states and districts have adopted “scientifically based” reading programs that are supposed to address the literacy needs of at-risk students. Yet the contradictions between the need for cultural relevance when working with Hispanic students and the basal reading program definition of reading as primarily a decoding activity has to play out somehow in the classroom. It’s not enough to look at after-the-fact statistics to understand the achievement gap. Instead we need to understand the many possible factors in the interactions between children, teachers, and reading curriculum that have created, contributed to, and/or widened the achievement gap. In the next chapter I review the literature relevant to the influence of scripted core reading curriculum upon teachers’ decision-making when reading and discussing multicultural literature in the classroom.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Social constructionist theory, which places a primary emphasis on discourse as a vehicle for constructing self and ways of knowing the world, served as a significant framework for this study, in particular for understanding the parameters of participants’ understandings and options for action. The methodological grounding, which is established on the idea that science and research are other forms of discourse that are socially constructed, supports this theoretical framework (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1999). Students and teachers in this study were socially constructed by culture and language in different ways, and these constructions were represented in how they interacted with each other and with the literature they shared. Social constructionist theory reveals the places in which these constructions differ, the way teachers privileged their constructions over that of the students, and the students’ acquiescing and resisting responses to the teachers’ constructs.

*Social Constructionism*

Social constructionism is a sociological theory of knowledge. As a theory of knowledge construction, social constructionism has been influenced by a number of multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary traditions, including sociology (Berger &
Luckmann, 1966), critical theory (Foucault, 1980), and literary theory (Derrida, 1976).

Berger & Luckmann argued that all knowledge, including basic common-sense knowledge is not only derived from but is maintained by social interactions.

Social constructionists avoid the notion of the mind as an individual container and instead focus on what happens outside of the mind between people. Central to social constructionism is the identification of the ways individuals and groups participate in the generation of their perceived social reality. Social phenomena are viewed as created, institutionalized and formulated into tradition by people; an ongoing, dynamic process. People reproduce their social reality by acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of it. Social constructionism is characterized by emphasis on discourse as a vehicle for constructing self and ways of knowing the world through the moment-to-moment interactions people have with one another.

According to Kenneth Gergen (1999), meaning is brought into being through language,

If language is a central means by which we carry on our lives together—carrying the past into the present to create the future—then our ways of talking and writing become key targets for concern. It is not only our grand languages of self, truth, and morality at stake; our futures are also fashioned from mundane exchanges in families, friendships, and organizations, in the informal comments, funny stories, and the remainder of the hubbub. (p. 62).
Ways of talking and using language in everyday interactions shape ways of knowing, being and doing. But language is not merely a way to express what we see in the world, it is “the doing of life itself” (Gergen, 1999, p. 35).

Social constructionism, which emphasizes the construction of meaning through language in social settings, has clear relevance for the classroom situation. Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris (2005) suggest that a social interactional approach to the analysis of classroom language and literacy events “combines attention to how people use language and other systems of communication in constructing language and literacy events in classrooms with attention to social, cultural, and political processes” (p. xv).

*Teachers*

The construction of teachers is complex, including factors external to them and their classrooms as well as internal factors such as personality and confidence. External to the classroom includes how state and district authority influence teaching decisions and how their culture causes them to construct their students, particularly when their students are from a different culture. Teachers’ individual beliefs about themselves, their efficacy, and teaching experience also influence how they approach their jobs. Beginning from the larger perspective of law and culture, this section moves to the more individual aspects of teaching.

*Teaching is Political*

Teachers cannot draw on, transfer, and adjust their beliefs in classroom practice with autonomy. Their academic and professional training and years of classroom
experience are marginalized by federal, state and local governments. The federal
government’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the state adopted content
standards which they must teach, the school district’s curriculum selections and
professional development trainings (Garan, 2004), and the local school administrator to
whom they are directly accountable determine the boundaries for teacher decision-
making in the classroom. The legislated high stakes testing (Solorzano, 2008),
California’s English-only laws, and local school districts’ strategic plan for English
Language Learners (ELLs) situate California’s teachers’ voices before the students
arrive. As a result, teachers’ decisions in the classroom, by virtue of their contracts, are
political, and cultural power is not an afterthought. It is a constitutive part of the very
being of schooling” (p. 96). In this text, Apple (1996) is writing about the prospects of a
national curriculum. His predictions came to pass with the passage of the NCLB act of

While proponents of NCLB, 2001 saw it:
as a means to create social cohesion and to give all of us the capacity to improve
our schools by measuring them against “objective” criteria, …the effects will be
that “differences between “we” and the “others” will be socially produced even
more strongly, and the attendant social antagonisms and cultural and economic
destruction will worsen (Apple, 1996, pp. 32-33).
While it can be argued that teaching has always been a political act and that one role of schools has been to reproduce society and its oppressions, the NCLB act has increased the effect of politics in the classroom by an order of magnitude.

*High Stakes Testing and English Language Learners*

One aspect of NCLB is its reliance on high stakes testing to determine if adequate progress is being made in schools. Yet these tests are problematic for the significant population (sometimes the majority in a school) of students for whom English is not their first language. Solorzano (2008) investigated the issues and implications for English Language Learners (ELLs) with regard to high stakes testing. He analyzed academic achievement tests relative to their norming samples, validity, technical quality, and fairness issues (validity, opportunity to learn and inclusion through accommodations) to determine their usefulness to ELLs. He also examined commonly used language proficiency tests relative to definitions of proficiency, technical quality and alignment with criteria for language classification and reclassification as well as their academic predictive validity. For example, Salazar (2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007) (reviewed by Solorzano, 2008) analyzed results from English proficiency tests, achievement tests, reclassification rates, retention and drop-out rates for 326,893 ELLs, K-12, in the Los Angeles Unified School District. In 2005, Salazar found that 93% of ELLs were Spanish speakers, 6% of ELLs received bilingual instruction, and nearly one-third of ELLs were still not proficient in English after being in the district 4 years or longer. Also, he found that ELLs performed dismally on the state Standards test; less than 1 in 3 ELLs
graduated, and ELLs were more likely to be retained. Findings from the Solorzano (2008) research and literature review contend that:

Unless tests are developed that specifically include ELLs during all stages of test development, their use is highly suspect, especially to make high stakes decisions concerning instructional placement, retention, and the awarding of diplomas (p. 314).

According to Solorzano, most research contends that ELLs need 3 to 5 years to acquire English at “reasonable” levels, and 4 to 7 years to acquire academic English proficiency, yet he found that language proficiency levels necessary to make tests useful measures that would inform instruction for ELLs are generally not considered when determining eligibility for test taking. Why ELLs are put in English-only classrooms for instruction (in most cases after 1 year of “structured English immersion”) is a question that demands an answer. Based on results from his analysis, Solorzano also questioned “why ELLs are being tested with English language tests and why high stakes decisions are made based on the results of clearly unfair tests” (p. 314). The most disturbing outcome of his study was the question of whether ELLs are actually receiving the necessary instruction to perform at their best on tests used to determine academic achievement and language proficiency.

Goldenberg (2008) concurs in his summary of the findings from two major reviews of the research (National Literacy Panel and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence) on educating English Learners (ELs) that were completed in 2006: “Currently there is no way to know the amount of support students
receive, or, most critically, the quality of the instruction and whether or not it is helpful for student achievement” (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 11). Since these tests determine whether a student graduates high school, and since it is very difficult to get a decent job without graduating high school, the lives of students whose native language is not English are significantly influenced by unfair standardized testing.

**English-Only**

About the English-only approach to teaching, Apple, (1996) states:

With the growth of the “English-only” movement and of the rightist assertion of the primacy of the (highly romanticized) “Western tradition” and other right-wing offensives, we are in danger of losing many of these gains [often-successful, concerted challenges to them]. Cultural domination and the creation of the “other”—long facts of life in many of our institutions—are coming center stage in the human drama of education (pp. 91-92).

The most common option for language learning and academic-subject instruction in elementary schools is the English-only program. In English-only classrooms all subject matter is taught in English (Valdés, 2001). In 1998, California passed Proposition 227 which required all English learners to be taught “overwhelmingly in English” through sheltered/structured English immersion programs. After a transition period, normally not to exceed one year, having acquired a working knowledge of English, they were transferred to mainstream English-language classrooms. According to Banks (2006), the intent of Proposition 227 was to eliminate bilingual education which was ironic, given the research which indicates that the best way for ELLs to learn English is to strengthen—not
to eradicate—their first language (August & Hakuta, 1997). ELLs placed in English-Only classrooms receive daily instruction that is governed by linguistic, sociocultural, and social interaction codes that may well diverge from those governing their home, peer, and community lives (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). This situation is a set-up for failure for these students; they are asked to learn all their subjects in a foreign language and then considered second class when this task is extremely difficult for them.

**School Reforms**

Lee, Ajavi, and Richards (2007) review the other reforms undertaken in California in response to concerns about student achievement. These reforms include teacher training, but also efforts to standardize instruction and assessment within elementary schools so that it would be consistent for students from grade to grade. As a result, many schools and districts adopted curricular programs from various publishing companies because these programs offered consistency across grades, a promise of all the necessary activities for learning, consistent assessment, and training for teachers.

As a result of this program, the authors report, students’ average scores in reading increased on the achievement tests. However, this series of reforms were not successful with English Language Learners. Critical instructional strategies, including the strategy of relating vocabulary to one’s own life, were missing for this population of students.

**State-mandated Core Curriculum**

It is most likely that second language learners will be taught by teachers who use core curriculum for instruction. Districts are restricted to “scientifically approved core reading programs” to secure Reading First grants for federal funding. If schools refuse to
use a government-approved reading program they don’t receive funding. According to Garan, (2004), Open Court Reading was the favored program with Reading First panels of experts. The National Reading Panel’s (NRP) website (http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/nrpvideo.htm, retrieved May 21, 2009) offers a free video which shows clips of children being drilled in McGraw-Hill’s Open Court even though the NRP report itself does not recommend any commercial program.

In 1998, the Governor of California, the Legislature, State Board of Education and the California Department of Education supported the passage of AB 2519 which created a series of adoptions of instructional materials which were standards-aligned materials. Since 1999, the state has adopted standards-aligned materials in history-social science, language arts, mathematics and science. In 1999 Open Court Reading and Houghton Mifflin’s Reading Program were the state-mandated choices offered to California school districts with the idea that either program would “provide teachers with instructional materials to support student mastery of the English language arts and mathematics standards” (p. 3, Preface, AB2519 Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics Report. California Department of Education, Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resource Division, Instructional Resources Office http://rsvh.addr.com/mva/id86.htm, retrieved May 21, 2009)

Open Court Reading is a scripted program which means that teachers read directly from the manual as the class progresses through the material. A rigid pacing of lessons is imbedded in the program, which requires all grade level teachers to be on the same page
on any given day. As part of its promotion, SRA/McGraw-Hill, its publisher, encourages districts to pay for coaches (in addition to the high cost of materials) who are trained in the use of the program to oversee the implementation of the curriculum in each classroom: “The coaches sit in the classroom to make sure the teacher is following the manual and doesn’t bring in books of her own or stray from the script” (Garan, 2004, p. 82). It is assumed that teachers want to be told what to say when teaching reading and that by doing so instruction could be standardized and therefore consistent, which would benefit learners. The scripted curriculum, with Open Court coaches’ oversight of the teacher’s adherence to the teacher’s manual, positions the reading program as the instructor and the content of classroom reading instruction rather than a tool in the hands of a professional. As a result, teachers are intimidated by their displacement and reprimanded by their principals if they deviate from the program (Garan, 2004).

Supporters of Open Court Reading argue that since the curriculum is preset with a script, teachers do not need to prepare for classes or make instructional decisions. This is beneficial because the program assures that students would get a full range of instruction using strategies that have been proven effective by scientific research. Children’s education would not be compromised by a teacher who isn’t aware of the best strategies for teaching reading. Essentially, reading instruction in Open Court classrooms would be “conducted” by the experts who created the program. On the other hand, those who argue against core curriculum programs advocate that students are unique and that a standardized program does not work for all children (Garan, 2004).
Additionally, Open Court has not been proven to be a panacea. Moustafa & Land (2002) compared the average SAT 9 reading scores of second through fifth grade English-Only children in schools using Open Court with the scores of comparable schools using non-scripted programs in a large urban school district. They also conducted a reanalysis of children’s reading achievement in Open Court vs. the contemporary reading instruction in the NICHD Houston study in Texas. The outcomes in both school districts suggested that use of Open Court Reading limited “what children were able to achieve in reading relative to what they were able to achieve via many other programs” (p. 52).

*Teachers’ Perceptions of the Efficacy of the Open Court Program for English Proficient and English Language Learners*

Lee, Ajayi, & Richards (2007) conducted a study to examine both experienced and less experienced teacher perspectives and opinions on the effectiveness of the Open Court program to facilitate English language teaching for ELL students in K-3 grades. Their findings showed a positive correlation between teacher’s experience and their perceptions of the effectiveness of Open Court, with less experienced teachers (less than 5 years teaching) more favorable toward Open Court. Teachers rated the writing component as the least effective part of the Open Court program, followed by the scripted nature of the program. Teachers suggested that the program could be improved by making provision for flexibility and creativity.

A new teacher gave the following evaluation of Open Court:
…as a new teacher, the program was great. It taught me how and what to do to teach Language Arts. The training taught you how to use the book to make the best out of your time. I don’t know what I would have done without this scripted program (Lee, Ajayi & Richards, 2007, p. 30).

An analysis of her language suggests that she acknowledges and recognizes the curriculum as her instructor (it taught me). By using “how” and “what” she acknowledges her need for methods and content of reading instruction to be determined by an external source (the reading program) and infers her lack of confidence in her own knowledge of teaching. Her expression also indicates the authority vested in the program from her position as learner. In the next sentence she changed the pronoun from “me” to “you” suggesting that she belonged to a plurality of learners who were dependent on trainers to decide how to “use” the teacher’s manual (book). Her expression of dependence (“the training taught”) reiterates her (and others) attribution of authority to the program. When she chose to refer to classroom instructional time as “your time” she aligned herself with other teachers rather than viewing the classroom as a shared experience with students. Her last statement reverted back to a personal reference (“I”) and confirmed her dependence upon the scripted program to direct her classroom moves, abdicating any professional responsibility for instructional decision-making.

Lee, Ajayi & Richards, 2007, conclude:

The issue of teachers’ decision-making process is at the heart of teaching. Teachers constantly interpret the classroom world they inhabit with their students. Classroom learning contexts require teachers to make judgment calls about the
topics at hand and about learners’ behavior, classroom management, and student priorities. It appears that the scripted nature of Open Court essentially denies teachers this fundamental role of their profession. When the critical role of teachers is “out sourced” to program designers, teachers run the risk of becoming reduced to mere technicians. An important implication from this study involves the teacher’s perceived role of themselves. Given that the majority of the teachers surveyed perceived Open Court to be generally ineffective, particularly for the English language learner, how teachers perceive themselves as agents of education remains compromised. Although Open Court was designed to standardize instruction and assessment, it appears that how teachers view themselves cannot be standardized. (p. 31).

Teachers, as technicians, are not authorized to adapt the program to the varying needs of students. As a result, this approach, which can be likened to the process of franchising fast food restaurants, does not have room for students’ unique and personal uses of language because these things could not be anticipated by the script writers.

In relation to Open Court and English Language Learners, Peck and Serrano (2002) found that teachers criticized Open Court for “presupposing background knowledge that ELL students did not have.” This is especially problematic because meaning-making is critical in the process of learning a foreign language; if students’ reading program is not meaningful to them because they lack the background knowledge for it, the program will not support their acquisition of the language. Peck and Serrano (2002) also stated that the “rapid instructional pace and lack of interaction caused ELL
students to tune out.” When instruction is not meaningful, students have a hard time focusing on it. The result is that students miss out on what is being offered and are at risk for falling further and further behind their English-proficient peers. Finally, they state that teachers did not feel the Open Court’s guide for adapting the curriculum for ESL was useful.

A Summary of California Reading/Language Arts Framework

“California’s Reading/Language Arts Framework provides a blueprint for defining the goals of English language learning, organizing language instruction, designing curriculum, specifying instruction, and identifying the role of teachers” (Lee, Ajayi & Richards, 2007, p. 23). The document recommends direct instruction of concepts and vocabulary of specific texts. For ELLs, the framework focuses on vocabulary, suggests a variety of supports and explicitly recommends that vocabulary instruction for ELL students be presented “overwhelmingly in English” (p. 233). Specifically the blueprint asserts that students in elementary school who are learning English “can participate fully in regular classroom language arts instruction” (p. 233).

Toohey (2003) posits that those type of classroom practices construct ELLs as language deficit learners; learners who lack the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) to participate in classroom discursive practices. This climate of marginalization is not limited to vocabulary instruction; rather it permeates classroom discourse across instructional events.

The framework states that teachers’ instructional practices will produce the best student outcomes if they adhere to the guidelines. No description is offered for specific
teacher roles or for his or her involvement in language lesson design and development. Thus, teachers are not viewed as “active agents in the development of their own practice, as decision-makers using their specialist knowledge to guide their actions in particular situations” (Calderhead, 1987 as cited in Richards, 2000, p. 65).

The framework narrowly constructs literacy education as reading and writing in traditional print texts in contrast to a broader view which includes articulating the ways and means students express themselves and how literacy practices can be linked to students’ “social and personal identities and their quest for meaning, personal power, and pleasure” (Mahiri, 2000, p. 384). It is clear that the California framework does not capture a broad perspective of literacy practices and therefore, ELL students do not benefit from it as they participate in the educational, cultural and social contexts of their lives.

*Teachers as Agent of Curriculum Implementation*

In addition to denying individual linguistic agency to students because the program fails to help teachers engage individually with students’ personal meaning making, the program also denies this type of agency to teachers. A reading program (such as Open Court) that does not take into consideration teachers’ expectations, interests, and viewpoints runs the risk of setting “the stage for angst and doubt in teachers, leading to lower personal and professional efficacy … and most seriously, continued failure for students most at risk” (Kame’enui, Carnine, & Dixon, 1998, p. 3). The teacher becomes the representative of the state, district, and publisher of the program, getting paid to embrace a powerless stance towards literacy and to place
students in a position of being shaped by a literacy construct that (as will be seen) cannot account for the realities of these students’ lives. In this way, reading easily ceases to be a meaning-centered activity. In addition to the ways in which the state, district, and publishers construct teachers, cultural experiences and other personal beliefs also shape their teaching practices.

**Teachers’ Attitudes and Beliefs about Schooling Second Language Learners**

Comber and Nixon (1999) posit, “The everyday moment-by-moment choices teachers and students make, and how they talk about those choices, construct the literate practices of the classroom” (p. 319). The day-to-day decisions made by classroom teachers reflect their beliefs and attitudes toward teaching and toward students and define the parameters of choices available to students in the classroom. Since teachers have authority in the classroom, their belief system controls much of what happens in the classroom.

Teacher belief, a form of personal knowledge, can be defined in a variety of ways. Harvey (1986) defined a belief system as a “set of conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth and/or trustworthiness to warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action” (p. 660). Kagan (1992) generally defined teacher belief as “teachers’ implicit assumptions about students, learning, classrooms, and the subject matter to be taught” (p. 66). Teachers’ sense of self-efficacy is one form of teacher belief; their generalized expectancy concerning confidence in their ability to influence students and to successfully perform certain professional tasks (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1977;
Teacher self-efficacy has been shown to increase in association with student achievement and use of new curriculum. For example, when 48 high school teachers were interviewed and observed, teachers’ self-efficacy was associated with student achievement in reading and math (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Some studies aimed at determining the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and classroom practice led to contradictory results. Harste & Burke (1977) and Deford (1985) both found a strong relationship between teachers theoretical orientations toward reading instruction (phonics, skills, whole language) and classroom practice. Bauch (1982, 1984) found a relationship between teachers’ beliefs about teacher control and student participation by using questionnaires to determine beliefs and teachers’ self-reported practices.

Duffy (1981), however, concluded that teacher’s theoretically based conceptions about reading instruction were not related to their teaching of reading practices. Hoffman and Kugle (1982) also found a lack of correlation between teachers’ theoretical orientations and specific classroom behaviors that were assumed to link with specific theoretical orientations. Notably, in most of these studies, paper-and-pencil instruments were used to measure teachers’ theoretical orientations derived from scholarly literature. Hoffman and Kugle (1982) concluded that teacher beliefs could not validly be accessed through multiple choice instruments.

Kagan’s (1992) review of 24 heterogeneous research studies on teacher belief identified factors which influence teacher judgments: teachers’ prior experiences and related beliefs, the particular class of students a teacher faces and the kind of academic
material to be taught. The combination of these factors formulates in part teachers’ belief system that constrains the teacher’s perception, judgment and behavior and functions as a filter when interacting with others. All 24 studies reviewed (quantitative and qualitative) reported consistency between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices.

Day-to-day experiences, within and without the classroom are translated and absorbed into the dynamic pedagogy unique to individual teachers. When considering teachers’ transfer of knowledge from one context to another, Salomon and Perkins (1989) found that in order for teachers to modify a curriculum script for a new class of students (context), teachers had to some degree decontextualize information associated with their personal pedagogy to make it useful when interacting with students. For example, when 6 elementary teachers and 5 students were observed, individually interviewed about their understanding of “reading instruction,” and asked to construct concept maps about their understanding of reading instruction, the complexity of teachers’ understanding of reading instruction was associated with greater use of responsive elaborations during instruction (Roehler & Reinken, 1989). The teachers in the Roehler & Reinken study altered their classroom practice for that particular class of students, based on their adjusted beliefs about the value of clarification in reading instruction as a result of staff development training.

Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd (1991) conducted a study to determine the relationship between teachers’ beliefs about the teaching of reading comprehension and their classroom practices with 39 teachers from grades 4, 5, and 6. An interview technique together with classroom observations was used to ascertain teachers’ beliefs
and practices rather than a paper-and-pencil measure. Specifically, their study investigated whether teachers who used basal readers in the teaching of comprehension, used them flexibly or inflexibly and:

- whether the teachers asked students to read orally or silently and, if oral reading was practiced, whether the teachers interrupted the students if they made an error in pronunciation; whether the teachers considered students’ background knowledge; and whether vocabulary was taught in or out of context (p. 563).

With regard to the use of basal readers, one teacher gave her rationale for using basals: “it was written by experts” who “know what skills are important” (p. 567). In contrast to inflexible use of basals, another teacher explained her flexible use, stating that she added literature as a modification to use of the basal.

Consideration of students’ background knowledge, an activity which reflects teacher beliefs related to the need to be flexible with curriculum, was analyzed on the basis of five teacher practices: a) reminding students of a previous lesson or experience, b) asking students about their previous experience or knowledge, c) telling their own experiences, d) providing background information, and e) providing background experiences (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991, p. 569). Findings of their study (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991) indicated that the beliefs of teachers in their sample were related to their classroom practices in the teaching of reading comprehension. The teaching practice of the majority of teachers within their sample was dominated by basal readers which focused on the skills of reading. Teachers within their sample did not hold theories of reading nor demonstrated classroom practice that
included interactive approaches to learning (focus on activation and building on students’ background knowledge, teaching vocabulary within story or content-related context or the inclusion of additional literature in the reading program). Even though some teachers used basals more flexibly than others, “these [basal] materials still governed the teachers’ thinking about the teaching of reading” (p. 579). This study indicates that the congruence of teacher beliefs with classroom practice was situated in the directives of the basal program. Luke (2002) maintains that teacher compliance and standardization of methods can lead to teacher de-skilling and a lack of flexibility in instructional strategies and responses to students.

Another factor which shapes teacher beliefs has to do with their perspectives about their students. Orellana, 2007, states, “Classrooms may be shaped more by teachers’ assumptions about their students’ home lives than by any forced imposition of norms (unlike schools, which do impose themselves on families), but those assumptions may profoundly shape practice” (p. 128). How the teachers construct the students in their minds shapes their teaching practices; inaccurate teacher concepts of students would obviously adversely affect their ability to be effective with their students.

Peterson & Bainbridge (2002), in their study of teachers’ practices and perspectives on writing assessment and selection of classroom literature, found that teachers positioned themselves within the dominant assessment practices by relying on externally imposed rubrics and curriculum as tools that allowed them to neutralize sociocultural influences on their practice. Teachers used the state writing assessment rubrics as objective representations of global standards that did not privilege one social or
cultural group over another. As a result, teachers’ use of the rubrics “narrowed their assessment only to writing conventions” (p. 6). “They did not carry their thinking further to assess how these influences impacted on particular children’s lives in their classrooms” (p. 7). The researchers concluded:

Predominant among the teachers participating in our research studies was a perception that commonly-accepted and recognized writing assessment and literature selection practices provided them with unquestionably reliable and valid practices for their classrooms. They felt comfortable with the values of homogeneity and universality embedded within those dominant practices and were particularly willing to accept the notion of objectivity inherent in them. (Peterson & Bainbridge, 2002, p. 9).

One aspect of teacher beliefs which has a significant effect on their teaching practices is the role of culture in the lives of their students.

*Positioning Theory as a Lens to Explore Teachers’ Beliefs about Literacy & Culture*

Positioning theory, developed within the framework of discursive psychology, demands close analysis of the sociolinguistic cues that people use to position themselves, their listeners, and others. Davies and Harre write:

> Once having taken up a particular position as one’s own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned (1990, p. 46).
Bruner, 1986, said, “Language not only transmits, it creates or constitutes knowledge or ‘reality’” (p. 132). The reality of classroom teachers and their students is revealed in the positions they take up in their discourse. Positioning theory provides a framework for analyzing the “saying [writing] – doing—being—valuing—believing combinations” (Gee, 1989, p. 6) produced by teachers’ and students’ interactions in the classroom.

Identifying positions that emerge from data can provide a useful tool to researchers for exploring what types of discursive positions are associated with participants’ responses. Positioning of participants during classroom events provide researchers with a beneficial lens to frame discussions of learning around issues of culture and literacy.

McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey (2004) explored the learning of teachers in a literacy masters course with a focus on how participants’ views of teaching and learning pertain to issues of cultural, racial, economic, and linguistic diversity when participants read multicultural autobiography, teacher ethnography and research in book clubs. Their research questions, “What positions do participants take up in regard to literacy and cultural issues such as race, class, and language use?” and “What do these positions reveal about participants’ learning?” are informative for the use of multicultural literature in the classroom.

They address the common classroom situation where the teacher is from the dominant culture (White, English-Only) and the students are diverse in cultural and linguistic heritage as well as socioeconomic class (August & Hakuta, 1997). Many teachers in that situation, embrace the belief that colorblindness is the best approach in
teaching children (Cochran-Smith, 1995; King; 1991). By doing so, they believe they are treating all children equally, mitigating difference in order to level the playing field (Paley, 1979).

Because most teachers identify with the dominant Euro-American culture in the U.S., they have not typically experienced race or language as constructs that position them in opposition to the mainstream. These teachers, like many of the rest of us, have internalized the linguistic and cultural practices of mainstream U.S. society where differences are defined in opposition to White, middle class, English speaking Americans. As part of a mainstream discourse community, teachers are typically taught to avoid openly drawing attention to difference, even as our speech may be marked to indicate such differences. For example, deeply embedded linguistic cues draw attention to race in our discourse, but these markers tend to remain transparent unless someone or something makes them visible (van Dijk, 1993) (McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey, 2004, p. 281).

These teacher beliefs erase the centrality of culture to the lives and experiences of children; yet many of these experiences are a result of being part of a culture that is considered second class. The result is that something profoundly significant to children becomes a topic that cannot be broached.

Another aspect of teacher beliefs in relation to culture is the focus on external features of the culture. For many teachers, culture is associated with holidays or festivals, or culture is experienced when traveling to other countries or socializing with
other races or with people who do not speak English. In contrast, Rosaldo (1986) defines culture:

[C] ultural patterns—social facts—provide the template for all human action, growth, and understanding. Culture so construed is, furthermore, a matter less of artifacts and propositions, rules, schematic programs, or beliefs, than associative chains and images that tell what can be reasonably linked up with what; we come to know it through collective stories that suggest the nature of coherence, probability and sense within the actor’s world. (M. Rosaldo, in Bruner, 1986, p. 66)

Culture is far more than merely a matter of the type of tableware a group of people uses; it is a way of thinking, understanding the world, and making predictions about what is likely to happen next.

Understanding the complexities of culture can lead teachers to major new epiphanies about their students and about their own teaching practices. McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey, 2004, page 282, state:

Although teachers often see themselves as apolitical, teaching and literacy instruction are political endeavors imbued with cultural beliefs, ideals, and values with implications for identity. As such, “Literacy acquisition, particularly reading instruction, holds implications for cultural transmission, that is, for how knowledge is transferred, reproduced, and transformed” (Roth in Ferdman, 1990, p. 288). The ways in which knowledge is transferred, reproduced, and transformed are inseparable from the discourses of power that govern what counts
as knowledge and how it is constructed. It is therefore critical that researchers investigate how teachers understand and position themselves in regard to literacy and culture (McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey, 2004, p. 282).

In the McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey (2004) study, 18 pre-service and inservice teachers participated by reading 7 texts, engaging in large group teacher-supported discussion and small group peer-led discussions. Researchers foregrounded their analysis of the participants’ written work (e.g. book logs, reflective papers, personal narratives, and final project). Three students were selected as focal participants.

After reading and discussing Vivian Paley’s White Teacher (2000), one participant related her personal experience in her book log:

One child came up to me and said that today was a celebration. I asked what he was celebrating and he told me that his [mother’s] anniversary was today. I was pleased with his excitement until he told me it was her anniversary for being clean from drugs. I said, “Oh nice,” and ended the conversation. I now realize that I sent a message that it should be kept [quiet] and avoided. Yet I know at least [part] of the class had been exposed to family members with drug addictions.

(McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey, 2004, p. 289)

In light of the participant’s positioning as the teacher, her response of “Oh, nice” was a move to mark the end of the conversation and make the child go away. His personal experience (celebrating his mother’s anniversary) was not valued in the classroom. When the teacher repositioned herself, she realized that she had “sent a message” to her student that such news should “be kept quiet and avoided.” Her response to the student
was a clear message that his news had no relevance in the classroom. Her reflective
stance allowed her to reevaluate, changing her mind about the student’s sharing and
determining that it was relevant and appropriate for sharing with others. In doing so, this
participant identified with Paley’s stance in White Teacher, when Paley described how
her discomfort with issues led her to silence some children in her class.

When the three teachers were given the opportunity to read and discuss literature
and reflect upon their feelings, meaningful learning and exploration of literacy and
culture was realized for each of the participants. Their learning was accomplished
because time for such activity was valued, and participants’ emotional investment
accompanied their literacy practices. However, not all participants in the study
demonstrated growth. Those that practiced positioning themselves with others or opposed
to others, did not choose to use their position to explore empathy with the “other”.
Instead they chose to practice self-other positioning in a neutral manner, expressing
superficial agreement with an author.

The understandings teachers have of culture, particularly teachers of the majority
culture who may not perceive how their own culture influences their thinking and who
cannot therefore comprehend the significance of culture to the thinking of their students,
profoundly affects the practices of the classroom. In relation to literacy, language use is a
reflection of personal meaning. If teachers use their authority in the classroom to make
culture an unacceptable topic of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, then a
significant portion of what children may wish to express has been made irrelevant and
essentially incomprehensible.
Kotsopoulos & Lavigne (2008) conducted a study to determine the assumptions teachers make about the intersection of knowledge about students and knowledge about mathematics (learning path) and investigated what conceptual and pedagogical insights might be mined from the analysis of teacher’s assumptions. Researchers recognize four domains of teacher knowledge: 1. general content knowledge, 2. specialized content knowledge [teacher knowledge that goes beyond the curriculum], 3. Teachers’ knowledge of students and content [intersection of teachers’ knowledge about students and knowledge about mathematics] and 4. knowledge of teaching and content). The researchers’ locus of inquiry rested on the third domain.

A common timed task (determining water pressure) was completed by pairs of teachers and pairs of students. Teachers were instructed to complete the task as a “level 3” response that a tenth grade student might complete. The teachers were not able to anticipate the learning paths of students. Teachers made significantly more conceptual errors than students. Students, on the other hand, adapted to the task and did better overall than the teachers at completing the task. Schulman (1986; 1987) asserts that “teachers must have ways of representing and formulating the subject that makes it comprehensible to others” (1989, p. 9).

Two significant questions emerge from this study: What other factors contribute to student understanding when the learning paths of students differ from those projected by teachers? How limiting are the assumptions teachers make about students’ learning paths? In conclusion, Kotsopoulos & Lavigne (2008) state:
The assumptions teachers make about student thinking potentially correlates to the ways in which teachers teach. By examining teachers’ assumptions about student thinking, we can then begin to unpack the assumptions teachers make. Furthermore, we can begin to understand the kinds of additional knowledge that teachers might need to be more effective at teaching mathematics. (p. 5).

Although their study was in the field of mathematics, their conclusions help in the analysis of the complexities of literacy instruction in the classroom.

**Students**

Of course, the other significant actors in a classroom are the students. Although they are more numerous than a single teacher or a single teacher plus a teacher’s aide, because they lack authority, their perspectives are less likely to become central to the linguistic interactions of the classroom, particularly in classrooms where there is a scripted literacy program. In fact, it is the conflict between the programmatic (state and district-mandated curriculum) and teacher construction of the students and the actual realities of the students that creates the decontextualization of literacy practices in the school.

**Identity**

Cultural knowledge cannot be separated from the identity of individuals. Social interactions in historically contingent, culturally constructed frames of social life shape the development of identities and agency of individuals specific to particular practices and activities (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998). People are thought of as “composites of many, often contradictory, self-understandings and identities, whose loci
are often not confined to the body but spread over the material and social environment, “and few of which are completely durable” (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 8).

DaSilva Iddings and Katz, L., (2007) examine the disconnect between school and home identities of three Hispanic second graders and many factors that seem to contribute to these disconnects. They conclude:

“…the possibilities for recent-immigrant Hispanic ELLs to exert will and autonomy and to affirm themselves as active social agents (Giroux & McLaren, 1994) may be harshly abridged by school practices that strictly predetermine ways of using language, ways of interacting, and ways of being that may not in any way represent them nor reflect their out-of-school experiences (see also McCafferty, 2002); thus imposing rigid boundaries on home and school identities. …our study demonstrates the complex nature of promoting ELLs’ school achievement (DaSilva Iddings & Katz, 2007, p. 312).

Their conclusions suggest that despite the ways in which laws and reading curricula construct students, identity is important and must be both acknowledged and supported in the classroom:

We suggest that mediating factors facilitating the integration of home and school identities for these students become an integral part of classroom practices. These mediating factors should include teachers’ efforts to (1) create occasions for family and community lives to intersect with school experiences, (b) accept linguistic/cultural hybridity (e.g., combined use of the native language and English for instruction, allowing code switching) as a viable and authentic way of
being and communicating so that students may not learn to value one
language/culture over another; (c) structure classroom activities so as to promote
a multiplicity of perspectives (i.e. voices), and (d) provide opportunities for
Hispanic ELLs (and their families) to adopt identities of competence in the
classroom. These mediations, and the like, may increase possibilities for students
and their families to exercise agency. Moreover, they should permit them to
weaken the demarcations that continue to separate their life histories and cultural
repertoires from the institutional context of educational activity.
Perhaps then, recent-immigrant Hispanic ELLs will begin to find deeper meaning
and significations in their being at school, to exert a compelling voice in
classrooms, and ultimately, to transform their educational circumstances.

This research demonstrates that curricular constructs that fail to account for individual
identity will also fail to teach the very students about which state legislatures, school
district personnel, and teachers are concerned (DaSilva Iddings & Katz, 2007, pp. 312-
313).

**Historical Aspect of Culture: Heuristic Development**

The social identities assumed by or assigned to students potentially provide them
with positive social identities from which to engage in learning. When a person
undergoes heuristic development, they use available cultural resources in order to
improvise, responding to the subject positions which exist in their present world. The
history that a person brings with them serves as the platform for those improvisations,
which potentially results in a change of mind, unlimited by the reality of their circumstances (Holland et al, 1998).

“Tools of identity,” as described by Hannerz (as cited by Holland et al, 1998), of particular lived worlds, “become means of the symbolic bootstrapping that creates a revised sense of self” (Holland, 1998, p. 43). In an educational context, when children participate in the activities of school, they adopt the identity of a student which changes their subsequent behavior.

As students, children develop a world view from the positions into which they are steadily cast by teachers and their peers (Holland, 1998). Their perspective “maintains a sense of entitlement or disentitlement to spaces, relationship, activities, and forms of expression that together made up the indices of identity: (Holland, 1998, p. 44). When students are not consciously aware of the positional aspects of their perspective, however, they are potentially more vulnerable to the power dynamics of the collective social situation in the classroom.

*Figured Worlds: Positionality and Agency*

Figured worlds, as described by Holland et al. (1998) are the collectively formed activities which trace the agency of individuals as they participate in those activities, situating their identity. Individual identities, informed by figuring and positionality, propose a way of “conceptualizing personhood, culture and their distributions over social groups” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 286).

The concept of “figured worlds” can be understood as historical phenomena; as social encounters in which participants’ positions matter; as socially organized and
reproduced worlds which divide participants into assigned roles (Holland et al., 1998). These social encounters value the positions of the participants in the particular space and time in which they occur.

The “figured world” then is a way to “conceptualize historical subjectivities, consciousness and agency, persons (and collective agents) forming in practice” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 42). People are both social producers and social products, not only acting upon others, demonstrating agency, but also receiving the acts of others (Holland et al., 1998). Holland’s (1998) expanded definition of “figured world” explains:

[It is] a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state (p. 52).

In the classroom setting, students’ view of their future is informed by their “figured worlds” which are their own interpretations or imaginations that mediate their behavior. Figured worlds and their situated realizations are spaces for self-authoring. When students author their own stories and allow their peers and teacher access to them, their “figured worlds” are reproduced as an abstraction, forming and reforming, guided by the practices of the participants (Holland et al., 1998).

“Figured worlds” then, are processes or traditions of understanding which draw people together and offer form to their intersecting lives (Holland et al., 1998). They are recreated when people work together, dependent upon interaction and intersubjectivity
for sustenance. “Activities as a context for action establish particular set of roles, actors, institutions, settings, durations and organizational requirements” (Wertsch; Engeström, as cited by Holland, p. 56). Situated learning in communities of practice has shown that identities are important outcomes for students who participate in socially enduring and complex activities (Lave & Wenger, 1999), which seems to parallel the idea that identities are formed in the process of participating in activities which are organized by ‘figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). Power, privilege, and agency are aspects of figured worlds that require close examination.

**Classrooms**

A classroom is a whole greater than the sum of its parts and a place where the proportionate number of parts maybe inversely related to the influence those parts have on the general goings-on. As with the constituent parts, teachers and students, there is a range of factors influencing the interactions that take place as well as the effectiveness of the supposed focus of activities: teaching and learning. After considering some of the larger significant constructs such as power relations, I will also consider constructs that apply to the teaching of reading and language arts to English Language Learners.

**Power Relations**

Hegemony “refers to a process in which dominant groups in society come together to form a bloc and sustain leadership over subordinate groups” (Apple, 1996, p. 14). Power relations permeate every classroom event and yet social interactions at school cannot be limited to a definition or analysis of power. A discussion of the cultural knowledge individuals bring and use at school requires, however, an investigation of the
ways students and teachers continually navigate through intersecting mazes of power in the classroom.

There are multiple ways to approach the analysis of power relations within the context of schooling. For example, literacy is sometimes defined as power, a quantifiable entity with multiple social and economic consequences. Classroom instruction offers literacy to empower disadvantaged students who need ‘more’ literacy. Competition for access to the power of literacy becomes the cause for equity and leads to exploration of the “distribution of literacy skills and identification of who controls access to them” (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005, p. 161). This view of power as product tends to stand alone, without accounting for socially constructed cultural identities that are constantly changing. Students’ ways of knowing and their internalized self portraits reflect power as a process rather than a product.

Power as a process is inherent in social and cultural practices of schooling and structures the relationships among students, their peers, and their teachers in specific moments in specific situations of day-to-day classroom experiences (Bloome et al., 2005). For example, with regard to reading achievement:

[A] student who is progressing through the various skills may be viewed as gaining “power”—skills that are transformed into social status (through report card grades, awards, etc.) and economic access (through admission to educational opportunities that lead to higher paying jobs). However, it is the structuring of reading into a set of hierarchical skills, and the institutional mechanisms of assessing those skills, that provides the “power” by defining who is who (good
reader vs. bad reader), and how cultural capital (reading skills) can be transformed into symbolic status (e.g. designations that range from valedictorian to high school graduate) and economic status (access to higher paying jobs (Bloome et al, 2005, p. 162-3).

What counts as reading often discounts alternative conceptions of reading, and the cultural knowledge that students bring to the classroom is judged irrational, lacking common sense, often resulting in referrals to special education (Cummins, 2000).

Inden (1990, as cited by Holland et al., 1998) defines human agency as:

The realized capacity of people to act upon their world and not only to know about or give personal or intersubjective significance to it. That capacity is the power of people to act purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships with one another, to reiterate and remake the world in which they live, in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action possible and desirable, though not necessarily from the same point of view (p. 42).

Scripted reading programs deny agency to both teachers and their students. Language, in these cases, does not offer the possibility of political choice because individual perspectives do not get constructed or represented. Rather, it is a medium of exchange around a decontextualized process of encoding and decoding.

Cummins (1989) posits that English Language Learners (ELLs) success in school is dependent on whether the schools either accept or redefine the power relations reflected in broader society. He suggests that the incorporation of students’ languages
and cultures into the culture of the classroom, the implementation of pedagogical empowerment strategies, and parental and community involvement in students’ school experiences are prerequisites for their school success. He also predicted that the quality of teacher-student interactions and peer interactions could be much more important to student success than specific teaching methods (Cummins, 1996).

Based on their research of teachers of Mexicano/Latino students, Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) state,

We believe that when discussing subordinated Latino populations such as Mexican Americans, Chicanas/os, and Puerto Ricans, we need to acknowledge candidly and courageously issues of unequal power relations and how they may get played out in school settings. There are scholars who argue that, short of a revolution, the equalization of asymmetrical power relations at the school and societal level cannot occur. Our findings, however suggest the powerful agency that teachers and other educators, as change agents, possess in their work in creating more just and democratic school (p. 63).

How agency is assigned or hidden, and how any use of language privileges some students at the expense of others must be considered. The uses people are making of language must be observed and understanding gleaned from it in its immediate context. Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris (2005) caution that teachers cannot assume or evaluate the meanings and uses of literacy on the basis of what they meant before or outside their context of use. Power relations permeate every classroom event and yet social interactions at school cannot be limited to a definition or analysis of power. A
discussion of the cultural knowledge individuals bring and use at school and how that cultural knowledge becomes part of the classroom discourse or is made invisible requires an investigation of the ways students and teachers continually navigate through intersecting mazes of power in the classroom.

Cultural Mediation

When interactions are invited, valued and allowed to flourish in classroom spaces, school looks and sounds differently; stereotypes are named, expectations are raised and teachers see their students for who they are instead of who they aren’t. By learning to recognize the cultural knowledge of students, and by identifying and negotiating ways of learning in the space where cultures clash, opportunities emerge for teachers develop a way of seeing their students for who they are.

Mediation is central to the creation and movement of cultural knowledge. The idea of mediation implies a “constant reciprocal relationship between the social and the individual, between the cultural and the intellectual” (Moll in Reyes & Halcón, 2001, p. 15). The teacher functions as a sociocultural, sociohistorical mediator of formal and informal knowledge about the culture and society in which children develop (Díaz & Flores, 2001). Teachers also function as a tool, a mediating “device” that deliberately teaches a student to achieve goals. The teaching-learning process of literacy development is a sociocultural, sociohistorical and sociopolitical act, and teachers must seek to understand and value the relationship between literacy processes and the cultural, historical, institutional and political factors at work in the classroom.
Cultural Knowledge

The themes of cultural knowledge: its social context and the act of mediation between the social and intellectual are interrelated. When social interaction between teachers and students occurs, identities are shaped. Heuristic development and perspective of participants are significant aspects of their developing identities and the figured worlds of students explicate positionality, power and agency that is in constant flux.

Community

Classrooms are often referred to as learning communities. Teachers have the responsibility for organizing the social context of the classroom in ways that guide students through the learning process. When classroom life, however, is described as a community, generic approaches to teaching and learning are often generated for broad application regardless of the sociocultural and interactional context or local conditions of any particular classroom (Bloome, 1989). When an assortment of ready-made materials and practices are used in the classroom, normative literacy practices are imported and imposed resulting in a constrained space for students (Guitérrez, 1997). For example, a recounting of the initial school experience of a Spanish-only speaker captures the consequences of such a classroom:

I came to kindergarten so excited and ready to learn. I came prepared with my maleta (suitcase) full of so many wonderful things, my Spanish language, my beautiful culture, and many other treasures. When I got there, though, not only did they not let me use anything from my maleta, they did not even let me bring it

This reflective narrative illustrates the potential consequences of classroom practices that exclude the cultural knowledge of students. Many elementary classrooms have twenty-five to thirty students in attendance. Some teachers think they construct equity for the group by treating everyone the same, when instead they devalue students’ cultural knowledge by asking them to check their backpacks (suitcases) at the door.

Anzaldúa (1987) refers to herself as a turtle, carrying “home” on her back wherever she goes; never losing touch with her origins because lo mexicano is in her system, it “permeats every sinew and cartilage in my body” (p. 21). Students, like Anzaldúa, do not exist apart from their identities of origin.

Some students pass more easily through the doors of the classroom than others, deciding to expose or hide given aspects of their identity in order to join the group as an accepted member (Orellana, 2005). Some students are able to shift from one identity into another by selective use of language, how they position their bodies and gaze or how they use silence (Orellana, 2005; Morita, 2004). They are negotiating their competence and their identities as in this example from Lisa, a Japanese graduate student:

Yesterday my classmates asked me to [summarize a group discussion to the whole class]. At first I thought, it’s really beyond my ability! (laughs) But the situation is like emergency. If I couldn’t do it, everybody thinks that I’m a very um (long pause) I feel that I have to say something even if I can’t …But the result is terrible. (laughs) Anyway, it’s really good for me because everybody now knows
that my English is not so good. It’s really important for me because if they know that, they can help me sometimes, probably. (Lisa, Interview 1, as cited by Morita, 2004, p. 585).

Students’ perspectives, like Lisa’s, find negotiating their sense of competence and identity a significant challenge. In this case, her negotiation influenced and was influenced by her class participation (Morita, 2004).

Classroom participants may be conceptualized as a collectivity rather than “community.” The collectivity, from the perspective of the students, is not a monolithic structure, but rather a location where openness to unassimilated otherness exists and is recognized; where diversity is constitutive and not simply tolerated and where difference is not suppressed or subsumed (Winkelmann, 1991; Young, 1986). The classroom collective as described by Pratt (1991) is named as a “contact zone.”

*The Contact Zone*

In order to explore how cultural knowledge can be recognized, elaborated and transformed, the notion of “contact zones” (Pratt, 1991) is used as a lens to critique four studies of classroom literacy instruction. Pratt (1991) defines the “contact zone” to be: “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery” (p. 34). Contact zones are where cultural knowledge can be recognized, elaborated and transformed. The idea of the classroom as a “contact zone,” rather than a unified community, offers the possibility of making alliances one with another across the differences that exist.
Transculturation, the process in which Latino/a students select and invent from materials transmitted by the dominant middle class Western European culture of school, often embodied by the teacher, occurs in and through the dialogic exchanges made in the contact zone. While marginalized Latino/a students “do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for” (Pratt, p. 36). When transcultural repositioning is central to classroom discussions, students are enabled to consciously regulate it and to move between and among different languages, social classes and world views (Guerra, 2005, p. 4).

The “contact zone,” which locates the movement inherent in transculturation, is characterized by the tension of living in a state of in-betweenness. This struggle of engaging with multiple identities and responsibilities constitutes the process of individual transformation. Anzaldúa (1987) refers to the in-between space employing the concept of nepantla. Nepantla is a Nahuati (Aztec) word that means being positioned or positioning yourself somewhere “in the middle” ground between available points of view about a topic (“torn between ways”) (Anzaldúa, 1987; Fránquiz, 1999). Although this middle place may occur in a physical space, the space of in-betweenness is “an uncertain terrain an individual or group crosses as each moves from one state of understanding to another” (Fránquiz, 1999, p. 31). The process of inhabiting a space between ideas of self, other, the world and one’s place in the past, present and future, produces transformation (ibid.).
In the third space (Guitérrez, Baquerdaro-Lopez, & Turner 1997), potentially produced by and in the “contact zone,” “learning takes precedence over teaching, instruction is consciously local, contingent, situated and strategic; and our current knowledge about language learning and language users informs the literacy curriculum” (p. 372). While the “contact zone” is potentially productive, it is an uncomfortable space lacking clear delineation, for teachers and students (Orellana, 2005). Languages, registers, beliefs and practices compete and create tensions among participants. It is the tension that holds the potential for productivity; creating rich linguistic, sociocultural and content knowledge which is learned and then used to learn, equipping participants to become “knowledge brokers beyond classroom walls” (Guitérrez, Baquerdaro-Lopez, & Turner, 1997, p. 374).

*Classroom Practices Related to the “Contact Zone”*

Location of dynamic cultural knowledge within classroom contexts is based on the assumptions of participants which are formulated from their varied perspectives. In other words, participants do not necessarily agree upon or share recognition of cultural knowledge at school. Individuals describe their own knowledge and the knowledge of others in the midst of the indeterminacy of social interactions (Bloome, 1993; Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005), contingent upon their social identities and upon what counts as knowledge in that particular situation at that particular time.

In a mainstream classroom, the meaning of English literacy for a Mexican immigrant second language learner was centered on producing a report that conformed to the look and length prescribed by the teacher (Carger, 1996). In an effort to produce four
pages, both sides handwritten, the fifth-grade student developed a system for stretching out his material to fill as much paper space as she could. He wrote long headings and titles and skipped numerous lines. He described himself by arguing, “I know how to do a report (Carger, 1996). Jiménez (2000) interviewed a fourth-grade Latina student, asking her to explain what reading was. She replied, “It’s so that you learn more English” (p. 229).

These students position themselves with regard to language and ideas. The student faced with writing a report chooses to interact with the teacher’s norm for length, predicting adherence to form will potentially afford positive calculation of his efforts. He evoked an identity which he could perform himself, by reading the scene of the assignment and making a choice about accenting his neat and adequately spacious handwriting, making ambiguous his ideas and knowledge (Guerra, 2005).

In the other classroom context, what counts as reading is equated with a level of English language use that positions the student as a low achieving student. Other teachers, however, who recognized students as fully competent speakers of a particular variety of Spanish, did not treat their students as linguistic incompetents—or solely as non-English speakers—but rather as individuals involved in the natural process of second-language development (Jiménez, 2000).

Often, students are presented with a conception of writing and reading that is reinforced by a system of choices and relationships among the state, the school, and the teachers’ expectations (Bloome et al, 2005). This process of power in the “contact zone”
of the classroom reinforces the dominant culture without seeming to be coercive, defining literacy narrowly to the exclusion of other ways of interpreting knowledge.

Competing educational philosophies in English Second Language (ESL) instruction limit opportunities for many students (Carger, 1996): “It was a sad situation for many students, including Alejandro, who needed ESL help and were adversely affected by the lack of agreement on how to construct that help” (p. 31). Teachers who hoped to raise their bilingual students’ scores by focusing on writing instruction (Coady & Escamilla, 2005), assumed that student ideas were as limited as their ability to express themselves in English. Grammar and spelling mistakes were the basis of teacher evaluations that categorized students as poor writers in transitional bilingual classrooms. Teacher perspectives of students shaped and generalized their social identities in the classroom.

When the researchers mediated student writing, focusing on strength of content, they identified complex and sophisticated ideas which the students imaginatively developed about societal issues (Coady & Escamilla, 2005). For example, when Alex was given the opportunity to write about being a king for a day, he imagined life on a farm, earning a fair wage with reasonable work hours. Alex wrote “…and me and my men will build a school for the kids” (p. 465) indicating his concern and value of accessible education.

Another student who qualified for free breakfast and lunch was identified as a poor writer. She imagined herself as principal, and wrote that she would “come early to school and open the door” (Coady & Escamilla, 2005, p. 465). Dropped off early by
parents on their way to work, this student often waited in the cold for the cafeteria to
open in the mornings before school started. Her writing reflected her perception of the
social realities in the school environment, particularly regarding labor, school
management and discipline.

Sergio, a Mexican immigrant, stated that he wanted to be Dr. Martin Luther King,
Jr. for a day during the time of segregation in order to “see how Dr. King felt about it”
(Coady & Escamilla, 2005, p. 468). His use of imagination allowed him to examine
issues of culture and race beyond White or Hispanic, the dominant racial groups of the
community in which he lived. This suggested a shifting identity, expressed through his
writing, in which he explored multiple ideologies. His ideas would have been eclipsed by
a teacher limited to an analyses of linguistic features, instead of enhanced by a focus on
his content.

Expanding notions of transfer involve language and self. Researchers were
informed by students’ writing about the role of language transfer in the writing of
bilingual students and the negotiation of students’ identities as bilingual and multicultural
individuals whose life experiences revealed a variety of social inequities.

In addition to language transfer, Coady & Escamilla (2005) showed that students
were applying and negotiating who they were, essentially a “transfer of self” which
encompassed students’ identities and life experiences. Their writing also indicated they
were developing an identity reflective of multiple ideologies. Students wrote about
themes of poverty, family and community which were windows into and expressions of
their collective life experiences and social realities. They showed how the transfer of
language and the transfer of self are dynamic and continuous, as students continue to negotiate their identities between and across languages and multiple cultural contexts. Students negotiated their identities, incorporated their life experiences and faced the societal realities they experienced in the world around them. They wrote about poverty, education, social injustices, and democratic systems.

Students’ agency in their explorations of topics related to their identities and the social realities of their lives, while simultaneously working to challenge existing social inequities. Mediation of the assignment was not about the difference between form and content. Rather, the intent of the mediation transformed the social identity of the student by identifying students’ cultural knowledge. Given the space for self-authoring, both students produced and entered a figured world that expanded their social positions in the classroom as writers with sophisticated ideas. Their heuristic development enabled them to act upon society in their writing regardless of the limitations of actual circumstances.

A close examination of the researchers’ mediation in the previous example reveals a complex multileveled intervention. Students’ low test scores were the impetus for teachers to focus on writing. Because of the state standards-based assessment system, fourth-grade students were scheduled to be given a high-stakes writing exam the same year of the research study. Use of writing prompts by the researchers was an effort to provide practice for the bilingual transitional students who would be assessed in a similar way. This strategy, against the mandated testing situation, found opportunity for transformation instead of resignation. Students’ cultural knowledge was elaborated and
transformed; students were able to self-author themselves and as a result teachers’ perspectives of students were disrupted if not changed.

Students in mainstream classrooms, who are learning English, are rarely given the opportunity to talk, read or write in their first language. Without the option of language choice, a primary tool for mediation of thinking, students are silenced and their cultural knowledge remains unidentified. For example, when Alejandro’s teacher was interviewed about his progress in school, she commented, “Alejandro rarely, if ever, volunteers to participate in class” (Carger, 1996, p. 45). Similarly, lowest-performing bilingual readers interviewed by Jiménez (2000) said very little, perceiving literacy as “complete mystery” (p. 217). In the context of the classroom, these students lacked agency to act on their worlds of school. Conversely, homework and communications from school were main literacy events in their respective households (Carger, 1996; Jiménez, 2000). The school context moved into homes and altered families’ use of space and scheduling of time.

During a science lesson on nonrenewable resources, the teacher tried to describe a type of stone to her class (Carger, 1996). When she used examples of downtown Chicago buildings, students who lived in Mexican neighborhoods surrounding the school, looked at each other quizzically. “Bloomingdales?” someone repeated (p. 47). When the teacher mentioned traveling to Yellowstone National Park, however, she compared the length of time for that trip to the duration of time required to drive to Texas. Immediately students offered names of cities they’d visited in Texas. This example
represents the opportunities that teachers have as they move in the contact zone of the classroom.

Apart from the sociocultural connections of the interaction, students were silenced (Carger, 1996). For example, in math, Alejandro was identified as “weak in fractions” (Carger, 1996). At home, when confronted with a boxed cake mix, his mother and sisters were unfamiliar with dry and liquid measurement—cups and fractions of cups, measuring cups and spoons—which made the steps in the recipe incomprehensible for them. Cooking was a gender-specific task in which daughters took part in marginal, authentic tasks, such as gathering ingredients. Daughters quietly and attentively observed while the mother cooked. The activity of cooking was not perceived as a time for integrating school skills, practice in counting, or “experiencing” fractions (Carger, 1996). In order for teachers to mediate knowledge for students like Alejandro, they must have a desire to understand how participants, context, and activity combine and influence one another in ongoing and dynamic ways.

Jiménez (2000), incorporating such a purpose, examined bilingual students’ interactions during literacy instruction in the classroom. Four 4th-6th grade classrooms that included many low-performing students participated in the study. Four bilingual classroom teachers, two Anglo, one Puerto Rican, and one of Mexican origin participated in implementing cognitive strategy lessons to be used in literature groups in their classrooms. Strategies introduced included making inferences, asking questions, dealing with unknown vocabulary items, accessing cognate vocabulary, translating, and
transferring information across linguistic boundaries. Instruction was in Spanish and sometimes English (Jiménez, 2000).

The ability to make connections between the students lived experience and textual information has potentially transformative power for promoting students’ desire to acquire higher levels of literacy and engage in literate behaviors (Jiménez, 2000, p. 234).

Students Gil and Juan were able to describe in detail, as well as in metacognitive terms, how their prior knowledge could be integrated with textual information. Their ability to engage in those types of interactions was influenced by, “their instruction, the texts they read, the support and prompting provided to them and the overall context of the activity” (Lipson & Wixson, 1991, cited by Jiménez, 2000, p. 233). Gil explained, “Compare the book and your life…to understand better the book …I see the pictures umm, they are giving you an image of what they are like” (Jiménez, 2000, p. 234). Juan explained, “that it is similar to what happens at my house…they make tamales and so do we…it is almost the same as when you do these things and talk about them; it comes out in the book” (Jiménez, 2000, p. 234).

Application of the “contact zone”

Approaching the contact zone with the intent of identifying and valuing the cultural knowledge of students means honoring what students bring with them to the classroom in terms of knowledge, language, and culture. These become the resources for further learning rather than problems to be solved (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Guerra’s (2005) suggestions for navigational strategies may offer Latino/a students an
atlas of the “contact zone” that will support their process of identity transformation, if not an alteration in status. He attended to language learning as a young child attends to his mother’s voice, maintained resilience in the face of physical punishment and practiced social surveillance to inform rapport building. His writing, just like the “poor writers” in Roldan’s study, revealed his sophisticated thoughts and understandings and functioned as a “pass” for higher educational opportunities. He explains, “internally I was in the process of reconstituting myself, of gaining a sense of agency over the power vested in language that could be used to persuade others that my vision of the world was worth considering” (Guerra, 2005, p. 15). The tension of the “contact zone” in which Guerra moved about produced a teacher.

Guerra’s theory of transculturation relates to Orellena’s expanding notions of context with regard to the products of tension. Both narratives counter dominant efforts to make non-mainstream homes more compatible with school. The burden of change can be more equitably distributed when Latino/a students gain a sense of agency in the school setting. Orellana (2005) offers examples of how children move across multiple social contexts, functioning from positions allocated by the dominant culture of school. However, Orellena cautions that the spheres they inhabit are not clearly delineated, and the mutually constituted contexts go with them from place to place. What they bring with them changes the new space for everyone in that space at that moment in time.

School is only one of the many contexts and when students come to school, the context of school is changed by virtue of the contexts they bring with them. Schools must reexamine what they are asking students to affiliate to. The context of the
institution of school has sterilized the space, prohibiting growth. However, the possibility exists for the transformation of all contexts represented and perhaps the most qualified schools are the ones with the “greatest capacity for change in response to their clientele” (Orellana, 2005).

People, task, tools, scripts and motives cannot be neatly separated, since the participants are constitutive parts of multiple contexts. The clash of the “contact zone” resounds. More particularly, teachers’ assumptions about their students and students’ levels of engagement temporarily shape the shared context of the classroom. Participants operate from multiple positions within multiple social worlds and must speak simultaneously in the midst of contradiction. Student translators experience being in the middle between multiple worlds.

For example, the Latino/a students who translate for parents at school conferences speak from the position in their family and from the position of a “low literacy” student all at once. The parent who asks “how is my child doing?” wants to know if the student is behaving, but when the teacher, with the grade card in mind, redirects the question to the student, a diplomatic response that bridges both positions without violating politeness norms must be constructed by the student on the spot. Silence allows the student to maintain her position at this juncture of contexts.

**Student narratives at school**

Bloome, Christian, Carter, Otto & Shuart-Faris, (2005) offer a theory of narrative. They contend that educators must make a careful and detailed examination of language used in a variety of ways within the context of school. They must investigate how
language frames issues and people and defines the terms of debate and discussion. Reflectively, the assumptions of language use that are taken for granted as “common sense” must be acknowledged by classroom teachers.

The relationship between the local and global; the micro and macro can be understood as meanings are built in their encounter. To echo Guerra and Orellana, it is necessary to take into account both the individual participant and his or her social and cultural positioning and responses. Researchers must analyze their own framing and interpreting of events in an effort to probe closely the events of classroom language and literacy (Street, 2005, in Forward in Bloome, Christian, Carter, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005). With regard to Pratt’s (1991) “contact zone,” Bloome, Christian, Carter, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005, write:

At any particular moment in a classroom, there are tensions and conflicts between the tendency for continuity (reproduction of extant classroom cultural practices and social structures) and change and, put more grandly, between maintaining a cultural ideology or challenging and transforming it. This tension exists both at the level of performance and at the level of the meaning and significance of the performance. Therefore, it is not sufficient to merely list and describe the classroom literacy practices one finds in a particular set of classrooms; one must also describe those classroom literacy practices within the dialectics of continuity and change. As such, classroom literacy practices are perhaps better viewed as fluid and dynamic than as fixed and static—more like a verb than a noun (p. 52).
Movement and change are part of what defines the process named as classroom literacy practices.

Mixed Classrooms

Current literature on English second language learning suggests that combining ELL and English-only students for all instruction as problematic. Chaudron (1988) documented the teachers’ “apparent disparity in treatment” (p. 119) of ELL and English-only students. He observed a “mismatch between teachers and students’ cultural norms that resulted in a differential treatment of students during classroom interactions” (p. 119). In a similar study, Laosa (1979) concluded that teachers tend to be more negative towards, less interactive with, and more critical of ELL students in classrooms with English-only students. McKeon (1994) found that teachers’ interactions with ELLs were more managerial than instructional. Genesee (1994), as cited by Lee, Ajayi, & Richards, (2007), proposed that English language teaching practices and policies alienate ELLs from the social aspects of their lives and promote annihilation of their home language and culture. As a result the school becomes an agent of the majority culture, socializing children in ways that maintain it uncritically.

Identity formation is another serious consideration in classrooms where ELL students are together with English-only students. Toohey (2003) documented evidence of marginalization in mixed classrooms and concluded that the structure of the social world of classrooms “systematically excluded (ELLs) from just those conversations in which they might legitimately peripherally participate with child experts, English old-timers” (p. 93). Norton (1995) found that “classroom teaching practices neither conceive of
integrating language learners with the social, cultural, and economic contexts of learning nor view language learning as an investment in learners’ own socio-cultural identities” (as cited by Lee, Ajayi, & Richards, 2007, p. 23).

Finally, the interpersonal dynamics in this type of classroom became significant to Craviotto, Heras & Espindola (1999): “Our initial focus was on documenting the opportunities for learning presented in the fourth-grade classroom. Gradually we became more interested in the relationships between language and culture” (p. 25). Learning is inherently connected to the use of language and the cultures behind the use of language. In order to understand why programs such as Open Court are not successful with the ELL population, we need to understand the relationships between language and culture and how those create and affect the patterns of language use in the process of teaching and learning.

Reading Instruction in a Second Language

Thornburg (1993) reported that teachers involved in an intergenerational literacy program could not get English as a Second Language (ESL) children to respond to English storybook reading when they used a cognitive approach that emphasized story grammar and prediction questions. When the teachers asked the children to relate their personal lives to what was being read, then their participation increased (cited by Garcia, 2000). Researchers who have analyzed the second-language content of teaching resource materials agree that teachers are not given the necessary information needed to work effectively with bilingual or ESL students in all-English classrooms (Bernhardt, 1994; Garcia, Montes, Janisch, Bouchereau, & Consalvi, 1993; Schumm, Vaughn, Klingner, &
Haager, 1992). Bernhardt (1994) found that authors of classroom textbooks generally categorized ELL students with dialect speakers or with handicapped children. Few, according to Bernhardt, discussed the role of native-language literacy. Garcia et al. (1993) found that upon examination of basal reading materials, most dealt with English oral language development rather than literacy development.

In a research review, Pearson and Gallagher (1983) found not only that strategy use and monitoring were characteristic of more mature and better readers but also that one model of instruction—a gradual release of responsibility model that emphasized guided practice, independent practice, and feedback—was effective in training students to summarize an expository passage, ask questions about it, detect difficult portions, and make prediction about following passages, eventually assuming responsibility for monitoring these tasks themselves.

According to Harvey and Goudvis, (2008),

for two decades, Fred Newmann and his colleagues have been studying “authentic instruction”—instruction that is highly engaging and interactive, and which connects to students’ real lives—and the impact of such instruction on customary measures of schooling, including the high stakes standardized test scores. In two recent studies of Chicago public school students, the researchers found that when teachers offered less didactic and more interactive experiences, scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills rose significantly among a large cross section of students. (Newmann 2001; Smith, Lee, and Newmann 2001). Further, in an article reporting results of an NICHD Early Child Care and Youth
Development Research study, Pianta, Belsky, Houts, and Morrison (2007) discuss the impact of the emotional and instructional classroom climate on student performance and growth. They conclude that “opportunities to learn in small groups, to improve analytical skills, [and] to interact extensively with teachers…add depth to students’ understanding.” These studies confirm what reading researchers have observed for decades: engaged kids learn more. Allington and Johnston’s (2002) purposeful talk; Perkins & David’s (1992) culture of thinking; Palincsar and Brown’s (1984) reciprocal teaching; and Davey & Beth’s (1983) thinkalouds all suggest that kids with something to do with text actually process it better (http://www.comprehensiontoolkit.com/samples/Toolkit%20Research%20Base.pdf, retrieved April 12, 2008).

Because literacy involved meaning-making on the part of students in the process of both reading and writing, effective literacy instruction necessarily involves students in these processes. Effective literacy instruction also supports students in their learning but slowly offers students more and more independence in their reading and writing. These instructional strategies are almost impossible to place in a scripted reading program because they depend so much on teachers’ knowledge of their individual students and those students’ lives and readiness to move forward.

*Culturally Relevant Literature*

Selection of classroom texts is an important example of the teacher’s role in selecting literature with the purpose of developing social and cultural understandings.
Equally, not all texts offer the opportunity to challenge the readers’ belief systems. Classroom books that provide students with practice in decoding words, for example, often lack vocabulary or content that could create the possibility of a reader seeing herself in the text or using the literature to inform her life. Children do not have choices regarding the types of literature their teachers will select for instruction. The absence of authentic literature and literature about and by authors of a variety of cultural and linguistic groups is an example of the “autonomous model” of literacy as defined by Street (1993) and may show a lack of ideological clarity.

Latina/o educators and researchers through their personal educational experiences, professional knowledge and research speak to the value of students seeing themselves in literature as a way for students to learn about themselves, and develop a positive sense of self (Barrera & Garza de Cortes, 1997; Nieto, 1997; Jiménez, Moll, Rodriguez-Brown & Barrera, 1999). They argue that culturally relevant literature is beneficial for all students. Bishop (1997) states,

…literature about people of color can serve at least five broad functions: (1) it can provide knowledge or information, (2) it can change the way students look at their world by offering varying perspectives, (3) it can promote or develop an appreciation for diversity, (4) it can give rise to critical inquiry, and (5) like all literature, it can provide enjoyment and illuminate human experience, in both its unity and its variety (p.4).

Nieto (1997) agrees that authentic literature is good for all children. She defines authentic literature as a realistic genre that addresses the complexity of the human
experience. Reading authentic literature can also push people to look at issues that may be hard to understand or accept (p. 74).

The selection of literature alone will not be an effective means of the above stated goals. While authentic and culturally relevant literature are positive additions to any classroom, without the ideological clarity of the educator (Bartolomé and Balderrama, 2001), and instructional approaches that stem from a critical literacy framework there exists a risk that the literature will not be explored in a critical manner (McGinley, Mahoney, & Kamberelis, 1995).

Using Culturally- Relevant Literature in the Classroom

Recognizing that the mere existence of multicultural literature in a classroom does not necessarily mean that the interactions in the classroom reflect respect for and sensitivity to issues of culture, Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003) sought to teach pre-service teachers the importance of understanding their students’ cultures and learning about them along with using children’s literature from those cultures in their teaching. Working with their students’ cultures, these teachers learned how to tap into what children already know in order to create a foundation for learning new information and skills. The study demonstrated that with appropriate support and instruction, the process of learning about children’s cultures and using relevant literature could be transforming:

The teacher candidates’ responses showed that they were beginning to connect with their students. The Latino literature helped teacher candidates to see parallels, even superficial ones, in their own life experiences and in the lives of their students. The activities that the teacher candidates engaged in using the
Latino literature increased their repertoire of methods and their confidence in going beyond “read alouds” in teaching. “The teacher candidates were able to get beyond simple “read alouds” and superficial discussions with their students. In addition, they saw firsthand the power of using relevant literature to excite and engage children in literacy experiences” (Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla, 2003, p. 112). Teacher candidates’ attitudes changed about and toward the children they were teaching and the communities in which they were working. Several teacher candidates became inspired to work on their Spanish by taking courses and participating in the School of Education’s summer language and culture courses in Mexico. An even stronger demonstration of the attitude changes were the high numbers of students who sought and acquired positions in the four partner schools where the teacher candidates had been placed for their preservice teaching experiences. The former teacher candidates became integral members of the communities, were strong proponents of the use of multicultural literature and mentored new teacher candidates to the program (Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla, 2003, p. 112-113).

Using culturally-relevant literature in a classroom is a reasonable first step, but in order for instruction to be successful, this use of literature needs to be accompanied by efforts to understand the cultures of the classroom at a reasonably complex level, well beyond the “food and festivals” level of cultural understanding.
**Latino Children’s Literature**

Medina and Enciso (2002) reviewed a range of significant Latino/a children’s literature, focusing on the ways in which this literature represents the spectrum of circumstances in which children find themselves, from being newcomers to the U.S., to various aspects of developing complex identities in a new country where events that happen are not always happy or fair. The books they selected are realistic in their representation of events and the feelings of characters about those events. Across the range of books they review, the stories challenge a monolithic notion of this culture, instead depicting complexity and opposition instead of homogeneity. Additionally, the use of language in these books places Spanish on at least an equal footing with English and demonstrates the valuing of being bilingual and the poetic aspects of both languages. Some of the books reviewed in Medina and Enciso’s article were selected for my research project because of their value as examples of literature representing Latino/a culture(s).

**Literature Groups**

DeNicolo (2004) examined the implementation of literature circles as a supplement to the mandated language arts program (Open Court) in one fourth grade English language arts class. Twenty-six students participated in literature circles using culturally responsive literature. The researcher functioned as both participant and observer in collaboration with the classroom teacher. This collaborative case study was situated in a Spanish/English two-way immersion magnet school located in an inner city.
The premise of the study was that the use of multicultural literature was positively consequential to the literacy development of second language learners.

The Open Court program included an optional workshop time for teachers to work with particular students in small groups and the researcher and teacher organized literature groups which met during the workshop time. Initially the literature groups met in the classroom but later they moved to the school library. Open Court texts were used in the beginning in order to give students time to become familiar with the discussion process. Six groups with four to six students each met each day, five days a week for one hour to discuss stories which they had read. The discussion groups were structured and students chose one of six different roles each week (discussion director, literary luminary, illustrator, connector, summarizer, and vocabulary enricher). Each role had specific responsibilities. For example, the connector had the job of connecting the reading to school, other stories, home or current events. The teacher and researcher together selected culturally relevant literature to correspond with the Open Court theme of survival. The teacher and researcher used semantic maps with the students to support vocabulary learning, but did not guide group discussions.

Findings from DeNicolo’s study included implementation issues: power relations and participation struggles. Students who were most fluent in English with high degrees of school literacy participated more frequently in whole group discussions and used their power based on reading ability to assume leadership roles in the discussion groups. Students who did not have power in whole group settings viewed the small groups as an opportunity to contribute to the group, help others and share their knowledge. The roles
of group participants were differentiated in status (i.e. students fought over being the
discussion director, disallowing turn-taking and others feeling like the director was being
bossy). Negotiations for dominance compromised the time for discussion in the groups.
Also, the students transformed the roles: instead of facilitating a discussion between
students, the director controlled how the text was examined and who could speak.

The Open Court stories which students read in the first phase of the discussion
groups did not relate to students’ lives so students had difficulty finding things to talk
about. Students rehearsed the role responsibilities with one another. For example AJ
corrected JZ saying, “you have to pick a page and you have to say…” (DeNicolo, 2004,
p. 93).

Negotiations over power were evident between female and male students whereas
there was an absence of conflict in groups of the same gender. Students also
demonstrated participation struggles in three ways: they struggled in the transition from
teacher directed structure to more student directed approach and this was correlated to the
difference between the teacher direction in Open Court lessons compared to increased
student direction in the literature circles. Students in the group had difficulty staying on
the topic and they had lack of experience in self-managing their own behaviors. The
classroom teacher became conflicted, worrying that students were not gaining
academically from the discussion groups. The situation in the discussion groups can be
likened to Bakhtin’s (1973) notion of carnival – a time in which authorized and
controlled disorder is sanctioned so that cultural norms can be suspended temporarily in
favor of creating spaces for hierarchies to be inverted and boundaries to be dissolved” (p.
246). As the study progressed through Phase II students demonstrated an increased ability to discuss according to the structure and time frame. Even greater improvement in students’ behaviors was observed when they began reading culturally relevant texts which were of high interest to the students.

Students who were not fluent in English were often not invited into the discussions; students kept discussing whether others in the group were engaged or not. With regard to language, students in DeNicolo’s study experienced tension regarding the use of their first and second language in their small groups. For example, Madeline, a Puerto Rican student who was fluent in Spanish and English, tried to force group members to use English or recognize the value of English. In the sample transcript, after one student, Mito, chose Spanish while Madeline (bilingual) insisted on English, another Spanish speaking student, Ashanti, sided with Mito, choosing to speak in Spanish, not English. During Phase II, when students were grouped by their text selections of culturally relevant literature, the same issues of authority demonstrated in Phase I persisted to the point of one student, Dominic, threatening to punch another group member. Immediately following that exchange, two students pulled their desks away from the group. The researcher notes that the students in the group had tried to encourage Dominic during discussion, ignored him when he got upset at times and intervened when he threatened another student.

Another finding from DeNicolo’s study was how students mediated their peers’ comprehension of the stories read and discussed together. After observing students’ participation in Phase II around culturally relevant texts, some of which were available to
students in Spanish as well as English, the classroom teacher prompted students to use Spanish to interact in discussions in order to include everyone in the group in discussion. An example is given where a discussion director tells another student who is hesitating to answer a question posed in English, “you can say it in Spanish”. The student immediately responds in Spanish when permission is granted; even extending his response by giving clarifying details.

In relation to students’ ability to work in English, Echevarria, Vogt and Short (1999) state, “When scaffolding, teachers pay careful attention to students’ capacity for working in English, beginning instruction at the current level of student understanding, and moving students to higher levels of understanding through tailored support” (p. 9). Also, DeNicolo noted that in addition to varying English proficiency, students had varying reading abilities which made reading and discussing stories difficult. The good readers in DeNicolo’s group (i.e. Maria) slowed down text reading because of the time she spent facilitating other group members comprehension, as reported by DeNicolo.

Students in DeNicolo’s study prompted one another in their discussion groups to give a rationale for identifying main story details. DeNicolo concluded that students used translation (speaking in Spanish), slowing down the reading pace and clarification questions to ensure that all students had equal access to learning in their literature groups. Students who were reading and discussing culturally relevant literature in DeNicolo’s study made multiple personal connections to the text and found details in the story humorous. “They all had a connection from their own lives that they wanted to share and described their personal experiences enthusiastically” (p. 113).
One culturally relevant text, Felita (Mohr, 1979), read by students in DeNicolo’s study, evoked group discussion about name-calling and specifically about reading aloud the word “niggers” from the story text. After Lupita read the word aloud from the text, the students gasped and one exclaimed, “it says a bad word in here!” At that point in the discussion, a student called for the teacher. She intervened, saying to the group, “it’s not a bad word, but it’s not a good word. When Lupita asked the teacher if she had to read it aloud, the teacher replied, “No, just skip it” and stepped away from the group (DeNicolo, 2004, p. 119). This interaction, as well as the text, positioned students to develop critical literacy skills and make connections between their multiple social worlds and Felita’s dilemma. Another outcome from DeNicolo’s (2004) study was students’ production of extended discourse; students were able to express complete thoughts in their discussion responses. Second language learners benefit from opportunities to engage in periods of extended discourse (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000). DeNicolo interpreted students’ extended discourse to be the result of the intersections between students’ knowledge about text, personal connections and non-school related interests.

Martinez-Roldán (2005) examined the interaction of 21 Latino/a bilingual second-grade students, divided into literature groups. After identifying “inquiry acts” in terms of purpose and expressive form, Martinez-Roldán examined the children’s responses to those inquiry acts as well as the effect of those inquiry acts on the discussion. She also investigated the meditational character of the literature discussion and identified the multiple tools and cultural resources that supported the children’s inquiries.
The groups were heterogeneous, organized according to the students’ book choices. The researcher, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, did not assign roles for the students to perform in the literature circles. The literature discussions were organized with the purpose of engaging students in thoughtful discussions and inquiry not only about the texts they read, but about social issues. In other words, the groups provided a context for students to engage in literary talk about texts while listening and considering each others’ voices and perspectives regardless of individual reading proficiency or language dominance.

Book selections were based on topics related to social issues in order to provide a context for students to think together about critical questions. The curriculum was organized around the broad concept of “sense of place and sense of belonging”. Initially they planned to have students engage in four activities over a two week period in order to support them in exploring, negotiating and understanding the broad concept. The teacher and the researcher acted as facilitator/mediator by preparing the social context for the actual discussions. The product of their mediation was a space of opportunity for the students to enjoy the texts, listen to one another and pursue their own inquiries.

First the teacher or researcher read aloud and had whole class discussions about picture books that presented different ways in which people find their sense of place or belonging. Each student then created a box of personal artifacts that reflected their sense of place and belonging, such as baby pictures, blankets, photos, and letters from relatives. Items chosen and shared gave evidence that they derived their sense of belonging from their families, their own history and growth, and the people they loved.
Next, the children browsed through more than 50 picture books presenting different perspectives on the broad concept of belonging. Children generated questions while previewing books and the teacher and researcher then created a web representing the children’s initial understandings of “sense of place” and “sense of belonging”. The children made connections to the issue they identified as “feeling left out,” “feeling out of place,” or “why some people laugh at others.” These connections provided the basis for the organization of the literature circles around issues of discrimination and provided a context for inquiry. As the children discussed those connections, they demonstrated particular curiosity about the issues of gender and equity. In response, the teacher and researcher provided a set of books dealing with related topics, including Oliver Button is a Sissy (dePaola, 1979).

The literature groups provided a context for students to engage in literary talk about texts while listening and considering each others’ voices and perspectives regardless of individual reading proficiency or language dominance (Martinez-Roldán, 2005, p. 25).

This environment was conducive to transformation in and among participants, providing multiple opportunities for students to mediate their thinking and talk, the thinking and talk of others in the group, and to ultimately transform the entire context of the discussions, enlarging the context for inquiry.

The plan and sequence of activities allowed for the identification and expansion of the students’ cultural knowledge, and the teacher and researcher mediated by shifting and adapting to the understanding revealed by the children in their discussions, helping
them to move to increased understanding again and again. For example, because of the students’ interest in the story, the teacher and researcher abandoned the two week schedule and offered the book for discussion again so students could further pursue their individual inquiries.

The teacher and researcher mediated the literature discussion while participating in the group using psychological tools (making requests for clarification, restating comments, asking questions, and making comments designed to encourage and invite students to expand their ideas or to express an opinion). They also mediated the discussion through listening, not for comprehension checks but rather to make sense of the children’s inquiries.

The literature itself was a psychological tool that mediated the students’ personal experiences and functioned as an instrument of cognitive change. The bilingual student’s use of English, Spanish and code-switching were linguistic resources that functioned as tools to mediate their thinking and participation. Code-switching, recognized as an indication of group membership, can be interpreted as behavior that reflects the individual’s dual, hybridized, and somewhat unique identity construction.

The discussions themselves mediated the children’s learning through their participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and the on-going participation allowed students to affiliate with the group, transforming ways of participating and talking about texts (Martinez-Roldán, 2005).

Students designated with “low literacy” in the classroom are often translators for their families. For example, the researcher asked Laura about translating, he wanted to
know whether she translated while reading in Spanish or English, but she explained how translating was a part of her life. Laura’s response indicates the intensity of the typical translation interaction, the importance of speed, and the frenzied pace of keeping two participants, who have monolingual mindsets, engaged in something approaching the relaxed attitude of any other monolingual interaction.

Interviewer: Can you tell me when [you translate]. Like for example?

Laura: Like for example I go to the store and I go with my aunt and she doesn’t know how to speak to him/her and I have to...I have to say it to him/her and what my aunt says to me, I say it. I say it to the lady...my aunt says something to me that I say...I say it to her and...and saying whatever the lady says, I say it to my aunt.

Examples of students’ hybridized identity surfaced when they made references to brokering activities (McQuillan & Tse 1995, as cited by Jiménez, 2000). Linguistic brokering is an activity often engaged in by immigrant children but because of the marginalized realities of these students, the high stakes and, it might be inferred, involved very stressful obligations and responsibilities unfamiliar to many mainstream students. The parents and other adult members of their families depended on these children because of their emerging bilingualism and expected them to translate documents such as lease contracts, income tax forms, billing invoices, and other complex texts. Some of this stress is reflected in Gil’s comment and provides insight into his view of reading in particular and literacy in general:

Interviewer: Now, I want you to tell me, what is reading?
Gil: [answered in Spanish; translated into English] It’s very important…they have something that is in the book and if, uh, I don’t know how to read, well how am I going to understand it…and when they give you something like that…something that you have to pay…and it doesn’t have numbers and it only has it like that in letters…and you are not going to know what you are going to pay (Jiménez, 2000, p. 227).

As intermediaries for siblings and parents, students interviewed by Jiménez (2000) described how their families served as sources of strength. When the interviewer inquired about Christopher’s brother, Jose Luis, Christopher explained how he tutored his brother at home: “He doesn’t know how to do his homework. I’m teaching him how and I read it. I tell him to read a book and then he reads it and then I read it again” (Jiménez, 2000, p. 230). These home literacy practices offer useful information for reconsidering dominant discourses that often marginalize and exclude students from educational opportunity (Jiménez, 2000).

Students indicated that literacy learning was a much more appealing activity if viewed as supportive of their Latina/o identity, if it fostered their Spanish language and literacy development. Letter writing was identified by students as a primary use of and purpose for literacy. Letter writing to relatives in Mexico makes a significant statement concerning students’ identity as transnational individuals (Guerra, 1998 as cited by Jiménez, 2000, p. 232).
Saul, labeled as having a learning disability, found that in his family and community, his Spanish language abilities were valued, considered necessary, and worthy of special status:

Saul: Like my sister. I explain to her like words in Spanish. It’s because she was taking a Spanish class. She has already forgotten almost all of her Spanish but now, now she knows a little more. When she had Spanish homework she said the words, what they meant. I and my father, we tell [this to] her (Jiménez, 2000, p. 228).

Language and literacy are socially situated. Students continually negotiate and make sense of themselves and the world in which they live; they express this in their words and in writing. Writing is an expression of students’ lives, and its purpose can be powerful for communication, inquiry, and investigation of self in the midst of the “contact zone” (Coady & Escamilla, 2005).

Students’ use of imagination allowed them to demonstrate multiple social ideologies. They wrote across ethnic, racial and linguistic groups, reflecting the social reality and context of their lives. Although the students lived in impoverished homes, their life experiences were varied and sophisticated. They wrote passionately and imaginatively about labor and wages, government, poverty and education (Coady & Escamilla, 2005).

Complexities

Issues involving language use are rarely simple. Meaning in language can be made on so many levels not just as a result of the structure of language itself but also
because the use of language represents the attitudes, beliefs and so many other factors behind the language. This literature review has laid the groundwork for the process of my study but also for the intricacies of my findings. The next two chapters discuss the methodology and data analysis for the study; the issues raised in this review of the literature will be taken up in Chapter Five’s discussion of the implications of the study’s findings.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Overview of the Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses of two fifth-grade teachers and their students to two different types of text (multicultural stories from the reading curriculum and Latino picture books) in large and small group contexts. Following the whole-group read-aloud lesson, each teacher gave six students in their respective classes an opportunity to meet as a small group, directing them to talk with one another about the story that had just been read. Neither the classroom teacher, nor the researcher participated in the students’ small group conversations about the stories read aloud to them in class. As a researcher, I did not want to assert authority over teachers or their students because I wanted to observe their perspectives; my stance as a researcher was as a “friendly observer” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

This study took place over eight months in two fifth-grade classrooms in a school which had used Open Court Reading (K-5) for eight years for their language arts instruction. The school’s Free & Reduced Price Meals (FRPL) population was 594, with 95% of the students self-identified as Hispanic or Latino. Sixty-four percent of the fifth-grade students participating in this study had attended this school from kindergarten through fifth grade. Both fifth-grade teachers had long term experience using Open Court Reading to teach reading.
Each week the teachers read one story aloud from the student anthology, using the stories as a basis for reading and language arts instruction. The Open Court unit “Heritage” included five multicultural stories. While teaching this unit, teachers also read aloud five Latino picture books, one per week, to their students. All of the picture books were about families that immigrated to the United States from Mexico, an experience common with the majority of students’ families in this study.

The focus of this study was the talk before, during and after story read-alouds. The read-aloud sessions and the small group discussions (22 whole group, 20 small group) were video-recorded and transcribed by the researcher; other data sources included field notes, audio recordings of interviews with each of the two classroom teachers and each of the 12 focus students, and audio recordings of 19 viewing sessions where teachers individually revisited video recordings of their whole class read-aloud sessions and offered personal reflections. Twenty whole group, and twenty small group sessions were chosen for in-depth analysis; the other data were used in a supplementary way. Data were analyzed recursively and iteratively, according to the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), by assigning codes and categories and modifying them as the analysis proceeded (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

The research questions which guided this study were:

- How and when do the directives suggested in the Teacher’s Edition of a scripted basal program affect what teachers do when reading and responding to basal stories?
• In what ways, if any, do basal manual directives affect what teachers do when reading and responding to multicultural picture books in classroom story-reading events?

• Is the nature of teacher-students interactions around story-reading events in whole class settings similar to or different from students’ interactions in peer group discussions in which neither the teacher nor the researcher is participating?

The goal of this study was to develop an understanding of and to describe the interactions particular to two fifth-grade classrooms where teachers’ cultural resources differ from students’ cultural resources, to investigate read-aloud lessons as they happened, to examine the impact of culturally relevant literature, and to represent the complexities of the interaction of teachers and their students in relation to multicultural literature in those classes by following their conversations.

A qualitative research design with an ethnographic perspective of classrooms allowed the researcher to examine closely the talk of teachers and students during classroom read-aloud lessons. This comparative cross-case study offers vivid, detailed ethnographic evidence from Open Court classrooms and adopts a social constructionist view of discourse, which places an emphasis on language-in-use “as the vehicle through which self and world are articulated, and the way in which such discourse functions within social relationships” (Gergen, 1999, p. 60). Teachers’ and students’ actions and reactions were viewed as “inseparable from cultural activity, cultural interpretation and cultural context” (Bloome, 1994, p. 55). In light of that view, classroom discourse, occurring in the context of read-aloud lessons, could potentially include teachers and
students articulating their world views in relationship to the characters and situations described in the stories, and in relationship to each other (Gergen, 1999).

In this chapter, I present my methodology according to the following sections: theoretical grounding, research site, participants, multicultural texts, data collection, role of researcher, procedures for data analysis, and reflexivity and trustworthiness.

**Theoretical Grounding**

The research questions for this qualitative study guided my inquiry about “how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 8) within the context of fifth-grade read-aloud lessons. From an ethnographic perspective of the classroom, I wanted to understand and describe how teachers and students use language to create and negotiate meaning relative both to the literature being read in the classroom and to the instructional frame of the basal reading series which the teachers were required to use, in connection with their differing cultural backgrounds and knowledges (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005).

**Social Constructionist Theory**

Social constructionist theory, which places a primary emphasis on discourse as a vehicle for constructing self and ways of knowing the world, served as a significant framework for this study, in particular for understanding the parameters of participants’ understandings and options for action. The methodological grounding, which is established on the idea that science and research are other forms of discourse that are socially constructed, supports this theoretical framework (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1999). Students and teachers in this study were socially constructed by culture and language in
different ways, and these constructions were represented in how they interacted with each other and with the literature they shared. Social constructionist theory reveals the places in which these constructions differ, the way teachers privileged their constructions over that of the students, and the students’ acquiescing and resisting responses to the teachers’ constructs.

The Research Site

This study took place in a California elementary school which had used Open Court Reading curriculum for eight years. More than 95% of the student population self-identified as Hispanic. English Learners (EL) comprised 66.4% of the student enrollment at the elementary (Jackson Elementary, [pseudonym] 2006-2007, school accountability report card). The research site for this study was a fifth-grade class taught by Linda Nelson (pseudonym) and a fifth-grade class taught by Matt Moody (pseudonym), at Jackson Elementary School (pseudonym). Jackson Elementary is located in a community served by the Oasis Unified School District (pseudonym) in Southern California. This section contains discussion of the considerations surrounding the choice of the research site; the issues of access and entre; and a description of the site.

Choice of the Research Site

In selecting a setting for this study, I had two criteria. First, I needed to locate and identify California elementary school teachers of Latino students who were willing to read aloud Latino picture books to their class and who were willing to permit a small group to meet. The second consideration was the reading program used for language arts instruction. Open Court and Houghton Mifflin were the two state-adopted elementary
school reading programs being taught in California schools (California Dept. of Education, 2002) at the time of this study. I intentionally selected a site that was using Open Court Reading because I wanted to study the effect of the scripted curriculum on the decisions teachers made when reading aloud stories to their students.

In 2001, over 700 elementary schools in California were using the SRA/Open Court Reading program, enrolling more than 375,000 students (McRae, 2002). Many of those schools, with significant numbers of Latino students, have continued to use the Open Court Reading program to date. Open Court is especially used in schools serving poor families (Coles, 2000; Taylor, 1998; Taylor, Anderson, Au, & Raphael, 2000).

According to the California Department of Education (2006), 62.7% of the 27,565 students enrolled in the Oasis Unified School District in the previous school year (2005-2006) school year were Hispanic. The Oasis Unified School District website allowed me to check by individual school for student ethnicity percentages and for the particular language arts program taught in that school. Four of the 20 elementary schools in the Oasis Unified School District had over 95% Hispanic student enrollment, and two of those schools used the Open Court Reading program. One school using Open Court Reading was newly built and in its first year of operation. The other school, Jackson Elementary School, had been using Open Court Reading for the past eight years and reported that 96% of student enrollment was Hispanic, 72% were English language learners and 83.1% of the student population was socioeconomically disadvantaged (2005-2006 school accountability report card). The ethnicity represented at Jackson
Elementary School constituted a student population that would likely find the themes and concepts in Latino picture books relevant to their life experiences.

_Issues of Access_

Initially, I contacted the principal of Jackson Elementary who gave her consent to invite teachers to an informational meeting about the opportunity to participate in my research study. Two fifth-grade teachers agreed to participate and gave their signed consent.

_Teacher permission for participation in the research study_

After carefully reviewing the approved human subjects’ teacher permission form, which explained the scope of the study as well as the specific tasks for participating teachers, both teachers gave their consent. The principal, Mrs. Carter (pseudonym), directed me to email the Director of Educational Services at the district office, offering a brief summary of my research study, with indication of the two teachers that had agreed to participate. A week later I was notified by the principal that the district office had confirmed their approval of my proposed study.

_Parent permission for student participation in the research study_

I hosted a combined parent-child informational meeting for parents of students in Mr. Moody’s and Mrs. Nelson’s fifth-grade classrooms. With the help of a translator, I was able to explain the nature of my study, answer parent questions and display a variety of Latino picture books. Parents not in attendance were individually contacted and our conversations were facilitated by a translator. Twenty-four students in Mr. Moody’s class and 24 students in Mrs. Nelson’s class were granted permission to participate.
making a total of 48 student participants in this study. Four students in each classroom did not participate in the study. Students who did not participate in the study were seated outside the view of the camera when the researcher was video recording in their classrooms.

Description of the Research Site

The district

The Oasis Unified School District is culturally and ethnically diverse. It consists of 20 elementary schools, six middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, an independent study/alternative school, and a continuation high school. The district received state and federal funding for Title I as well as several other categorical, special education and support programs. All district curriculums align with the California State Content Standards and Frameworks. Nine district schools, including Jackson Elementary, were identified for “Program Improvement” (PI). Schools that receive Title I funding enter PI if they don’t show “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) over two consecutive years in the same content area: English-language arts or mathematics. With each additional year that they don’t meet AYP, they advance to the next level of state intervention. For the 2005-2006 school year, the district offered staff development and training focused primarily around Open Court Reading, Jackson Elementary’s Language Arts program (2005-2006 school accountability report card).

The school

Jackson Elementary School was built in 1969 and was last renovated in 1991. The 10-acre school campus included 21 permanent classrooms, 16 portable classrooms
and a cafeteria with an outdoor covered picnic table area where students ate lunch. A free and/or reduced lunch was available to all students. Jackson Elementary School had a K-5 enrollment of 678 students during the year this study was conducted. The report of student enrollment by ethnicity indicated that 95.4% of students were Hispanic or Latino, 2.8% were White (not Hispanic), 0.7% was African American and Multiple or No Response comprised 0.6% (Elementary School Accountability Report Card 2006-2007).

The principal, Ms. Carter, had transferred to this school during the previous 2005-2006 school year. Thirty fulltime fully credentialed classroom teachers taught grades K-5 at Jackson Elementary; including four fifth-grade classes. One fulltime reading specialist (Open Court coach) served on the school’s support staff. There was no library media teacher; a fulltime paraprofessional served as a library media technician.

According to the 2006-2007 California Achievement Test, Sixth Edition (CAT/6), 18% of students at Jackson Elementary scored at or above the 50th percentile in reading (Jackson Elementary School Accountability Report Card). Students at Jackson Elementary were required to wear uniforms or sign a waiver (principal approved) to be excluded from this requirement.

The classroom

Each of the fifth-grade classrooms was an individual portable classroom, positioned end-to-end, adjacent to each other, across the playground from the main building. Mrs. Nelson and Mr. Moody knew at the beginning of the school year that they would be moving out of their portable classrooms over the winter break, beginning classes in new portables which were delivered and anchored in another area of the
playground in December. A ramp, two-thirds the length of each portable, was built outside the door of each portable classroom. Teachers organized student lines on the ramp to lead children back and forth across the main area of the campus. Each portable classroom had a telephone, an intercom, and three computers, one on the teacher’s desk and two for student use.

A diagram of Mrs. Nelson’s (Figure 3.1) and Mr. Moody’s (Figure 3.2) fifth grade classrooms indicates room arrangement. Both portable classrooms were small and crowded, (approximately 24 x 36, or 864 square feet) with limited options for flexible student groupings. Mrs. Nelson had 28 students and Mr. Moody had 28 students.

Figure 3.01: Mrs. Nelson’s Classroom Arrangement
Both teachers organized their classrooms to meet the Open Court program standards for seating arrangement and bulletin board displays. The program required that student desks be arranged facing a central wipe-off board with Open Court alphabet cards arranged along the front wall (Open Court Reading, Level 5, Unit 1, p. 19J). Rows of student desks were positioned closely together as a result of limited space. As a result, students were required to turn sideways to walk down the row behind their chairs.

Figure 3.02 Mr. Moody’s Classroom Arrangement
The classroom daily schedule was posted on Mrs. Nelson’s and Mr. Moody’s board each day. For example, on Wednesday, January 10, 2007, Mr. Moody’s schedule was posted as:

- 8:40 – 9:20 P.E.
- 9:20 – 10:10 Interventions (Standards Plus Skill Practice)
- 10:10 – 10:20 Bathroom Break
- 10:20 – 12:20 Language Arts
- 12:20 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 2:10 Math
- 2:10 – 2:55 ELD (English Language Development)

(field notes, 01-10-07)

Due to the administrative directives for implementation of the Open Court Reading curriculum, teachers situated the reading of a picture book outside their time designated for language arts instruction. Both teachers requested that their picture book read-alouds (with power point presentations) be scheduled during “Interventions” so that the two-hour instructional time, designated by the district for “Language Arts,” would only be used for Open Court stories. When the small group of focus students met they first talked about the Open Court story which had been read aloud by the teacher, and then talked about the picture book, which had been read aloud by the teacher earlier that same day. Discussing both stories, one after the other accommodated the teachers’ schedules and provided students an opportunity to talk about each story and the opportunity to talk across both stories if they chose to do so.
The teachers

Mr. Moody (pseudonym) taught one fifth-grade class and Mrs. Nelson (pseudonym) taught the other fifth-grade class. Both teachers identified themselves as White (not Hispanic or Latino). Beginning in January, 2007, Maria (pseudonym), a para-educator, self-identified as Hispanic, worked full-time on a one-on-one basis with a visually impaired student in Mrs. Nelson’s class.

Both teachers spoke only English. Neither teacher lived in the community where the students lived and where the school was located. Both teachers were married and had school-age children. Mrs. Nelson and Mr. Moody had earned masters’ degrees, were experienced classroom teachers and had taught reading with Open Court curriculum for a number of years. Mr. Moody had been a principal of another Oasis District school for ten years before returning to classroom teaching at Jackson Elementary. As principal, Mr. Moody had been trained to observe and evaluate classroom teachers when teaching Open Court Reading. As a fifth-grade classroom teacher, Mr. Moody had taught Open Court curriculum at Jackson Elementary School for three years prior to this study. Mrs. Nelson had taught fifth grade for nine years at Jackson Elementary School. Open Court was piloted her second year at Jackson Elementary, giving her eight years experience teaching Open Court. Both teachers participated in Open Court and Corrective Reading training which was provided by the school district (see Appendix E).

The students

There were 48 fifth-grade student participants in this study, 10 to 11 years in age. Across the two classrooms, 44 of the 48 student participants were self-identified as
Hispanic and 22 student participants were classified by the school as English learners (ELs). Six Mexican-American students in each classroom (three boys and three girls) were interviewed and subsequently identified as focus students.

Mrs. Nelson had 28 students, 15 girls and 13 boys. One African-American student, one American Indian student, and 24 Hispanic students were enrolled in Mrs. Nelson’s fifth-grade class. Twenty-two students were born in the United States, and 4 were born in Mexico. Spanish was spoken in the homes of 20 students. Sixteen students had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. Ten students had attended 3 years or less. Fourteen Hispanic students were classified as English Proficient; ten were EL (English Learners) and two students were English Only. Mrs. Nelson reported that 2 students were reading at grade level and 24 students were reading 2 or more years below grade level, based on October, 2006 AR (Accelerated Reading) assessments which she administered. According to Mrs. Nelson, ten students in her class scored below seventy per cent on the SCOE (Sacramento County Office of Education) Unit 1 comprehension assessment which was administered Fall, 2006. SCOE is not a district benchmark. Mrs. Nelson explained that the Oasis school district provides a trimester benchmark for all students to take. However, the district encouraged schools to administer the SCOE as a precursor to the district benchmark assessment. Since SCOE is designed to follow Open Court curriculum, those schools using Open Court curriculum (including Jackson Elementary) administered the SCOE in fall 2006, as directed by the district.

Mr. Moody had 27 students, 13 girls and 14 boys. All students enrolled in Mr. Moody’s class were self-identified as Hispanic. Spanish was spoken in the homes of 23
of his students. Thirteen students had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. Fourteen students had attended three years or less. Fourteen students were classified as English Proficient and thirteen were EL (English Learners). According to Mr. Moody, thirteen students in his class scored below 70% on the SCOE (Sacramento County Office of Education) Unit 1 comprehension assessment which was administered Fall, 2006. Mr. Moody did not administer AR (Accelerated Reading) assessments for any of his students.

**Focus student small groups**

The criteria used by the researcher for selecting focus students helped identify students that were representative of their respective classes. Criteria included: attendance, gender, observable listening behaviors during read-aloud lessons, and the number and type of responses during classroom conversations about stories read aloud by the teacher.

The researcher reviewed field notes from classroom observations made September through October, 2006 during reading class in each fifth-grade classroom. A grid was created which enabled the researcher to identify the variations within and among students. The categories were labeled “gender”, “non-verbal behaviors”, “frequency of verbal responses”, and “variation in verbal responses”. From this preliminary analysis, eight children from each classroom were selected by the researcher as possible focus students. Two children from each class were eliminated due to inconsistent school attendance.

In November, 2006, after each teacher had read aloud and discussed a story from the reading curriculum with their class, they gave the selected students in their respective
classes an opportunity to meet as a small group, directing them to “continue talking about the story” from the whole-class read-aloud lesson. The selected students’ overall expression of interest in stories and their sustained interaction during the small-group conversations were the most critical factors in confirming representative focus students for this study. In December, 2006, I conducted individual interviews with each of the twelve selected students, six from each class. These interviews confirmed the selection of focus students because they revealed student interest in the stories and in participation. Descriptions of the students are provided in Appendix A. These interviews gave students an opportunity to express their interest in stories, to reflect on their small group experience and to confirm their interest in participating in weekly small-group conversations about the stories read-aloud in class. Six students from each fifth-grade classroom were confirmed as focus students.

The reading curriculum

The Oasis Unified School District required that fifth-grade teachers provide two hours of language arts instruction daily, adhering to the lesson format and pace set forth by the Open Court Reading program, which was aligned with California State Content Standards and Frameworks. The Open Court Reading program had been pilot-adopted at Jackson Elementary school in 1999.

There were three parts to the Open Court lessons for each day. Part one, Preparing to Read, was for teaching phonemic awareness and vocabulary. Part two, Reading and Responding, was designed to prepare students to use the comprehension strategies of predicting, clarifying and summarizing. Part two also included an inquiry
component, where students investigated the unit theme or story topic. The third part, Language Arts, involved the development of spelling and vocabulary, writing grammar, penmanship, and listening skills (Open Court, 2002, Level 5, Unit 3, p. 180E). The following chart indicates a weekly instructional schedule:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to Read</td>
<td>Word Knowledge</td>
<td>Word Knowledge</td>
<td>Word Knowledge</td>
<td>Word Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus/echoic practice: 21 Vocab wds/ 4 sentences</td>
<td>Synonym activity Students generate sentences with synonyms</td>
<td>Review s-consonant blends Spelling words with /al/ and /le/ final sounds</td>
<td>Review synconant blends Spelling words with /al/ and /le/ final sounds</td>
<td>Review Synconant blends Spelling words with /al/ and /le/ final sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading &amp; Responding</td>
<td>Selection Vocabulary</td>
<td>Teacher reading aloud story (2nd read) Model Comprehension Strategies Comp. skills Compare/ contrast Clues, Problems, Wonderings (note taking)</td>
<td>Teacher reads aloud ‘Meet the Authors’ pp. 208-209). Author’s purpose/point of view; main idea. Theme connections Class discussion</td>
<td>Review Selection Vocabulary Making inferences Class discussion Student hand-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry</td>
<td>Review unit projects Generate questions for question/ concept board</td>
<td>Inquiry journal</td>
<td>Review unit projects Inquiry journal</td>
<td>Listen to audio CD 3 page multiple choice and short answer unit 3, lesson 2, <em>In Two Worlds</em> assessment;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.01: Open Court Language Arts Schedule, Jan. 8–12, 2007

Mrs. Nelson’s and Mr. Moody’s classroom each had a class set of student anthologies which contained all the stories from the reading curriculum. Each student had a copy of the anthology from the reading curriculum to refer to while the teacher read
those stories aloud. Student anthologies did not, however, include the introductory read-
aloud story provided for use at the beginning of each new unit in the Teacher’s Edition.

A set of audio recordings of the stories included in student anthologies were provided as
a classroom resource for teachers, to be used at their discretion. Mr. Moody’s story CD’s
were defective and therefore he did not use this teacher resource. Overheads and
blackline masters of the graphic organizer, “Clues, Problems and Wonderings,” which
could be used as a “Directed Thinking and Listening Activity” (DTLA), were curriculum
resources made available to classroom teachers.

Four intervention components to the Open Court Reading program were designed
to meet the differentiated needs of individual students. These are teacher materials which
are used for seatwork and homework:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reteach Lessons</th>
<th>All skills for students who need extra support with a particular phonics, comprehension, or language arts skill (workbook pages).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Lessons</td>
<td>(&quot;Standards Plus&quot;) Controlled vocabulary selections based on unit themes and specific skill lessons to bring students up to grade level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Activities</td>
<td>Accelerated instruction for those students working above grade level and beyond the capabilities of the average readers in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Development</td>
<td>Practice books remediate, reinforce, and extend lessons for meeting the needs of all learners in your classroom. They are available in both workbook and blackline master formats which offer skills practice recommended for small-group instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.02 Intervention Components**

Teachers had the option of selecting pages from any or all of the four intervention
resources for use during class as seatwork, or for assigned homework in correlation with
daily class lessons. The second one, Intervention Lessons (titled “Standards Plus”), was
taught during “Interventions” which was a 50-minute class scheduled before morning recess. During this time one day a week, teachers scheduled the Latino picture book read-alouds.

Unit 3 in the fifth-grade Open Court Reading curriculum included five multicultural stories which were read aloud by the teachers and discussed with their respective classes. According to Bishop, 1992, “multicultural literature” refers to “literature by and about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the socio-political mainstream of the United States” (p. 39).

Each teacher introduced the “Heritage” unit with a read-aloud story which was provided in the Teacher’s Edition of the Open Court Reading curriculum. This story was not included in the Open Court student anthologies. Although there was a whole-class read-aloud lesson using the introductory read-aloud, focus students did not meet in a small group to talk about that story. In the weeks following the introductory read-aloud lesson, five stories from the “Heritage” unit (which were included in students’ anthologies) and five Latino picture books were read aloud by each teacher. Because individual copies of the Latino picture books were not available for the entire classroom of students, the researcher provided a power point presentation, displaying the illustrations and full text (with publishers’ permission), which was shown while the teachers read each Latino picture book aloud to their respective classes. The researcher provided a single copy of the Latino picture books for the small group to discuss.

The Open Court story titles were: The Land I Lost: Adventures of a boy in Viet Nam; In Two Worlds: A Yup’ik Eskimo Family; The West Side; Love as Strong as
Ginger (which included a glossary for Chinese words used in the story) and Parmele. In addition, each teacher read aloud “The Bats”, an excerpt from Under the Royal Palms by Alma Flor Ada, an Open Court teacher resource that was used to introduce the “heritage” unit theme. This introductory story was not included in the student anthologies.

One Open Court story was read aloud each week by each teacher during the language arts block (sometimes portions of the story were read aloud twice during the week in each classroom) and one Latino picture book was read aloud once each week by the teacher, usually during the time designated for “Interventions”.

Latino Picture Books

In order to understand this category of multicultural picture books, it is helpful to examine the meaning of “Latino”. Several subgroups make up the Latino population of the United States, including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, and Dominican.

A broad, inclusive definition of Latinos is the segment of the U.S. population that traces its descent to the Spanish-speaking, Caribbean, and Latin American worlds (Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). Some Latinos/as prefer to be identified as Latino/a because it “embraces the African and Indigenous heritage that characterizes Latin American and Caribbean communities” (Medina, 2000, p. 10). Notably, the term “Latino” has meaning only in reference to the U.S. experience. Outside the United States, Latinos are referred to as Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and so forth.

Latino children’s literature includes stories from Argentina, Central America, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador,
Guatamala, Latin America, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, South America, Spain, Uruguay, Venezuela, and the Latino-heritage people in the United States. These countries are representative of Latino cultures. Because many fifth grade students in this study had parents who were from Mexico, the set of Latino picture books included several titles about children and their families who immigrated to the United States from Mexico.

Picture books that depicted individuals or members of a particular culture, and in this case, Latino/a culture, were selected according to guidelines within literary, sociopolitical, and educational categories (Bishop, 1992; Huck, Keifer, Hepler, & Hickman, 2004). Guidelines for this selection of Latino/a picture books included:

a) diversity and range of representation including standard for success, how problems are resolved, lifestyles, power relationships between people and the assignment of heroes;

b) avoidance of stereotyping;

c) language considerations (loaded words that may be indicators of covert forms of bias, including the language of the narrator or author, and the fictional characters);

d) the perspective of the book, analyzing how people of color are characterized;

e) careful examination of the illustrations, judging whether they show variety in physical features among the people of any one group; and

f) investigation of the background of the author, discerning the author’s perspective and themes (Bishop, 1992; Huck et al, 2004).
The researcher provided a collection of Latino picture books (see Appendix C) for teachers to review for selection; all stories related to the classroom’s unit of study on “heritage.” Most of the books offered interrelated themes associated with varied meanings of the border, home, family and language. The books allowed listeners to explore Latino/a identity in terms of labor and economic relationships, language status, and the meaning of home and citizenship. This literature speaks to both the specific and shared dimensions of Latino/a experiences.

*Selection of Latino Picture Books for Classroom Read Alouds*

Upon examination of the picture books, teachers deferred to the researcher to select Latino picture books for classroom read alouds. Five Latino picture books were selected for use in this study: *My Diary From Here to There* (Pérez, 2002), *Calling the Doves* (Herrera, 1995), *Friends from the Other Side* (Anzaldúa, 1993), *I Speak English for My Mom* (Stanek, 1989) and *La Mariposa* (Jiménez, 1998). All of the Latino picture books used in this study were selected based on the following criteria: each book had strong, believable story lines that were well crafted and were not contrived or condescending. The well-written language and vibrant illustrations matched and supported the story. The high quality Spanish translations of English text accurately captured the story concepts.

The selected picture books had interlingual and/or bilingual texts. The interlingual texts were written in English, with a few Spanish words interspersed throughout the story. Of the books selected, only *La Mariposa* included a glossary which indicated pronunciation and meaning of the Spanish words used in the text. Bilingual
texts offered the entire text of the story in English and in Spanish. Classroom read-alouds of culturally relevant picture books which incorporated the language used out of school by most students, together with student perspectives voiced in classroom interactions, provided the opportunity for teachers’ cultural and political awareness to be raised and or transformed (Willett, Solsken & Wilson-Keenan, 1998).

Review of selected Latino picture books

*My Diary From Here to There* stressed the closeness of family and friends as Amada’s family immigrated from northern Mexico to Los Angeles, California. Diary entries and paintings introduced the reader to the tight-knit communities and physical landscapes of northern Mexico and California. Each of Amada’s diary entries mapped an important point along the journey she took and modeled how personal writing can be a means of understanding oneself and conquering one’s fears. This bilingual book offered the complete text in both English and Spanish, and six Spanish words appeared in the English text.

*Calling the Doves* is an autobiography which related the author’s childhood memories of moving from place to place in the mountains and valleys of California with his farm-worker parents. Herrera presented the day-to-day language typical of conversations he remembered having with his parents, in poetic stanzas. The striking artwork of the illustrator was done with colored pencils and acrylic paints on rag paper which offered a tapestry of color and details. A homemade camper built by the author’s father is presented as a double spread illustration. Both the Spanish and English texts are printed on the inside of the camper and the page border records the Spanish text of

*Friends from the Other Side* is a contemporary realistic fiction story about a young Mexican American girl who helps Joaquin and his mother, undocumented aliens, who have just crossed the border in search of a new life. This story does not avoid the real-life situations of cultural conflict and negotiation, which are familiar to children who live in two cultural worlds. The complete text is offered in Spanish and English and four Spanish words appear in the English text. The author’s note explains that Chicano Spanish was used in this story to accurately represent the language spoken by many Mexican Americans and to distinguish Chicano Spanish from the Spanish used in Latin America and Spain. Watercolors, graphite and colored pencils, and collage were used by the illustrator to depict the themes of struggle and friendship.

*I Speak English for My Mom* portrays a common reality in the life of many first and second-generation students in an insightful and balanced manner. The mother-daughter relationship between Lupe and her mother is tenderly depicted, “and the pencil-and-line drawings by Judith Friedman, edged in an Aztec-motif border, complement the story well.” (Harris, 1992, p. 217). Stanek uses “Spanish phrases throughout the text, which are immediately defined in the text” and the environmental print in two of the book’s illustrations is in Spanish (Harris, 1992, p. 217).

*La Mariposa* is an autobiographical account of the author’s experience as an English Language Learner in a California first grade class. Illustrated with vibrant paintings, Jiménez gives an unsentimental account of his struggle to learn English and the
sustaining power of his imagination. The progressive transformation of a caterpillar in a jar next to his desk symbolizes the young student’s own social transformation realized in acceptance, friendship and self-identity. This English text is sprinkled with Spanish words which are listed in a glossary that offers phonetic pronunciation and English translation.

*Rationale for Reading Sequence*

The Open Court stories were read in the order in which they appeared in the student anthologies. The rationale used for pairing Latino picture books with Open Court stories included consideration of genre and theme. Autobiography and realistic fiction were appropriate for reading aloud and had the capacity to naturally evoke rich responses by offering students stories involving situations that were much like their own.

*The Land I Lost* and *My Diary From Here to There* were both autobiographical; written in first person, and both detailed memories associated with leaving home.

The authors of *In Two Worlds* and *Calling the Doves* related firsthand accounts of years gone by. Both stories give detailed descriptions of sleeping on the ground, moving in seasonal camps and fathers and mothers passing down family knowledge of hunting, healing and helping.

*The West Side* and *Friends from the Other Side* were both realistic fiction pieces and they both addressed the issues of difference faced by immigrants. The main characters, Juan, from Puerto Rico and Joaquin from Mexico, experienced embarrassment and fear in their new environment.
Love as Strong as Ginger and I Speak English for My Mom were written as realistic fiction, introducing little girls who speak in first person about the way they help the grown-ups in their lives by translating for them. Katie’s grandmother and Lupe’s mother both work hard and have dreams of better lives for them. The authors of Parmele and La Mariposa give detailed scenarios of relationships with people from their past that made a difference in their lives.

The following chart presents the stories in the order in which they were read aloud in whole-class settings, indicating the genre and a brief description of each story.
### Open Court Unit 3 “Heritage” Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. The Bats</strong> by Alma Flor Ada. This story, an excerpt from Under the Royal Palms, is an autobiography which describes the author’s childhood in Cuba. (A teacher resource, used to introduce the theme of “heritage.” This story does not appear in the student anthology).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. The Land I Lost:</strong> Adventures of a Boy in Viet Nam by Huynh Quang Nhuong. This story, an excerpt from the book of the same title, is an autobiography of a Vietnamese boy who relates memories of his life before it was disrupted by war.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The West Side</strong> by Peggy Mann. This story, an excerpt from the book How Juan Got Home, is written as realistic fiction. This selection tells about a young boy who feels isolated after immigrating to New York City until he discovers a Puerto Rican enclave.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In Two Worlds: A Yup’ik Eskimo Family</strong> by Aylette Jenness and Alice Rivers. This story, an excerpt from the book of the same title, is an expository text about life in Alaska and how contacts with outsiders affected family customs throughout generations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>My Diary From Here to There</strong> by Amada Irma Pérez. This autobiographical bilingual story is told through the diary entries of a young girl and explores one family’s process of traveling, waiting, working, and hoping as they immigrate from northern Mexico to Los Angeles, California.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In Two Worlds</strong> by Aylette Jenness. This story, an excerpt from the book of the same title, is an expository text about life in Alaska and how contacts with outsiders affected family customs throughout generations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calling the Doves</strong> by Juan Felipe Herrera. This autobiography, with both English and Spanish text, records the childhood memories of the Mexican-American author who lived in California with his farm-worker parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friends from the Other Side</strong> by Gloria Anzaldúa. This realistic fiction selection is the story of a young Mexican American girl who befriends a Mexican boy from the other side of the river.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Love as Strong as Ginger</strong> by Lenore Look. This selection of realistic fiction relates how a granddaughter faces her grandmother’s reality and feels her love.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>La Mariposa</strong> by Francisco Jiménez. In this autobiography, the Mexican author, son of migrant workers, recalls his experiences of attending first grade in California and the difficulties he had fitting in at school while he was learning English.</td>
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### Latino Picture Books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>No Latino picture book was used to introduce the theme of “heritage.”</td>
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### Table 3.03 Stories in the Order They Were Read

**Story illustrations**

Basal selections and picture books particularly differed with regard to illustrations. *The Land I Lost* had muted-toned water colored illustrations, with no full
page illustrations. There were two full pages of text with no illustrations. The second story, In Two Worlds had one full page sepia-toned photograph and four full pages of text, with no illustrations. The first page of The West Side had only text, with a colorful, full-page illustration on the opposing page. All other illustrations in the story were positioned along the bottom border of each page. Illustrations from the picture book publication of Love as Strong as Ginger were reduced in size and positioned either above or below boxes of text. One word of the original text ("Barbie") was changed to "fashion", one illustration and the "Author’s Note" was omitted. The story, Parmele, had one full page black and white photograph and all other photographs were small and wrapped with text. In contrast, the illustrations in the Latino picture books were richly colored. Each of the five picture books had multiple full-page illustrations and four of the five picture books had several double spread illustrations.

Length of read-aloud selections

The Latino picture books varied in length. Only the words in the English text were counted in the bilingual books. La Mariposa was the longest picture book, with 2,408 words, and Friends from the Other Side was the shortest, with 1018 words. The stories included in the reading curriculum ranged in length from 3,485 words (In Two Worlds) to a word count of 1190 for Love as Strong as Ginger. In averaging the word counts for the purpose of comparison, the Open Court reading selections tended to be approximately 400 words longer than the Latino picture books.
When comparing the length of a story or picture book, however, a word count does not reflect the difference in vocabulary, or the variation in background building necessary to support student understanding. For example, according to Mrs. Nelson, 

There are OC (Open Court) stories which are not lengthy (regarding word count) but need so much support in vocabulary, background etc. that it takes a great deal of time to read it. Other OC (Open Court) stories are pages long, but are entertaining, light humored and therefore can be read in a breeze. (interview, February 26, 2007)

Data Collection

Role of the Researcher

Because I took an ethnographic approach to the research, I participated in the classroom somewhat in order to elicit the insiders’ views; my participation was focused on gaining the trust of the teachers and children so they would feel comfortable in participating in the research. At the beginning of the year, Mrs. Nelson provided a nametag for me to wear at school, which designated me as a school “visitor”. Teacher and student interviews allowed me to elicit insiders’ views with limited involvement. I also had to observe from an outsiders’ perspective to make visible the invisible (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). By staying behind the camera during whole class lessons and small group conversations, I positioned myself as an outsider, resisting participation by refusing acknowledgement of questions or comments directed toward me. However, during small group meetings, I sometimes signaled students to lower their voices in an
effort to reduce distractions to the teacher and students who were engaged in whole class
seatwork activities while we met.

Although it was my intent to remain primarily an observer in the classroom, the
natural environment of the classroom was altered by virtue of my presence and my
purpose, which were to video record the teacher and the students. Regardless of my
efforts to position myself in the background, my extended presence in the classroom was
known and acknowledged by teachers and students.

I often stayed through the morning, packed up my video equipment and debriefed
with teachers during their lunchtime. During the fourth phase of data collection
(February to April), I stayed through the afternoon in the classroom, in order to meet with
Mrs. Nelson after school for viewing sessions and reflective interviews.

In the afternoons I sat on the outside perimeter of the classroom, sometimes
reviewing my field notes, and other times observing social studies and math classes.
Therefore, from the students’ perspective, I was a familiar classroom visitor, who “did
research in the mornings and “hung out” in the classroom in the afternoons” (student exit
interview, April 11, 2007). Students would often interact with me in friendly
conversation while they were lining up to leave the classroom for other classes, or
preparing for dismissal. Sometimes students sought me out as an audience for their math
papers or writing, but I did not help them complete an assignment, check their papers, or
suggest any revisions in their work.

Along the continuum of high to low researcher participation, I chose to take a
friendly observer stance, as described by Bogdan and Biklen, 1992: “given the challenge
of researching children, the option may be to establish oneself, not as an authority figure, and not as a peer, but as a “quasi-friend” or “tolerated insider” in children’s society” (p. 88). Overall, I was able to maintain a high level of observation with a relatively low level of interpretation, which supported researcher objectivity throughout this study.

**Phases of Data Collection**

Data were collected from September 14, 2006 through April 19, 2007, in four phases, as shown in the following chart:
Table 3.04: Phases of Data Collection

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Research Activity</th>
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| First Phase of the Study   | Gaining official access to the setting  
| September 14, 2006         | Meeting with teachers                                                              |
| Sept. 18 – Dec. 6, 2006    | Teacher permission; teacher interviews  
| Oct. 5, 2006               | Observed 5 OC read-aloud lessons                                                   |
| Oct. 20, 2006              | Parent-child information meeting                                                   |
| Second Phase of the Study  | Confirmation of parent permission for  
| November 7 - December 6, 2006 | student participants                                                              |
| Third Phase of the Study   | Classroom observations                                                              |
| Fourth Phase of the Study  | Video recording whole class read-aloud lessons (11 in each classroom)             |
| Feb. 26 - April 18, 2007   | Video recording small groups (10 in each classroom)                                 |
| March 28-29, 2007          | Began focus student exit interviews                                                |
| March 30 – April 19        | Revisited video recordings with teachers                                            |
| April 19, 2007             | Completed focus students’ exit interview (12)                                      |
|                            | Teacher exit interviews (2)                                                        |
|                            | Last day at research site                                                          |

Phase I

During Phase I, which lasted from mid-September to the third week of October, I hosted a combined parent-child informational meeting for parents of students in Mr. Moody’s and Mrs. Nelson’s fifth-grade classrooms. With the help of a translator, I was able to explain the nature of my study, answer parent questions and display a variety of Latino picture books. Parents not in attendance were individually contacted in order to
provide them an opportunity to hear about my study and ask questions. A translator was used when needed.

My goal during Phase I was to become familiar with the school and classroom culture, the routines of the classroom, and to describe the ways students responded to teachers. My field notes provided a chronological record of my visits, conversations with teachers, diagrams of classroom arrangements and the details of daily schedules.

I was also able to inventory exposed classroom materials and equipment during this first phase of the study. For example, while students were at recess, I measured the pull-down screen and positioned the projector at various distances from the screen in preparation for the power point presentations of Latino picture books I would be showing in January. I tracked movement in the classroom, indicating the classroom norms which appeared to govern the environment. My notes and drawings allowed me to make preliminary decisions about placement of video cameras and helped me identify optimal spaces for small group discussions.

I observed five Open Court Reading read-aloud lessons (three from Unit 1 and two from Unit 2) in each classroom during Phase I of data collection. The Unit 1 stories were realistic fiction selections with a theme of cooperation and competition. Astronomy was the theme for the stories in Unit 2, and most of the selections were nonfiction, which allowed me to note and compare student responses to expository, nonfiction texts with the realistic fiction texts that were read in Unit 1. During these observations I noted student attendance, participation patterns and the type of questions teachers and students asked.
Twenty-two students in Mr. Moody’s class and 23 students in Mrs. Nelson’s class were granted permission by their parents to participate and to be videotaped, making a total of 45 student participants in this study. Parents of four students in each classroom chose to not have their children participate in the study and these students were positioned out of camera view when I was recording whole group and small group interactions.

Having gained parental permission to video students in the classroom, the last week of October I video-recorded Mrs. Nelson reading-aloud The Five “Wanderers” of the Ancient Skies, the introductory teacher read aloud for Unit 2. Although many informal conversations occurred with teachers and students during Phase I, no student interviews were conducted.

Phase II

Phase II of my data collection began on November 7 and continued until school was dismissed for winter break. In Phase II I experimented with camera placement and video recorded an Open Court (OC) story read-aloud in each classroom. I made a tentative choice of students from each classroom for small groups and conducted a trial focus group meeting in each classroom. Afterwards, I conducted individual interviews with each focus student. Selection of focus student participants was confirmed.

Phase III

Phase III (January and February) was the most intensive stage of data collection. Individual and joint teacher interviews were conducted during January and February. The teachers requested a joint meeting to review the goals and procedures of my
observations and to confirm scheduling of focus group meetings. I also interviewed and audio-recorded each teacher individually regarding their personal history of teaching reading. Several informal conversations with individual teachers occurred throughout this phase, and were audio-recorded. I later selectively transcribed the interviews and conversations that were closely related to my research objectives.

During Phase III, each classroom teacher read aloud a Latino picture book, as well as a story from Open Court Reading, to their respective classes each week for five consecutive weeks. All read-aloud lessons were video-recorded each week and later transcribed. In addition, a focus group conversation of the Open Court story and a focus group conversation about the Latino picture book were video recorded. All focus group conversations were video-recorded and transcribed. Many times, the Open Court read-aloud lesson extended across two language arts periods. Scheduling between the two classrooms was a particular challenge during this phase. On occasions when teachers were reading aloud stories at the same time on the same day, in accordance with the Open Court pacing guide, it was necessary to set up a video camera in each classroom in order to ensure that the complete event was recorded in each classroom.

Phase IV

The fourth phase of data collection began February 26 and continued through the middle of April; the purpose of this data was to provide background and context for the study. I made DVDs of each read-aloud lesson and gave teachers the opportunity to view the DVDs with me. Due to scheduling constraints and personal commitments, Mr. Moody only initiated three appointments for viewing and reflecting on the video
recording of class discussions. Viewing sessions were held in his room before school. Mrs. Nelson initiated sixteen viewing sessions, which were conducted after school in her classroom. The reflections teachers gave during viewing sessions offered significant evidence of teacher perspectives of literature, of students and the school culture. Exit interviews were conducted during this phase with each focus student and with each teacher. All teacher reflections and exit interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Many casual conversations with teachers occurred throughout all the phases of data collection. Many of these conversations were recorded (with teacher permission) and offered supplementary information about teachers, students and the school environment as those topics were related to the events of any particular day.

*Types of Data Collected*

During this study, a total of 22 whole-class read-aloud lessons (including the whole class discussion of the introductory read-aloud story in each class), and 20 focus group conversations were video recorded. In other words, 11 whole-class read-aloud lessons and 10 focus group conversations were video recorded in each of the two fifth-grade classrooms.

The video recordings served as a data resource for this study and were transcribed and analyzed. Other data sources included field notes, audio recordings of interviews conducted with fifth-grade teachers and focus students and individual viewing sessions which included each teacher’s reflections of the read-aloud lessons; these data were used to gain background and context on the participants and the setting. Classroom
observations of Open Court whole-class read-aloud lessons were data sources for transcriptions

Each fifth-grade teacher read aloud and interacted with students about an introductory read-aloud story (found only in the Teacher’s Edition) with their respective classes. Subsequently, teachers read aloud five stories, one per week, from the “Heritage” unit in Open Court Reading with their respective students in whole class settings. All five of the stories were included in the students’ anthologies. Each week, throughout the “Heritage” unit of study, a Latino picture book was also read aloud to the class by each classroom teacher. The power point presentation of the story (including complete text and all illustrations) progressed at the teachers’ pace when reading aloud the picture books. A class set of the Latino picture books was not available to students.

Video recordings were made of teacher read-aloud lessons in each fifth-grade classroom. I observed in the classroom for approximately one hour for each observation. Sometimes the teacher took two class periods to complete the read-aloud lesson. In those instances, classroom read-aloud lessons of an Open Court Reading story or a Latino picture book began one day and continued the following day, and included teacher and student talk which occurred before, during and after the story was read aloud by the teacher.

Quality of sound proved to be one of the greatest challenges in attempting to capture whole class read-aloud lessons. I chose not to use a shot-gun microphone on either video camera because I felt it would be too distracting in the social environment of the classroom.
Two digital video cameras were used for video recording whole-class read-aloud lessons and focus student small group conversations. I positioned each camera on a tripod, one in each classroom, in order to capture simultaneous events. Both cameras had wide angle lenses, which enabled me to capture whole class groups in the view of the camera. Initially I placed one video camera on a tripod to capture the students’ faces and held the other camera to follow the teacher as he or she moved about the classroom. At the beginning of my data collection, I panned from side to side and made changes from wide-angle to close-up (zooming in and out) to capture speakers’ soft voices with the small directional microphone attached to the top of the camera. I soon found that by placing small digital recorders on the desks of students with particularly soft voices, and in locations of extremity where the external microphone on the video camera was inadequate, I was able to establish a back-up for unintelligible voices on the video footage. By accommodating for variance in voice level, I avoided moving around and panning and zooming in and out on individual speakers for the remainder of my video recorded observations.

After viewing my first video recordings, I decided to place a camera, with an attached directional microphone, on the tripod positioned to capture a side view, including students and the teacher together in the video frame. I found that by raising the camera on the tripod, and positioning it slightly downward, I got a better view of students’ and teachers’ eye gaze, gestures and facial expressions as they alternated between listening and speaking to one another. Maintaining the stationary wide-angle view was necessary to capture other students’ attempts to gain the floor, side
conversations and activities or sustained silence. This camera placement and position proved to be the best placement for recording whole class interactions, and allowed me to record field notes while video recording.

The digital audio recorders were especially small and unobtrusive. I could use one in my pocket or around my neck when participating in casual conversations with teachers and students that were pertinent to my study. Adequate recording-time capacity allowed me to turn on the recorders and leave them on student desks throughout entire whole-class read-aloud lessons (to ensure adequate sound for generating transcripts) instead of training students to turn them on and off.

 Observations of Latino picture book whole-class read alouds

Because classroom sets of the Latino picture books were not available to allow each student to have their own copy, I contacted the publishers of several Latino picture books and received written permission to scan the entire books in order to generate a power point presentation of the book for each fifth-grade class.

The layout of the picture books, double spreads, placement of text, and multiple texts in the bilingual books challenged the scanning decisions necessary for preparation of the power point presentations. In some cases, text had to overlay corners of the illustrations in order for students to see the illustration and the text which referenced the illustration on the same slide. In many cases, size of text font had to be magnified to allow readability for students seated in the back of the classroom. Magnification of text font size limited the choices for illustration size. On double spreads, the slide was split so
that the spread maintained its unified presentation. In spite of these challenges, every effort was made to adhere to the text and illustration placement found in the book itself.

A laptop computer and projector were used to project power point presentations of Latino picture books so that all students could have equal access to the text and the illustrations. A portable screen was used since the new portable classrooms were not equipped with pull-down screens. Mr. Moody requested that the screen be positioned at the far end of the classroom, opposite the door. This placement allowed him to resume teaching from the front of the room (facing students) without obstructive equipment. The placement of the projector, however, required two students to relocate to other seats during the viewing of the presentation. In Mrs. Nelson’s classroom, the screen was placed directly in front of the white board, at the front of the classroom, allowing all students to remain in their usual seats.

I used a remote point presenter to advance the slides as the teacher read aloud. I gave the teachers a copy of each picture book, in advance of the presentation, to allow for their preparation of the read aloud.

Focus student small group conversations

After each whole class read-aloud lesson, six focus students met in a small group for approximately 30 minutes to continue discussing the story. Neither the teacher nor the researcher participated in the focus student small group conversations. The focus students did not receive training or guidance for discussing the stories in their small group. Each student had a student anthology which included all the Open Court stories
and focus-student small groups had access to a copy of each Latino picture book which had been read aloud to the class.

Having focus students meet before recess, during “Interventions” time, instead of during language arts, worked well in the two classrooms. In both classrooms the other students were engaged in seatwork at their desks while the focus students met to discuss the story. Sometimes during “Interventions” class, Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson talked to the whole group of seated students, giving instructions for workbook pages and answering questions. During this time of instruction, voices would gradually elevate, competing with the voices of the focus students.

Sometimes focus students were already engaged in the skills lesson when I arrived to video-record their small group conversation. The teachers did not dismiss the students, but rather relied on me to quietly indicate that I was ready. I had to use my judgment in determining when students needed more time in the whole group, and if there would be enough time for their small group to meet before dismissal for recess.

Locating space for six focus students to meet as a small group proved challenging in both classrooms. Since each focus student small group was video recorded, determining space for the small group to meet had to include the required space for the tripod and video camera, with adequate room behind the camera for the researcher.

The noise generated by the wall air conditioners in each classroom prohibited recording small group conversations on that side of the room. As a result, focus students sat on the floor, as far away from the air conditioner as possible. In an effort to be sensitive to the total room environment, as well as to the teacher’s comfort level, focus
students spoke softly. By using the attached, omni-directional external microphone on the video camera and by placing a digital audio recorder on the floor in the middle of the small group, quality of sound of focus group conversations in both classrooms was ensured for transcription purposes.

*Field notes*

I kept field notes during each classroom observation, throughout the duration of the study, in order to record what I had specifically seen or heard. My field notes served as data to be analyzed in order to provide the description and understanding of the research setting and participants. The basic protocol that guided classroom observations served as a framework for my field notes:

- Who is being observed?
- What is happening?
- How is it happening?
- How do I know what is happening and how it is happening?
- What was I (the observer) doing during the observation?

(Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005)

Literal descriptions recorded in my field notes included date, classroom, and student attendance. In addition to the emic data, “the view from within the culture” (Spindler, 1988, p. 7) of the classroom, my field notes also included my reflections about each observation. During the observation, my reflections were abbreviated. Later that same day, I added detailed reflective notes. These extensive notes and the other background data I collected constituted thick description (Geertz, 1973).
For example, on February 1, 2007, I noted:

Today Mrs. Nelson will read *La Mariposa* to her class. The video camera, projector, and individual recorders are placed and ready. (“Genesys and Leslie are absent” is written in at the top of the page, obviously added after students arrived.) Mrs. Nelson and Maria (Moises’ aide) and I are in the classroom alone, before the students arrive from the playground.

Across the room from me, hovering around her desk, Mrs. Nelson cradles the picture book in the crook of her left arm. As she moves around to the front of her desk, she projects her voice toward me. “With all this Spanish in this story, I don’t know how I’m going to get around it.” I look up but she does not make eye contact with me.

Her words hang in the air, suspended. My silence, (sealing my thoughts of “how will the kids interpret your choices about the Spanish in the story – they’ll see the text on the screen while you’re reading”) seemed to push her toward Maria, who was arranging materials on the back table.

Mrs. Nelson recruited Maria, a Hispanic classroom aide, to read the Spanish part. With low, semi-decipherable voices, Mrs. Nelson showed Maria the book, presumably asking her to pronounce the Spanish words during the story read aloud.

Did my silence distance me from her? Why did they lower their voices? Maybe, since I’m writing, they’re being “polite” so as not to disturb me? Later, during class, Mrs. Nelson, reading aloud on the fourth page of text, said: “My
little brother is in first grade” she skipped over the Spanish “is en primer grado” and translated it as she read aloud (field notes, 2-1-07).

Teacher and Student Interviews

Three interviews were conducted with each fifth-grade teacher, four interviews with the two teachers together, and two interviews (an initial interview and an exit interview) with each of the twelve focus students. Several informal conversations between the researcher and the teachers were recorded, but only a few were selected for transcription, based on the conversations’ relationship to the study. Each teacher also gave reflective interviews during viewing sessions of whole class read-aloud lessons. Teachers’ reflective interviews were selectively audio-recorded and transcribed.

Focus student interviews

At the beginning of the study an initial interview was conducted with each of the fourteen potential focus students, as a source of background information and a means to construct student profiles. In order to gain insider student perspectives on classroom culture, and particularly on classroom read-aloud lessons, I used ethnographic interviewing as described by Agar (1980).

The ethnographer] doesn’t know enough to ask the appropriate specific questions. In this early dance, the informant takes the lead. The ethnographer’s role is to look interested and suggest a couple of turns toward the other side of the ballroom so that he can check the view from there (p. 90).
Because I was not transcribing these interviews for formal analysis and because I wanted to establish a reasonable amount of rapport, I did not create a formal list of questions to ask each participant. Instead, I began with my directive, “Tell me about yourself”. During these initial interviews, focus students talked more about their families and their play than they did about school. By relinquishing my need to control the conversation, I handed over the topic of discussion to the student and as a result, I learned how the student was thinking about his or her world from his or her own point of view. For example, Ubaldo (pseudonym) began telling me about his immediate family, and spontaneously added: “I was surprised on one Sunday … on Sunday he [my dad] told me the story that I had long lost cousins in Mexico, but I didn’t know that and he showed me a picture of them and he told me they played the drums” (student interview 12-05-06). His story informed me of his perspective of his own heritage rather than me questioning him about “what heritage means to him.” This choice allowed me to understand how the children were thinking about their lives without the content of my questions influencing their thinking process.

I conducted individual exit interviews with each of the twelve focus students. Like the initial interviews, these did not make use of a formal set of questions, for the same reasons, however, I did have some content in mind that I wanted to cover (see below for details). Exit interviews began with an open-ended question, “Tell me about your experience as a participant in this study”. Students retold their memories of
humorous small group events, acting out fighting over the digital recorder and then realizing that the video camera was recording, like a security camera in a store.

I had in mind Freeman, Freeman & Freeman’s (2003) “Cultural Relevance Rubric” when asking students to reflect on the Latino stories that had been read aloud:

- Are characters in the story like you and your family?
- Have you ever had an experience like one described in this story?
- Have you lived in or visited places like those in the story?
- Could this story take place this year?
- How close do you think the main characters are to you in age?
- Are there main characters in the story who are: boys (for boys) or girls (for girls)?
- Do the characters talk like you and your family do?
- How often do you read stories like these?

(Freeman, Freeman and Freeman, 2003, p. 8)

Rather than surveying students with a consecutive list of questions, I asked questions from the rubric as they naturally connected to students’ comments about the Latino picture books. Copies of the books were accessible during my interview, and often the students would select one, and turn to a particular illustration or portion of text to show me their connection to the book. Not all of the questions from the rubric were addressed in each interview. Student responses during exit interviews helped me to confirm or disconfirm my interpretation of their responses during classroom read-aloud lessons and during small group conversations (see Appendix A).
Teacher interviews

Teacher interviews, like student interviews, were not limited to a prepared set of questions. Since the teachers were aware of the nature of the study, I knew they would discuss the literature that was the focus of the study. I wanted the interviews to reflect the teachers’ thoughts without my cuing specific topics or content through questions. I began teacher interviews by saying, “I’d like to have a conversation with you about you, your teaching and your students”. Teacher interviews offered personal stories which embodied their values, beliefs and social contexts. For example, on February 26, 2007, Mrs. Nelson was talking about the unit theme of “heritage” and spontaneously added:

Even though we all come from different places, and are associated with different traditions or values, we have so much in common; so many similarities. And, that then gives everybody that value that you don’t have to look at people as different, but just as an extension of yourself.

She stated her view of others as well as her view of herself in the context of her own topic of discourse.

Four interviews were conducted with both fifth-grade teachers together: one for the purpose of their own informed consent, one regarding parent permission for students, one regarding selection of picture books, and one for questions and discussion about my research project.

The first of the four interviews began with “Tell me about yourself” and included a review of the detailed consent form approved by the human subjects review board with both teachers. The second interview, regarding parent permission for students, began
with “Tell me about your students and their families,” an open-ended question that allowed teachers to present information in an order reflecting their own thinking processes and values. Verbal permission (rather than written consent forms) was approved by the human subjects review board as a means for gaining parent permission for student participation in this study. During this interview, teachers planned the combined parent-child informational meeting which I hosted.

The third interview about the selection of picture books began with a display of all of the books in the Latino Children’s Literature Selections (Appendix C). As teachers picked up and skimmed through the books, they generated questions and participated in discussion with each other and with the researcher. During this meeting, teachers deferred the selection of picture books for read-alouds to me. I submitted preliminary suggestions by briefly comparing picture book characteristics with the Open Court Reading selections, with regard to genre and story concepts. We mutually agreed upon the five selections and the order in which they would be read.

The fourth interview was held in January, just as I was beginning the most intensive time of data collection. This interview was initiated by the teachers in order to clarify expectations. They had visited together before our meeting and had generated a list of questions for me about reading the picture books. My responses were purposely non-directive and they guided the teachers to answer some of their own questions.

Viewing sessions

After teachers completed Unit 3, having read-aloud the Open Court stories and the Latino picture books, reflective teacher interviews were conducted during viewing
sessions (Erickson, 2006), when video recordings of whole class read-aloud lessons were replayed with each teacher. Each viewing session lasted approximately one hour. I offered these opportunities individually to each teacher, to revisit the videoed lessons on an optional basis, before and/or after school. Due to teachers’ schedules and responsibilities both at school and out-of-school, Mr. Moody was only able to meet three times, whereas Mrs. Nelson chose to meet sixteen times. These interviews began with “Tell me what you see and what you think about what you see” and proved to be a valuable data source. A total of 19 reflective interviews were conducted.

The viewing sessions allowed teachers to be an observer of their own read-aloud lesson. Teachers commented on individual student responses and on their own participation in the discussion, adding context: “That’s a conversation that we had the day before; that he’s recalling, and then bringing it over to this story” (Nelson Reflective Interview No. 10, line 236). They also commented on their own participation in the discussion: “I somehow bring it all back in even though I don’t even know where the heck the conversation is going” (Nelson Reflective Interview No. 11, line 545).

The individual exit interviews which I conducted with each fifth-grade teacher were similar to the student exit interviews. I began with an open-ended question, “Tell me about your experience as a participant in this study”. Teachers commented on the social structure of their classroom, “one person talks and everyone listens, and that’s not necessarily me talking” (Moody, 3-30-07), voiced their opinions with regard to reading aloud particular Latino picture books and made predictions about their future read-aloud lessons. Teachers had the opportunity to identify “surprises” that occurred during read-
aloud lessons and what they considered most valuable about participating in this study. Teacher responses during exit interviews served as data evidence that confirmed or disconfirmed discourse analysis of teacher-student interactions during read-aloud lessons (See Appendix F, Teacher Beliefs).

**Data Analysis**

Findings from my study were constructed from the raw material of the collected data. The analyses reported here used as data sources (a) expanded field notes, audio/video recordings of selected whole class read-aloud lessons and focus student small group conversations; (b) teacher interviews; (c) focus student interviews; and (d) audio recordings of teachers’ reflections during viewing sessions.

Some data sources functioned in supplementary ways to my analysis. For example, my expanded field notes, transcripts of teacher interviews, focus student interviews and teachers’ reflections during viewing sessions were not coded. Only transcripts of selected whole class read-alouds (22) and transcripts of focus student peer group conversations (20) were coded for analysis. As previously addressed concerning data collection, transcripts of interviews with teachers and focus students were transcribed and offered supplementary evidence for describing the context of the study.

Teachers’ reflections during viewing sessions supplemented my analysis of classroom read-alouds. When constructing transcripts of classroom read-alouds, I included a column which provided the teachers’ reflective comments while watching a video recording of that read-aloud session. For example:
Sometimes people make these rules and we go, “well, yeah, and who made the rule?” “Who makes them in charge?” Doesn’t make sense [looks at Alfredo, walks toward him]

Alfredo

Alfredo: Ummm, When my real sister... about kindergarten, she didn’t know no English like...uhhh, five months, she xxxxx

Alfredo almost made me fall over. I mean I lost where I was in the book! He usually sleeps through the whole morning! He connected!

Table 3.05 Teacher Talk and Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher talk (verbal and non-verbal)</th>
<th>Student Question (verbal and non-verbal)</th>
<th>Student talk (verbal and non-verbal)</th>
<th>Teacher Reflection [3-13-07]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes people make these rules and we go, “well, yeah, anmd...who made the rule?” “Who makes them in charge?” Doesn’t make sense [looks at Alfredo, walks toward him]</td>
<td>Rosa’s hand is still raised</td>
<td>Alfredo raised his hand</td>
<td>Alfredo almost made me fall over. I mean I lost where I was in the book! He usually sleeps through the whole morning! He connected!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher’s reflective comment provided history of Alfredo’s participation in classroom read-alouds and documented the teacher’s reaction to his change in classroom participation.

I did not begin with a set of categories or codes that shaped the data as it was being collected, but rather attempted to allow codes and categories to emerge from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). In spite of my intent, my background knowledge and experience prevented me from having a neutral stance toward my data (Erickson, 1992). When I endeavored to examine the aspects of classroom language, I was also analyzing my own interpretation of the teachers and students’ actions and reactions to one another, the texts and the literature discussions as a whole. My presence in the classroom...
influenced the representation of my data in the transcripts which I generated (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

A microethnographic approach to discourse analysis of language use in the classroom focused on what people do with language in context, and in this case, within the context of a particular event; the read-aloud lesson, or even a particular phase of the lesson. This type of analysis helped me to address the subtleties of language use in order to examine teacher/student interactions and their connections to or differences from peer/peer interactions. Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005 defines an event as “a bounded series of actions and reactions that people make in response to each other at the level of face-to-face interaction… it is people who are acting and reacting to each other; that is, the basic analytic unit, …not the individual but a group of people” (p. 6-7). As will be seen in the data analysis, understanding events as interpersonal interactions helped me to capture the complexity of the language use around literature in relation to the linguistic politics of the classroom.

Observational field notes, together with the video recordings of classroom read-aloud lessons, helped reconstruct the social context of the classroom environment when constructing transcripts of whole group read-aloud lessons and focus student small group conversations.

Transcriptions

As the researcher-writer, I had control over decisions of what to include in transcripts, how to represent certain details, and what to ignore, which resulted in a product that reduced and analyzed my raw data (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). Data
collected through audio recording (teacher and student interviews) were transcribed on the same day as the audiotape was made, or the day following. Whole class read-aloud lessons and focus student small group conversations were reviewed and portions were transcribed, with added notes, during data collection; complete verbatim transcripts were prepared after data collection. As previously stated, transcripts of interviews with teachers and focus students were transcribed and offered supplementary evidence for describing the context of this study.

Initial transcriptions of each of the videotapes of read-aloud lessons, small group conversations and of digital audio recordings of interviews were done using Transana qualitative analysis software (2007) operated with the aid of a foot pedal. This software facilitated a way for me to view four screens simultaneously: the video window, the transcript window, the data window and the visualization window as seen in the following figure:
Figure 3.03 Transana Software Data Windows

The video window displayed the video and allowed the user to play, pause and stop the video. Transcripts were entered, displayed and edited in the transcript window. The data window is where all data loaded in Transana was viewed, organized and manipulated. The fourth window, the visualization window, displayed visual representations of the data in the form of a waveform diagram which represented the audio track of video/audio recordings. While the Transana software was helpful for generating transcripts of data sources, it was not used for data analysis.

Making a transcript from a video recording was not a matter of writing down all that was said and seen. It is impossible to capture all the information represented on video recordings. According to Genishi (1982), the level of detail in transcriptions must
be related to the level and type of analysis the researcher intends. My goal was to situate the use and importance of communicative behaviors within the flow of social interaction in the classroom in order to understand in particular the student/teacher interactions around literature in comparison with the peer to peer interactions around literature (Bloome & Clark, 2006). First, I needed to produce verbatim transcripts of the whole class read-alouds, small group conversations and interviews that included accurate identification of the speaker(s), a record of interjections and overlapping speech and description of contextualization cues.

The transcription system needed to indicate the portion of the book that was being read as well as represent the students’ and teachers’ talk. Three of the five Latino picture books used in this study were unpaged. In order to identify particular pages of the text, the term “opening” was utilized to indicate the two facing pages on which the text and/or illustration appeared (Bader, 1976; Moebius, 1986). Opening “a” indicates the left-hand side of the double spread and “b” indicates the right-hand side of the double spread. “Text only” specifies a double spread of text with no illustration on either side of the opening. In order to indicate teachers’ oral variations when reading story text, I transcribed the teachers’ words and bracketed the actual written text throughout the story. The teacher’s insertions were printed in boldface and underlined. For example, while reading aloud La Mariposa (Jiménez, 1998) to her class, Mrs. Nelson (N756, La Mariposa, LPB-5, p. 6, 2-1-07) read: “Well, this teacher started to speak to the class [Miss Scalapino started speaking to the class] and Francisco didn’t [did not] understand a single word [she said].” (La Mariposa, Opening 4a, text only)
The transcription process required decisions about description of non-verbal language used in video-recorded whole-class and small-group classroom settings in order to capture the complexities of contextualization cues. According to Green & Smith (1983), description of contextualization cues provides “a means of specifying the range of behaviors that appear to contribute to decision making” (p. 380). After a transcript of spoken discourse was drafted, I followed the transcript while reviewing the video recording, adding notes about the visual details (i.e. posturing, proxemics, eye contact, hand and head movement, the manipulation of books and other materials) of unfolding events. This procedure helped insure that decisions about interpretation of the language was “based on contextualization cues rather than on arbitrarily preset features of message and conversation, e.g., syntax, semantics and/ or turn” (Green & Wallet, 1981, p. 163).

For the transcription process I utilized elements from conventions devised by Green and Wallat (1981), Shultz, Florio, and Erickson (1982), Bloome and Theodorou (1988), and Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, (2005) and added original elements to serve my own analytic intentions. The first initial (i.e. N=Nelson, M=Moody,) of the teachers’ last names, (indicating the classroom location), the video/audio file number, the story title and text type with order of presentation, the page number of the prepared transcript and the date were used to identify each transcript. For example, N756, La Mariposa, LPB-5, p. 6, 2-1-07, indicated the location in the transcript where the teacher read aloud a particular paragraph of La Mariposa (Jiménez, 1998).

Transcripts were organized by story titles. While the transcripts represented a somewhat static form of the actual read-aloud lessons, they did retain a sense of what was
happening and how it was happening between and among teachers and students.

Appendix D has a sample transcript. The following table describes the transcription system which I used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading the text of the book</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>Mrs. Nelson: back to our story please, boys and girls. “They came to a tumbledown shack”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omitted story text</td>
<td>[]</td>
<td>Mrs. Nelson: “They came to a tumbledown shack” [with one wall]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase of story Text</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Mrs. Nelson: “They came to a tumbledown shack” [with one wall]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One of its walls was missing.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture book page turns</td>
<td>[…]</td>
<td>[Opening 6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualization Cues</td>
<td>XXXX = undecipherable</td>
<td>Sharlene: XXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STRESS (all caps)</td>
<td>Mr. Moody: they DON’T have a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= short pause</td>
<td>Ubaldo: what did they hate about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= long pause</td>
<td>because if they had the monkey bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonverbal behavior or transcriber comments for clarification purpose</td>
<td>Cesar: it’s smelly because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adrianna: and then my mom (looks down at her book) Mrs. Nelson touches her shoulder as she walks behind her and toward the center aisle, maintaining eye contact by looking back at her over her right shoulder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice that is unidentified</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student: yeah!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices that are speaking at once</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Students: ooooooh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is speaking</td>
<td>Name (pseudonym)</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is speaking</td>
<td>Name (pseudonym)</td>
<td>Jasmine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.06 Transcription System**
Preliminaries to Coding

A microethnographic discourse analysis (cf. Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005) was used to examine conditions that influenced teachers and students interactions related to classroom multicultural stories. This particular approach was selected to analyze events in the classroom that exhibited the inter-relationship of the reading curriculum and teachers’ decision-making when reading and discussing literature in the classroom. Bloome et al. (2005) describe events as empirical circumstances where researchers can inquire into how people create meaning through their actions and reactions to each other (DaSilva Iddings & Katz, 2007). For this study, where the focus was on student’s and teacher’s linguistic interactions message units were used as the basic unit of analysis. My line of inquiry about patterns of participation structures was informed by considering contextualization cues. “Contextualization cues include verbal, nonverbal and prosodic signals as well as the manipulation of artifacts. “ (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005, p. 9). The content of what any participant had to say in this study was mostly contingent upon what other people had said or the language of the books being considered; therefore message units were a logical choice of unit.

Three phases of each story reading lesson were evidenced in the data: The first phase, “Before the Story” was limited to the teacher’s introduction immediately
preceding the reading-aloud of the story text. Introduction activities (i.e., introduction of vocabulary words, grammar and usage) which teachers did day(s) before reading aloud an Open Court story to the class were not included in analysis of story reading lessons.

The primary focus of analysis was on the second phase of the story reading lessons, “During the Story.” The second phase of the story reading lessons began with the first word of the story and ended with the last word of the story read aloud by the teacher to the whole class. All story text as read aloud by the teachers and all stops with teacher and/or student discourse were analyzed. The third phase of the story reading lesson, “After the Story” included whole class and focus group discussions following each story.

The story text of the Latino picture books and the stories from the reading curriculum was considered as “teacher-talk” since they were read aloud by the teacher. The published notes and script (which indicate teacher and student speaking parts) found in the Teacher’s Edition of the Open Court Reading curriculum became portions of teachers’ oral narrative segments when teachers elected to speak or read them into read-aloud lessons of Open Court selections. Use of Open Court Reading directives and/or actual script evidenced in Latino picture book read-aloud data, were so noted.

Coding Procedures and Emerging Categories

Constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used to analyze field notes, audio and video recordings by assigning codes and categories and modifying them as the analysis proceeded (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This inductive approach involved closely attending to data sources and noticing what patterns emerged (open coding).
noting categories or themes, and then describing the properties that exemplified each category by comparing and contrasting subsequent data. None of the categories of communicative behaviors, however, were mutually exclusive.

*Open coding*

The close examination of the data began when four transcripts of whole group read alouds (the first selection from the reading curriculum and the first Latino picture book in Mr. Moody’s class and in Mrs. Nelson’s class) were prepared, and this process continued as transcripts of small group conversations were produced together with the remaining whole class read-aloud discussions in each classroom. The goal was to describe what was happening. For example, on January 5, 2007, Mr. Moody had just finished reading aloud Herrera’s picture book, *My Diary From Here to There* (2002), to his class without making any stops. The following conversation occurred:

001 Mr. Moody: OK

002 That's the end. [Closes book, holding it in his right hand; removes his glasses with his left hand; standing opposite Michael’s desk]

003 Did you like that one? [makes eye contact with Michael]

004 Michael: short [maintaining eye contact with teacher]

005 Mr. Moody: yeah. [smiling, chuckling out loud] [turns away from Michael]

006 Short but good, huh [makes eye contact with Enrique, on back row]
However, on Tuesday, January 9, 2007, when Mr. Moody reviewed the previous day’s reading aloud of *In Two Worlds* (Open Court), the interaction included a sequence of literal questions with teacher-nominated student responses, followed by:

012 Mr. Moody: What else did we learn? *[Lupe has hand raised]*

013 Ummm, Lupe. [teacher made eye contact with Lupe and maintained his gaze throughout her response and his evaluative response to her]

014 Lupe: uh…they didn’t have any floors [*rising intonation*]

015 Mr. Moody: OK

016 they didn’t have any floors

017 OK

018 very good. [*looks down*]

I noted in the first exchange Mr. Moody asked students if they liked the story and in the second exchange the teacher orally quizzed students’ recall of facts and asked about their learning. As I continued to read through the transcripts, I noted several instances where the teachers’ questions, contextualized in exchanges with students could be categorized by the language register. The language of the social situation in an Open Court reading lesson, (“what did we learn?”) followed by a reproduction of the story text, was compared to language register used in a social situation with a non-school text (personal evaluation of the story using “liked” and “good”). Thus began the process of categorizing. I continued to explore the concept of language register in relationship to
teachers’ questions and I began to notice that the time given (or limited) for student response following teachers’ questions altered the function of the teachers’ questions. I had to broaden the category of “teacher’s questions” to “teachers’ decision-making.” In this way, open coding proceeded by the naming of categories (teachers’ questions), by splitting the categories into sub-categories Open Court language register, non-school-reading register and by broadening a given category through redefining the concept that the category seemed to embody (teacher decision-making).

This is only one example of the decisions surrounding one descriptive category that emerged during open coding. “Language register” eventually became an important category in the other phases of coding. However, some descriptive codes did not survive for long because they were either too specific or too general to be of use; these codes surfaced only to submerge again. For example, I tried using a classroom map to trace teacher movement during selected whole class read-aloud lessons in order to examine the relationship of teachers’ interpersonal distance to student responses. These maps documented teachers’ movement in relationship to verbal exchanges with individual students but resulted in messy representations that failed to adequately reflect teachers’ and students’ simultaneous non-verbal communicative behaviors in real-time duration of interactions. As a result, I abandoned visual representations of teacher movement and relied on written notations in the transcripts to indicate teachers’ interpersonal distance, students’ and teachers’ non-verbal behaviors in addition to teacher-student(s) spoken discourse.
Many teacher-student interactions during read-aloud lessons initially seemed to fit the “I” (Initiation), “R” (Response), “E” (Evaluation) participation pattern (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 2001). However, after I coded several transcripts using this descriptor, I began to understand that every teacher-student interaction could be labeled “Initiation, Response, Evaluation (IRE).” Closer examination of teacher-student interactions, with special attention to contextualization cues, revealed that their generative interactions varied in function and meaning. Therefore the coding of “IRE” participation structures was changed to encompass variations of the “IRE” pattern as well as non-“IRE” patterns, since the form of the participation structure could not be assumed to equal its function or meaning. These comparisons informed my analysis of the teachers and students’ pattern of interactions in Open Court story-reading groups with Latino picture book story-reading events in order to compare them with students’ interactions during peer group conversations, as per my third research question.

During all phases of coding, including open coding, the process was recursive and iterative (Patton, 1990). Some codes were applied to the data but when the data failed to support these conceptualizations, recoding was necessary to test new hypotheses. This back and forth movement is known as the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition to “back-and-forth” coding, the process also entails analytic induction; interplay between part-to-whole reasoning (induction) and whole-to-part reasoning (deduction) (Erickson, 1986). Part-to-whole reasoning, a “bottom up” process, involved
examining a diverse set of clips, and mining the data to explore what relationships might exist one with another.

The “top-down” method deductively reasons whole-to-part by selecting analytically interesting portions of data and then organizing them into theoretically-related collections to allow for the examination of multiple examples of the same phenomenon (i.e. teachers’ improvisation of written text when reading aloud). Together, analytic induction and deduction formulate a cycle of analyses which involves proposing hypotheses and checking them against the data.

Selection of Transcripts for In-depth Analysis

Looking across transcripts, teachers’ illustrations about their personal experiences often preceded students’ responses about their personal experiences related to story concepts and/or discourse topics. I noted use of personal pronouns to identify teachers’ and students’ personal experiences and considered use of personal pronouns as an evidence of teachers and or students’ positioning to the social situation of the story-reading lesson. The language of positioning related to the affect of the reading curriculum on the teachers and students in the social situation of each story-reading event with particular regard to students’ opportunities to speak.

Examination of the teachers’ situated personal stories revealed multiple occurrences of “imagined scenarios” which used inclusive personal plural pronouns (“we” and “us”) rather than personal singular pronouns such as “I” and “me” when relating personal experiences. For example, on January 4, 2007, Mrs. Nelson stopped at the bottom of page 13 while reading My Diary From Here to There (Pérez, 2002) and
asked what the character, Amada, wanted as she rode with her family across the border into the United States. Students suggested that Amada wanted something similar to what she had before; something that felt comfortable. The teacher did not use “you” (referring to the students) but instead, said:

163 Mrs. Nelson: How many of us |

164 when we travel have to travel with a special buddy, special blanket, or special toy [Nathaly, Lupita, Elidieth and Jasmine raise their hands] [all students’ eyes are on teacher]

165 And we do so because it makes us feel good doesn’t it?

166 Students: [many overlapping voices sub-vocalizing “yeah;” most students smile]

167 Mrs. Nelson: [teacher makes eye contact with individual students, smiling, then moving her eye gaze and connecting with one student after another]

168 so that no matter how strange the place is that we go to |

169 there’s that little buddy

170 there’s that toy |

171 Students: [overlapping voices sub-vocalizing; smiling to one another as they turn to one another or make eye contact with another peer sitting close to them]
I define “imagined scenario” as an oral narrative about students’ out-of-school experiences which was spoken or performed (sometimes with dialogue and exaggerated humor) by the teacher during classroom read-aloud lessons. Imagined scenarios were not named or defined a priori. I relied on my observational and analytic notes about the immediate context of the interaction before and after the delivery of oral narratives identified as “imagined scenarios” to help determine the boundaries of each “imagined scenario.” Students’ behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) in relationship to teachers’ “imagined scenarios” positioned students as participants in the scenario and as members of the audience.

Since a focus on teachers’ “imagined scenarios” closely aligned with my first two research questions (the ways teachers responded to basal stories and how basal directives affected what teachers did when reading and responding to both types of text), instances of the teacher’s “imagined scenarios” influenced my selection of transcripts for microanalysis.

Focus students’ small group conversations about the stories read aloud by the teacher in the whole class setting offered the opportunity to closely examine students’ language, decisions and behaviors after it had been mediated by the teacher in the whole class setting. Data from small group conversations needed to be included since my third research question dealt with the possible differences in students’ responses in small peer groups compared to student responses in whole group settings.

I developed a rationale for the choice of transcripts for microanalysis. First, I chose to primarily represent data from the second phase (during the teacher’s reading
aloud of the story) of whole-class read-alouds in Mrs. Nelson’s and in Mr. Moody’s class. “Before” and “after” phases of classroom read-alouds had greater variation between the ways teachers introduced texts (i.e. picture walks were done before reading aloud Open Court stories since students had individual copies of anthologies for reference; no picture walks were done prior to reading Latino picture books). Secondly, I chose data sources that represented read-alouds from Open Court Reading and Latino picture book read-alouds in order to explore the comparison between the two types of text. Reading culturally relevant stories (which may more closely relate to students’ personal experiences), represented by the Latino picture books, created a different social situation than the Open Court story-reading classroom situations. Each situation directly affected teachers and their interactions with students. Finally, I selected data sources that were collected during each of the five weeks of study of the unit on “heritage” in order to examine the influence of one discussion upon subsequent discussions; whole class as well as students peer group discussions.

On the basis of this rationale, transcripts of 20 whole group read-aloud lessons and 20 small group conversations (Nelson (N); Moody (M)) were chosen for in-depth analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan. 1-5</th>
<th>Jan. 8-12</th>
<th>Jan. 15-19</th>
<th>Jan 22-26</th>
<th>Jan 29-Feb 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whole Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N – Fri. (18 min.)</td>
<td>N – Thurs. (47 min.)</td>
<td>M – Thurs. (34 min.)</td>
<td>M – Thurs. (18 min.)</td>
<td>N – Fri. (10 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M – Fri. (19 min.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M – (students declined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N – Fri. (28 min)</td>
<td>N – Wed. (39 min.)</td>
<td>M – Wed. (24 min.)</td>
<td>N – Fri. (30 min.)</td>
<td>N – Thurs. (51 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M – Fri. (11 min)</td>
<td>M – Fri. (14 min)</td>
<td>N – Fri. (35 min.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>M – Fri. (37 min.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.07 Read-alouds and Small Group Discussions
Axial Coding

After the choice of transcripts for in-depth analysis, another level of coding was generated. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe “axial coding” as the process of putting data together in larger categories by “making connections between a category and its sub-categories” (p. 97). This intermediate stage between open coding and the final coding phase (selective coding) is when major categories that have been developed are related to each other in a theoretical synthesis.

As the transcripts selected for in-depth analysis were re-coded, concepts and categories were combined into fewer broad categories that would reflect those concepts and categories. Like open coding, this process involved alternating between inductive and deductive reasoning as well as the more horizontal process of refining or renaming codes.

The result of the axial coding was the development of four broad categories that were descriptive of the affects of the reading curriculum on the teacher when conducting story-reading events for both Open Court stories and Latino picture book stories: 1) The Reading and 2) Student-teacher interactions, since the classroom interactions were a product of what the teacher did or did not do in response to the directives of the Open Court Teacher’s Edition. Two broad categories described students’ interactions in peer groups discussions: Non-literary responses and Literary responses.

The sub-categories for The Reading were a) Teacher control of text and b) Teacher control of topics of talk. Sub-categories for the second broad category, Teacher-Student Interactions were: a) Opportunities for student talk, b) Patterns of teacher-
student talk, and c) Teacher evaluation of student talk. The two broad categories which
described students’ interactions in peer group discussion also had sub-categories. The
sub-categories for Non-Literary Responses were: a) Procedures, b) Turn-taking, and c)
In and Out. The sub-categories for Literary Responses were: a) Topics of talk, b)
Analytical Talk, c) Personal responses, and d) Reading.

*Selective Coding*

Selective coding involved the most difficult interpretive work. I began to relate the broad conceptual categories to each other in an attempt to perceive patterns and relationships that involved these categories. In this study, selective coding involved two challenges. First, the two categories of reading stories aloud and teacher-student interactions needed to be related to each other. And at the same time, the categories describing non-literary and literary student responses in peer group discussions needed to be related to the categories of the teachers’ reading and the teacher-student interactions in the whole class story-reading events. Patterns and relationships were constrained and disconfirmed in some instances when attention was given to timing. Timing was influential in analysis with regard to the order in which stories were read, the evidence of one read-aloud lesson contributing to the nature of subsequent read-aloud lessons and with regard to the way teachers’ “imagined scenarios” functioned.

The central phenomenon of this study was teacher decision-making which encompassed all other categories, since ultimately each teacher decided the extent of adhering to or deviating from the Open Court directives. Specifically, the decisions teachers make when reading aloud multicultural stories in classrooms where the reading
instruction is located in the basal series was central to this study. Chapter 4 constitutes the findings of this study which includes an explanation of the relationships and patterns constructed as a result of this analytical process.

It is important to state that the process of open, axial and selective coding was not a linear process. At each stage, dissonance resulted in going back to previous stages of coding in order to adjust the coding system so that the data supported the conceptual interpretations that were being made. As a result, the construction of the interpretive description was grounded in the data themselves.

*Reflexivity and Trustworthiness*

*Prolonged Engagement*

This study lasted for a total of eight months, which allowed the researcher to provide a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of two classrooms, two teachers and 45 students who participated in read-aloud lessons. Four phases of data collection over time provided an increased exposure to the day-to-day classroom routines which contextualized the read-aloud lessons and reduced the novelty of the presence of the researcher in the classroom.

*Variety of Data Sources*

The variety of data sources (video recordings and audio recordings of whole-class read-aloud lessons and small group conversations, multiple informal and formal interviews with teachers and students and teacher reflections during viewing sessions of read-aloud lessons) broadened the perspective of the meanings constructed through teacher-student and student-student interactions in the classroom. As the researcher, I
could not be overly confident that the simple aggregation of data collected from a variety of sources in a variety of ways would yield a complete understanding of what was happening at any given time. The representation of each source of data threatened its validity.

**Triangulation of Data Sources and Methodologies**

The triangulation of data sources and the triangulation of methodologies were two forms of triangulation used in this study. According to Diesing (1972), the process of contextual validation takes two forms. First evidence may be compared with a different kind of evidence on the same subject. For example, a child’s comment about his identification with a story character during a small peer group discussion may be checked against his comments during a whole-class discussion and his comments during an interview. Cross-comparison of evidence is useful because each example has its own immediate context which impacts the response and differentiates it from another comment in a different context.

Contextual validation may involve questioning the source of the data. If a student comments during a read-aloud lesson, “this is not a good story because it is sad,” the researcher must consider what internal and external factors prompted such a response at that time in that setting. By using both forms of validation, the researcher in this study may be able to detect the source of distortions in the evidence collected and identify examples of disconfirming cases of teachers’ and students’ experiences during read-aloud lessons and during small group conversations about stories which were read-aloud by the teacher to the class.

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Between-method triangulation is described by Denzin (1989) as “the combination of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical unit (p. 244).” In this study, methodologies were triangulated for all of the reasons pertaining to the purpose of the research. Each source of data (video recordings of whole-class read-aloud lessons from the reading curriculum and of Latino picture books, audio recordings of individual teacher and student interviews, teacher reflective interviews while revisiting video recordings of teacher-student interactions during read-aloud lessons, and video recordings of student interactions with peers in small groups), provided a different view of teacher, students and of the text and their inter-relationships. It was intended that the strengths of one context of data would compensate for the limitations of another context, taking into account both the individual participant and his or her social and cultural positions and responses.

To conclude, the issue of generalizability must be addressed. Clifford Geertz (1983) argues that knowledge is “always ineluctably local” and situated (p. 4). This dissertation is a description of the use and importance of communicative behaviors situated within the flow of social interaction related to multicultural stories read aloud by two fifth-grade teachers to their respective students. Geertz (1973) states that the extensive, finely detailed description of the study is not intended to give readers the ability to repeat the study, but rather to supply enough information so that readers can themselves determine what is applicable to another situation. Therefore, given the particularities of two particular fifth-grade classrooms, examined by a particular researcher with her own assumptions and predispositions, this unique situation is not
repeatable. It is the reader who must decide whether the information reported in this study is valuable because of its unique example.

**Limitations of Study**

*Story genre and formats*

One limitation of this study was the range of different genres and story formats across the stories read aloud to students. The genres of the Open Court multicultural stories included autobiographies, two realistic fiction and one expository text. The genres of the five Latino picture books included two autobiographical and three realistic fiction stories. Two of the Latino picture books were bilingual, offering two sets of text on each page. One story from the reading curriculum, and one of the Latino picture books offered a language glossary for pronunciation and meaning. The presentation of Spanish in both types of text (*The West Side*, from the reading curriculum and the five Latino picture books) had limited access to non-readers of Spanish. Four of the five Open Court stories were excerpts from larger works. The characteristics of basalized text are highly contrastive to high quality, award winning picture books. The stories offered in the Open Court reading program had some illustrations which supported the text. The Latino picture books, however, contained illustrations that were as important as the text in conveying meaning.

*Length of study*

Even though this study lasted for eight months, it was not the researcher’s intention for it to be framed as a longitudinal study for the purpose of tracing development. A longitudinal study of the development of teacher knowledge acquisition
of students’ diverse cultural resources would require several years of data collection. 
This study did, however, allow the researcher to investigate the influence of the reading 
curriculum upon teachers’ and students’ classroom talk across the school year, with an 
intensive focus on one five-week unit of study.

*Student Access to Texts*

Another limitation of this study was the difference in the access students had to 
the texts which were read aloud by the teacher to the class. Each student had an Open 
Court student anthology on their desk when the teacher was reading the story aloud. 
Some students examined the illustrations, pointing to details and others swept under the 
line of text while the teacher was reading. In contrast, the illustrations and texts of the 
Latino picture books were enlarged on a screen, which created a different environment 
than when the teacher read aloud stories from the Open Court Reading curriculum; 
students were required to rely on their hearing of the story text as read aloud by the 
teacher, without the option of touching the pages, or locating specific lines of text to 
reread. Students were limited to scanning with their eyes the text and illustrations 
projected onto the screen, whereas they could use their fingers to sweep under text and to 
locate specific details in illustrations in their Open Court anthologies. Visual-only access 
to the texts of the Latino picture books, however, did not prevent students from following 
the text as the teacher read.

*Listening Environment*

The difference in listening environment constructed during the read-aloud events 
of two types of text (Open Court Reading selections and Latino picture books) also
limited this study. The power point presentations of the Latino picture books influenced teachers and students non-verbal behaviors and movement, positioning them as “watchers” as well as readers and listeners.

Setting and Participants

This study is limited in the same way all descriptive classroom studies are limited, in that it reports on the experience of 45 specific students and two teachers in two particular classrooms which both use the same reading curriculum and who read aloud the same five Latino picture books. As such, this study attempts to provide a sufficiently “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of these two classroom cases in order to enable the reader to gain both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) insight into what happens when culturally relevant literature is read aloud as an addition to the classroom experience of teachers and students who use scripted language arts curriculum. This study offers no generalizability for other children, other classrooms, and other teachers. Of course, the researcher’s own subjectivity is an important part of the methodology of this study as well.

Teacher’s education, experience and training

To what extent the data about degrees held, teaching experiences and district inservices attended make these two teachers a representative sample of fifth-grade elementary teachers is unknown.
Chapter 4: Findings of the Study

The purpose of this research was to examine how two teachers used a basal reading program’s instructions during classroom story reading events of multicultural children’s literature and to compare children’s talk about the literature between themselves to the whole classroom discussions. While the teachers themselves were white (not-Hispanic, not Latino/a), the literature used for this study included Chinese, Yup’ik, and Latino (Puerto Rican; Mexican) cultures. The majority of students in the two classrooms were Latino/a, specifically Mexican-American; the literature selected for read-alouds outside of the basal program reflected this culture specifically.

The three research questions were:

- How and when do the directives suggested in the Teacher’s Edition of a scripted basal program affect what teachers do when reading and responding to basal stories?
- In what ways, if any, do basal manual directives affect what teachers do when reading and responding to Latino picture books in classroom story-reading events?
- Is the nature of teacher-students interactions around story-reading events in whole class settings similar to or different from students’ interactions in peer group discussions in which neither the teacher nor the researcher is actively participating?
The two teachers in the study used a state-approved basal reading program, Open Court. Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson were experienced fifth-grade teachers with advanced degrees (see Appendix E for more details on their education and experience). They were also familiar with the basal reading program; Mrs. Nelson had taught Open Court Reading for 8 years and Mr. Moody had taught Open Court in his fifth-grade classroom for four years. Previously, Mr. Moody served 3 years as a local elementary school principal, during which time he oversaw the implementation of Open Court in his building. Both teachers attributed their pedagogy of reading to the training they received in district in-services, led by Open Court trainers; they felt this directed their implementation of the curriculum and established their accountability to follow the curriculum (Moody interview, 2-13-07, Nelson interview, 2-26-07).

Of significance to the study were Mr. Moody’s and Mrs. Nelson’s story-reading events which occurred as part of the daily classroom. Story-reading events refer to the time during the school day when teachers and students respond to one another in relationship to stories read aloud by the teacher to the class. These read-aloud events were observed in January and February, for five consecutive weeks in each respective fifth-grade classroom. Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson were observed reading aloud selections from Open Court Reading to their students during the period of the school day scheduled for reading, and they were each observed reading aloud Latino picture books to their respective students as well, although those story-reading events were not scheduled during Open Court Reading (Open Court, 2002) time. Also to be examined was the
nature of the peer focus groups that discussed all the literature and how those discussions were similar to and different from the whole class, teacher-led discussions.

Context

Qualitative research acknowledges the significance of context to any study. What is at stake is not how many times a teacher quoted or paraphrased the teacher instructions from the basal series, but rather the more subtle aspects of how language (and in these classrooms, language difference) plays out in a classroom. To understand how the basal directives affected teachers’ presentation of and interaction with both the basal reader and the Latino picture books, as well as to understand the classroom context of the peer discussion groups, I will discuss the Open Court reading sessions and the Latino picture book readings from each teacher. I describe the classroom in general, the ways in which teachers read the stories to their students, and some of the interactions between students and teachers about the stories. In a number of cases, I provide lengthy transcripts of classroom discussion; because the dynamics of events are subtle and because I want to show that these dynamics appeared over and over again, it is necessary to provide context-rich information about the interactions in these classrooms.

Open Court Reading in Mr. Moody’s Classroom

The Reading Environment

A new story came along every week. Mr. Moody had it handy, on the shelf beside his other spiral bound teacher manuals for math and social studies. The students’ hardcover anthologies were lined up on the classroom shelves. The story lesson began each school day at 10:20 a.m., following a morning recess. Students entered the
classroom, voices overlapping in conversation as they found their seats. Student helpers distributed the books. Mr. Moody stood at the front of the room, his chino pant leg flattened against the edge of the desk where Ana sat facing him, bordering the center aisle. For each story from the Open Court Reading curriculum, Mr. Moody held his Teacher’s Edition with both hands, announced the page number and read aloud the focus questions, printed on the title page, just above the story text. Looking down to find his place, he said into the page, “I’m gonna read it. You follow along and then we’ll have some questions” (M586, Land I Lost, OC-1, 1-03-07).

Across the Open Court read-aloud events in Mr. Moody’s classroom, he referred to the story as a task to complete. For example, when getting ready to read aloud Love as Strong as Ginger, he said, “I’m gonna read the thing aloud. You’re gonna follow along. I’m gonna get through the whole thing and then we’re gonna discuss it.” (emphasis added, M735, Love as Strong as Ginger, OC-4, 1-24-07) Mr. Moody’s instructional conversations during Open Court story-reading events were group-centered (to his team) rather than to individual students. His language was like that of an athletic coach, referring to team members as “you guys”. Mr. Moody announced, “Here we go” when beginning to read The Land I Lost (OC-1), and In Two Worlds (OC-2). Just before reading the first sentence in The West Side (OC-3), he explained to the students, “I’m gonna read for about a minute and then we’ll dismiss morning recess and then when we come back in we’ll hit it right away.” (Emphasis added, M715, The West Side, OC-3, 1-17-07). True to his word, he said, “Here we go guys,” read the first sentence of the story aloud, and dismissed the students to recess (M715, The West Side, OC-3, 1-17-07).
The personal pronoun “I” positions Mr. Moody as the teacher and “you” separates student’s roles from his role as the teacher. Use of “we’ll” (we’ll dismiss morning recess) positions Mr. Moody with the school, since it is the larger institution that determines dismissal times. In the second half of that same sentence, use of “when we come back” and “we’ll hit it right away” suggests that the coach is going to accompany his team and that it is a cooperative effort to accomplish the task of the story-reading event.

The Reading

Mr. Moody read in a soft, pleasant tone, his voice modulating up and down over the words as he walked down the center aisle, to the back of the room. Mr. Moody’s oral reading modeled re-reading when words were misread or skipped. He was never observed reading Open Court stories in preparation for the story-reading event. Though his prosody was sometimes stilted, he kept reading aloud as he wove his way between the long rows of students’ desks, from one side of the room to the other, often chuckling out loud when the levity of the story tickled his fancy. Students remained seated in their desks throughout his oral story-reading. No one got up to sharpen a pencil, to throw away trash or to attend to any other task. Students were observed sitting at their desks.

Most students had their anthologies open on their desks. Some students intermittently looked up at Mr. Moody as he read; if no eye contact was made, they looked back at their books. Students often lay over on their desks, propping their heads up with their hands. Some laid their heads onto the desk or on top of their open books. Though students were observed looking down at their text, it is not known whether they
were following the text with their eyes. And while they could hear Mr. Moody reading aloud, it is not known to what degree they listened to the story.

_Science-Teacher Interactions_

When Mr. Moody nominated students to respond to his questions, some looked down and did not offer a response. It is unknown whether they had been listening or they knew the answer and chose not to speak or they were listening and did not understand Mr. Moody’s question. Students who spoke (either in response to Mr. Moody’s question or to offer a comment) gave responses that suggest they had been listening to the story.

Three of the five Open Court stories evoked teacher-student interactions about language difference. Spanish, Yup’ik and Chinese are heritage languages of the main characters in _The West Side_ (OC-3), _In Two Worlds_ (OC-2) and _Love as Strong as Ginger_ (OC-4). In accordance with the Open Court directive (Teacher’s Edition, Open Court Reading, 2002, p. 214), Mr. Moody relied on the bilingual students in his classroom to model pronunciation and translate the Spanish words and phrases _The West Side_ (OC-3).

After reading aloud the introduction to _The West Side_ (OC-3) on page 212, Mr. Moody asked, “Why doesn’t Juan like the United States?” Liliana responded, “’cause he doesn’t speak English.” Mr. Moody responded: “he doesn’t speak English and it’s kinda hard to uhhh play and interact with people who speak a different language.” Liliana’s response to Mr. Moody’s question identifies his proposal of a link between the story character, Juan, and Liliana. Mr. Moody’s response to Liliana shows his recognition of her connection to his proposal. He repeated Liliana’s response, and extended it. He does not supply an antecedent for “it’s,” suggesting that language difference is difficult for
unnamed others in social situations. Liliana does not verbally respond. She withdraws eye contact with Mr. Moody and looks down. Mr. Moody looks across the class, using the marker “okay” to signal that the floor is closed. Subsequently, he says, “Here we go guys” and begins reading aloud the story text. Liliana looks at her open text.

Later, during the same story-reading event, the story text read:

“Sure,” Carlos said in English. “Matter of fact, I was going to ask you to give me a hand. He smiled. Juan didn’t understand the English, but a smile was the same in any language.

He smiled back. They made two trips from the Bodega Rivera to the basement of the brownstone rooming house where Carlos lived. Juan kept talking almost nonstop all the way. He had so much talk inside him it seemed he just couldn’t get it all said (p. 217)

Miguel, a student on the front row, interrupted Mr. Moody and asked, “Does he…” Mr. Moody interrupted the question and replied, “yeah, he thinks Carlos speaks Spanish.” Miguel is a Hispanic bilingual student. Mr. Moody anticipated Miguel’s question and gave an answer. He immediately resumed reading aloud the story text.

After reading The West Side, Mr. Moody asked the class, “If Carlos from the story was sitting in this classroom and Juan (other main character) was sitting in this classroom, what do you think their personalities would be like?”(M, The West Side, OC-3, p. 4, 1-19-07). Five students volunteered and were nominated. Michael responded with one word, “confused”. Teacher-student interaction continued as follows:
Mr. Moody: Okay. Yeah, he’d be a little confused because he doesn’t speak English, right? Errr..because…yeah doesn’t speak English and with a teacher like me, that might be a problem, huh? [Marlen raised her hand]

Mr. Moody: Marlen.

Marlen: Mr. Moody, I have a question for you.

Mr. Moody: Sure.

Marlen: What if there was somebody like…like Juan in here and he’s talking to us. Would you get mad at him? Like cause he’s trying to learn.

Mr. Moody: No. Nope. Not as long as he’s trying to learn. That would not be a problem at all. I’ve had that in class before and I just sit him next to somebody that speaks Spanish and they sort of translate, and then all of a sudden it seems like they pick up English in no time.

Mr. Moody: All right. Turn to page 212.

Marlen’s question was questioning Mr. Moody’s rule about not speaking Spanish in class. She wants to know Mr. Moody’s attitude (would you get mad?) toward speaking Spanish in class, and she aligns her question with learning, which is an accepted value and purpose for classes at school. Mr. Moody acknowledges her question, recognizes it with the learning qualifier attached, and gives his teacher-procedure for
helping students with language confusion in the context of the classroom. Mr. Moody immediately closes the floor (“All right”) and directs students back to the story text.

In the students’ anthologies, In Two Worlds (OC-2), (as well as in Mr. Moody’s Teacher’s Edition) a sepia-toned photograph appears on page 202, depicting a classroom with students seated at their desks and a Yup’ik teacher at the blackboard, facing the class. In the sidebar of the Teacher’s Edition, the following script is provided for teachers: “I’m a bit confused here. This is something I should clarify. Why is the teacher writing words in Yup’ik on the board?” Mr. Moody read the script verbatim, laid his Teacher’s Edition down on Ana’s desk, and walked across the classroom, gaining eye contact with David. “Why would that language be needed to be taught in school?” Mr. Moody nominated a student who had not volunteered and the student responded by giving eye contact and then looking down, never offering a verbal response. Mr. Moody repeated the question, moving his right arm down, palm up, “It’d be like I… I don’t need to teach any of you… most of you know Spanish… don’t need to teach you that.” Students offered responses when nominated, but Mr. Moody rejected their responses with “not exactly” and “no, they DO understand English.” Finally, Mr. Moody looked at the camera and asked, chuckling, “Does this kind of remind you of ‘who’s on first?’”

Mr. Moody then offered an example from his own life, explaining that even though his great grandfather was from Greece and spoke Greek, none of the succeeding generations spoke Greek; only English. He then asked, “Why did that happen? Why don’t I speak Greek? Why didn’t they teach me? Why don’t I speak Greek if my great grandfather was from Greece?” Students volunteered and offered a variety of reasons.
Mr. Moody stated, “it gradually gets phased out” [right hand moving up and down as if marking passage of time] and offered a personal example:

I have a friend whose great grandfather is from Mexico. His name is Matt Sanchez. Matt doesn’t speak any Spanish because he father was here and spoke mostly English. Matt’s parents spoke mostly English at home and then they didn’t speak Spanish to him. So they lost the language.

Mr. Moody shifted back to the story text and asked, “How did the Yup’ik lose their language? Why do they still want to teach it?”

When Xochilt responded by saying, “because that’s who they are and they are supposed to know that language,” Mr. Moody shifted the conversation to the students’ personal lives:

118 Mr. Moody: you speak two languages, English and Spanish. You know more words than I did at your age. You have a bigger vocabulary than I had at your age.

119 Jesus: [pumping his raised arm up and down]

120 Mr. Moody: Now what you never want to do is lose that. You always want to continue to speak Spanish AND English so that you’ll have two languages. It’s something that will help you in life. And it’s also part of your heritage.

121 Mr. Moody: and that’s what is going on here [having returned center front, taps the open Teacher’s Edition] [Jesus raised his hand].
Mr. Moody: Jesus.

Jesus: I started speaking more English and my dad didn’t like it.

Mr. Moody: ‘cause you were speaking so much English, right?

Jesus: yeah.

Mr. Moody: and that is exactly right. You guys are lucky you can relate to this story.

Mr. Moody: If I was reading this up in Seattle with some of my classes, they would not have had two languages so they can’t relate to it.

Mr. Moody: [walks down center aisle, stopping at Jesus’s desk. Touches his desk with his hand, turns around to face the class from center aisle] But what Jesus just did was compared himself to what was going on there. [touches Jesus’s shoulder] and that was perfect.

Mr. Moody: [walks briskly up center aisle to center front] It’s easy to lose a language if you don’t speak it all the time. Okay.

Mr. Moody: [made eye contact with Lupe, and nominates her verbally]

Lupe: my mom …umm mmm…xxxxx Spanish…xxxx

Mr. Moody: yeah.
Mr. Moody: [Miguel has hand raised. Mr. Moody looks over at him] Miguel.

Miguel: Well, I can speak Spanish. How can you speak Greek?

Mr. Moody: It was not passed to generations. That’s what I’m saying. Everybody just spoke English. Nobody spoke Greek after while, so none of my family speaks Greek. They all speak English.

Miguel: Then you don’t have the blood of Greek

Mr. Moody: [loudly, maintaining eye contact with Miguel] NO. I DO have the blood of Greek. My great great grandfather was from Greece. The problem was they didn’t keep the language. They didn’t continue to teach it so they lost it. So part of the heritage is gone.

Miguel: xxxx

Mr. Moody: see, he doesn’t know much Spanish, and that’s exactly it.

Mr. Moody: [returns to center front, picks up TE off of Ana’s desk] (M696, In Two Worlds (OC-2), p. 6-13, 1—09-07)

Holding the Teacher Edition in his hands, Mr. Moody says “Okay” and resumes reading aloud the story text. Mr. Moody became frustrated when students didn’t identify with the students in the story, In Two Worlds (OC-2). After offering two personal examples, one about a friend and one about his own heritage, he contests Miguel’s declaration that he is not Greek if he doesn’t speak Greek. He distinguishes between
ethnic heritage and losing a language. Miguel’s last turn, responding as much to Mr. Moody’s elevated voice as he does to his explanation, generates an example of someone he knows that is Mexican, but doesn’t speak much Spanish. Mr. Moody affirms his response, closes the floor for student responses and returns to the task of reading aloud.

In the story, *Love as Strong as Ginger* (OC-4), Katie’s grandmother is speaking: “Maybe if I knew English,” she said, “I would have become … a famous actress!” Mr. Moody stopped and Miguel said, “Does Katie know Chinese? That’s about heritage.” Mr. Moody responded, chuckling out loud, “that’s right. That’s about heritage. But that is a very good question, Miguel.” Norma, who rarely participated in any story-reading event, volunteered and was nominated. Her response was too soft to accurately transcribe, but Mr. Moody’s response indicated that Norma’s response was probably anchored in the text: “yeah, that’s what it seems like from the story because the grandmother says she doesn’t speak English so she can’t get a job in one of the other places.” The teacher-student interaction continued. Prompted by Miguel’s question about Katie’s ability to speak Chinese, this teacher-student interaction attributes the students’ inferences to their own dual-language experiences and compares the Open Court story situation to the characters’ situation in the Latino picture book, *I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4), which had been read earlier that same day.

150  Ana: so, ummm. If the grandmother doesn’t speak English

151  Mr. Moody: yeah, it’s exactly like the story that we read today [*I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4)]. Ummm

152  Ana: uh, probably she translates for her
Mr. Moody: right. And I’m not sure, Miguel brings up a good point because I’m not sure how good, uh, Katie speaks Chinese because they would interpret for her when they go to the crab chong.

Michael: she probably knows Chinese well because if the grandmother didn’t know any English, and understood grandma and talked to the little girl in Chinese…

Mr. Moody: She must have known. That’s what we can infer, anyway. Right? Okay.

Saul: and probably she can understand it, but only…and she probably knows what English means, but doesn’t know how to speak it.

Mr. Moody: that could be and that’s the way it works for you? [rising intonation]

Saul: [nods, smiling]

Mr. Moody: is that right? Yeah. You can pick it up a little bit, but…okay. Very good.

It is important to note that this interaction about the story text, page 233, in *Love as Strong as Ginger* (OC-4), occurred in the second reading of the story. During the first read on Wednesday, Mr. Moody read aloud four pages of story text, pages 231-234, without stopping. On Thursday, Mr. Moody directed students to take turns, each one reading aloud one sentence of the story on page 233 of *Love as Strong as Ginger.*
“Following along” was an established classroom participation rule during and across Open Court story read-alouds, at least according to Mr. Moody. Mr. Moody monitored whether students were keeping their place as he read and he made clear the consequences for not following along. For example, after reading aloud the first two paragraphs of *In Two Worlds* (OC-2), Mr. Moody stopped, looked up and said, “you people still aren’t reading with me. You’ve got to be right with me, guys.”

After reading aloud the next paragraph, he left the front of the room, and began walking down the center aisle, reading as he made his way to Jesus, who was sitting in the back row, next to the center aisle, slumped down in his seat with his chin resting on his open book. Having finished the second paragraph of story text, Mr. Moody stopped in the aisle and turned to face Jesus, gaining eye contact when Jesus straightened in his seat. After a long pause, which gave Jesus time to sit up and make eye contact with Mr. Moody, Mr. Moody said to Jesus, with slightly increased volume, “you’ll have to stay for not following along.” Since fifth-grade lunch immediately followed language arts, “staying” meant lunch detention in the classroom with Mr. Moody where talking was not allowed at all. Often I would de-brief with Mr. Moody during lunch and most times he was in his classroom monitoring students serving lunch detention.

Mr. Moody broke eye contact with Jesus and turned his back to Jesus. Jesus looked down at his open text. Mr. Moody resumed reading aloud as he walked across the center aisle. Mr. Moody’s public confrontation with Jesus reminded all students that he monitored their behavior while he was reading aloud. He indicated through his exchange with Jesus that good students follow along in the text while the teacher is reading and
students who don’t follow along while the teacher is reading will eat lunch in the classroom instead of with their friends. In every Open Court story-reading event, Mr. Moon stopped reading multiple times to monitor students’ place in the text.

An evidence of students’ resistance to Mr. Moody’s monitoring, was the observed behavior of students who imitated following along. Although students sometimes stretched backwards, both arms extended into the air with open-mouthed yawns, most conformed to the posture of following along. However, some students’ books were not open to the page Mr. Moody was reading while others had their book on their desktops open to the right page, but had another book or paper in their laps. Responding to the turn-the-page signal, students flipped their page just after everyone else did. Some girls bent their heads so that their long hair veiled their book and their eyes. Students, like Jesus in the example above, publicly contested the teacher’s rule by laying their heads on their books, regardless of the predictable consequences.

Mr. Moody also monitored students’ attentive behaviors during interactions following the story. For example, when Mr. Moody had finished reading aloud, (no longer shifting back and forth between the text and the students), and was looking at the class, students were responding to his question: “What was Juan’s problem?” Mr. Moody stopped after Lupe’s response and said,

065 TM Okay.
066 TM Everybody stop for a minute.
067 TM I want you looking up here.
068 TM hands folded on the desk.
I don’t want drawing
ummm
I appreciate you guys wanting to learn your times tables
but now’s not the time.
So put those cards away.
I don’t want you looking around laughing.
I want you paying attention. All right?

[low, overlapping voices. Students slid their cards and papers inside their desks while maintaining eye contact with Mr. Moody] (M The West Side, OC-3, 1-19-07)

Mr. Moody publicly addressed students on their lack of attention and instructed them to focus on the main activity of the classroom.

Pacing

Pacing demands of the Open Court Reading curriculum influenced the amount of time teachers devoted to classroom interactions during story-reading lessons. In Mr. Moody’s classroom, the Open Court story-reading lesson began at 10:20 a.m. and lasted until approximately 11:20, when the teacher taught spelling and reviewed workbook pages until lunch break at 12:20. Reading was over when Mr. Moody announced it was time to start spelling. Student helpers collected the books put them away.

While reading aloud The Land I Lost (OC-1), Mr. Moody said, “we’re gonna work for about fifteen minutes and then we’re gonna get on with your spelling uhh, because we gotta get your spelling words ‘cause we have the test…uhh pretest
tomorrow.” (M587, Land I Lost, OC-1, p. 6, 1-03-07). This was the first week back from winter break, a four day week. Pacing schedules were demanding for five-day weeks; holidays and other deviations in school schedules pressured teachers to fit in the components of the reading curriculum regardless of reduced instructional time. Mr. Moody often checked his watch during story-reading events. During the story-reading of *In Two Worlds* (OC), Mr. Moody interrupted a student response and said, “Jesus, we gotta go. Okay, let’s get this going” (M686, *In Two Worlds* OC-2, p. 8, 1-08-07).

The following table indicates that Mr. Moody spent an average of 34 minutes per story in Open Court story-reading events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPEN COURT STORIES</th>
<th>Student talk / Teacher stops; % of stops that were student talk</th>
<th>Time Spent Reading Aloud</th>
<th>Discussion Time After Story (same day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land I Lost (pp. 180-183)</td>
<td>9/10=90%</td>
<td>26 min</td>
<td>9 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In Two Worlds</em> (pp. 195-203)</td>
<td>10/14=71%</td>
<td>36 min.</td>
<td>4 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The West Side (pp. 212-223)</td>
<td>10/21=48%</td>
<td>24 min*.</td>
<td>13 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Love as Strong as Ginger</em> (pp. 229-235)</td>
<td>17/19=89%</td>
<td>55 min.</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmele (pp. 279-283)</td>
<td>3/5=60%</td>
<td>31 min.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include the teacher’s stops for pronunciation of Spanish words.

Table 4.01: Time Mr. Moody spent on Open Court stories

This chart shows the relationship between teacher talk and teacher-student interaction for each Open Court story-reading event. For example, when Mr. Moody read aloud *The West Side* (OC-3), he stopped 21 times during the story. Students interacted with Mr. Moody 10 of the 21 times Mr. Moody stopped reading. During the other 11
stops, Mr. Moody was the only one who talked. Also, when Mr. Moody made more
stops during the reading, he spent less time interacting with students after the story.

Mr. Moody’s students returned from morning recess at 10:20. Lunch break was 2
hours later, at 12:20. If Mr. Moody’s story-reading event lasted approximately 34
minutes, he had 1.5 hours to maintain the pace for incorporating the other components of
the Open Court Reading program (i.e. vocabulary instruction, spelling, and workbook
page assignments). Following the Open Court reading events, students’ anthologies were
put away and were not used again until the next reading lesson. Neither Mr. Moody nor
the students were ever observed taking home Open Court books. The teacher and
students’ perspective of Open Court stories was that they were “school stories” which
came out for about an hour a day and the rest of the time they sat on the shelf.

As will be seen, while both teachers used instructions from the Teacher’s Edition
of Open Court as they taught, the reading event in Mrs. Nelson’s classroom was different
from that in Mr. Moody’s classroom in several significant ways. As with the description
of Mr. Moody’s reading of Open Court material, I discuss the general environment of
Mrs. Nelson’s classroom, Mrs. Nelson’s reading of the stories, and her interactions
around the stories with the students.

Open Court Reading in Mrs. Nelson’s Classroom

The Reading Environment

Mrs. Nelson’s classroom was located in a portable classroom near Mr. Moody’s
classroom. Both teachers were on the same grade-level team, contracted to implement
the same reading curriculum, under the same principal, in the same school district. Mrs.
Nelson’s morning schedule was similar to Mr. Moody’s. The story lesson began at 10:20 a.m., following morning recess. After recess, Mrs. Nelson’s students lined up on the wooden ramp outside their classroom. At the teacher’s direction, students entered quietly and took their seats. “Nothing on your desk, in your desk, or under your desk” was Mrs. Nelson’s classroom policy, which meant that the desks functioned as work tables. All students’ materials were placed on shelves. At reading time, student helpers distributed the anthologies and notebooks students used for reading lessons.

Every week, on Mondays, Mrs. Nelson played a CD audio recording of the Open Court story that she would read aloud later that week (field notes, 10-2-06). Sometimes she read aloud the Open Court story on Tuesdays, but usually her story-reading event took place on Wednesday. Mr. Moody, in contrast, did not have the CD’s and therefore, his students did not listen to the audio recordings.

*The Reading*

Instead of reading Open Court story “focus questions” aloud herself, Mrs. Nelson nominated a student to read them to the class before reading the story. Mrs. Nelson carried her teacher’s manual in the crook of her right arm, but often laid it down on a student desk and walked away. Unlike Mr. Moody, Mrs. Nelson did not read directly from the manual. However, close examination of her story-reading events reveals she used most of the components of the curriculum which framed each story. Mrs. Nelson began reading class from a variety of locations in the classroom, rather than remaining positioned at the front of the classroom, as Mr. Moody did. She was just as likely to
stand at the back of the classroom, behind the last row of student desks, as she was to begin positioned at the front of the classroom, facing students from the center aisle.

Mrs. Nelson made multiple references to the work of the stories and the work of the listeners. She said “…we can start working on *The Land I Lost (OC-1)*” which suggests that reading is “working on” stories. She said, “when we read this story, our job is to figure out what kind of challenges that the family has” (N589, *The Land I Lost*, OC-1, 1-03-07), and she continued to use “figure it out” when referring to students’ job across story-reading events. Mr. Moody, in contrast, identified “following along” as the students’ job during story-reading events. Mrs. Nelson told her students, “we have to see if there is something that this particular author can teach us about a culture that we have had nothing; no extra knowledge over” (N589, *The Land I Lost*, OC-1, p. 10, 1-03-07), which correlates with Mr. Moody’s questions of “What did you learn from this story?” She said, “We have to hope that this author has done a great job of bringing us to this country (Viet Nam) in the words that they’re choosing” (N590, *The Land I Lost*, OC-1, p. 12, 1-03-07), inferring that the words of a story can transport the listeners/readers to unknown places. Multiple times, during story-reading events, Mrs. Nelson admonished students to remember. Her emphasis on students’ memories infers that Mrs. Nelson valued the stories and the classroom talk about stories during story-reading events.

Mrs. Nelson announced page numbers as she read the story aloud, and when beginning to read the first story, *Land I Lost*, (OC-1), she told students, “I’d like you to follow along, please” (N590, *Land I Lost*, OC-1, p. 11, 1-03-07). On September 14 during the first Open Court story-reading event of the year, Mrs. Nelson was observed
saying, “While I read to you I want everybody, Isaac, to have their fingers on the words. We track as we read; we track as we listen” (Field notes, 9-14-06). She was not, however, observed monitoring students “following along” during any of the story-reading events analyzed in this study. While Mr. Moody gave students lunch detention when they failed to keep their place during the story-reading event, Mrs. Nelson gave lunch detention to students who did not turn in their daily homework (field notes, 9-27-07). Some students had their book open while she was reading, but students were not observed sweeping under the print or moving a bookmark down each line of print. Other than the instances when students read aloud a portion of text as evidence for a point in conversation about the story, it is unknown to what extent students were able to or chose to follow the text while Mrs. Nelson read aloud.

The story-reading event in Mrs. Nelson’s classroom lasted until she stopped to assign students a writing task or to review workbook pages. Because the length of time varied for story-reading with intermittent teacher-student interaction throughout, Mrs. Nelson flexibly used the two-hour period. Unlike Mr. Moody’s practice to end story-reading events after one hour, Mrs. Nelson’s story-reading events sometimes lasted until lunch break at 12:20. Other times, Mrs. Nelson ended the story-reading event by assigning a writing task or by reviewing workbook pages.

Students generally exhibited school behaviors during story-reading events, either looking at their teacher or down at their open books and/or note-taking papers. When Mrs. Nelson announced a story page number, students generally maintained a gaze toward the teacher rather than looking at their texts. Eye gaze toward the teacher, as
evidence of engagement, had several functions. When students were looking at the teacher, they were perceived as “good students who were paying attention.” Students’ eye gaze sometimes functioned as a signal to the teacher that the student was bidding for the floor. On occasion, if Mrs. Nelson made and maintained eye contact with a student, the student could speak, gaining the floor, without raising their hand or waiting to be nominated by the teacher. And, if students kept their eye gaze ready, it was more likely that Mrs. Nelson would initiate a conversation with that student in the midst of a class discussion.

Student engagement was evident in the choral responses, student laughter, and instances of multiple, overlapping voices in response to Mrs. Nelson’s enactment of the imagined scenarios she generated when performing stories during story-reading events. In that way, students watched Open Court stories; their engagement was evidence of their positioning as members of the audience.

Three students were observed sleeping during Mrs. Nelson’s Open Court story-reading events, demonstrating no engagement with the story or the discussion. A fourth student, Abraham, was observed stretching a rubber band in front of his face, playing with a paper clip, and on another occasion, sliding a paper drawing in and out of his desk, depending on Mrs. Nelson’s movement around the classroom. When she walked toward him, Abraham slid his drawing into his desk; when she walked away, with her back to him, he pulled the drawing into his lap and added to it. Abraham had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. His classmates and teachers were used to his classroom behaviors which contested classroom norms (and his playground behaviors which often
involved fighting). Abraham’s classroom behaviors did not disqualify him from the privileges of engagement with the story and the discussion. On multiple occasions Mrs. Nelson and Abraham had sustained conversations related to the story during story-reading events (see Appendix G for an example).

The West Side (OC-3) is the story of Juan, a young Puertorriqueño boy who has come to live with his uncle Esteban in New York City. Carlos and Señor Rivera are the other two main characters in the story. Mrs. Nelson was not observed reading the names “Esteban” or “Rivera” Instead, she skipped over them, reading “uncle” and an anglicized version of “Señor” (pronounced “senior”) when their names appeared in the story text.

On page 218, Mrs. Nelson read “Puertorican” for puertorriqueño and she paraphrased the following paragraph:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Mrs. Nelson’s paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here he’d been jabbering away to this boy all about Barranquitas and his house and his mother and sisters and friends and his miniature car collection and the Piñonas River and his school, and the TV programs he watched at home. And all the time Enrique had hardly understood a single word!</td>
<td>He’d been jabbering telling this boy all about his home life. Telling him about his house, his mom, his dad, his miniature car collection talking about school, the places around his school, TV programs .And the whole entire conversation, Enrique barely understood a single word!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.02: Mrs. Nelson’s Paraphrase

In Two Worlds (OC-2) is a nonfiction selection which “depicts the lives of three generations of a Yup’ik Eskimo family in Alaska” (TE, p. 192A). A sepia-toned photograph shows a classroom where a teacher has written Yup’ik words on the chalkboard. The teacher’s script in the sidebar of the Teacher’s Edition states:
Why is the teacher writing words in Yup’ik on the board?... It says here that the class wants to be fluent in both English and Yup’ik. What else should we clarify before we go on? The first paragraph of story text on page 203 states: In Sarah and Isaac’s combined third and fourth grade class, Clifford Kaganak teaches Yup’ik. Here he writes words in Yup’ik on the chalkboard, and the class practices reading and translating. They want to be fluent in both of their languages—English and Yup’ik. (Open Court Reading, 2002, p. 203)

Mrs. Nelson chose to read aloud all three paragraphs on page 203 before stopping to make the comment:

020 Mrs. Nelson: so it’s a lot like your own life, isn’t it?

021 Students: [noisy overlapping voices]

022 Mrs. Nelson: busy at school, learning the most important things to make you successful, to make you grow so that you can becomes a great production in our society as an adult. (N 703, In Two Worlds, OC-2, p. 3, 1-10-07)

While Mr. Moody had an extended class discussion about heritage language and language loss, Mrs. Nelson did not address heritage language issues.

Before browsing the illustrations of Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4), Mrs. Nelson brought gingerroot and ginger candy for students to sample. The story-reading event began when Mrs. Nelson read aloud the glossary of Chinese words which appears on the title page of the story (p. 228). A phonetic pronunciation for two of the word
entries was provided. Mrs. Nelson pronounced the Chinese words (i.e., Chibungbung) which appeared in the story text while reading the story aloud to her class.

**Student-Teacher Interactions**

After reading, “‘Maybe if I knew English,’ she said, ‘I would have become a famous actress!’” (p. 232), Mrs. Nelson talked about dreams for the future, and added:

148 Mrs. Nelson: So what you have to think about is what are your dreams?

Just because Librado, you are of the Hispanic culture, and most of the Hispanic culture isn’t known to go to college, does that mean instantly “Sorry, Genesys, you’re not going ‘cause you’re Hispanic?”

149 Students: huhhhhh!

150 Mrs. Nelson: No that doesn’t mean that, does it. Just because we’ve never had a Hispanic president of the United States, does that mean we can’t?

151 No.

152 Student: no

153 Mrs. Nelson: but what happens is people get confused with their culture. Oh well I’m a girl therefore I’m not allowed to play football. Or because I’m a girl, I can’t be a scientist. Or because I’m a girl I can’t go race cars

154 Students: [loud, overlapping voices]
Mrs. Nelson: whatever it might be we know that that’s not true and we know that there are people that are starting to step up and show people that it’s okay to do these things even though society doesn’t always agree.

(N, Love as Strong as Ginger, OC-4, p.11, 1-24-07)

Mrs. Nelson erased the Spanish words and names in the Open Court selection which most closely identified with students heritange language. She did not choose to discuss loss of heritage language when reading In Two Worlds. In Love as Strong as Ginger she attempted pronouncing Chinese words and she talked with students about future decisions for higher education in the context of learning English.

Mrs. Nelson read for her students, implemented the Open Court comprehension strategies, and supported comprehension by shifting from imagined scenarios situated in the story setting to imagined scenarios situated in the out-of-school experiences of the teacher and her students. Mrs. Nelson’s students talked very little, in comparison to her teacher talk, and they were not observed reading connected text. The students shared her story experiences but were not observed approaching the story independently. Mrs. Nelson’s pattern demonstrated her use of language that retained control of when students could speak and when they could not and fostered student dependency upon the teacher.

Across the five Open Court stories, Mrs. Nelson repeated her performance pattern which included (a) paraphrased story text, (b) generation of an imagined scenario with dialogue within the story situation, and (c) generation of parallel imagined scenarios situated in the present, located in the out-of-school contexts of her students and herself.
Story performances by Mrs. Nelson (components listed above) were observed four times during Land I Lost, once during In Two Worlds, six times during The West Side, eight times during Love as Strong as Ginger and twelve times during the last story, Parmele.

Mrs. Nelson found a way to adapt the curriculum because, in her words,

[Open Court] it’s so robotic in its design that it doesn’t make sense to me. I can’t live like a robot. …my connection in the way I think reading should be taught works for my room environment; therefore my kids come on board. The kids are like those sponges. If you don’t have the security and the confidence of what you’re doing, it’s an all out disaster. (N, 2-36-07, reflective interview, DVD#1, Introduction to Unit 3, Heritage).

Across all stories, Open Court and Latino picture books, Mrs. Nelson contended, “What we have to do is connect” and she monitored students’ attentive listening by repeatedly asking “how many of us have ever…?” This emphasis was observed to be a good fit for the students. They turned completely around in their seats in order to follow the teacher as she moved about the classroom reading and talking about the story.

**Pacing**

Mrs. Nelson took more time than Mr. Moody with the story reading. Her Open Court story-reading events ranged from 34 minutes to 66 minutes in length. In four of the five Open Court story-reading events, over 50% of her stops during the stories included student interaction; with a significant increase in student interactions during Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4). In contrast, Mr. Moody’s story-reading events ranged from 24 minutes to 55 minutes in length and 60% of his stops included student
interaction. In both classrooms, students had a similar number of opportunities to interact during story-reading events. However, in Mrs. Nelson’s class, amount of teacher talk was related to longer story-reading events and her performance variations.

The following chart compares the two classrooms in terms of their time spent for story-reading events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Teacher-Student Interaction/Total Teacher Stops; % Teacher Only</th>
<th>Time Spent Reading Aloud</th>
<th>Discussion Time After Story (same day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land I Lost</td>
<td>Moody: 9/10=90% Nelson: 10/27=37%</td>
<td>26 min. 34 min.</td>
<td>9 min. 1 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Two Worlds</td>
<td>Moody: 10/14=70% Nelson: 10/20=50%</td>
<td>36 min. 64 min.</td>
<td>4 min. 7 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The West Side</td>
<td>Moody: 10/21=48% Nelson: 17/24=71%</td>
<td>24 min. 66 min.</td>
<td>4 min. 7 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love as Strong as Ginger</td>
<td>Moody: 17/19=89% Nelson: 11/13=85%</td>
<td>55 min. 41 min.</td>
<td>17 min. 25 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmele</td>
<td>Moody: 3/5=60% Nelson: 8/13=62%</td>
<td>31 min. 42 min.</td>
<td>3 min. 6 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.03: Comparison of Time Spent on Open Court Stories

While the teachers differed in some of the details of their approach to students and the story reading from Open Court, each teacher’s approach toward story-reading events embraced the guidelines of the teacher’s manual. Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson both demonstrated their authority as teachers, timekeeping in relationship to the directed pace of lessons, maintaining control of the floor and monitoring student behaviors. Students in Mr. Moody’s class were observed resisting his direction to follow along; students in Mrs. Nelson’s classroom demonstrated audience behaviors whether the teacher was on stage or whether she shared the stage with another student in a sustained conversation.

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Both teachers affirmed students’ knowledge of both English and Spanish, but when non-English words appeared in story text, neither teacher used the Open Court pronunciation guides to support attempts to pronounce the Spanish words. Mr. Moody relied on students to pronounce and translate Spanish into English; Mrs. Nelson erased the Spanish by paraphrasing the story text. Language difference was a prevalent theme across three of the five story-reading events, contextualized in the story text and in class discussion, with the idea that learning English was the ticket to a new and better life.

In both classrooms, students were dependent upon their teachers to read and explain the story; in neither classroom were students observed reading connected text or independently applying the comprehension strategies modeled by the teachers. In Mr. Moody’s classroom, student participants in story-reading events were surveyed, eliciting short answers. In Mrs. Nelson’s classroom, student participants had approximately the same number of opportunities to talk as students in Mr. Moody’s class. Mrs. Nelson, however, allowed more time for her students’ individual responses. In both classrooms the teacher and the text determined the topics of talk and reserved interpretive authority over the story and class discussion.

*Latino Picture Book Reading Across Both Classrooms*

*The Reading Environment*

Story-reading of Latino picture books did not occur during Open Court reading class. Teachers read aloud the Latino picture books to their students during a 50-minute time scheduled for Standards Plus, a California state-approved supplemental language arts curriculum. The Standards Plus curriculum consisted of direct instruction mini
lessons and written practice assignments aligned with California state standards. Fifth-grade lessons emphasized vocabulary presented in context, inferential comprehension, sentence structure, and writing conventions. Teacher’s lesson plans labeled this class period as “Interventions”. The Open Court Teacher’s Edition specified, “Intervention lessons are for students who are working below grade level and need more intense support” (Program Overview, p. xvi). Therefore, unlike Open Court story-reading events which were scheduled for two hours, “Interventions” were scheduled for 50 minutes; the Latino picture book reading events were typically shorter than the Open Court events.

Each Latino picture book was scanned in order to generate a computer presentation of the book for each fifth-grade class. A laptop and projector were used to project the books so that all students could have access to the text and the illustrations.

Figure 4.01: Power Point Slide 7
For example, slide 7 above, is from Calling the Doves (LPB-2). The English and Spanish text set in the illustrator’s double spread are the reproduction of the original double spread found in the picture book.

A portable screen was used since the new portable classrooms were not equipped with pull-down screens. I used a remote point presenter to advance the slides as the teacher read aloud. Teachers viewed the slide presentation of each Latino picture books only once—while reading the story. They did not request to see the slide presentation in advance of the story-reading event nor did they request to have the presentation repeated when discussion of the Latino picture book continued the day after the read-aloud.

Mr. Moody’s Latino Picture Book Reading

The reading aloud of Latino picture books was never recorded on Mr. Moody’s weekly lesson plans. In his exit interview (3-30-07) he commented, “I don’t do a lot of read alouds because I think we just have to follow the curriculum. You know that’s what they want us to do. And so, I think I’m afraid to…for me to do it, I feel like it is something that might not fit as well.” (Moody, exit interview, 3-30-07)

Even though he had access to each picture book at least a week in advance of the story-reading event, Mr. Moody never pre-read the book before the reading it to his class. He had asked that I leave him a copy of the picture book in his school mailbox and I observed that the books were not picked up before the day of the story (field notes, delivery of picture books to Mr. Moody, #1, 12-5-06, #2, 1-5-07, #3, 1-12-07, #4, 1-17-
07, #5,1-25-07). Mr. Moody confirmed my observations when he stopped me one day after the students had gone to lunch. He had read aloud, *Friends from the Other Side* (OC-3) to the class earlier that day, and Mr. Moody said to me: “I felt just a little uneasy [reading the word wetback] and it’s my fault. I didn’t pre-read the book.” (M, audio-recorded conversation, 1-17-07). Just before reading the last Latino picture book, *La Mariposa* (LPB-5), Mr. Moody looked up toward the camera and addressed me, saying “Mrs. Montgomery, what book am I reading today?” (M, *La Mariposa*, LPB-5, 2-2-07).

Mr. Moody continued to use some of his “coaching” language (“Here we go guys”) just before reading aloud each Latino picture book. However, he never referred to a picture book as “the thing” and he never stated that the objective of the story-reading event was “to get through it”. His practice of surveying students after the story, asking them to evaluate the story (“did you like that one?”) or directing them to tell what they liked about the story were questions unique to picture book story-reading events in Mr. Moody’s classroom. In contrast, after reading Open Court stories, Mr. Moody asked, “What did you learn?” or used the Open Court “focus questions” to elicit student answers that functioned to monitor students’ comprehension of the story.

There was a significant difference in the way Mr. Moody delivered the Latino picture book stories compared to the way he read the stories from the Open Court Reading curriculum. The blank free-standing screen was erected in front of the long table of computers along the far end of the classroom, opposite the door. Students knew as soon as they entered the classroom that they would “watch a story” instead of doing intervention workbook pages. Once students were seated (three students moved to empty
desks to avoid sitting by the projector’s fan), Mr. Moody, standing center front, began the story-reading event by announcing to students in an elevated voice: “Listening positions. Okay. I’m gonna read a story and I want you actually facing towards the screen. I’m gonna do a read-aloud.” (M, My Diary From Here to There, LPB-1, p. 1, 1-05-07).

The Reading

After announcing to his students what he was going to do, Mr. Moody introduced the story: “Here we go guys. Pay attention. This is called My Diary From Here to There (LPB-1)” (M, My Diary From Here to There, LPB-1, p. 1, 1-05-07). He read the story straight through to the end, pausing at Spanish words as they occurred in the English text of the story. He held the picture book open, in both hands, reading aloud with his head down; his lowered voice fell into the pages of the book he was reading, evidencing little inflection. Across all Latino picture book story-reading events, Mr. Moody did not appear to take on character voices or modulate his voice in interpretive ways while reading aloud. He read aloud the story text closely as it was written, pausing at Spanish words in the text. Students called out Spanish words when Mr. Moody paused, but remained turned in their seats to face the screen throughout the duration of his story-reading event.

In effect, the story-on-the-screen compromised Mr. Moody’s center-stage position that he maintained during all other instructional and social events in his classroom. Even though he often walked around and between student rows of desks while reading aloud Open Court stories, Mr. Moody always returned to center front. In contrast, when students turned in their seats to face the screen, Mr. Moody was displaced by the screen used during Latino picture book story-reading events.
Students made themselves comfortable when viewing the story on the screen. Many laid their arms on their desks in an effort to pillow their heads, which were turned toward the screen. Students did not maintain a gaze toward the screen, as if glued to the presentation. Rather, students consistently looked up, then down or away from the screen and back up, returning their gaze to the screen. Students’ pattern of “looking-looking away-looking” was repeated multiple times during a single slide presentation as well as multiple times across slides. Notably, no side, student-to-student conversations were observed during the viewing of the picture book slides and no students on the front row interacted with Mr. Moody when he was reading the picture book aloud.

**Student-Teacher Interactions**

Students volunteered during Latino picture book read-alouds, testing to see if the floor was open during picture book screenings. Across the five Latino picture book story-reading events, a total of four students participated during the read-alouds. Two of those students initiated a question or comment and the other two were in response to Mr. Moody’s questions. Student affects resonated seriousness (facial tenseness) with suggestion of shyness (some students turned their heads away and buried their faces in their arms) and their gazing patterns were consistent with this inference.

When Mr. Moody finished reading aloud three of the five Latino picture books, Mr. Moody asked his students, “Did you like that one?” Students responded with nods and responses in varied participation patterns. For example, after reading aloud *I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4), Mr. Moody exclaimed, “Hey, that was a good one, wasn’t it!”, offering his evaluation of the story. Students responded in chorus, “Yeah!” An
extended teacher-student interaction followed in which students gave “I liked” responses about the story. This “I liked” genre is suggested in the program appendix of the Open Court manual, although it is situated during rather than after the read aloud:

At reasonable stopping points in reading, ask the students general questions in order to get them to express their own ideas and to focus their attention on the text. [Question prompt, “What did you like best about this?” (Open Court, 2002, Program Appendix, p. 6)]

After he read aloud *Friends from the Other Side*, (LPB-3), Mr. Moody closed the book, and said, “Ummm.” He walked over to me, still behind the camera and asked, “Do you want them to get in their group now?” He then returned to his center front location in the classroom and began his Standards Plus lesson by announcing the page number (713, *Friends from the Other Side*, LPB-3, p. 3, 1-17-07). After reading aloud the last line of text in *La Mariposa* (LPB-5), Mr. Moody immediately asked students to make a prediction: “What’d you think happened after he gave the drawing to Curtis?” (M, *La Mariposa*, LPB-5, p. 7, 2-2-07). Asking prediction questions is prompted in the Open Court manual across all stories under their heading, “Comprehension Strategies.”

Across the Latino picture book story-reading events, students knew that the story-reading event was over when Mr. Moody turned to speak to me and said, “Thanks Mrs. Montgomery.” He then turned back to face the class, looked down at his watch, looked up and said, “Here’s what we’re gonna do. I’m gonna do Standards Plus.” The six focus students were then quietly dismissed to meet in their peer group.
Mr. Moody welcomed students’ pronunciation of Spanish words which occurred in the English text of the Latino Picture book stories. He would pause and a student (usually in the front row) would pronounce the Spanish word aloud and Mr. Moody would continue reading. On some occasions, after a student pronounced the Spanish word, the rest of the class would echo, repeating the word in Spanish.

Before reading aloud *La Mariposa* (LPB-5), Mr. Moody asked students, “What’s it called?” Ten hands shot up in the air and a student called out, “butterfly”. Mr. Moody responded with “very good” and then Ana, seated on the front row, said to Mr. Moody, “I thought you knew Spanish”. Mr. Moody smiled, maintaining eye contact with Ana and answered, “I was just testing you”. Students in the first two rows (who could hear the exchange between Ana and Mr. Moody) smiled and in chorus responded with “huh uh,” shaking their heads “no.” Ana’s comment made public the language difference between the teacher and the students. The students’ response indicated that they knew their teacher did not know their heritage language.

**Pacing**

The Interventions class period was 50 minutes. If Mr. Moody’s Latino picture book story-reading event lasted approximately 12 minutes, he had 38 minutes remaining to implement “Standards Plus” curriculum. Mr. Moody dismissed six students to “continue talking about the story” in a small peer group immediately following the Latino picture book read-aloud. Therefore, peer group discussions of Latino picture books met for approximately 35 minutes each time they met.
In comparison to teaching the Open Court stories, which was monitored by the principal and the school district, Mr. Moody fitted in the Latino picture book stories by shortening his Intervention period. While he viewed the Open Court stories as "school stories," he did not recognize a place at school for Latino picture book stories, evidenced in their absence from his lesson plans. Mr. Moody expressed his perspective of the Latino picture books and students’ reactions to them: “The books did go along with the Open Court unit themes. I think they [students] made far more connections to the picture books than they did to the Open Court stories.” (Moody, exit interview, 3-30-07)

Summary: Mr. Moody’s Latino Picture Book Reading

Mr. Moody acknowledged students’ connections to the Latino picture book stories, but his role as classroom teacher positioned him to rely on the Open Court Reading stated story objectives: “Students will use the comprehension strategies Visualizing, Making Connections … as they read the story” (The Land I Lost (OC-1, p.180M, The West Side, OC-3, p. 212M, Love as Strong as Ginger, OC-4, p.228M, and Parmele, OC-5, p. 278M). Mr. Moody’s attitude towards the Latino picture book stories influenced the way he prepared for the story-reading events (no evidence of pre-reading the picture books), the way he read aloud the stories, (little voice modulation), the reduced number of opportunities for students to participate in talking about those stories and the minimal time he devoted to reading and talking about Latino picture book stories.
Mrs. Nelson and Latino Picture Book Reading

The Reading Environment

Mrs. Nelson commented while reading aloud Calling the Doves (LPB-2), making public her posture toward the students as they responded to the picture books: “I’m gonna have to listen to you guys so that I can live through your experiences ‘cause it’ll make it more fun for all of us.” (N, 700, Calling the Doves (LPB), p. 4, 1-10-07) Mrs. Nelson’s patterns of performance evidenced in her Open Court story-reading events continued across Latino picture book story-reading events. Her performance pattern occurred five times when reading aloud My Diary From Here to There, once when reading Friends from the Other Side, twice when reading I Speak English for My Mom four times when reading aloud La Mariposa.

Mrs. Nelson’s room arrangement was not altered for the Latino picture book story-reading events. In contrast to Mr. Moody’s placement at the far end of the classroom, the screen was positioned center front in Mrs. Nelson’s classroom, in front of the front dry erase board. As a result, students remained in their own desks and viewed the screen in the same direction in which they viewed the teacher when she was facing them from the front of the room. Mrs. Nelson moved around the outside perimeter of student desks and ventured up the center aisle while reading aloud the picture books. While reading aloud, stopping and inviting student responses, Mrs. Nelson did not appear to monitor students’ behaviors during Latino picture book story-reading events.
The Reading

When reading aloud story texts which included Spanish words (*The West Side*, Open Court, as well each of the Latino picture books), Mrs. Nelson skipped the Spanish words. Mrs. Nelson changed or omitted the Spanish names of main characters. For example, she changed the main character’s name, “Prietita” in *Friends from the Other Side* (Anzuldúa, 1993), to “Polly” (explaining that “myyyyy English; I’m not about to butcher this poor girl’s name”) and omitted “Miss Scalapino” in *La Mariposa* (Jiménez, 1998), referring to her as “this teacher” throughout the story.

Pacing

Mrs. Nelson did not voice a conflict in scheduling Latino picture book story-reading events. When reading aloud Latino picture books during “Intervention” time, Mrs. Nelson used the entire 50 minute period to read-aloud and discuss the stories. The second Latino picture book story-reading event was the only time that she did not devote the entire 50 minute period to the story-reading event. On that day, she used the remaining 12 minutes for students to do a reflective writing assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATINO PICTURE BOOKS</th>
<th>Mrs. Nelson: Time Spent Reading Aloud</th>
<th>Mrs. Nelson: Discussion Time After Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>My Diary From Here to There</em></td>
<td>28 min.</td>
<td>45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calling the Doves</em></td>
<td>31 min.</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Friends from the Other Side</em></td>
<td>41 min.</td>
<td>31 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I Speak English for My Mom</em></td>
<td>31 min.</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>La Mariposa</em></td>
<td>51 min.</td>
<td>25 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.04: Time Mrs. Nelson Spent on Latino Picture Books
In summary, the Latino picture books were accommodated in different ways across the two classrooms. Both teachers acknowledged their value for their students, although Mr. Moody was also concerned about following the mandated curriculum. Mrs. Nelson and Mr. Moody scheduled the picture book story-reading outside their reading classes and did not record them on their lesson plans. Neither teacher prepared in advance for the story read-alouds, Open Court or Latino picture books. The visual presentation of the Latino picture books altered the reading environment of the classroom, with the large, colorful representations of the books, making public the bilingual texts and directed students’ focus to the screen rather than to their respective teachers. Mr. Moody did not read the picture books with the expressive voice he used when reading Open Court Stories. Mrs. Nelson was consistent across whole class story-reading events: she read with dramatic expression, paraphrased the story text and generated imagined scenario performances of her own creation.

Mr. Moody had little student interaction during picture book read alouds compared to the opportunities students had to participate in discussion of Open Court stories. Neither Mr. Moody nor Mrs. Nelson were observed monitoring students’ attentiveness while reading aloud Latino picture books. Mrs. Nelson had similar participation patterns across both types of texts used in story-reading events. Teacher’s social behaviors in relationship to their students were consistent across both types of story-reading events; Mr. Moody asked students the same reading instruction questions (author’s purpose; point of view) across both types of texts. Mrs. Nelson conducted
handed-off activities following the story-reading events, just as she did after Open Court reading lessons. Both teachers were faced with pacing constraints for all read-alouds. Mr. Moody had less time to teach his “Interventions” lessons and Mrs. Nelson was limited to the 50-minute class period compared to the two-hour language arts block she had when teaching Open Court Reading. Mr. Moody relied on his students to pronounce and translate Spanish words as they appeared in both Open Court texts (*The West Side*, OC-4) as well as in the Latino picture books. Mrs. Nelson, on the other hand, erased the Spanish from the texts by paraphrasing and renaming main characters. The specific effects of the Open Court directives will be closely examined in the next two sections of this chapter in relationship to the research questions which guided this study.

*Research Question One*

The first research question for this study was: How and when do the directives suggested in the Teacher’s Edition of a scripted basal program affect what teachers do when reading and responding to basal stories? This question will be addressed by detailing the teachers’ use of the manual and curriculum during the read-alouds.

*Open Court Reading Directives and Mr. Moody*

The story in the instructional manual, together with the pre-reading “focus questions” and scripted sidebar, functioned as a resource and as a guide for Mr. Moody’s teaching. Following each Open Court story Mr. Moody asked students, “what did you learn?” as suggested in “Discussing the Selection: in the Teacher’s Edition (Open Court Reading, 2002, p. 189A, 207A, 223A, 243A, 283A). This question positioned him as the teacher and situated the story as a tool for reading instruction.
Teachers are directed in their Open Court manual to browse story illustrations and a transparency of “Clues, Problems and Wonderings” is provided for teachers to use to record student observations while browsing (Teacher’s Edition, Open Court Reading, 2002, p. 180N). Mr. Moody was not observed using the transparency during Open Court story-reading events. He did not reproduce the chart on the transparency for students to use to do their own note-taking while listening to the story.

Mr. Moody had students silently browse illustrations before reading aloud, In Two Worlds. He moved about the room, stopping at individual students’ desks, making his way to the front of the classroom, and said: “kay, you’re supposed to be looking through these –just the pictures. Kinda thinking about what it might be about, what you might find interesting, sorta questions you might have about it.” He opened his teacher’s manual, reading silently to himself (M686, In Two Worlds, OC-2, p. 1, 1-08-07). Mr. Moody was not observed browsing with his students the illustrations of the other four Open Court selections before reading aloud.

The Open Court teacher’s manual gave directions to teachers regarding reading aloud the Open Court stories to students. For example, for the first Open Court story, The Land I Lost (OC-1), (an autobiography) the following reading recommendation is given on page 180O: “Because this selection is a first-person account, students will enjoy reading it aloud” (Teacher’s Edition, p. 180O, Open Court Reading, 2002). However, on page 180, which includes the title page of the story, the sidebar labeled “First Read” begins with this statement: “Read the story aloud, taking turns with the students.” In the program appendix of the teacher’s manual, page 6, teachers are encouraged to, “Read
aloud to your students regularly. You can read Classroom Library selections or full-length versions of Student Anthology selections” (Program Appendix, p. 6, Teacher’s Edition, Open Court Reading, 2002). This direction is in the context of the procedure for “Reading Roundtable” which is an activity students may choose to participate in during small group instruction (in addition to whole class reading instruction) for the purpose of offering differentiated instruction (Teacher’s Edition, Open Court Reading, p. 180G), which neither of the teachers practiced in their classrooms.

The teacher’s manual recommends that students read aloud every Open Court story in this unit, providing a rationale for the recommendation based on the genre (autobiography, realistic fiction and one expository text), of each story included in the heritage unit. However, because Mr. Moody believed his students had difficulty with reading comprehension, he chose to read aloud each Open Court story, with the expectation that students would follow along in their anthologies (field notes, 11-7-06).

One time, Mr. Moody directed his students to read silently. He read the story Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4) aloud in its entirety on Wednesday (the main story-reading event). The following day, he began reading class by announcing “Page 228. Begin reading silently; absolutely no talking. Let’s go.” While he wrote vocabulary words on the board, student helpers passed out student anthologies. When everyone had a book, silent reading was over. He directed students’ attention to the board and taught a 5-minute vocabulary lesson. His next directive to students was: “We’re gonna talk about this as we go through. We’re gonna go in round robin fashion; start with Miguel. And Miguel, I want you to start where it says, “A pair of large rubber gloves.” (M739, Love as
Strong as Ginger, OC-4, p. 1, 1-25-07). Based on the classroom rules of silent reading (absolutely no talking) and classroom time given to it (5 minutes), silent reading functioned as a way to manage students’ behaviors at the beginning of this reading class.

Mr. Moody stopped while reading the story text, according to the coding in the manual for insertion of teacher prompts, located in the sidebar script. He consistently stopped to read from the scripted Teacher’s Edition and to build background, as directed in the teacher’s manual. He often gave illustrations related to story concepts. Mr. Moody explained, “I think in Open Court, that’s why it’s so important to go over building background. The vocabulary. And if they [students] have no clue about anything, they can at least connect it to what we’ve talked about” [Moody exit interview, 3-30-07].

Mr. Moody often read directly from the Open Court Teacher’s Edition while reading aloud each of the five Open Court stories. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Court sidebar Illustrations and/or directives</th>
<th>Transcript line</th>
<th>Teacher talk (verbal and non-verbal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>054 Mr. Moody: Their mark on the land was light (pause)</td>
<td>055 Mr. Moody: That’s a weird phrase [teacher reads directly from the sidebar (student sample) in the teacher’s manual]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student sample: I know that a “mark” is something that you leave behind like a scratch on a table. It’s always there but it can be hard to see. If their mark is light then I guess it means that they didn’t change the land that much. (p. 194)</td>
<td>056 Mr. Moody: “I know that a ‘mark’ is something [that] you leave behind like a scratch on a table. It’s always there but it can be hard to see. If their mark is light then I guess it means that they…that they didn’t change the land that much”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Two Worlds Class Read Aloud (pp. 194), Mr. Moody, (1-08-07)

Table 4.05: Comparison of Mr. Moody’s Talk and Teacher Edition
After Mr. Moody read the “student sample” from the sidebar in the Teacher’s Edition, he resumed the story. His reading the student sample, (instead of asking the questions in the teacher script), eclipsed student participation during his stop in the story.

Mr. Moody initiated two handing-off activities across Open Court story-reading events, with In Two Worlds (OC-2) and Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4). When Mr. Moody finished reading aloud Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4), he began with a student-to-student (according to their seating arrangement, as he had done in his previous handing-off activity) survey of the learning outcomes for students:

014 TM [reading aloud] And I filled myself with all the flavors of her hard work. [end of story]
015 TM this is going to start the discussion
016 TM and you won’t be raising your hands.
017 TM You’re just going to discuss it.
018 TM Ummm,
019 TM I’ll call on one person to start
020 TM and then we’ll go.
021 TM What did you learn from that story?
022 TM What did you learn?
023 Miguel: probably that umm,
024 Miguel: the mom was
025 Miguel: couldn’t work in the factory
just talk out.

You don’t have to raise your hand

[looks down; no verbal response]

the question I asked was

what can we learn from that story.

What do you think you can learn from that story?

(M735, Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4), 1-24-07)

Students remained in their desks, arranged in long rows across the classroom, divided by a center aisle. The Open Court manual explained, however, that

In order for handing off to work effectively, a seating arrangement that allows students to see one another is essential. A circle or a semicircle is effective…Actively encourage this handing-off process by letting students know that they, not you, are in control of the discussion. (Open Court, 2002, Program Appendix, p. 34)

After each student responded, Mr. Moody intervened, spoke again, gave an affirmation and encouraged students to address the student sitting beside them, repeating the question to shift the discussion back to his recitation activity: “Enrique, what’d you learn from the story?” (M,735, Love as Strong as Ginger, (OC-4), p. 5, 1-24-07)

The Open Court Reading program appendix specifically explained the procedure:

When a student finishes his or her comments, that student should choose (hand the discussion off to) the next speaker. In this way, students maintain a discussion
without relying on the teacher to decide who speaks. (Open Court, 2002, Program
Appendix, p. 34)

With a limitation of space and the students’ habit of raising their hands to speak, Mr. Moody used the “handing-off” activity as a quiz rather than something to promote students’ discussion.

The following chart provides a visual representation of Mr. Moody’s response to Open Court directives in relation to the Teacher’s Edition of Open Court Reading during the first Open Court story-reading event. Specifically, Mr. Moody spent five minutes reading aloud the first page of Land I Lost (OC-1), which had three paragraphs of text.
### Table 4.06 Comparison of Teacher Instructions and Mr. Moody’s talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Edition Land I Lost (p. 180)</th>
<th>Mr. Moody (1-3-07) Whole class story-reading event (Page 180; 5 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recommendation:</td>
<td>After reading the first page, page 180, Mr. Moody continued reading aloud the story in its entirety, through page 189 in a single reading class period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the story aloud taking turns with the students. Observe individual students as they read and use Teacher Observation Log to record anecdotal information.</td>
<td>Pg. 180: Focus Questions What memories does the author carry with him of his boyhood in Vietnam? Why are these memories important to him?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg. 180: Focus Questions</td>
<td>Pg. 180 Mr. Moody read aloud focus questions before reading story aloud (page 180), stopping as indicated below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg. 180 Comprehension Strategies Visualizing: When a new term is introduced, sometimes visualizing its meaning can help a reader understand it. The text says that a hamlet has many houses in it, but this one has no shops or marketplaces. A hamlet must be like a village. It might help me to draw a quick sketch. How do you visualize the hamlet? Connections: how my culture is similar to and different from the author’s. What connections have you made and how do they enhance your store of knowledge? Vocab. Words: hamlet; trench.</td>
<td>Visualizing: Read verbatim from manual. [read aloud first paragraph of story text] Teacher Question: What do you picture a hamlet as being? Teacher Direction: let’s read this again and I want you to visualize where he came from. [reread first paragraph of story text] Teacher Question: Do you think a hamlet has a mall...a shopping mall? Teacher Question: Do you think it has a Burger King? Teacher Question: What do you picture a hamlet as being? Teacher Question: Samuel, what do you visualize a hamlet’s like? IRE pattern: nominates 6 students to tell how they visualize a hamlet. Teacher statement: I think that’s exactly what I visualize as well. [read aloud second and third paragraph of story text to bottom of page] Teacher Question: Why did they pull the bridge in at night? Teacher Question: You’d probably have to walk on that pretty careful, huh?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student-teacher interactions

The underlying structure of teacher-student interactions during story-reading events in Mr. Moody’s classroom was a repeated IRE (teacher Initiation, student
Response, followed by teacher Evaluation (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 2001) sequence.

Typically, in this form of classroom interaction, the teacher controls turn-taking. Following a teacher question, students bid for turns by raising their hands and the teacher nominates the student who will respond. Often the teacher evaluates the student’s response and then initiates another IRE cycle.

For example, across all Open Court stories, Mr. Moody stopped reading to ask a comprehension question, particularly if the sentence in the story contained a vocabulary word. For example, in this story, *In Two Worlds* (OC), tundra is a vocabulary word. The analysis, on the right hand column of the chart shows the IRE sequence used by Mr. Moody, indicating his initiation of a question, the student’s response, and his affirmation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line &amp; Speaker</th>
<th>Message Unit/Story text</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>IRE Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>044 TM</td>
<td>[looking up from the text, with increased volume] What’s tundra? What’s tundra mean? [Miguel raises his hand]</td>
<td>Because teacher has raised his voice and looked out across the classroom when asking his question, Miguel perceives that he must bid for the floor instead of using his front row status to talk without teacher nomination.</td>
<td>Teacher initiates with question (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>045 TM</td>
<td>Yes [looking at Miguel and extending his right hand toward him]</td>
<td>Miguel sits on the front row. Teacher gives eye contact, a gesture and ‘Yes’ to nominate him rather than calling his name.</td>
<td>Teacher nominates student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>046 Miguel (front row)</td>
<td>[maintaining eye contact with Mr. Moody] far away</td>
<td>Two word response refers to unspecified location.</td>
<td>Student offers response to teachers question (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>047 TM</td>
<td>[maintains eye contact with Miguel] Okay.</td>
<td>Signal that teacher has evaluated his response to be appropriate.</td>
<td>Teacher evaluates student response as appropriate (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>048 TM</td>
<td>We think of it as far away.</td>
<td>Use of plural pronoun “we” infers that the teacher and student think alike. Repeats student response (line 46) which reinforces evaluation of “Okay” in previous line</td>
<td>Teacher evaluates students’ response (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>049 TM</td>
<td>It’s usually a place without trees where it’s very open.</td>
<td>Maintains student’s reference to location (place) to define tundra. Extends student response, giving more detail</td>
<td>Teacher extends students’ response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>050 Michael (front row)</td>
<td>[speaking out from the front row] open land</td>
<td>Student joins “front row” conversation by extending teacher’s response with word that infers that tundra includes the condition of the soil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>051 TM</td>
<td>Open land. Okay</td>
<td>Repeats the combination of his own response together with student’s response to recognize open land as authoritative knowledge. “Okay” offers another evaluation for appropriateness.</td>
<td>Teacher evaluates students’ response (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>052 TM</td>
<td>No woods. Okay</td>
<td>Extends description by classifying open land to be land without trees. “Woods” refers to line 49 where Mr. Moody established that openness had no trees. “Okay” evaluates the new information as fitting.</td>
<td>Teacher extends and evaluates student’s response (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>053 TM</td>
<td>If you think about it [slowly, looking up toward ceiling]</td>
<td>Use of plural pronoun “you” appears to include the teacher as he is thinking out loud to himself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.07: Mr. Moody’s IRE Pattern
Table 4.07 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>And it’s really a rough place.</th>
<th>Returns to defining tundra in terms of location, adding detail.</th>
<th>Teacher extends and evaluates student’s response (E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>That’s why they named that one truck the Toyota Tundra</td>
<td>Deductive reasoning using comparison, connecting lines 53-56. The truck is called Toyota Tundra because it goes in rough open land. Maintains idea of place. Student response is valued because it warrants extension with additional details</td>
<td>Teacher extends and evaluates student’s response (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>They named it after tundra. Okay.</td>
<td>“They” has no antecedent. “Okay” marks and emphasizes similarity between truck, truck name and tundra, and functions to close the floor.</td>
<td>Teacher extends and evaluates student’s response (E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(M686, In Two Worlds (OC), 1-08-07).

Across story-reading events, Mr. Moody often nominated students, one after another, until a student gave him the answer he was looking for. For example, when reading aloud In Two Worlds (OC-2), Mr. Moody rejected student responses that did not offer the answer he had in mind in an exchange discussed previously in this chapter: teachers taught Yup’ik to Yup’ik children in school because their parents wanted to preserve their heritage for their children.

When analysis of the classroom discourse was conducted across all story-reading events in Mr. Moody’s fifth-grade classroom, the IRE participation structure varied from one event to another and from one interaction to another within the same story-reading event. The components of the pattern occurred in many different ways, depending upon what the teacher and students in a particular interaction constructed the function and meaning to be. In the following interaction, Mr. Moody varied the pattern by initiating a
statement (instead of a question) and the students interpreted his statement as a call for a response. Mr. Moody was reading *In Two Worlds* (OC-2, page 195), and stopped to clarify who the speaker was by making a statement, following the Open Court prompt to address the author’s point of view. Jesus, and perhaps the other students who raised their hands, anticipated the information Mr. Moody had in mind.

036 TM Okay.
037 TM This is the mother speaking.
038 TM Remember how I told you what my parents’ life was like?
039 TM She’s telling what her parents’ life was like. [three students raise their hands]
040 TM Jesus
041 Jesus: it’s in first person
042 TM it was.
043 TM It changes to first person
044 TM Very good.

(M686, *In Two Worlds* OC-2, 1-08-07)

Jesus interpreted Mr. Moody’s statement as a call for a response which would identify the author’s point of view. Mr. Moody’s response to Jesus (“it was”, line 41), indicates that he evaluated Jesus’s response to be correct. He emphasizes his affirmation by repeating Jesus’s response (line 43) and adding “very good.” This example gives evidence of Mr. Moody’s pattern of reliance on Open Court prompts as well as his practice of duplicating the directive onto other stories. Teachers are prompted in only
two of the Open Court story selections to ask about the author’s point of view. Mr. Moody asks about author’s point of view in every Open Court story-reading event. These students recognized his pattern and reacted accordingly. Typically, Mr. Moody’s feedback was implied by repeating the students’ answer (rather than explicitly offering “very good” as he did above). Other times, Mr. Moody simply moved on to the next question, signaling his acceptance of the previous student’s response.

Mr. Moody repeated his questions particularly when he called on students by name who had not volunteered to answer. For example, when following the Open Court directive to compare story concepts across selections, Mr. Moody said:

008 TM I want some good answers.
009 TM I’m gonna be calling on people, even if your hands not up.”
010 TM What could you think is the same about both authors [Land I Lost (OC-1) and The West Side (OC-3)]?
011 TM What could you think is the same about both people telling the story?
012 TM David? [David had his head laying face forward on his open book]
013 David: huh?
014 TM What if I said I’m not gonna let you out for lunch duty?
015 TM Compare what they have in common
016 TM It’s huge
They both have the same thing in common.


When David did not answer, Mr. Moody nominated another student who volunteered to answer his question by raising his hand.

Mr. Moody also reserved the right to not call on students whose hands were raised. In this example, he acknowledges Modesto’s raised hand as he asks,

What was Juan’s problem?

What’s the one problem Juan has?

Modesto, I’m not gonna call on you, but I tell ya I like the way you been raising your hand all this time.

Nice job. (M *The West Side* (OC), 1-19-07).

‘cause I’ve called on you too much.


After affirming Modesto’s behavior (raising his hand to bid for the floor) (line 29), Mr. Moody explained why he decided not to nominate Modesto (line 32). [Miguel, sitting on the front row, interrupted with a comment, but it was ignored by Mr. Moody].

While students had the opportunity to volunteer to respond to Mr. Moody’s comments, ask a question or extend the teacher’s idea, students’ verbal responses to another student’s question or comment were limited primarily to “yeah” during Open Court story-reading events.
One consistent deviation from the typical IRE participation pattern was the interaction between Mr. Moody and the students who sat on the front row. Across the Open Court story-reading lessons, students seated on the front row spoke out to Mr. Moody without first being nominated. In accordance with the Open Court directive (Open Court, 2002, p. 214), Mr. Moody relied on the bilingual students on the front row (although other students in the class were bilingual) to model pronunciation and help translate the Spanish words and phrases in the selection, *The West Side* (OC-3).

In the following example, the teacher-student interaction began with a student question. When reading aloud *In Two Worlds* (OC-2), Mr. Moody read, “We mostly did with what we had at hand, and we used our parkas to keep us warm” (p. 196). Miguel, sitting on the front row, near where Mr. Moody was standing, spoke out, looking up at Mr. Moody: “What’s a parka?” Looking up from his text to Miguel, Mr. Moody answered, “It’s like a big jacket. Okay?” and resumed reading the story. Other times when Mr. Moody was reading aloud and mispronounced a word (English as well as Spanish), a student on the front row would call out the correction and Mr. Moody would repeat the correction and resume reading. A transcript showing front row student-teacher interaction, and teacher-class interaction occurring as separate but parallel interactions shows how the teacher shifted one to the other level of communication.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-Front Row Interactions</th>
<th>Teacher-Class Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>006 It seems like there’s a river that separates their house, dudn it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007 Very good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008 [Gregorio’s hand is raised] Gregorio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009 Gregorio: Like if, ummm...like xxxxxxxx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010 Maybe they’re fighting with another village you’re thinking?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011 Okay.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012 Ana: [looks at teacher, standing next to her desk] Like they pull in the bridge and we lock...lock our doors on our houses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013 Oh that’s a good analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014 She said we lock the doors on our houses at night but they pull a bridge in.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015 [Enrique has hand raised] Enrique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>016 Mr. Moody: [eye contact with Ana; lowered voice] Good, Ana.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>017 Enrique: like are we safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>018 Okay. To be safe.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>019 [Jesus raises his hand] yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020 Jesus: xxxxxxx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>021 T: okay. Good thought.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>022 Why don’t we read on and let’s see if they answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>023 It’ll be interesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>024 [looking up at teacher; soft voice] Michael: monkey bridge like sorta like a bamboo stick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>025 Mr. Moody: [looking down at Michael]: yeah! [loud, with excitement]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>026 [looks up, over Michael’s head] they called it a monkey bridge but it’s just a single bamboo stick that uhhh goes across</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>027 so you’d probably have to walk on that pretty careful, huh?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>028 [resumes reading story text aloud]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>029 Hey I wonder if they pulled that bridge in to keep the animals out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>030 [multiple overlapping voices] yeaaaah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>031 Saul: xxxxxx ..said, umm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>032 T: [eye contact with Saul; low voice] okay xxxx very good.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>033 Miguel: what’s a hog?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>034 T: [looks up over Miguel] A hog is like a big pig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>035 Students: [multiple, overlapping voices]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.08: Front Row Interactions
The shared understanding of participation without nomination between the front-row students and Mr. Moody gave access to the teacher and to the floor in ways that were not available to students seated elsewhere. Front-row students’ perspective of Mr. Moody was that they shared an informal relationship that worked like a conversation instead of a lesson. Mr. Moody appeared to recognize and acknowledge the localized shift in the classroom rules of participation. Consequently, more teasing and humor took place between front-row students and Mr. Moody than in teacher-student interactions located across the classroom. Notably, even though Mr. Moody rearranged other students seating during this unit of study, no students were moved into or out of the front row during the series of story-reading lessons observed during January and February.

Mr. Moody adopted the instructional goals in the Open Court Teacher’s Edition and followed the manual closely. He maintained control of his students. He monitored student attentiveness and coached them along so that reading lessons got done.

*Open Court Reading Directives and Mrs. Nelson*

The following table documents Mrs. Nelson’s use of Open Court directives in The Teacher’s Edition of Open Court Reading (2002) during 12 minutes of the first Open Court story-reading event, Land I Lost (OC-1) on the first page of the story, which had three paragraphs of text.
**Teacher’s Edition**  
**LAND I LOST**  
(p. 180)

Read the story aloud taking turns with the students. Observe individual students as they read and use Teacher Observation Log to record anecdotal information.

**Mrs. Nelson**  
**Whole class story-reading Event (Page 180, 12 minutes)**

1-3-07 Mrs. Nelson read aloud pages 180-183. Pages 184-189 were read aloud the following day by her substitute teacher.  
[Mrs. Nelson spent 53 minutes before the read aloud introducing unit projects and browsing with students through all illustrations]

**Pg. 180: Focus Questions**

What memories does the author carry with him of his boyhood in Vietnam? Why are these memories important to him?

**Pg. 180 Comprehension Strategies**

**Visualizing:** When a new term is introduced, sometimes visualizing its meaning can help a reader understand it. The text says that a hamlet has many houses in it, but this one has no shops or market-Places.. A hamlet must be like a village. It might help me to draw a quick sketch. How do you visualize the hamlet?

**Connections:** how my culture is similar to and different from the author’s. What connections have you made and how do they enhance your store of knowledge?

**Teacher Tip:** invite students to compare the chores they do around their homes with the ones in this selection.

**Vocab. Words:** hamlet; trench

**Pg. 180 Nominates student to read focus questions aloud to class.**

**Teacher reads aloud page 180, stopping as indicated below.**

**Teacher statement:** We gotta find out why this child—this adult now—feels like he had lost it.

[Teacher read aloud first sentence of story text]

**Visualizing:**

**Teacher Question:** What vision just popped up in your mind?

**Teacher direction:** Draw it on your paper please.

[rereads last part of first sentence of story text]

**Teacher Question:** What’da ya think his homelife was like?

**Teacher Question:** What does a jungle have in comparison to what a mountain has?

**Teacher Question:** Does it seem friendly?

**Teacher Question:** Would you feel afraid?

**Teacher contrasts mountains and jungle to beach.**

[reads second sentence]

**Geographic connection:** So much like our valley..surrounded by these mountains.

[reads 2 sentences, 2nd paragraph]

**Teacher Question:** How many of you know what bamboo looks like?

**Local connection:** In many of our plant stores now, we can buy bamboo.

**Teacher question:** How well are tree leaves gonna be as a roof?

**Local connection:** How would you like the roof if your house to be nothing but palm fronds?

**Vocabulary:**

Teacher: they had to build a trench; that means that they had to make a big, huge circle, a big huge---- [student: hole] gap between their home and the surrounding area.

**Student Question:** What’s the difference between sugar cane and bamboo?

**Table 4.09: Mrs. Nelson’s Use of Teacher Directives**
As the reading event continued, Mrs. Nelson continued to paraphrase the text, generate vivid scenarios to activate students’ imaginations, and continued to make connections between the text and students’ every day lives.

Mrs. Nelson nominated a student to read aloud the focus questions preceding the story, whereas Mr. Moody read them aloud himself. Both teachers asked students to visualize the setting; Mrs. Nelson directed students to draw as per the directive in the manual. By the time Mrs. Nelson had read the first sentence of the story, she had asked five questions and contrasted mountains to beaches. Mr. Moody read the first paragraph twice. When reading the second paragraph, Mrs. Nelson’s questions moved details of the story text to the local context of her students. Similarly, Mr. Moody selected places in students’ local environment for contrast to the story setting, evoking one-word choral responses from his students. Mrs. Nelson did not survey students’ visualizations; Mr. Moody nominated six students, one after the other to make their visualizations public.

Mrs. Nelson generated dialogue and performed an imagined scenario based on the description of a monkey bridge given in the second paragraph. Mr. Moody read the second and third paragraphs together and asked students to infer about the monkey bridge. Both teachers followed the Open Court directives closely. They read the focus questions, asked students to visualize the setting, made connections to students’ lives, and addressed vocabulary words (hamlet and trench).

“Preview and Prepare” directives in the Teacher’s Edition of Open Court Reading recommended that teachers “have students preview the selection by browsing the illustrations and skimming text in the entire selection” (page 180M). Teachers were also
directed to record students’ observations and responses while browsing through the story illustrations before reading aloud the story, using the “Clues, Problems and Wonderings” reading transparency included in Open Court teachers’ materials (page 180N). Mrs. Nelson and her class browsed the story illustrations, page by page of each Open Court story before Mrs. Nelson began reading aloud. For example, prior to reading *The Land I Lost* (OC-1) aloud, Mrs. Nelson spent 31 minutes browsing with her students through the illustrations of the story, monitoring students’ use of the “Clues, Problems and Wonderings” graphic, which she had reproduced for each student.

Mrs. Nelson saw the goal of the browsing activity as distinct from the goal of reading the story. For example, after students had considered the illustration of a boy on the back of a water buffalo on page 182 in *The Land I Lost*, they debated whether the animal was a bull or a large cow. Later when the teacher and the class were looking at another illustration on page 183, Lupita raised her hand to bid for the floor. When nominated, Lupita said, “Right here on 182 it says that” [reading aloud from the text] “I looked after the family herd of water buffaloes.” After reading, Lupita look up from the text, and smiled at the teacher. Mrs. Nelson immediately responded by saying, “That’s right but we’re not reading the story yet, are we Lupita?” Lupita leaned back in her chair, gave a “thumbs up” sign with both hands and then laid her head down on her open book. Mrs. Nelson turned to the class and said, “we’re just looking for associations.” She then announced the next page number, “185” and asked a question about the illustration (N590, *The Land I Lost*, OC-1, p. 4, 1-03-07).
Mrs. Nelson not only read the story selections with expression and fluency, she performed the stories for her student audience. Her story-reading events were not limited to the Open Court directives (i.e. markers for where to stop; scripted questions and comments). While reading aloud and interacting with students about stories, Mrs. Nelson relied heavily on her own knowledge and experiences as scripts for her performances which served to build background and support student comprehension of the story selections. Mrs. Nelson positioned herself center aisle (stage), changed the language of the text by generating her own paraphrasing and drew students in to participate in the story by generating descriptive language with gestures that support visualization.

She then initiated a parallel event situated in the students’ presumed personal experience and built on audience response to spontaneously construct a humorous performance. According to this pattern, students became engaged in the story by vicariously joining in with the teacher’s performance and at the same time, were positioned as the audience, offering choral responses. After the teacher had determined the end of her performance, students were offered the floor to share the stage and tell their own stories. The following transcript excerpt, which includes my analysis in the right hand column, gives evidence of Mrs. Nelson’s performative pattern.
How confusing...completely insane is this idea? Okay [Genesys gets up out of seat and walks to teacher’s desk for a tissue] Hold on. Let me get the bridge. Then let me go put the bridge across the hole...make sure it gets across the hole the right way [teacher acts out putting the bridge out; students are all turned looking at her]

The teacher’s question with adverb and adjective descriptors (“completely insane”) marks her upcoming performance as exaggerated, which is the same pattern she used earlier. When Genesys gets up during the teacher’s performance, she is demonstrating audience behavior rather than stage behavior. Teacher’s use of “me” places her in the experience as the main character.

Cause I don’t want anybody to fall in [Bianca raises her hand]

Use of personal pronoun “I” positions the teacher in the experience and allows her to think out loud to her student audience. Bianca tests access to the floor, indicating that the teacher’s pattern of performance is not shared. Students aren’t sure when the floor is open.

[laughing out loud]

Students’ loud laughter positions them in the audience, with their teacher as the entertainer.

Then we gotta go across, in the pitch darkness, hoping there’s no monsters from the jungle waiting for me on the other side to eat me like lunch. Go take care of my bathroom break and come back and puuuuuuuuull the bridge back in so I

Teacher’s use of “we” invites the student audience onto the stage reducing their distance from the experience. The teacher switches back to personal pronouns, “my” and “I” suggesting that the experience is happening to her, leaving students in the audience.

Mrs. Nelson began by paraphrasing the story text. The author had used the pronoun “we” and the teacher took it up to include herself and her students. Mrs. Nelson stood in the center aisle, and began generating descriptive language with gestures, exaggerated to entertain, and supportive of visualization (lines 68-71). She then generated a parallel event (see lines 74-79) situated in the students’ presumed experience (referencing a garage door opener) and ended her performance by returning to the text.
We come home, we pull in the drive way, you might push a button – make the garage door go up. Put the car in the garage, push the button and drive...the garage door goes down. I get out of the car, go in the house, lock the door, LIFE IS GOOD!

The teacher has shifted from the story text situation to personal home environments. She switches from “we” to “you,” separating her identity as owner-operator of a garage door opener from students. Use of “might” leaves open the possibility that use of a garage door opener is a shared experience between teacher and students. The next sentence has an understood “you” subject, leaving identification with the experience ambiguous. Use of “I” limits the experience to the teacher. The sequence of events suggests that the teacher’s life is good when she is locked inside her own house.

We don’t think twice about it. Doesn’t mean we don’t have bad people that might want to try to get in our house.

Teacher switches to plural pronoun “we” to include students with her vantage point. The context for “we” refers to the story character’s circumstance as the agent in the action. Abraham may have thought the floor was open since the teacher said “we.”

So we feel a whole lot more secure than this poor person...so the middle of the night we gotta puuull [demonstrating] the bamboo...monkey bridge into the house, cause by having it in the house, they feel like they’re secure. No one can sneak up on’em. What a thought to have.

Teacher’s choice of adjective for the depersonalized author, “this poor person” distances him from her as the reader and from the students as the listening audience. She uses “we” when participating (and acting out) the action, inviting the audience to vicariously participate with her, but she switches, mid-sentence, to “they” and “they’re” and “em,” once again stepping off the stage and down into the audience. Her last sentence sums up her performance and signals that she will open the floor.

Abraham. [eye contact with Abraham]

Teacher nominates Abraham with her eye gaze and by calling his name.

Table 4.11: Mrs. Nelson’s Performance

Only then (line 79) did she nominate a student to speak. Instances of text paraphrasing which introduced Mrs. Nelson’s pattern of improvisation and student
participation in class discussion were coded across all stories read aloud. The transcript analysis shown above provides a sample of Mrs. Nelson’s multiple voices and positions during story-reading events in her classroom. Her voice is dramatically expressive, her facial expressions, gestures and movements (contextualization cues) function in a combined way to accomplish Open Court directives according to her own self-generated scripts.

Mrs. Nelson had managed to create an environment for visualizing, predicting, and making connections between the story and students’ lives. She modeled summarizing as the scene built, and she, as the author and main character, faced balancing on a monkey bridge right in the center aisle of the classroom. She voiced the author’s point of view, and enacted both a comparison and contrast to the situation in the story. The dialogue she enacted, followed by her story-moral invited her student audience to draw conclusions and make inferences.

While reading aloud Open Court stories, Mrs. Nelson stopped more often than directed in the Open Court sidebar scripts. Although she was never observed reading the scripted questions and statements directly from the manual, she incorporated those scripted directives across each Open Court story-reading event. Neither Mr. Moody nor Mrs. Nelson implemented every Open Court directive found in the teacher’s manual.

Mrs. Nelson had established her classroom rules for handing-off activities at the beginning of the school year: “Hands folded, learning positions, big voices, acknowledge the person who just spoke, be polite, thank them and use eye contact. After you’ve shared, address the question to the person sitting next to you.” (field notes,
Nelson, 9-27-06). After she finished reading aloud Land I Lost (OC-1), she conducted a “handing-off” activity. In contrast to Mr. Moody’s practice, she asked students to compare My Diary From Here to There (LPB-1), which had been read-aloud earlier that day, with The Land I Lost (OC-1). As students responded, she began constructing a large chart, on which she recorded student responses. Mrs. Nelson demonstrated her value of the picture book by asking students to compare the two stories. Mrs. Nelson retrieved and posted her chart, adding to it as each additional story was read aloud.

Like Mr. Moody, Mrs. Nelson did not follow the Open Court directives for the handing-off activity. No change in seating arrangement (rows to a circle) was made, students only addressed the person sitting beside them (rather than randomly addressing or responding to classmates across the room), and Mrs. Nelson, like Mr. Moody, interjected her responses and directives between students’ responses. In her classroom, students’ turns of talk often consisted of repetition of another student’s response. However, some students used this time to tell personal experiences related to the story characters and situations. After the first Open Court story, The Land I Lost (OC-1), Mrs. Nelson did not initiate any handing-off activities for the remaining four Open Court stories. Instead, she revisited her chart of story comparisons and recorded student responses during after-the-story classroom discussions. Mrs. Nelson, did, however, initiate handing-off activities following two other Latino picture book story-reading events (in addition to My Diary From Here to There (LPB-1).

Unlike Mr. Moody, Mrs. Nelson made paper copies of Clues, Problems and Wonderings and monitored her students’ use of them for note-taking during pre-reading
browsing activities and for reference during story-reading events. While Mr. Moody monitored his students’ following along in the text as he read aloud, Mrs. Nelson monitored students’ note-taking during story-reading events. Mrs. Nelson’s pattern of physical movement around seated students, and particularly her practice of moving toward and standing in close proximity to students nominated to speak, positioned her as being omni-present in relationship to students’ location in the classroom and functioned as a way for the teacher to monitor student’s engagement in story-reading lessons.

Students exhibited a variety of behavioral responses to Mrs. Nelson’s methods of monitoring. Students generally exhibited “on task” behaviors, either looking at their teacher or their books or responding to Mrs. Nelson’s suggestions to “write that down on your ‘Clues, Problems, and Wonderings.’” Mrs. Nelson would sometimes prompt them, saying, “So in our ‘wonderings’ we’re gonna say, write down, ‘why is this child doing this?’” (N590, *The Land I Lost*, OC-1, p. 1, 1-03-07). She also inferred that their notes would be useful for getting good reading scores: “There were four animals. Hint, hint, hint, hint. What do you think’s gonna be on your test on Friday?” (N591, *The Land I Lost*, OC-1, p. 4, 1-03-07). In contrast to Mrs. Nelson, Mr. Moody was not observed identifying story information related to reading tests. Mrs. Nelson’s students’ reading notes were kept in their individual notebooks, and students were aware that Mrs. Nelson periodically reviewed their notebooks to monitor their classroom work.

Mrs. Nelson was observed monitoring students’ eye gaze. As she was reading aloud, Mrs. Nelson looked up and announced the page numbers with a loud voice. These announcements functioned as teacher control, monitoring if students were “with her” as
she resumed reading aloud, rather than focusing on whether students were following the print in their anthologies. Mrs. Nelson’s performance pattern motivated students to keep their eyes on the “stage” and participate in audience responses (choral responses and laughing out loud). Students watched their teacher, some turning completely around in their seats to maintain eye contact with Mrs. Nelson during story-reading lessons.

Mrs. Nelson incorporated students’ names into her story talk as a way of emphasizing their need to focus, particularly for Librado who was seated at the end of a row, where his restless behaviors were less distracting. This was Librado’s second year at Jackson Elementary; he and his classmates had developed a shared understanding that his squirming and tapping would be ignored during classroom instruction.

Mrs. Nelson also monitored students who chose to remain silent across story-reading events. During story-reading events, three students were not nominated by Mrs. Nelson to speak and none of them ever volunteered to speak by raising their hands. As Mrs. Nelson walked past them, while reading aloud, she was observed lightly touching their shoulders and the camera verified their practice of following Mrs. Nelson with their eyes. The only time Guillermo, Carmela and Sabrina were observed speaking in class was during handing-off activities which followed story-reading events. Because students spoke, one student to the next, down the rows until every student had participated in the handing-off activity, each student was faced with speaking aloud; passing was not an option. When it was their turn, Guillermo, Carmela and Sabrina looked down and spoke in soft, undecipherable voices. Mrs. Nelson thanked each of the three for sharing immediately following their turns to speak. Mrs. Nelson and Guillermo, Carmela and
Sabrina obviously shared an understanding of their non-verbal participation during story-reading events.

Similar to Mr. Moody’s participation structures, Mrs. Nelson exhibited an underlying IRE (teacher Initiation, student Response, followed by teacher Evaluation (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 2001) sequence, with different variations which functioned in different ways. Mrs. Nelson (TN) often initiated interaction with a question, although often her questions were rhetorical in nature. She made eye contact with students when asking rhetorical questions, but reserved control of the floor. As the following example shows, Mrs. Nelson initiated a question (line 046) but continued talking. Students volunteered to respond but were not nominated until Mrs. Nelson had essentially answered her own question by describing what was shown on the Discovery channel.
Have you ever watched your National Geographic and your Discovery channel and you happen to find those really intriguing shows about the natives of Africa;[Ubaldo raises hand] the tribes of Africa. And they have those same, similar kinds of beliefs. The parent is knowing that the birth is coming, so they kinda go wander off; take a hike, if they will, to get kinda away from the tribe for a little bit and she might be gone a few hours; she might be gone a few days, but when she comes back, she’s got a baby in her hands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker &amp; line</th>
<th>Message Unit/Story text</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>IRE Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TN 046</td>
<td>Have you ever watched your National Geographic and your Discovery channel and you happen to find those really intriguing shows about the natives of Africa;[Ubaldo raises hand] the tribes of Africa. And they have those same, similar kinds of beliefs. The parent is knowing that the birth is coming, so they kinda go wander off; take a hike, if they will, to get kinda away from the tribe for a little bit and she might be gone a few hours; she might be gone a few days, but when she comes back, she’s got a baby in her hands.</td>
<td>Teacher names public television channels that may be accessible by students in their homes. Regardless of whether students watch named programs, teacher provides description for shared connection to story situation</td>
<td>Initiates question(I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Whoop-te-doo! Here we go! Life continues!</td>
<td>[Elidieth raises her hand]</td>
<td>Student volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elidieth</td>
<td>[walks to back of classroom, stands behind Alicia’s desk; looking at Elidieth] Teacher’s change of proximity demonstrates value teacher assigns to students’ response.</td>
<td>Topic of childbirth is considered an intimate private subject. Student lowers voice and demonstrates a private conversation with teacher.</td>
<td>Teacher nominates student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elidieth</td>
<td>Umm [talking very softly, alternating looking up at teacher, down at pen in spiral notebook, back up to teacher]</td>
<td>Teacher response affirms students’ response as sensible (‘of course’)</td>
<td>Student response (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Hm mm. of course.</td>
<td>Teacher response affirms students’ response as sensible (‘of course’)</td>
<td>Teacher evaluates response (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Yeah. Big difference. Huh? [looks up and across class]</td>
<td>Teacher’s response affirms with agreement and shifts significance from individual student to whole class</td>
<td>(E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Mrs. Nelson’s IRE Pattern

Unlike Mr. Moody, Mrs. Nelson was not observed nominating several students one after the other. Because Mrs. Nelson moved around the classroom, “front row”
students did not have increased access to her. In contrast to Mr. Moody, across story-
reading events, Mrs. Nelson’s practice was instead to nominate one or two students and
enter into sustained conversations with them. For example, when reading aloud, *Love as
Strong as Ginger* (OC-4), Mrs. Nelson read from the story text: “At lunchtime, she’d
make the best meal, clearing room for me in her tiny kitchen where salted butterfish and
flounder hung like laundry above our heads” (Open Court Reading, 2002, p. 230). Mrs.
Nelson had a four-minute conversation with Abraham (see transcript in Appendix G).
She remained positioned just opposite Abraham for the entire conversation and only
looked away from him once, in the very beginning, to quiet the class out of respect for
Abraham. This conversation is not an isolated example. In every Open Court story-
reading event, Mrs. Nelson engaged in sustained conversations with an individual
student, positioning the remaining students as members of the audience. In Mrs.
Nelson’s class, students had about the same number of opportunities to talk during story-
reading events as Mrs. Moody’s students had, but the students who did talk in Mrs.
Nelson’s class, like Abraham, were often able to maintain the floor for an extended time
due to the increased length of her story-reading events. Sustained conversations with
individual students were performances in which Mrs. Nelson shared the stage with a
student. They functioned much like her solo performances, where she paraphrased story
text and generated imagined scenarios in that students participated as members of the
audience (i.e., overlapping voices, laughing out loud) and vicariously experienced the
situation being enacted.
Summary of Relations of Open Court Readings to Teacher Edition

Two experienced White (non-Latino, non-Hispanic teachers) present to their students two types of story texts: one with a school-volume of scripted prompts and one representing the language and culture of the students they teach. Two classes of predominantly Latino fifth-grade students listen to the stories, answer questions about the stories and take tests on those stories; students whose language and culture influence how they interpret the instructional and social language of school.

The Open Court stories are written to represent five different cultures: Vietnamese, Yup’ik, Puerto Rican, Chinese, and African-American. Teachers use these stories as tools to teach students skills and strategies identified for transfer to other stories. And their school story-tools come with specific instructions. Both teachers value those instructions, carry the instruction manual with them, rely on those instructions and in Mr. Moody’s case, read the instructions to the students. Both teachers of reading are contracted and monitored to follow the instructions closely.

Classroom talk about stories is about teaching the students the answers and the instruction manual has the answers. As a result, in Mr. Moody’s class, students are nominated by the teacher and quizzed about vocabulary word meanings (“what’s edible mean?”), and are asked to identify the author’s purpose and point of view. Inferences about character’s relationships and the meaning of figurative language are explained in stories about Mr. Moody’s childhood friend, Carmichael, or acted out in Mrs. Nelson’s mini-dramas. The teachers work hard and carefully manage their instructional minutes according to the pacing schedule they are asked to follow.
The following chart displays the influence of the Open Court directives upon teachers’ reading instruction. The center column provides the story text (three paragraphs) on the first page of the first Open Court story, *The Land I Lost*. The outside columns denote the directives from the Open Court teacher’s manual and each teacher’s response to those directives. This chart reveals how both teachers used the directives from the manual, albeit differently.
I was born on the central highlands of Vietnam in a small hamlet on a riverbank that had a deep jungle on one side and a chain of high mountains on the other. (OC-1 visualize: draw a sketch) “Okay. One of the skills we’re working on this week on this story is visualizing. What does visualizing mean?” Enrique and Miguel are nominated and respond. Mr. Moody reads from the TE: “when a new term is introduced, (the word ‘hamlet’ is underlined in the TE indicating a vocabulary word) sometimes visualizing its meaning can help a reader understand it. I am not familiar with what a hamlet is. Remember they used hamlet. The text says that a hamlet has many houses in it but this one has no shops or marketplaces. Therefore a hamlet must be like a village. It might help me to draw a quick sketch. How do you visualize the hamlet?” M2: Mr. Moody: “Do you think a hamlet has a mall? A shopping mall? Do you think it has a Burger King? What do you picture a hamlet as being?” [Gregorio, Miguel, Marlen, Michael, Saul, Lupe, Jesus are nominated and give short, individual responses. Across the river, rice fields stretched to the slopes of another chain of mountains. (OC-1 visualize: draw a sketch) Table 4.13: Comparison of Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson

N3: Teacher comment relating to school location.
Table 4.13 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There were fifty houses in our hamlet, scattered along the river or propped against the mountainsides. The houses were made of bamboo and covered with coconut leaves, and each was surrounded by a deep trench to protect it from wild animals or thieves.</th>
<th>N4: Teacher talks about houses and compares roofs to use of local palm fronds. Nathaly volunteers and is nominated. She asks for clarification about bamboo. Teacher gives explanation. Ubald and Elidieth volunteer. Elidieth is nominated but her response is too soft to be intelligible. Ubald is nominated and asks, “what’s the difference between sugar cane and bamboo?” Teacher gives an explanation. Ubald responds, “I compared bamboo and the sugar cane and they looked similar.” Teacher gives more details.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The only way to enter a house was to walk across a “monkey bridge”</td>
<td>Paraphrase of text: <strong>The ONLY WAY is with a monkey bridge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5: Teacher paraphrases the text’s definition of a monkey bridge and gives description of using it. Students respond with overlapping voices and laughing. Ubald volunteers and is nominated. He about watching a TV show about bamboo. Teacher changes the topic to memories and explains what is needed to feel safe. Bianca and Marco volunteer but are not nominated to speak.</td>
<td>A monkey bridge, boys and girls, is a single bamboo stick that was big enough to go across the trench</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 4.13 continued</strong></td>
<td><strong>a single bamboo stick that spanned the trench. At night we pulled the bridges into our houses and were safe.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N6:</strong> Teacher generates inference about the experience of getting up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom in the author’s house, using the monkey bridge. Teacher contrasts with imagined contemporary scenario of going in and out of one’s home, using plural pronouns (we come home, we pull in the driveway, you push a button; make the garage door go up…). Multiple overlapping student voices with laughter. Cristian volunteers and is nominated to speak: “if people can go across the bridge, maybe monkeys can go across the bridge too”. Teacher affirms his response.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>There were no shops or marketplaces in our hamlet.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Well</strong> There were no shops marketplaces in our hamlet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N7:</strong> Teacher asks students to imagine their own city with no convenience stores, no grocery stores, …” no restaurants… nnnada.” Students respond in low overlapping voices.</td>
<td><strong>If we needed supplies—medicine, cloth, soaps, or candles—we had to cross over the mountains and travel OC-2 to a town nearby.</strong> (OC-2 what connections have you made; how my culture is similar to and different from the authors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If we needed supplies—medicine, cloth to make clothes, soaps, or candles—we had to cross over the mountains and travel OC-2 to a town nearby.</strong></td>
<td><strong>N8:</strong> Teacher gives example of comparable distance to travel for groceries…”if you wanted to go and get groceries, you’d have to walk to Los Angeles” Multiple overlapping student voices; laughing out loud.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
Table 4.13 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M3: “Why did they pull the bridge in at night?”</th>
<th>Hernon, Gregorio, Ana, Enrique, Jesus, Michael are nominated and give responses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M9: Teacher says, “remember what we said?” “Water can certainly give us that opportunity...”</td>
<td>No student talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 total student responses</td>
<td>5 student responses (Ubald0 participates twice); Two students volunteer but are not nominated. N5, N6, N7, N8 students respond as group with overlapping voices; laughing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Moody stops three times when reading aloud three paragraphs of story text. In five minutes, he has read the page and heard a total of 15 student responses to the questions provided in the teacher’s manual. Mrs. Nelson, on the other hand, has made 9 stops (three times as many as Mr. Moody) while reading the three paragraphs of story text. She has heard 5 individual student responses, as well as four group responses.

Both teachers have defined “hamlet” which is a vocabulary word. Both teachers have emphasized the skill of visualizing while reading as prompted in the teacher’s manual. Mrs. Nelson acted out for students a dramatization of a monkey bridge in the Viet Nam jungle and a monkey bridge at students’ homes in California. Students in Mr. Moody’s class have listened, and half of them volunteered and were nominated to answer
scripted questions. Students in Mrs. Nelson’s class comprised the audience and four students (one of them on two different occasions), were invited to briefly share the stage.

Both classes of students depend on listening to learn the answers about the stories. Their focus is primarily on the teacher and secondarily on the story. These students do not read stories in reading class. In Mr. Moody’s class they hear the stories, they see and are directed to follow the print of the stories, they decode a sentence when it’s their turn, they answer teacher questions about the stories and they take tests on the stories. In Mrs. Nelson’s class, students hear the stories, take notes on the stories, watch dramatized scenarios situated both in the stories and in their own lives, and, like Mr. Moody’s students, take tests on the stories.

Research Question Two

The second question for this study was: “In what ways, if any, do basal manual directives affect what teachers do when reading and responding to multicultural picture books in classroom story-reading events?” This question will be answered beginning with events in Mr. Moody’s classroom.

Mr. Moody and Latino Picture Books

There were multiple evidences of instructional questions during Latino picture book story-reading events that were similar to those used during Open Court story reading events. For example, after reading the first picture book, My Diary From Here to There, and asking students, “did you like that one?”, Mr. Moody asked three more questions, directed to the class:

027  TM  What person was that written in?
Sharlene: in first person
First person. Very good.

What was the author’s purpose? [Modesto raises his hand]

What was the author’s purpose?
Modesto

to tell about the moving
Okay. To tell about his life. [the author is a female, not a male]

Which would be to ---- what? [points to Samuel]
explain
explain

(M601, My Diary From Here to There (OC), p. 5, 1-05-07).

Both of the questions, determining the point of view and author’s purpose are the same questions that Mr. Moody asked per scripted directives located in his Teacher’s Edition of Open Court Reading when reading aloud Open Court stories.

When reading aloud Latino picture books, Mr. Moody did not often engage students in discussion of those stories; since there was little or no discussion, repetitive patterns of interaction or variations of IRE participation patterns were not identified as had been the case during the Open Court story-reading events. When Mr. Moody read aloud a Latino picture book, he and his students had a shared understanding of the task;
he would read and they would listen while looking at the screen. Mr. Moody was not observed monitoring students during Latino picture book story-reading events.

The chart below records the number of times Mr. Moody stopped reading aloud to interact with students during each story. The majority of his stops during Open Court stories correlate with prompts in the Teacher’s manual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Court Stories</th>
<th>Latino Picture Books</th>
<th>Stops with Student interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land I Lost</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Diary</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Two Worlds</td>
<td>Calling the Doves</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The West Side</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends from the Other Side</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love as Strong as Ginger</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Speak English for My Mom</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmele</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Mariposa</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14: Comparison of Mr. Moody’s Stops

Across all five of the Latino picture book read-alouds, six stops with student interaction involved four student participants (two students participated twice). Mr. Moody asked four questions while reading aloud the Latino picture book, *Calling the Doves* and 5 questions after the story. All four of the questions he asked during the story were open to any student. The second time Mr. Moody stopped while reading aloud, he acknowledged Marlen’s raised hand and nominated her to speak. She said,
“farmworkers. apposition” and Mr. Moody responded: “Hey, that’s exactly right. Very good, Marlen. That is an apposition where it said, ‘campesinos’ and then it said, ‘the farmworkers.’ Nice observation.” (M708, Calling the Doves, 1-12-07)

Immediately following the story, Mr. Moody asked the class, “How’d you guys like that one?” As students volunteered, were nominated and offered their responses, Mr. Moody responded to individual students with questions directed to them, evidenced by eye contact, change in proximity to the student and a listening-with-interest demeanor.

The table below shows the relationship between teacher talk and teacher-student interaction for each Latino picture book story-reading event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATINO PICTURE BOOK STORIES</th>
<th>Student talk/Teacher stops; % of stops that were student talk</th>
<th>Time Spent Reading Aloud</th>
<th>Discussion Time After Story (same day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Diary From Here to There</td>
<td>No stops</td>
<td>11 min</td>
<td>1 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling the Doves</td>
<td>4*/7=57%</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td>2½ min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends from the Other Side</td>
<td>No stops</td>
<td>9 min.</td>
<td>0 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Speak English for My Mom</td>
<td>No stops*</td>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Mariposa</td>
<td>2/15*=13%</td>
<td>18 min.</td>
<td>4 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include the teacher’s stops for pronunciation of Spanish words.

Table 4.15: Mr. Moody’s Time Spent on Latino Picture Books

For example, when Mr. Moody read aloud Calling the Doves (LPB-2), he stopped 7 times during the story (not counting the times he stopped for students to pronounce Spanish words). Students interacted with Mr. Moody during only 4 of the 7 times Mr. Moody stopped. Otherwise, Mr. Moody was the only one who talked. Also, the recorded discussion times during and after each Latino picture book story-reading
event suggest that Mr. Moody interacted only after reading *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1) but during and after reading *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2) and *La Mariposa* (LPB-5).

*Mrs. Nelson and Latino Picture Books*

Since Mrs. Nelson did not have the opportunity to do a browsing activity with students before reading aloud the Latino picture book, she introduced the story and browsed the first slide (book cover) with the students. Two students were nominated and offered responses to the teacher’s comments.

Mrs. Nelson modulated her voice with expressive inflection and she interacted with students throughout each story. As she did with Open Court stories, Mrs. Nelson omitted sentences, combined two sentences into one, changed the verb tense, and substituted simplified language. For example, here is how Mrs. Nelson paraphrased the opening of *I Speak English for My Mom* (Stanek, 1989):

The text reads: “When we count the money that night, there is just enough to pay the bills. There’s nothing extra for the red can.” Mrs. Nelson read: “So when we counted the money that night it was just enough for the bills and nothing could be put in our little red can.”

In this instance, Mrs. Nelson combined two sentences into one and changed the verbs to past tense (“count” to “counted” and the verb “is” to the verb “was”). While students had access to the text of the Latino picture books on the screen, no student ever publicly compared the words of the text to the teacher’s words during story reading lessons. Mrs. Nelson’s patterns of performance of imagined scenarios evidenced in her
Open Court story-reading events were also observed during Latino picture book story-reading events.

Similar to her practice of initiating handing-off activities following Open Court story-reading events, Mrs. Nelson initiated handing-off activities following three of the five Latino picture book story reading events. The day after she had read aloud *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1), Mrs. Nelson led a class discussion and initiated a handing-off activity which together lasted 45 minutes. The handing-off activity guided students to make comparisons between *The Land I Lost* (OC-1) and *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1). Mrs. Nelson also initiated handing-off activities following her read-aloud of *Friends from the Other Side* (LPB-3) and *La Mariposa* (LPB-5). The *La Mariposa* (LPB-5) handing-off activity took place during Open Court Reading, preceding her browsing of *Parmele* (OC-5).

The table below indicates the number of times Mrs. Nelson and students engaged in interaction during the story-reading events. While reading aloud *My Diary From Here to There*, students interacted with Mrs. Nelson six times during the story. This was the first Latino picture book story-reading experience in her classroom, and given the initiation of a different presentation mode (powerpoint slides of story text and illustrations), it is reasonable to consider those factors when comparing opportunities for students to speak across story-reading events.
Mrs. Nelson’s patterns of performance evidenced in her Open Court story-reading events continued across Latino picture book story-reading events. Her performance pattern occurred five times when reading aloud *My Diary From Here to There*, once when reading *Friends from the Other Side*, twice when reading *I Speak English for My Mom* four times when reading aloud *La Mariposa*.

Mrs. Nelson did not generate her pattern of performance when reading aloud *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2). The first slide, depicting the cover of the book, was projected on the screen and Mrs. Nelson introduced the story in the following way,

*Today we have another story and I want us to be listening to the story and thinking about, does this story also give us a very valuable lesson? And what is that valuable lesson that this story gives us? How does this story connect with the stories that we’ve been reading in Open Court? How does it connect with “The Diary” story? Do they have something: a lesson, an idea, that all comes together*
nice and neat? Today’s story, as you can see on the overhead is called, *Calling the Doves*. (N, 700, *Calling the Doves* (LPB), 1-10-07)

Students and the teacher browsed the cover illustration, and two students were nominated and offered responses to the teacher’s comments.

The theme of memories, together with poetic stanzas of text and beautifully situated Spanish words powerfully supported teacher-student interactions. The second time Mrs. Nelson stopped while reading aloud *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2), she commented on the California grape fields, and three students raised their hands.

Gabriel was nominated and said matter of factly, “I worked there.” Instead of glossing over his response, Mrs. Nelson, standing behind Gabriel, answered quietly, “yes,” and paused. Gabriel turned, looking over his left shoulder to maintain eye contact with Mrs Nelson and began to elaborate about his experience. Mrs. Nelson replied, “so you have an ever better personal story to share because you could go home and ask [your parents] just how hard that was.” Gabriel smiled and she added a question, with a slight tone of sarcasm, “How much fun was it? ’Cause that will give you a different look at how the story is.” Gabriel turned back around and Mrs. Nelson resumed reading aloud.

With Gabriel’s public identification with the story, the tone of the story-reading event changed. It was hushed, as if a blanket had floated down over them all and underneath, everyone was sharing secrets. With a reverent sensitivity, Mrs. Nelson made a light-hearted connection at the next stop and seven students raised their hands, smiling. The more she read, the more the students evidenced engagement with the story. Page by page, slide by slide, students seemed to try the story on for size, fitting it to themselves.
Mrs. Nelson changed too. Instead of offering her authoritative knowledge, she reflected students’ questions back to the class. For example, when Librado noticed the writing on the inside wall of the camper, he asked,

Librado: What is all the writing on the walls?”

Mrs. Nelson: What’d you think it might be?”

Librado: [smiling] Spanish?

Mrs. Nelson: What did we say was happening inside that trailer? Do you remember what we read about when it came to the insides and all the great things that were going on? There were conversations, the radio was on, so you’d have noise from the radio.

Mrs. Nelson: So what that illustrator chose to do was out along the outside of the trailer it shows you all that was going on in the inside, ‘cause we can’t really see on the inside, can we?

N, 700, Calling the Doves (LPB), p. 3, 1-10-07

Question 2: Summary of the influence of teacher edition on LPB

In his exit interview (3-30-07), Mr. Moody commented on his experience of reading aloud Latino picture books to his class: “I don’t do a lot of read alouds because I think we just have to follow the curriculum. You know that’s what they want us to do. And so, I think I’m afraid to...for me to do it, I feel like it is something that might not fit as well.” Mrs. Nelson, though she expressed valuing the picture books, concurred with
Mr. Moody’s school perspective: “they're not part of our Open Court series, they're not part of our social studies, so we should not be reading them” (Nelson 3-5-07).

How does the teacher’s dependency upon the Teacher’s Edition of Open Court Reading influence teacher’s Latino picture book story-reading? Mr. Moody clearly stated that he didn’t feel that the picture book stories fit at school. He was adamant that he would not read *Friends from the Other Side* (LPB-3) to future students. One of his front row students, Michael, explained why he did not have a favorite among the picture books:

I didn’t rate them that good because I wasn’t reading them. I haven’t been to Mexico, like that many times. I wasn’t born or raised there, or anything. Probably didn’t pay attention to ‘em as much because they...cause if they’re not testing on them, why should we even do it if it’s not even a test?

(Michael, exit interview, 4-10-07)

Mrs. Nelson acknowledged students’ responses to the picture books. Even with the demands of the reading curriculum and the pacing schedule, Mrs. Nelson was observed approaching the Latino picture book stories with a primary focus: students’ connections to those stories. Just as she had done in Open Court story-reading events, Mrs. Nelson paraphrased story text and embarked on imagined scenarios situated both in the story setting and in the contemporary experiences of her students.

*La Mariposa* and teacher-student interactions

In order to show a comparison between Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson’s teacher-student interactions while reading a Latino picture book, the following paragraph of text (double spread of text, opening 11b) was selected from *La Mariposa* (LPB-5). Each
teacher read the following paragraph aloud to their students (Mrs. Nelson’s paraphrasing is indicated in bold underlining, followed by story text in brackets):

Next thing Francisco knew, he and Curtis were on the ground, wrestling. Kids swarmed [circled] around them. He could hear them yelling Curtis’s name and something else. Francisco knew he had absolutely no chance; Curtis was so much bigger and all so much stronger. But he held on tight to his jacket. Why should he let him take it? Curtis pulled [on] one of the sleeves so hard [that] it ripped at the shoulder. And he pulled on the right pocket and it ripped as well [too]. (M, *La Mariposa*, LPB-5, 2-2) (N, 757, *La Mariposa*, LPB-5, 2-1-07)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Moody</th>
<th>Mrs. Nelson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(M, La Mariposa, LPB-5, 2-2)</td>
<td>(N, 757, La Mariposa, LPB-5, 2-1-07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[paused, looking up]</td>
<td>[paused, looking up]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think Curtis’s so mad? Can you predict why Curtis might be mad?</td>
<td>Have we ever seen this kind of a circumstance at school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Michael raises his hand and is nominated]</td>
<td>Students: [lowered voices, overlapping] yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The jacket is his</td>
<td>Students: [in chorus] yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, where did the principal get the jacket?</td>
<td>Misunderstandings. So it helps us to understand Francisco’s frustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think he’s got to be really feeling? Is he gonna want to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continue going back to school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlen: [raises her hand and Mr. Moody points at her]</td>
<td>Marlen: in the lost and found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ubaldo: noooooooo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the lost and found box, huh. Okay.</td>
<td>He knows that that principal wouldn’t give him a jacket that belonged to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>somebody else. He just doesn’t have that knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elidieth</td>
<td>Elidieth: like Cinderella’s mean step-sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There you go. Elidieth just connected it with Cinderella and how the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>step sisters got frustrated so they tore the dress that Cinderella was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>going to wear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaly: [eye contact with Mrs. Nelson; doesn’t volunteer; is not</td>
<td>Nathaly: [speaks out based on eye contact with teacher]Because they saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominated]</td>
<td>their stuff they said, “I don’t want this anymore” Cinderella was wearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the stuff and the one sister said, “Oh that’s mine” [Rosa raises her hand]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exactly. So even though they had parted ways with it, they were done with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it. All of a sudden, because they saw it looking nice on somebody else,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they got jealous, they got frustrated, and instead of asking and using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>words, they ended up with something very violent and vicious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosa: xxx always fight and they end up fighting and then my mom said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Teacher looks away and resumes reading aloud]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17: Comparison of Discussion, Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson
Mr. Moody read the paragraph with a level voice, just lower than his teacher voice. When he stopped, looked up and interacted with students, he increased the volume of his voice and directed his gaze across the students. Mrs. Nelson, in contrast to Mr. Moody, read this paragraph with expression, reflective of the conflict which was described. When she stopped, she looked up, scanned the students’ faces and made eye contact with participants.

Mr. Moody’s question, “Why do you think Curtis’s so mad?” is an inferential question; the story text does not explain until later in the story, that the jacket belonged to Curtis. Mr. Moody did not wait for students to answer his first question. Instead, he changed his question, asking students to predict why Curtis might be mad? Michael, sitting on the front row, does not rely on front row access to Mr. Moody. Instead, he raises his hand and is nominated. Mr. Moody accepts Michael’s response, indicating it is the correct answer. Mr. Moody then asks a literal question, referring to the story text which preceded the last paragraph he had read aloud.

This sample shows that Mr. Moody resisted Sharlene’s bid for the floor (seated on the second row, center aisle). She did not raise her hand and he did not nominate her. By cutting her off after she started to speak, and looking and pointing at Marlen (seated beside Sharlene), Mr. Moody demonstrated to the class that he would only recognize students who adhered to the classroom norm of raising hands.

In summary, Mr. Moody asked literal and inferential questions about the story using comprehension strategies from Open Court Reading. He also established that students were to raise their hands before speaking. Mrs. Nelson, in contrast, immediately
shifted from the situation in the story to students past school experiences. She described, with dialogue, a contemporary scenario and students indicated their receipt of the scene with choral responses. Mrs. Nelson names the situation as a misunderstanding and invites students to identify with Francisco’s feelings instead of quizzing them about where he got the jacket. When a student initiates reference to Cinderella’s conflict with her step-sisters, Mrs. Nelson affirms and expands on that example. Finally, Mrs. Nelson changes her language; previously, when referring to the story situation, she had used “him” in reference to Francisco. Now, after the introduction of another example (Cinderella and her step-sisters), Mrs. Nelson uses the plural pronoun “they:”

So even though they had parted ways with it, they were done with it. All of a sudden, because they saw it looking nice on somebody else, they got jealous, they got frustrated, and instead of asking and using words, they ended up with something very violent and vicious. (emphasis added, Nelson, 757, La Mariposa, LPB-5, 2-01-07)

In this case the antecedent is ambiguous, encompassing the story conflict (Curtis and Francisco), Cinderella’s conflict with her step-sisters and anyone else’s conflict where misunderstanding leads to violence. Mrs. Nelson’s pattern described here is similar to her pattern of teacher-student talk across Open Court and Latino picture book story-reading events.

Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson evidenced the following similarities in their classroom story-reading events when they read aloud and discussed Latino picture books: story-reading was scheduled outside of reading class, no preparation for story-reading
lessons, length of teacher time for story-reading determined when and how long peer groups met, did not monitor student attentiveness using “following along” or note-taking. Neither teacher browsed the picture books; the one-time viewing prohibited browsing or re-reading. When Mr. Moody did interact with students, he relied on questions from the Open Court Reading script (point of view, author’s purpose).

Unique to Mr. Moody’s Latino picture book read-alouds were: altered seating for students, and compromise of Mr. Moody’s centrality to the lesson due to the placement of the screen. Mr. Moody read the picture books cover to cover in a monotone voice. There were no “front row” participation patterns as there had been in the Open Court story-reading events; all interactions between teacher and student were reduced. Mr. Moody had students pronounce and translate the Spanish words that appeared in the story texts. Mr. Moody initiated and controlled topics of talk, reserving interpretive authority.

Mrs. Nelson skipped the Spanish words, paraphrased the language of the texts, and renamed main characters. Frequency of teacher-student interactions and Mrs. Nelson’s expressive reading, movement and performance patterns were similar to those which occurred during Open Court reading lessons, except when discussing Calling the Doves LPB-2. During that story-reading, Mrs. Nelson intentionally listened to students and their questions and stories. Students had side conversations during the story and the floor was open intermittently for student questions and comments. Topics of discussion were initiated by the students as well as by Mrs. Nelson. Levels of vulnerability were evidenced in the students’ and teacher’s topics of home, border crossing and acts of discrimination, despite her privileging English and excluding Spanish in the classroom.
Research Question 3

The third research question which guided this study was: Is the nature of teacher-students interactions around story-reading events in whole class settings similar to or different from students’ interactions in peer group discussions in which neither the teacher nor the researcher is participating? Open Court Reading directed that every lesson begin with “whole-group, teacher-directed lessons so that all children have access to the same models and information” (Open Court Reading, 2002, Program Overview, p. xvi). In addition, the Open Court program appendix described “Workshop” as: “the period of time each day in which students work independently or collaboratively to practice and review material taught in the lessons.” (Open Court Reading, 2002, Program Appendix, p. 40)

Although small groups (Workshop) were optional within the Open Court instructional plan, Mrs. Nelson did not choose to release her students to work in collaborative groups during Open Court Reading apart from the design of this study. Following his Open Court read-alouds, Mr. Moody sometimes had his students work in small groups for fifteen minutes to practice asking and answering literal and inferential questions from the Open Court story text, according to his specified procedure.

Student peer-group discussions refer to the time during the school day when six students met together as a small group and responded to one another in relationship to stories read aloud by the teacher to the class. These student peer-group discussions were observed in January and February, for five consecutive weeks in each respective fifth-grade classroom. Students in Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson’s class who participated in
peer-group discussions (described in Appendix A) were observed talking with one another about the selections from Open Court Reading which their respective teachers read aloud to them during the period of the school day scheduled for reading, and they were each observed talking with one another about Latino picture books which their respective teachers read aloud to their respective classes as well. Neither the teachers (Mr. Moody or Mrs. Nelson) nor the researcher participated in the observed peer-group discussions. While the student peer-groups met together, their respective classmates participated in whole group skill review lessons with their respective teachers.

First, I describe a typical peer-group discussion of an Open Court story selection and a typical peer-group discussion of a Latino picture book in each of the teachers’ classrooms, followed by a comparison of student peer-group discussion of both types of story text across both classrooms. Next I compare student peer-group discussions with whole class discussions about each type of text in each of the two fifth-grade classrooms.

*Peer-Group Discussion of The Land I Lost (OC-1): Mr. Moody’s Focus Students*

*Michael, Enrique, Saul, Ana, Xochilt, Marlen*

This was the first peer-group discussion these students had participated in. Their only context for this meeting was the trial peer group meeting which was conducted before the winter break. Prior to this peer group discussion, students were accustomed to meeting as a whole group to talk about stories with their teacher.

No role assignments, no training, and no procedural instructions were given to the students by the teacher, Mr. Moody, or by me. After reading aloud and discussing *The Land I Lost* (OC-1) to the class, Mr. Moody quietly dismissed the six students and said,
“You may go with Mrs. Montgomery and talk about our story, *The Land I Lost* (OC-1).”

In this story, (an excerpt from the book by the same title), the author described his childhood in Viet Nam and reflected on his memories about his grandmother.

The researcher motioned for them to bring their anthologies with them, and led the students to a small area on the floor which bordered the outside row of student desks. The following picture and transcript reflect the first segment of their peer group discussion at *The Land I Lost* (OC-1).

**Figure 4.02: Getting Started**

01 Ana: Who wants to start first?

02 Marlen: me [hand is raised]

03 Ana: Okay. Go ahead Marlen.

04 Marlen: I liked the [turns, glances at text and turns back to face Ana] I liked the grandmother when she kicked the dude.

05 Ana: oh yeah.
Ana began by opening the floor to the other students. In response, Marlen raised her hand, transferring the class norm to the peer group. Xochilt (line 8) anticipated that Marlen was going to speak, and took up the role of monitoring turn-taking in the group. Since Marlen had already given her response (line 4), Xochilt surmised that she had used her turn. As the conversation evolved, Xochilt and the three remaining students took turns using “I liked” comments about the grandmother in the story.

Making Meaning Clarification

The story began with the author’s description of his grandmother when she was 80 years old (p. 184). Next he reflected on an incident in a restaurant which happened only three months after the grandmother and grandfather had married (pp. 186-187). The author ended the story with a conversation he shared with his grandmother just before she died (pp. 188-189). In this segment of their peer group discussion, the students negotiated the age of the grandmother at the time of the restaurant incident.

86 Michael: she was that old and she beat the guy up because he said it was only three months after they got married (reference to pg. 186)

87 Marlen: oh yeah. She wasn't that old

88 Enrique: she was eighty years old

89 Michael: but she must have been pretty young
90  Student:  she wasn't

91  Michael:  it was after they got married; it was only three months after
that

92  Marlen:  no. She was eighty. Look it “when my grandma was eighty
she was still quite strong” (reading from top of page 184 in

93  Saul:  Hey, teacher?  She was eighty.

94  Enrique:  she was eighty years old and then she went to the restaurant

95  Marlen:  she was three months after she got married

96  Student  yeah

97  Marlen:  no it's just talking about when she was eighty but then it
goes back in time when she was only three months married

98  Ana:  oh

99  and no wonder when they say that the grandmother died.

100  But would the grandfather die?

101  Michael:  'cause would you get married when you're eighty years old?

102  Students:  Everyone laughing

103  Saul:  Noooooooo, it's a like

104  Xochilt:  going back in time

105  Saul:  it's going back in time when they got married

106  Student:  I know
In line 86, Michael relied on the authority of the author (“he said”) to determine the grandmother’s age. Marlen’s response suggested that it made sense that the grandmother was younger when she married. In line 89, Michael shifted from the text to his own sense of how old people are when they get married. Enrique voiced the text on page 184, “she was eighty years old” with an authoritative tone. After Saul listened to the conflicting opinions, he sided with Enrique and appealed to the researcher behind the camera to settle the dispute. When I didn’t respond, Enrique restated his case across the text to the incident in question (“she was 80 years old when she went to the restaurant”). Marlen, in lines 95 and 97, offered an explanation that allowed the author to maintain authority. Ana responded and introduced a new topic which was not taken up (“would the grandfather die?”). Michael, in line 101, formulated a question to the group (“would you get married when you’re 80 years old?”) that voiced his own understanding and aligned with Marlen’s explanation. The students’ laughter which followed indicated that they recognized his logic and the remaining responses built consensus.

*Influences of Social Context*

Four of the students in this group, (Ana, Xochilt, Enrique and Saul) had gone to Jackson Elementary together since kindergarten. Michael and Marlen were both in their first year there. While Ana and Xochilt set the norms for this group, (deciding who would start and that participants would take turns) the social dynamics of this group during this discussion, did not become an “us” and “them” dichotomy. Instead, Michael and Marlen introduced their ideas with a question, humor (they all laughed together) and
an explanation that left the authority of the grandmother’s age with the author; ways that did not contest the others’ historical social relationships.

**Facilitating**

Their first peer group conversation about *The Land I Lost* lasted 20 minutes. Michael evolved as the facilitator of the group, asking questions and restating students’ responses much like Mr. Moody did in whole class discussions. The other students in the group did not contest Michael’s shift in role. Students maintained the norm of taking turns, and negotiated a number of topics (grandmother’s karate skills, constructing a stable monkey bridge, the death of the grandmother, the author as a young boy in the jungle, why the story is included in the heritage unit, going home, prospect of living in Viet Nam, and students’ stories of their parents). Topic shifts were introduced when a student posed a question. When the topic wasn’t taken up right away, the student who posed the question waited and re-introduced the topic or else the topic was abandoned.

When Marlen asked, “Why did the grandmother say the grandfather taught her karate?” Michael and Ana generated an imagined scenario, with dialogue, about how the people would react to her husband after word of the restaurant incident spread throughout the village. Michael suggested, “if somebody bumped into him, they’d be like all apologetic” and Ana responded by suggesting, “and like ‘it was my fault – don’t worry!’”. Enrique and Saul gave enthusiastic “yeahs!” in recognition of Michael and Ana’s “scene,” and everyone was laughing. These responses suggest that the students entered the story together.
In Mr. Moody’s class story-reading event of *The Land I Lost* (OC-1), he chuckled while reading aloud about the incident at the restaurant. He asked the class two questions (“Do you think her husband really taught her karate?” and “Why did she say that?”), nominated two students to respond, and commented, “That was nice of the grandmother to say that, wasn’t it?” before reading aloud the next paragraph. None of the peer group participants gave verbal responses during class. In the peer group, however, they all agreed that the restaurant incident was their favorite part of the story and generated a verbal skit to extend the scene.

*Peer-Group Discussion of Open Court Selections: Mrs. Nelson’s Focus Students, Genesys, Katrina, Nathaly, Cristian and Ubaldo (Abraham is absent)*

*Getting Started*

As was the case in Mr. Moody’s class, this was the first peer-group discussion, composed of these students had participated in. Their context for this meeting was also the trial peer group meeting which was conducted before the winter break. Students’ experiences of talking about stories in Mrs. Nelson’s class were limited to whole class discussions.

No procedural instructions for peer group conversations were given to the students by Mrs. Nelson or me. After reading aloud *The Land I Lost* (OC-1) to the class, Mrs. Nelson directed me to call the focus students. I motioned for them to bring their anthologies, and led the students to a small area on the floor outside the rows of student desks. Once the students situated themselves on the floor, each with their own anthology, I adjusted the placement of the tripod and took my place behind the camera.
The three girls sat facing Ubaldo: Genesys, Katrina, and Nathaly; Nathaly was on the end, sitting next to Cristian who was sitting to the right of Ubaldo. They all looked at the camera, smiled and began talking in whisper voices, although their voice volume increased as they went along:

001 Ubaldo: [pointing to Katrina] Who’s gonna start?
002 Katrina: You!
003 Katrina: uhhh, *The Land I Lost*. I really liked the grandma. The character that
004 Ubaldo: Why?
005 Katrina: She was strong; also it sounded like she was fun to play with
006 Ubaldo: yeah but how did she know towards the end of the story that she was already going to die?
007 Nathaly: noooo
008 Ubaldo: At the end of the story how did she know that she was going to die?
009 Katrina: I think she ummmm she was really sick and probably she said xxxx and then she died.
010 Genesys: probably she missed her husband
011 Ubaldo: cause in the middle she tells that she touches the tomb of her husband
012 Genesys: and she said
013 Ubaldo: and she said she’s gonna join him soon
014 Genesys: yeah
015 Ubaldo: that gives you a clue
016 Katrina: XXXX
017 Ubaldo: yeah ‘cause right here it says
018 Nathaly: [reading aloud] she touched her husband’s
019 Ubaldo and Nathaly: [reading out loud together]: tombstone and said
020 Ubaldo: [continues reading aloud] ‘Dear, I will join you soon.” So that gives you a clue that he’s already dead and that she’s [reading aloud] ‘gonna join him soon’ so that gives you a clue right there that she’s gonna die
021 Genesys, Katrina and Nathaly: well yeah
022 Ubaldo: but not like in that kind of way. Like she’s gonna dress up all fancy and then die in her bedroom.

023 Students: [multiple, overlapping voices]

(N,599, The Land I Lost, OC-1, Peer group, 1-5-07)

Students got to work quickly on constructing a shared understanding of the text, one that would take into account all the information revealed in the story.

_Influence of Social Context_

All the students in this group had attended Jackson Elementary together since first grade. Cristian is the only student in the group currently classified as an English Learner (EL), although Spanish is spoken in every student’s home except Ubaldo’s.

_Facilitating_

Ubaldo took up a predominant role, deciding who would begin, asked questions (lines 04 and 06) and used the text to authoritatively determine the grandmother’s knowledge of her imminent death. Cristian had his book open and looked at each speaker, but did not attempt to enter the conversation. Similar to Mr. Moody’s peer group, students used the “I liked…” genre to talk about the characters in the story. Students introduced a variety of topics during their 20-minute group meeting, including the threat of jungle animals, child labor, supplies for survival, an illustration’s color shading, building a monkey bridge, and negotiation of the meaning of the story title.

The group facilitator-role was shared by Nathaly (line 61) and Ubaldo (line 64), directing questions to Genesys so as to include her in the conversation. No one contested
Nathaly’s shift to facilitator. Shifts in roles and topics were accomplished primarily through student questions. All five students participated in the “I like” genre.

“I liked…” Genre

056 Nathaly: I was wondering, who’s your favorite character in the story?
057 Katrina: yeah
058 Ubaldo: the boy
059 Katrina: but he’s not really in the story, he’s just talking about it
060 Ubaldo: true
061 Nathaly: [leaning over to look at Genesys] So what do you think?
062 Genesys: I liked the grandma
063 Katrina: yeah I liked the grandma too
064 Ubaldo: [looking at Cristian] Who do you like Cristian?
065 Cristian: uhhh grandpa
066 Katrina: yeah because he’s shy like Cristian cause you don’t
067 [everyone laughing; Cristian is smiling and drops his head]
068 Katrina: like reading; like reading books
069 Nathaly: [looking at Katrina] Why do you like the characters?
070 Katrina: I like the grandma because
071 Ubaldo: she’s tough
072 Katrina: yeah she’s tough and she looks funny and she like talks…
073 Ubaldo: yeah
Nathaly introduces the “I liked” sequence with her question (line 56). Katrina and Ubaldo’s response took up Nathaly’s topic. Ubaldo acknowledged Katrina as group leader when he responded to her correction (line 59) without contestation. Line 61, when Nathaly invited Genesys to enter the conversation (what do you think), Ubaldo re-voiced their response in line 64 (who do you like), when he invited Cristian to give a response. Lines 66-68 are evidence of the shared history Katrina and the other students have with Cristian. Nathaly redirected the conversation, rescuing Cristian from being the topic of conversation. Ubaldo finished Katrina’s sentence for her (possibly based on his knowledge of her identity as a boxer). Genesys entered the conversation (line 74) without an invitation, and Ubaldo and Nathaly acknowledged her response.

During the whole 20-minute peer group conversation about The Land I Lost, students referred to the whole group story-reading event, referencing Mrs. Nelson’s personal story about her father-in-law’s knowledge of his death. The students focused on the illustrations, negotiated the identification of opera characters and questioned the illustrator’s use of color, much like the browsing activity that Mrs. Nelson did before reading aloud the story. Although students did not reference Mrs. Nelson’s dramatization...
of the monkey bridge in class, they collaborated on a way to stabilize a monkey bridge so that heavier people could pass safely across the bridge.

Comparison of Mr. Moody’s and Mrs. Nelson’s first peer group discussions

The peer group conversation by six students in Mr. Moody’s class had many similarities to the peer group conversation of five students in Mrs. Nelson’s class. In both groups the students had a shared history. In Mr. Moody’s class, four of the students had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. Five of the six students in Mr. Moody’s peer group spoke Spanish at home. In Mrs. Nelson’s class, all five had attended Jackson Elementary since first grade and four out of the five participants spoke Spanish at home. Mrs. Nelson’s peer group had one student classified as an EL; Mr. Moody’s English Learner (EL) students had all been reclassified as English proficient.

Neither classroom teacher set procedural guidelines for the peer groups. Both peer groups remained in their respective classrooms, while the teacher taught a whole-class lesson to their classmates. Both groups sat on the floor, had access to one copy of the student anthology and discussed the same story. In both peer groups, one student initiated the conversation by determining who would speak first and in both groups, (Xochilt in Mr. Moody’s class, and Ubaldo in Mrs. Nelson’s class), and students monitored equitable turn-taking. Students in both groups chose to read aloud from the story text and attributed interpretive authority to the text. In both peer groups, students used the “I liked…” genre to respond to the stories. Common topics to both groups were the grandmother (her karate skills and her death), jungle animals and the monkey bridge. Unique to Mr. Moody’s peer group was the generation of an imagined scenario, with
dialogue, which went beyond the story, negotiation of the meaning of the story title, The Land that I Lost with a parallel to crossing the border from Mexico to the United States, and students’ individual narratives about their parents. Unique to Mrs. Nelson’s peer group was the critique of the illustrator’s color shading and reference to their whole class discussion about the teacher’s personal story of the loss of her father-in-law.

*Peer-Group Discussion of Latino picture books: Mr. Moody’s Focus Students*

Michael, Enrique, Ana, Xochilt and Saul (Marlen is absent)

(M, *My Diary From Here to There*, LPB-1, Peer Group, 1-08-07)

*Getting Started*

Five students met on the floor, adjacent to Mr. Moody’s desk. Mr. Moody was teaching a Standards Plus lesson on synonyms and antonyms to the rest of the class. His voice was loud but it did not appear to hinder the student’s ability to hear one another.

Mr. Moody’s copy of the picture book was not available, so the five students shared one copy of *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1).

The students sat in a semi-circle, cross-legged, except for Ana who was sitting up on her knees. The picture book lay centered on the floor between them, open to the first spread. Ana was distracted by the book and did not officiate allocating turns as she had previously done when their group discussed The Land That I Lost (OC-1). The following transcript records how students began their conversation about the story and includes analysis of student responses. This long transcript reveals how students sorted out their understandings of the story in order to reach consensus as a group; it also reveals some of
the interpersonal dynamics of the group, particularly the ways in which students took authority for themselves or denied authority to members:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>line</th>
<th>Speaker and turn</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Ana: I wonder why they have it in Spanish and English</td>
<td>Looking down at text, thinking out loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Saul: because she is from Mexico and this is a Spanish and English book so Spanish kids that only speak Spanish</td>
<td>[Looking at Ana] Recognizes Ana’s inquiry, positioning himself by naming Spanish kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Enrique: can read it</td>
<td>Finishes Saul’s turn and positions himself with Saul as a Spanish kid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Saul: can read it</td>
<td>Repeats Enrique’s turn, recognizing Enrique and agrees on the purpose of the bilingual text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Michael: Kids who only speak Spanish can read it and kids who speak English could read it</td>
<td>[sitting cross-legged, looking down] Combines 3 previous responses into a compound sentence which now includes his own position as an English-only speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Ana: learn how to read it in English</td>
<td>[looking down at book] Extends Michael’s response, suggesting that this book could be used to teach English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Saul: yeah</td>
<td>Acknowledges Ana’s response [looking toward book]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Enrique: [looking closely at the illustration] What do you think she was writing?</td>
<td>Thinking out loud. Unclear if he is asking about the language written on the diary in the illustration or the message of her diary entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Saul: She’s writing in a diary</td>
<td>Describes the illustration rather than responding to Enrique’s question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Michael: think about the book, think about her day</td>
<td>Directs group to reconsider Enrique’s question (line 08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Saul: [reading aloud] “Dear Diary, I know I should”</td>
<td>Ignores Michael’s direction. Relies on text to give message in the diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>[Four students laugh out loud; Michael smiles]</td>
<td>Recognizes Saul’s response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Michael: think about what happened that day</td>
<td>2nd attempt to guide the group’s responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ana: [pointing to illustration] She’s writing in cursive</td>
<td>Ignored Michael’s direction. Examining the illustration in response to Enrique’s question (line 08).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Saul: [turning book to look at illustration] in cursive and in Spanish</td>
<td>Recognizes Ana’s response and extends description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ana: “Do you think there’s more girls than boys?” I think we should</td>
<td>Begins to give direction to the group (use of plural pronoun “we”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Xochilt: What is this story about?</td>
<td>[Looks at book] Attempts to shift topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18 Student Discussion of My Diary From Here to There
Table 4.18 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Michael: Any of your family members like anyone in the story?</th>
<th>[no eye contact with anyone] Ignores Xochilt’s question. Attempts to initiate a new topic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 8</td>
<td>Saul: welllllll</td>
<td>Ambiguous response to Michael and possibly to Xochilt as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 9</td>
<td>Michael: or are you like any</td>
<td>[looking down] Personalizes his question (line 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 0</td>
<td>Xochilt: like the characters in the story</td>
<td>Finishes Michael’s question, joining him in effort to guide discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>Saul: so they’re like these</td>
<td>[looking at illustration of brothers] Main character’s brothers are possible antecedent to pronoun “they’re”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>Xochilt: but not so close</td>
<td>Possibly extending Saul’s comment about the illustration and in reference to her own siblings (two older teenage sisters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>Michael: Do you think her brothers are older or younger than she is?</td>
<td>[looking at floor] Clarifies relationship that is topic of his question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 4</td>
<td>Ana: I think some are older than her and some are younger</td>
<td>Acknowledges Michael’s question. Gives interpretation of brothers’ ages based on illustration [looking at book]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 5</td>
<td>Saul: I think this one’s older than her</td>
<td>Recognizes Ana’s statement. Uses illustration as evidence for his opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 6</td>
<td>Xochilt: I think she is 12 years old</td>
<td>Recognizes Saul’s response by assigning a specific number to main character’s age-relationship to her brothers [looking at book]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 7</td>
<td>Ana: yeah she looks like 12</td>
<td>Recognizes Xochilt’s response and aligns with Xochilt’s opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 8</td>
<td>Saul: and that other one looks smaller</td>
<td>[looking at illustration] uses illustration as authority for his opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 9</td>
<td>Ana: and that’s a really big family</td>
<td>[looking at illustration] evaluates number of children to be “big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 0</td>
<td>Saul: yeah cause in Mexico they like have biiig family there</td>
<td>Recognizes Ana’s response and associates it with location (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>Xochilt: so what do you think this story’s about</td>
<td>“So” acknowledges Saul and Ana’s previous responses. Restates her previous question (line 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>Saul: about</td>
<td>Repeats Xochilt’s last word to maintain place in conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>Enrique: moving to the United States</td>
<td>Responds to Xochilt’s question (line 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 4</td>
<td>Saul: yep</td>
<td>Acknowledges Enrique’s response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 5</td>
<td>Ana: and not knowing any English</td>
<td>Extends Enrique’s response (line 34) by identifying language difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All five students participated in this first segment of their peer group discussion about *My Diary From Here to There*. This group sustained conversation about this story for 30 minutes. Xochilt (not Ana) controlled the picture book, turned the pages as the conversation evolved, called on students who raised their hand to speak (transferred behavior norm from whole class setting) and she attempted to manage students’ behavior, (“Don’t argue!”, line 111). The illustrations guided the conversation, evoking questions and comments from the students, page by page.

**Influence of Social Context**

Throughout their browsing activity, students touched the book, critiqued the illustrations, and questioned the illustrator about the minutest detail (i.e. is that a clip-on necklace on her or a real butterfly?). Michael, however, gradually distanced himself from the book; physically he withdrew his body into himself, wrapping his arms around his drawn-up legs. He publically monitored the length of the picture book, (stating on line 205): “three more pages left” Michael touched the picture book only twice in 30 minutes; once pointing to the sky on page 12 he asked, “Have you seen a pink sky?” and on page 21 he pointed to the central figure and asked “Who do you think that is?” In contrast to Michael, the other four students manipulated the book, pointed to pictures and flipped the pages with eager access as they examined the illustrations.

The book, which lay open on the floor, gradually became situated closer to Xochilt, (almost upside down from Michael’s vantage point). Enrique scooted into the semi-circle, leaned over in front of Ana and reached across to touch the book when he spoke about a particular illustration. Saul, to Xochilt’s left, sitting opposite Michael,
looked across the center space to Enrique, Ana and Xochilt. Much like Michael’s view, the picture book was visible, but upside down to Saul. Regardless of the topic of talk among the four students, Michael persistently interjected questions while the other students examined the illustrations.

*Getting the Floor*

Most of the questions generated by Michael were unrelated to the other students’ comments and questions. Michael was persistent, though not aggressive, as he competed with the picture book to direct the group; eventually some of his questions were taken up by the group and some of his comments were acknowledged. Sometimes, rather than ignoring Michael completely, students responded to his question, even though they didn’t look up from the book until later. For example:

266 Ana: what do you think is up there? *[pointing to page 30]*

267 Enrique: a tree *[leaning across, pointing to the page]*

268 Ana: no, but *[looking down at book] it has like these little [tracing with her finger on the page]*

269 Saul: pears

270 Michael: How do you think their life was after they moved to California? *[looking down at floor]*

271 Saul: *[Enrique, Ana, and Xochilt have their heads down, looking at the book. Saul is looking at the three of them] hmm. Good.*

Saul: They probably had just mom and dad and they probably have good jobs [looking over at open book; Michael looks at Saul as he responds]

Ana: because right here it shows that they got a house [head down, looking at book]

Enrique: happy, I think [looking at book]

Xochilt: how do you think it was traveling from this other place? [flipping pages back; attempts new topic; looking at book]

Ana: hard [looks up from book to Xochilt]

Enrique: it would have been long [looks at Xochilt; gains eye contact]

Saul: [looking down] long because from the border from Mexico all the way to Los Angeles . . that is a loooooooooooong way [stretches out left arm]

Ana sat between Enrique (on her right) and Xochilt (on her left), looked at the illustration and pointed out the figures she was trying to identify. “You” in line 266 (what do you think is up there?) addressed Enrique and Xochilt, as they were viewing the page with Ana. Enrique responded and Saul, from his vantage point opposite the book, saw the figure in question and responded. Michael (line 270) from across the group, attempted to propose a new topic (life in California). Saul (line 271) acknowledged that he heard Michael but does not break his gaze from the three who are looking at the book.
Ana, like Saul, acknowledges Michael’s question, but talked down onto the page of the picture book with her one word response (“yeah”).

In recognition of Ana’s response, Saul offered a rationale for why he agreed. His longer answer evoked eye contact from Michael. Ana followed Saul’s pattern, and offered her explanation based on textual authority (“because right here it shows they got a house”). Ana lived in a trailer and looked forward to the house her dad planned to build for their family. Her personal context may have led her to believe that having a house in California was evidence of a better life. Enrique’s response (line 275) indicated his acknowledgement of Ana’s response and indicated that he concurred that life was happy in California. In line 276, Xochilt used the same construction (how do you think it was) as Michael had used in line 271 (How do you think their life was…) to formulate her question.

_In and Out_

Michael asked 14 questions in 30 minutes of group conversation and 7 of his questions were taken up by the other students in the group; three of his questions he answered himself. While Michael generated questions from outside the book, the other participants continued asking questions about the details in the illustrations. In most cases, their questions were directed toward the illustrator (“I wonder, why do they have a cat in a box?”) rather than toward the others viewing the illustrations with them; they didn’t expect answers to their questions about the illustrations, and as a result, they did not assume they were having a conversation that included Michael, since he was not looking at the picture book with them.
At one point, after being ignored, Michael started to ask another question. Four students were huddled around the open book and from his place in the circle across from them, Michael began, “Where do you think that …” None of the students looked up or acknowledged him and Ana started to speak. He stopped midway and said quietly, “oh never mind.” Given the dissonance between Michael and the picture book and the dissonance between Michael and the rest of the group, the tension became more visible when Saul generated a question that was not anchored in an illustration. This transcript is lengthy because of the need to reveal these significant group dynamics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker and turn</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>297</td>
<td>Saul do you guys help your family or brothers or what do you do?</td>
<td>Initiates new topic directed to the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298</td>
<td>Michael: I have three brothers and I’m the youngest [looks at Ana and Xochilt]</td>
<td>Recognizes Saul’s question and appeals to girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>Saul: [looking at the three students who were looking at the picture book] If you were her (main character in the story) and you had all these brothers and it was only you and your mom, what would you guys do?</td>
<td>Ignores Michael’s response. Rephrases his question (line 297), linking to main character in the story and perhaps as well to his own single-parent home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Ana: [looks up from book and looks at Saul] they’re your brothers. You have to learn to love them</td>
<td>Acknowledges Saul’s question and states her opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>Xochilt: [looks up at Ana] yeah, but…</td>
<td>Recognizes Ana’s response and starts to extend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>Saul: well, what if they got …</td>
<td>Recognizes Ana’s and Xochilt’s response and begins to suggest a condition to his proposal on 299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>303</td>
<td>Ana: [looking at Saul] you’ll go crazy</td>
<td>Interrupts Saul, adding to her original response (line 300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>Saul: what if they got into your guys’ stuff?</td>
<td>Finishes his suggestion on line 302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>Enrique: like your diary</td>
<td>Acknowledges Saul’s question and answers with object in text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td>Ana: I’d kill ‘em</td>
<td>Recognizes Enrique’s response and predicted her emotional response to that situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>[Saul, Ana, Enrique and Xochilt laugh out loud]</td>
<td>Laughing together suggests they shared the humor of Ana’s expression (306)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>Xochilt: [looking down at book] I would get mad</td>
<td>Recognizes Ana’s response and positions herself with the foursome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>309</td>
<td>Enrique [pointing to the illustration on p. 27] it’s like nobody’s xxxx</td>
<td>The illustration shows the bus with an empty driver’s seat. Enrique shifts the topic back to the illustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310</td>
<td>Xochilt [to Saul] just say if you had to live in another house with</td>
<td>Ignores Enrique’s response. Responds to Saul’s proposed situation (304)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>Michael: [looking down] were her brothers nice to her?</td>
<td>Appeals to the group by inferring perhaps that people treat others the way they are treated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>Ana: [looking at book] it doesn’t say, but…</td>
<td>Recognizes Michael’s question and lack of literal evidence in text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.19 Peer Group Discussion of *My Diary From Here to There*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:14</td>
<td>Saul:</td>
<td>“do you guys think that her brothers were nice to her?”</td>
<td>Recognizes Michael’s question (line 311) and restates it to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15</td>
<td>[the girls whisper to one another]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visible resistance to responding to Michael’s question, even when Saul revoiced it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:16</td>
<td>Saul:</td>
<td>“huh?”</td>
<td>Appeals to girls for inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:17</td>
<td>[more whispering between the girls]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visible resistance. Refuses to give the boys access to their talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:18</td>
<td>Michael:</td>
<td>“do you think she was nice to her brothers?”</td>
<td>Initiates suggestion that the girl in the story may have provoked her brothers’ behaviors. Possibly uses question to suggest that the girls in the group are not being nice to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:19</td>
<td>Xochilt:</td>
<td>“oh…yeah”</td>
<td>Unclear who her response is directed to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Ana:</td>
<td>[looking at picture book] “oh right here you guys said she wasn’t that excited and now right here in her diary it’s stating: “I am soo excited I can hardly write”</td>
<td>Ignored Michael’s question (318) and redirected group to new evidence in text regarding a previous response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This segment of conversation is significant not only as a part of this peer group conversation, but it is significant in the effect it had on all subsequent peer group conversations in Mr. Moody’s class. Analysis relied on observation of Michael’s physical positioning (doesn’t engage with the physical book; sits with his arms wrapped around his legs, knees tucked next to his body) for evidence of his position in relationship to the actions and reactions of members of the group to one another.
This drawn-back position was different than his position in the first peer group conversation about the Open Court story, The Land That I Lost (OC-1) where students gave him eye contact and acknowledged his questions in recognition of his function as the facilitator of the group.

Figure 4.05: My Diary From Here to There Peer Group Discussion

Figure 4.05 Michael as facilitator of the group
Students in Mr. Moody’s peer group discussion of *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1) consistently ignored Michael’s responses and the girls’ whispering created another situation (in addition to the picture book-looking) that excluded Michael from their conversation. Observation of this conversation did not indicate where Enrique and Saul positioned themselves in relationship to Michael or to the group.

Michael and Marlen did not share the local school history of the other members of the group. Enrique, Ana, Xochilt and Saul had been attending Jackson since first grade. Michael and Marlen were new to Jackson Elementary this school year. Michael was the oldest student in the group; (he was two months older than Saul, three months older than the Xochilt and Marlen and eight months older than Enrique and Ana) and he was the smallest boy in the class. Also, Michael was the only student in the group whose family did not speak Spanish at home. Yet, his ethnic heritage was Mexican and his last name was identifiable as a common Latino name.

In January, 2007, Mrs. Nelson administered Accelerated Reader (AR) tests for each of the focus students, including the students from Mr. Moody’s class. She reported that Michael’s score for his instructional reading level was 6.9, which was higher than any other focus student in either classroom.

A close investigation of the remaining conversational segments in this peer group meeting gave evidence of the positioning of the other group members (except for Marlen, who was absent). Following the conversation transcribed above, the students continued to talk about the story. Enrique, (sitting to Michael’s left, with Ana on his right) was caught in the middle between Michael and the rest of the group. He was a soft-spoken,
shy, polite boy. Saul, sitting opposite Michael, with Xochilt on his right, had a stocky build and a ready grin. He demonstrated an extroverted personality that supported his sense of humor across all classroom events. Saul looked for opportunities to gain an audience and have a good laugh.

After the girls had finished examining each illustration, Xochilt proposed examination of the map of Mexico and the southwestern United States on the back of the book cover. It was a popular topic-activity, with enthusiastic responses from everyone except Michael. When Ana commented that she didn’t realize how close Calexico was to California, Michael, with a raised voice, responded, “it’s IN California,” his only verbal response during the three-minute map segment.

The map conversation ended when Ana made a new proposal, one that impacted the remaining conversation as well as all subsequent peer group meetings in Mr. Moody’s classroom. When Ana asked, “Can anyone read the story in Spanish from right here?” (first sentence of Spanish text on page 3), Xochilt responded, “I think I could, Enrique answered, “yeah” and leaned closer as Saul flipped the pages back to the first spread where the Spanish text appeared beneath the English text. Ana encouraged with “just try it” and Saul suggested, “try like a paragraph”. Michael immediately turned to look at me behind the camera, turned back and remained silent, watching them much the way he had watched them view the picture book illustrations.

Ana allocated turns to read in Spanish. With the book directly in front of Ana and Xochilt, Xochilt began reading aloud in Spanish, word by word, and soon Ana joined in and they read aloud together to the end of the first sentence. When Xochilt read aloud the
first word in the second sentence, Saul intervened, “...one sentence” (which was the method Mr. Moody used when students read aloud in class). “I’m sorry,” Xochilt responded, and Ana slid the book in front of Saul. At first, Saul resisted but Ana responded, “try. We stopped at esta”. As Saul began reading the text aloud, Ana supported him, (just as she had done when Xochilt read) corrected his pronunciation and prompted “acostamos” when Saul hesitated. When Saul finished reading aloud, Xochilt clapped and everyone, including Saul, smiled. Saul slid the book across to Enrique, skipping Michael and said, “Enrique’s turn.”

After Enrique had begun to read aloud the Spanish, Saul interrupted Enrique:

441 Enrique: Estaban diciendo que tend-

442 Saul: [interrupted Enrique; extended left arm toward Michael, pointing at him] Oh! He had no question. He has to do questions!

443 Enrique: tendriamos que dejar nuestra casita

Saul attempted to redirect the group to Michael. It is unclear if Saul meant that Michael should take his turn reading Spanish. Regardless of his meaning of “he has to do questions!” Saul insisted that Michael participate in the group. Enrique’s response (not only ignoring Michael but ignoring him by doing something Michael didn’t know how to do) generally defined their conversational relationship throughout the present conversation as well as all subsequent peer group conversations. Before, Enrique had wavered between being polite to Michael and viewing the picture book with the others, but by ignoring Saul’s proposal to force Michael’s inclusion, Enrique positioned himself
with the other readers of Spanish. When Enrique finished his turn of reading Spanish, Saul repeated to Michael, “you have to do questions! You have to be doing questions!”.

After Enrique finished his turn reading Spanish, Saul turned the page and Michael found himself the focus of attention once again:

466 Xochilt: Michael you say some
467 Michael: nahhh
468 Students: [everyone talking at once]
469 Michael: NO I hate Spanish. I’m not good at it
470 Xochilt: pleeeeeease
471 Ana: [Saul points to picture of diary on page 7] diario
472 Xochilt: you can do it

As Saul flips to different pages, Enrique, Ana and Xochilt point to objects and name them in Spanish. The book functioned like a picture dictionary. Xochilt continued to encourage Michael to try to pronounce a Spanish word but his response remained, “I don’t know Spanish” and he put both hands over his face. His resistance did not dissuade the others. Saul made attempts to name objects and Ana corrected him but it was all in the context of a light-hearted game. Xochilt, Enrique, Ana and Xochilt and Saul were laughing in between each student’s response. For example, the illustration on page 5 showed a breakfast meal with chocolate milk and pancakes. Initially Saul referred to the picture, saying “chic-olate”. Enrique and the girls reeled backwards, laughing. After Ana said, “it’s leche de chocolate” (chocolate milk), Saul offered “cucalate”. Ana
responded, “first its chic-olate and now it’s cu-calate!” Again, all four students laughed out loud; Michael brought his hand up to his mouth, covering his smile.


The “teach-Michael-Spanish” game was repeated in every peer group discussion of the remaining Latino picture books. Once Michael demonstrated his willingness to participate as a student of Spanish (instead of a teacher of reading) the students welcomed him into their activity. When Ana played with Michael’s name, it may have been an attempt to Spanish-ize his identity. During my initial interview with Ana, she introduced herself and the names of her family members and added, “we all have Spanish names”. Ana assigned ethnic heritage and family belonging to their names. By exploring a
Spanish pronunciation of Michael’s name, Ana attempted to create a way for Michael to
“join the family” of the peer group.

Twice, Ana shifted from ignoring Michael (as she had done earlier) to responding to him. After the students had examined all the illustrations in the book, Ana decided to read aloud the two sentences about the author which were located on the book jacket. Ana had difficulty decoding “multicultural” (which she read as “miniature”) and “Ventura” (the name of the city where the author lived). Michael leaned in and pronounced the words for Ana. While she didn’t ask for his help, nor thanked him for his assistance, she acknowledged his responses by repeating “Ventura” after he read the word. None of the other students affirmed Michael’s reading support to Ana.

On line 517 (after the reading of Spanish had subsided), Michael introduced a new topic by offering a comparative statement about *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1) in relationship to the Open Court story, *Land I Lost* (OC-1). His proposal temporarily displaced the picture book, which reinstated Michael in the group. (Comparison across texts was not practiced by Mr. Moody during whole class story-reading events in his classroom). Michael said, in reference to the family leaving Mexico to come to the United States, “it wasn’t really a war, but it was something bad…like they ran out of jobs.” The students took up his topic and shifted from the picture book to the group, giving each other eye contact as they generated comparisons between the two texts. On line 533, after each student in the group had taken turns offering similarities between the two stories, Michael proposed: “What can you contrast about some from this (picture book) and *The Land I Lost* (OC-1)?” Saul responded exactly like he did to
Mr. Moody, “excitedly saying, oh, I know! I know!” Like Mr. Moody, Michael responded, “uhhh, Saul” as if he were looking across a whole class of volunteers before nominating Saul. Ana and Xochilt responded to Michael’s proposal as well. Enrique, however, shifted back to the picture book, asking “Did he ever find his shoe?” (line 544).

Michael’s experience with the picture books was similar to Mr. Moody’s experience in the class setting. Students watched the screen instead of Mr. Moody; and peer group members looked at the picture book instead of at Michael. Reading aloud Open Court stories was a task for Mr. Moody, and the presentation of picture books was a problem for him. Michael, who sat on the front row in Mr. Moody’s class, had two levels of participation in Open Court story-reading events. After Mr. Moody read aloud *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1), he asked, “Okay. That’s the end. Did you like that one?” Michael responded from the front row, with one word, “short”. Following the “Spanish lesson” Michael continued to be included in the peer group interactions, on their terms. Subsequent peer group conversations in Mr. Moody’s class were built upon this shared experience among group members.

**Comparison of Peer Group Discussion with Whole Class Discussion**

Peer group discussions of both types of literature shared some characteristics with the whole class discussions, with some interesting differences discussed below. In addition to the fact that whole classroom discussion preceded peer group discussion and was a context to all the discussions, shared characteristics included the discussion of similar topics, the use of personal story telling related to the literature, and the occasional student taking on a teacher-like role in order to establish authority. There were some
natural dissimilarities such as the fact that peer groups provided students with more opportunities to participate and talk and the fact that leadership varied among the students. Students also discussed different text features among themselves than with the whole group. The most striking differences had to do with language and culture. While the teachers clearly privileged English, the students found ways of privileging Spanish to the point of insisting on teaching Spanish to one non-speaker. Student group discussions also reflected a different attitude towards culture.

**Topics**

The similarities of the topics discussed between the whole groups and the peer groups is illustrated by an example from Mrs. Nelson’s peer group discussion of *The Land I Lost* (OC1). The illustrations evoked several topics, which were primarily initiated by the turning of the pages and the details in each illustration. No topics were abandoned altogether; rather some topics were expanded on more than others. For example, students viewed the first spread and discussed sleeping arrangements in the character’s house.

As they discussed the second spread (pages 8 and 9), where the family in the story was packing, students in the peer group analyzed the children’s reactions to moving and extended that topic with reflections on their own personal experiences of moving from one house (or city) to another. The students reflected on choosing what to take and what to leave behind when moving. Mrs. Nelson had initiated this topic during the whole class story-reading discussion which immediately followed the read-aloud. She extended the topic of moving by generating an imagined scenario of students’ experiences. For
example, she looked at Jose and said, “Well, Jose, honey, I know you love your bedroom and everything in this bedroom, but you’re only gonna be able to keep and pack and move stuff that fits in this box. And they [his parents] show you a box that’s only so big” (measures in the air with both hands). She then proceeded to address the necessary choices and the feelings associated with those choices.

Nathaly was the only student in this peer group that participated in Mrs. Nelson’s whole-class conversation about moving. The table below compares Nathaly’s response in the peer group conversation about the topic of moving in *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1) with Nathaly’s response during the whole-class discussion about moving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer group discussion of <em>My Diary From Here to There</em> (LPB-1)</th>
<th>Mrs. Nelson’s whole-class discussion of <em>My Diary From Here to There</em> (LPB-1) following the read-aloud</th>
<th>Nathaly: They had to take all the things that were important and the things that weren’t that important they had to sell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathaly: It’s just all sad that they might take all their special things with them, but what about all the other things that are important, like food, clothes and all</td>
<td>Mrs. Nelson: What was the plan they had to do?</td>
<td>Nathaly: They had to take all the things that were important and the things that weren’t that important they had to sell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubaldo: and all those things</td>
<td>Mrs. Nelson: so things that you’ve had for a really really long time, would that be the MOST important stuff and you’d want to hang onto it or would you want to be willing to give up and sell those things?</td>
<td>Nathaly: Maybe like special stuff that remembers a friend gave you and maybe some family member or friends died so that makes it really really special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristian: they’re gonna buy over there.</td>
<td>Mrs. Nelson [in response to Nathaly] and she’s right on target. What word are we looking for? Special items give us what?</td>
<td>Gabriel: memories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Mrs. Nelson: Excellent! |

Table 4.20 Comparison of Peer Group with Whole Class Discussion
In the whole group discussion, Nathaly’s response is anchored in the situation of the story (“they”) and she describes the attributes of valuable items. In the peer group conversation, Nathaly also uses “they” in reference to the situation of the characters in the story. Her response emphasized the tension between memories and survival. In response to Nathaly, Cristian offered that supplies for survival are replaceable.

In the whole class discussion, consideration of the choices involved in moving was identified by the teacher, Mrs. Nelson, as a “targeted” answer and followed by a fill-in-the-blank question. The story and illustrations represented the topic of moving, and Mrs. Nelson used the topic as an oral comprehension quiz with a right answer (on her target) and a vocabulary exercise for which “memories” was the correct response.

**Personal story telling related to literature**

A common way teachers help students understand literature is to have them connect what they read to their own lives. This happened in Mr. Moody’s classroom and was elevated to an art form in Mrs. Nelson’s class via her performances. Peer groups adopted this strategy numerous times, as illustrated by the following example from Mr. Moody’s peer group discussion of *In Two Worlds* (OC-2).

One illustration showed a family photo with seven children. Peer group students talked about their own large families. Marlen offered that her grandma had seventeen kids and Enrique reported that his grandmother had fifteen children. They extended the topic, sharing stories about their grandparents. Michael directed students to specific page numbers and asked questions related to the photos. For example, he said, “On page 198,
where do you think that ice cave goes?” Although Saul suggested it led to a maze under the snow, Michael was the only student that had “snow” stories to tell.

Enrique, in the context of talking about survival skills, asked, “is it possible to burn ice?” and a variety of responses addressed the solid, liquid and vapor forms of water, as well as ways to stay cool in the heat. In the whole-class discussion, Mr. Moody had spent time discussing how the Yup’ik language was taught to children at school. The peer group discussion about school diverged into Michael’s description of the parochial school he had attended before coming to Jackson Elementary.

Students initiated the topic of learning from their parents and took turns reporting on their parents’ advice about attending school, which included comparisons of their parents’ level of education. Marlen described a visit to her dad in prison where he taught her to carve and paint on wood, and made plans to bring a painting to school to show the group.

*Imitation of teachers*

While leadership in both groups varied, there were times when students used language they had heard the teachers use. One way was via sentence construction, as will be seen in Mrs. Nelson’s peer group’s discussion of *The Land I Lost*. A second way was as a means of guiding the group, such as getting it started, calling students to order, and, in one case where the whole class assignment was to answer questions from the Open Court book about a story, students imitated Mr. Moody’s way of handling these questions.
Sentence construction

Just as Mrs. Nelson had initiated the topic of language difference in the class story-reading event, Ubaldo introduced the topic of language difference to the peer group:

226 Ubaldo: Oh. They were forbidden to speak Yup’ik
227 Cristian: Yup’ik in school
228 Ubaldo: [reading aloud p. 199] “…in the belief that this would help them to learn English
229 English and that would
230 and that learning English was very important.”
231 Cristian: English was very important but their language was Yup’ik
232 [overlapping voices]
233 Ubaldo: ‘cause they were teaching them how to read
234 When I used to be in Mexico
235 when we were in school it would be easy for me
236 ‘cause I would know a lot of Spanish
237 but since my family moved over here it’s harder
238 ‘cause I need to learn a lot of English.
239 Katrina: and in Mexico you need to learn English, right?
240 And then like here, when we speak Spanish
241 no, when we speak.
242 . no…”

295
Genesys: [laughing out loud]

Katrina: no I said when we go over there you feel like speaking

..when you go over there you feel like Spanish, right?

Ubaldo: yeah

Katrina: ’cause they’re gonna speak Spanish their whole life

and the teachers know how to speak Spanish

Ubaldo: and it was hard

Katrina: and they know how to speak Spanish over there for over

here

and the Spanish people come over here then they’re gonna

need to learn English

Nathaly: since my brothers

they used to live in Arizona

Ubaldo: hm mm

Nathaly: my mom wanted them to learn Spanish first so they went to

Sp-

Ubaldo: Spanish school?

Nathaly: Yeah Spanish school.

Ubaldo: hm mm

Nathaly: and my mom wanted them to learn English too, so she put

them in the English school

and they had trouble right there

296
They couldn’t even sing their alphabets because they only knew it in Spanish.

Katrina: [saying alphabet in Spanish] a be ce de

Nathaly: I don’t even know it in Spanish.

[Genesys, Cristian, Abraham, and Ubaldo join Katrina and Nathaly saying the alphabet in Spanish together]

Katrina: no. a be …

Genesys: ene eme

Students: everyone laughing out loud

Nathaly: I only know up to

Katrina: XXXX

Abraham: erre

Students: everyone laughing together

Katrina: I don’t know “f”

Genesys: watch! A be ce

Cristian: a be ce

Genesys: ah-che – no!

Ubaldo: it’s hard, isn’t it?

Students: overlapping voices

Page 196 had no picture support for the sentence Ubaldo read aloud to the group (one small picture of Alice, the mother, in a sled is the only photo shown on that page). When Mrs. Nelson was reading aloud page 196 to the class, she stopped reading in the
same place that Ubaldo did, to talk to the class. At that stop she said, “Everything in this world needs to be spoken in English ‘cause that’s the most important.” After Ubaldo read the sentence from the text aloud, Cristian constructed a sentence with two independent clauses using the parallel coordinating conjunction “but” (English was very important but their language was Yup’ik). In so doing he made public the tension of what is valued as very important: learning English compared to one’s heritage language. His response in the peer group discussion was consistent with his response to Mrs. Nelson during their class discussion. She generated dialogue for the Yup’ik school saying, “Everything in this world needs to be spoken in English ‘cause that’s the most important” and Cristian had contested with “huh” [increased volume].

*Getting the group started*

Like Mr. Moody’s peer group, Mrs. Nelson’s students had two copies (students took the initiative to borrow Mrs. Nelson’s copy) of the picture book to share among themselves during their discussion of *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2). Retaining their seating arrangement from the former discussion, students’ began by designating one copy of the book for boys and one for girls and maintained that distribution throughout the discussion. The boys’ copy of the book remained on the floor providing equal access for Ubaldo and Cristian; Katrina, seated between Nathaly and Genesys, held the girls’ copy of the book. Students did not monitor whole-group page turning. As a result, sometimes two conversations (one among the girls and one among the boys) occurred simultaneously although they were not exclusive. Side conversations gave way to students’ questions or comments that were addressed across the group.
Katrina announced page numbers, with an elevated voice, similar to the way Mrs. Nelson did when guiding their browsing activity.

Establishing authority in the group

Ana used teacher authority to keep students on task and also to continue the “game” of teaching Michael Spanish. On the third spread of *I Speak English for My Mom*, Enrique noticed the time on the clock in the illustration even as students had previously scoured the picture book illustrations for details. When students discovered a clock on the 11th spread (a clock appears on the 3rd, 11th and 13th spread) they flipped back to monitor the passage of time throughout the story.

Saul and Ana spied the sign written in Spanish in the illustration on spread 11 (Clases Gratis de Ingles) and Ana read it aloud in Spanish and then in English. Michael responded with a question about the Spanish words (is that [gratis] free?). Although students enjoyed examining and discussing each illustration, Ana asked questions that
shifted the focus from the book to the group. For example, she asked, “Do you guys know some people; they get [so] used to talking English that they stop speaking Spanish?” Marlen and Enrique responded but Ana wanted to continue talking about her topic. Enrique and Saul compared the time on the clocks and soon their time-telling project drew Michael and Marlen’s attention away from Ana.

Ana raised her voice and said authoritatively, “OKAY! No eyes reading about the clock!” In Mr. Moody’s class, when he announced “listening positions” he expected students’ to look at him for further directions. Ana relied on a teacher role in an attempt to regain everyone’s attention.

Unlike the bilingual picture books (My Diary From Here to There (LPB-1), Calling the Doves (LPB-2) and Friends from the Other Side (LPB-3), which have a full Spanish story text as well as Spanish words in the illustrations, this picture book, I Speak English for My Mom has an English text with 5 out of 15 pages of text on which one or two words of Spanish appear. The only other Spanish in the book is found in 2 of the 14 illustrations. Since the storybook did not offer a lot of Spanish, Ana, in her teacher role, instructed “Michael has to say a word that we say in Spanish”. Her announcement of the rule positioned the members of the peer group as members of Ana’s class. Enrique offered “milk! milk!” Before Michael could answer, Claudia offered him a clue, “it starts with the “l.” Michael smiled and responded, “a la mode”.

Michael, according to his established pattern of resistance, refused. The more he refused the more attention he drew from members of the group. After prompts from
Enrique and Saul, Xochilt and Ana chanted in unison, “leche!” When Marlen joined in, Saul turned to her and said, “I didn’t even know you spoke Spanish!”

The more Michael resisted, the more Ana and Xochilt attempted to motivate him. Ana, inventing a school buddy program, said the school “needs your help with the first graders” and Xochilt warned him, “if you want to go work some where, you’re supposed to know Spanish!” When Michael persistently refused, Xochilt intervened, saying “Michael doesn’t like this game”. Ana responded, “we’ll quit the game. We’ll do it with Enrique.” Her response positioned Michael as Enrique’s competitor for Ana’s attention.

220 Ana: we’ll quit the game. We’ll do it with Enrique
221 Saul: we’ll quit the game
222 Xochilt: I have a question! Uhh, look. Listen. Read a little sentence, starting with Michael.
223 Students: [laughing uncontrollably]
224 Xochilt: okay, what is this name
225 Saul: hola…messed up. Okay?
226 Michael: nooooo
227 Students: [laughing out loud]
228 Saul: that’s okay. [now] that one not going to say it in Spanish
229 Ana: okay. just read a sentence.
230 Saul: What is a good question?
231 Ana: yeah!
Saul: why does she have the phone in her hand? (4th opening)
Yeah. Is she talking? Question again is, so she’s talking.

Xochilt: Ask a question. Tell us a question.
Ana: yeah. Ask us a question
Saul: Ding!

Michael: Why is she dressing the same in all of the pictures?
Students: [overlapping voices]
Xochilt: she can’t afford more clothes
Michael: what about right there? She has a sweater on, actually.

Ana initiated the next question, “Do you think the girl feels happy that her mom is gonna learn English?” and each one of the students in the group offered a response.

When Ana asked, Why do you guys think that the front cover of the book is colored and the pages inside are not? Marlen offered the only response, “probably he ran out of paints.” In the context of color usage in the design of the book, students began to argue about the color of the character’s hair. Ana authoritatively intervened and said, “Okay. Don’t fight about the hair”, using “okay” as a marker in the same way it was used by Mr. Moody to signal students to stop and to signal that he was about to give a direction, usually with a consequence. Michael waited until students responded to Ana’s question before he asked, “Why do you think they quit free English classes?” Students debated whether the English classes had ended, based on Michael’s proposal that when there was no charge, the English classes were no longer offered (since no one would be paid to teach the class).
Much like Mrs. Nelson, Ubaldo gave a prompt to students during his contrast-activity in their peer group discussion of Parmele. “Okay. What’s so different about these stories…not the color [pictures] and the language. What’s different? Like different, different, different, different?” Abraham was the first to respond: “black people and Mexicans”. Katrina recognized that the people in Parmele was a black family from the Jamaica and La Mariposa was about Spanish people. She noted that in the illustrations in Parmele (OC-5) had different hair styles than the people in the illustrations in La Mariposa (LPB-5). Cristian responded by extending the comparison to people from Viet Nam and their hair styles depicted in the illustrations of The Land I Lost (OC-1).

Genesys and Cristian discussed at length the difference between the black-and-white photo illustrations in Parmele (OC-5) and the colored illustrations in La Mariposa (LPB-5). Rather than generate similarities and differences between the two texts, Abraham first waited, looked and listened to the other students’ questions and comments before offering his own verbal responses.

One incident in Mr. Moody’s classroom suggests how peer groups might be affected by teacher instruction, in terms of students taking on authoritative roles like the teacher. Mr. Moody’s peer group was dismissed to meet after he had given the class a writing assignment from their Open Court anthologies. Students were assigned the task of writing out their answers to the five questions about Love as Strong as Ginger (OC-4) that appeared on page 245.
Students brought their books with them to the floor and Ana brought her spiral notebook as well. Evidently the students assumed that they could, or needed to follow Mr. Moody’s direction, regardless of whether they did it at their desk or in their small group. There was no evidence that the teacher had imposed this procedure on the group. Students may have opted to do their writing assignment in the small group as opposed to doing it for homework after school.

The peer group discussion began with all six students sitting on the floor in a circle. Each student had their student anthology laying on the floor in front of them, open to page 245. Marlen began the discussion with a statement instead of a question: “We’re gonna ask questions about the story”. One at a time, Ana, Marlen and Michael read their questions from their book and Ana recorded student responses in her notebook. Students’ participation pattern mirrored the participation pattern in the whole class discussion of the story. Saul, like Mr. Moody, repeated the question as each student took a turn responding.

After students responded to the third question, “How does Katie feel about her Chinese heritage?”, Ana generated a question of her own: “Who likes their Spanish heritage?” Saul, Marlen and Xochilt raised their hands in response. Enrique added, “I like it too, and Ana followed with, “yeah, me too”. Saul turned to Michael, who had not responded, and extended his arm, touching the sleeve of Michael’s shirt.

35 Michael: I’m like Mexican-American

36 Saul: [with arm extended toward Michael] Okay. What do you like about your Mexican…I mean American
Ana: heritage? Yeah.

Saul: Mexican and American

Michael: ummm

Enrique: the store…the food

Saul: the food

Ana: the food

Michael: [does not give eye contact to Saul; touches finger to chin] My ancestors

Saul: [turning, looking toward Ana] ahhh see, he likes his ancestors

Michael: there’s one of my ancestors you would like…he was an interpreter for Geronimo and him and Geronimo were being chased by this guy named like General

Marlen: what’s Geronimo?

Saul: I like…I like…

Marlen: isn’t that a movie?

Michael: yeah you know, Geronimo got one of these

Saul: he was one of your ancestors?

Michael: no. My grandpa or my great..I think it was my great, great

Students: [multiple overlapping voices]

Michael: grandpa was the interpreter

Saul: What they did
55    Marlen: when people come down to put their boats away she would 
       jack them

56    Ana: I don’t know my ancestors

57    Marlen: and she would…she was really rich

58    Enrique: xxxx

59    Saul: what are ancestors?

60    Marlen: and she had a bunch of money

61    Saul: what are ancestors?

62    Ana: what happened to it? huh?

63    Saul: what are ancestors?

64    Marlen: and she buried it all; she never wasted nothing; she buried 
       it all and she told my grandpa to go get it but he didn’t want 
       to. He was too scared

65    Ana: what happened to it?

66    Saul: what are ancestors?

67    Ana: and nobody knows where it is?

68    Marlen: no

69    Saul: what are ancestors?

70    Michael: people that lived before you

71    Ana: yeah

72    Marlen: it’s like your grandpa

73    Saul: like your great grandpa; your great grandma
Michael, who had self-identified as Mexican in the last peer discussion group, changed his descriptor to Mexican-American (line 35). Saul’s question to Michael shifted the conversation from the story to Michael, even as Ana’s question had done when she asked, “Who likes their Spanish heritage?” When Michael hesitated, Enrique, Saul and Ana suggested that Michael liked Mexican food, but Michael did not recognize their responses.

On line 45 Michael prefaced his response with “there’s one of my ancestors you would like” which gives evidence of Michael’s prevailing insecurity in this group with regard to difference in language. Marlen (line 46) asked for more information about Geronimo but after Michael’s response (line 53) she began her own narrative about her grandparents alongside Saul’s repeated question, “what are ancestors?” Michael (line 70) regained the floor when he gave his definition of ancestors in response to Saul’s question, “what are ancestors” which he had repeated five times during the conversation. Ana shifted the conversation back to the story when she returned to the Open Court question (In what ways do you think she [the grandmother] wanted Katie’s life to be like hers?).

This peer group discussion lasted for 18 minutes. Students continued to ask personalized parallel questions following the Open Court questions. These questions
evoked students’ stories about parents’ employment (do you want to have the same job as your dad or mom?) and food preferences (How does the author use food to tell about the Chinese culture?).

However, when students began the genre of “how I relate to the story,” Saul said matter-of-factly, “well, it’s Chinese”. His response evoked a discussion about students’ ethnic heritage. Xochilt announced, “I’m Chihuahua” which identified with her parents’ place of birth and suggested that she viewed ethnicity as a location as well as a bloodline.

* Differences between Peer Group and Whole Class Discussion *

Some differences between whole class and peer group discussions appeared to be a function of the different structures of the experience. For example, whole class discussions, by virtue of the fact there are more participants, necessarily offer each participant less of an opportunity to participate verbally. Also, because no student was nominated to be in charge of the peer groups, leadership varied across both groups over time. Finally, there were differences in the specifics of what students talked about even if topics were similar. The other type of difference has to do with resistance toward the classroom cultural and linguistic norms that privileged everything the students were not: being monolingual in English, and belonging to a middle class white culture.

* Differences: more opportunity to talk in peer groups *

Compared to the opportunities to talk afforded by a peer group discussion, students in Mrs. Nelson’s class had a limited number of opportunities to participate in their whole class discussion of *In Two Worlds* (OC-2). Following the browsing activity on Tuesday morning (1-09-07), Mrs. Nelson spent 15 minutes reading aloud and
discussing pages 195-196 of _In Two Worlds_ (OC-2) before lunch. While Mrs. Nelson read aloud, Katrina, Alfredo and Enrique slept; Katrina had her face lying on her open book.

On Wednesday, Mrs. Nelson reviewed what had been read aloud on Tuesday and spent 52 minutes reading aloud pages 197-207. The following table records the number of stops Mrs. Nelson made (“N-1” indicates the first time Mrs. Nelson stopped reading on a particular page), the number of opportunities students had to talk during discussion of the story (on page 195 students had three opportunities to talk), and the students who participated.

<table>
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<th>Mrs. Nelson: Wednesday, 1-10-07: Pages 197-207 = 52 minutes</th>
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<tr>
<td>N-1</td>
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<td>Ubaldo</td>
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<td>Abraham</td>
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| Table 4.22 Opportunities for Students to Talk in Whole Class Discussions, Nelson |

309
Mrs. Nelson read aloud pages 204-207 straight through with no stops, which meant students had no opportunities to speak after page 203. This table indicates that when Mrs. Nelson is reading aloud and then stops to talk or nominate a student to talk, she usually calls on one or two students before resuming reading.

When Mrs. Nelson viewed the video of her whole class read-aloud of *In Two Worlds* (OC-2), she monitored student engagement, (“he’s out; he’s got his book wrapped around like a blanket”) and explained her personal context on the day of that story-reading.

A lot of it is being reflective of MY calendar. This is right before I was gone for two days. Guest teacher’s gonna cover it to their best ability but there aren’t any days in that week that I can go back and re-teach it. This is it; this is my Friday.” I’ve gotta get them to hear it from me all the way through. Obviously I would chunk it in a different set up because of that.

(N, Review of *In Two Worlds*, OC-2, 3-13-07).

Mrs. Nelson’s schedule, as well as Open Court pacing guide influenced how she read aloud and discussed stories with their students. Not only did being in a large group discussion reduce students’ opportunities to take part in talking about the stories, but the timing pressure of the reading curriculum reduced these opportunities even further.

*Differences: Everyone involved, no leader*

For the purpose of contextualizing Mr. Moody’s peer group discussion, the following table indicated the number of times Mr. Moody stopped on each page of the classroom read-aloud of *In Two Worlds*, affording students the opportunity to speak, and
the number of students who interacted at each stop. Mr. Moody nominated students one after the other, repeating his question over and over as he surveyed students; students offered short answers. For example, on page 196, at his third stop on that page, Mr. Moody stopped and asked students (as per OC directives), “What is different from their life to our life?” Ten students volunteered and responded; three students gave one-two word responses (Marina: sod; Xochilt: no electricity; Lupe: no pillows).

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**Table 4.23 Opportunities for Students to Talk in Whole Class Discussions, Moody**

In contrast to the whole group discussion, during the 34 minute peer group discussion, all participants generated questions for the group and responded to each other’s questions and comments. One student did not take up the role of facilitator for
the group to determine who could speak and when; Ana and Michael, however, asked the most questions.

* Differences: Text features noticed *

Mr. Moody spent a total of 14 minutes reading aloud and discussing *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2), about the same length of time as the students’ peer group discussion. When Mr. Moody read aloud *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2) to the class, he stopped after reading page 4 and nominated Marlen, who had volunteered to speak by raising her hand. Marlen offered a two-word comment, “farmworkers. apposition” that was recognized by Mr. Moody. He responded: “Hey, that’s exactly right. Very good, Marlen. That is an apposition where it said, ‘campesinos’ and then it said, ‘the farmworkers.’ Nice observation!”  Marlen was observed gazing at the screen while Mr. Moody read. By following the print, (and hearing Mr. Moody read it aloud) she was able to isolate a grammatical feature in the story text which was valued by the teacher. In contrast, when students were viewing page 4 in the peer group, Marlen continued her narrative of personal experience, which was valued by the group (evidenced in their responses to her). In the whole class discussion, Marlen pointed out something that she knew the teacher would appreciate whereas in the peer group discussion, she focused on her own relationship to the text.

* Differences: Spanish *

The first three of the Latino picture books (*My Diary From Here to There, Calling the Doves, Friends from the Other Side*) were completely bilingual and all five of them had significant vocabulary in Spanish. The books afforded students the opportunity
to embrace and value their native language and even to discover new ways of using it, by reading Spanish. Three incidents reveal the importance of Spanish to the students and also the ways in which peer groups functioned as a space for using Spanish (which was not practiced at all in the school).

In the whole group discussion of *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1), the teacher did all of the reading (as the read-aloud defined) and did not choose to read aloud the cover information (map of Mexico) or information about the author. In contrast, students in the peer group, read aloud from both the English and Spanish texts, Katrina chose to read aloud the author’s information, and the group had a lively discussion about the map.

Even though Ubaldo’s family spoke only English at home (see Appendix B), he enthusiastically joined the other four students in the peer group as they read the Spanish text on page 6 aloud in unison. Nathaly’s family spoke Spanish and English at home, and when Ubaldo asked, “who knows how to read Spanish?” Nathaly responded, “I only know how to talk it but I don’t know how to read it”. Unlike Michael, in Mr. Moody’s peer group, who resisted using Spanish in several incidents cited above, Nathaly did not withdraw from the group when they began reading Spanish. Instead, she squeezed in between Katrina and Cristian and looked for words she recognized (“Nacho”).

More powerfully, reading Spanish in the peer group gave students a surprising (to them) mastery over literacy and text features. The double spread illustration on pages 10-11 shows a homemade camper.
Spanish and English words and phrases are written on the lines extending into the border. The Spanish words and phrases in the border are not translated into English.

Saul asked the group, “what does it say?” and everyone in the group began reading the Spanish aloud together, laughing as they went line by line, moving right to left around the border. After Ana read, “ya comienza”, Marlen exclaimed, “oh! It’s like a little song!” Xochilt noticed that some of the lines were dialogue between the family member characters in the story: “they’re talking in Spanish!” When they read the last line on the left side of the double spread, Ana started again at the top of the right spread, moving right around the border. After reading “de tu rancho” Ana stopped, looked up and announced, “that rhymes!” and laughed out loud. Marlen picked up where Ana left off.
and everyone got quiet while Marlen read aloud the next five lines. After the fifth line, she laughed and said,

Marlen: “I can read Spanish! I never knew that!”

Saul: [giving her eye contact] “Oh my goodness!”

Marlen: I never knew that! I understand!!

Finally, the allure of Spanish kept a group going even after the main discussion was completed; students voluntarily decided to continue interacting with print and actually reading it. After discussing the last illustration in the book, Marlen looked up to the camera and said, “we’re finished.” Saul turned the book over and read the price off the back cover. Ana invited the group to read the story in Spanish; Xochilt chimed in, “oh let’s try reading it!” Saul, finished with his examination of the back cover, suggested (as though he had not heard Ana and Xochilt) “Let’s try reading it in Spanish!” Students spent the next five minutes reading aloud, sometimes in unison, sometimes taking turns, the Spanish text of the story. Enrique, who at first shyly resisted reading the Spanish text aloud by himself, read aloud in Spanish from page four. All four of the other students clapped and cheered, yelling “bravo!” During the last minute of their group discussion students quickly initiated summing up what they liked about the book, all reiterating that they liked reading the story in Spanish together. Ana announced, “we are done” but Xochilt grabbed the book with both hands and said, “oh wait, oh wait, I …”

_Differences: Attitudes about Mexican things_

Like the position of Spanish in the classroom, the teachers occasionally made it clear their privileging of middle class American culture. Students in Mrs. Nelson’s peer
group discussion of *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2) did not directly refer to Mrs. Nelson’s comments during their class discussion although death in childbirth and natural home remedies were common topics to both discussions. In the class discussion about home remedies, Mrs. Nelson stopped after reading aloud about the healer on page 20, and said:

> So again, we find methods, traditions, that help us to recognize what this culture’s all about. Most of YOU, if you get sick, being in America, you go to the doctor. Doctor’s not gonna put this crazy stuff on your knee, right? They’re gonna give you Tylenol, aspirin; whatever the medicine that seems fitting. But this is something that they believe in that makes them better.

(N, 700, *Calling the Doves*, LPB-2, 1-10-07)

Mrs. Nelson took an “us and them” stance, distancing herself (and the students) from people in Mexico that “put crazy stuff on” when they’re sick. However, according to the students’ peer group discussion, their parents and grandparents treat them with natural herbs and teas and when they go to Mexico they buy rubbing alcohol for bruises and gather herbs to use when they get sick at home. Peer groups provided students with an opportunity to validate cultural knowledge and practices that were denigrated in the whole classroom discussion.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

In examining how scripted reading programs affect teachers’ readings of multicultural stories from both a basal reader and picture books, I discovered a number of circumstances and situations that are significant for those of us who want teachers and their students to construct literary meaning. In looking at children’s peer group responses to both types of literature, I learned a lot about these students’ perspectives not just on the literature but also on the intersection between culture and language that turned out to be a significant feature of the classroom. In this chapter I discuss my findings and their implications, organizing the chapter via three sections: teachers, students, and the classroom.

Teachers

Political Context for Classroom Interaction

This study confirmed Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto and Shuart-Faris’s (2005) suggestion that a social interactional approach to classroom interaction required attention to political processes. State law, as I pointed out in Chapter 2, mandated teaching second language students in English as much as possible, which Banks (2006) states is not as effective as a bilingual approach to teaching. The use of a state-approved core curriculum resulted in the adoption of the Open Court reading program in many districts and schools (Preface, AB2519 Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics Report, California Department of Education, Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resource Division,
Instructional Resources Office http://rsvh.addr.com/mva/id86.htm). The political nature of the educational context of this study was directly related to teacher’s use of the core curriculum and to their interactions with students which confirms Apple’s (1996) assertion that the relationship between schooling and political power “is a constitutive part of the very being of schooling” (pg. 96).

The combination of the scripted nature of the Open Court series, as described by Garan (2004) and as critiqued by Lee, Ajayi & Richards, (2007) along with the natural tendency of non-minority teachers to have problematic expectations of their students (Orellana, 2007) created a situation in which the students are vulnerable to identities of deficiency given the lack of recognition of their cultural and linguistic knowledge and the systemized practice of universal approaches to testing. In fact, these external factors made their appearance in the classrooms of both Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson. From the federal and state mandates (e.g. NCLB, 2001; CA Proposition 227 as addressed by Banks, 2006; Garcia, 2005) to the cultural construction of white teachers (Howard, 1999; Delpit, 1995), the problematic dynamics of cross-cultural teaching were clearly operating in this milieu.

Limitation of Classroom Resources

In Mr. Moody’s and Mrs. Nelson’s classrooms, teachers were restricted to the use of Open Court Reading selections in the classroom. Teacher’s resources did not include Open Court’s classroom libraries and bibliographies which provide “leveled readers for reading practice and add background knowledge to the Thematic Learning Units for grades K-6” which meant that Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson were operating with less than
the complete set of Open Court resources for their students. Scripted programs are limiting, but these teachers had even fewer choices because they didn’t have the extra reading materials for the Open Court program. (http://www.sraonline.com/index.php/home/curriculumsolutions/reading/ocr/622 Retrieved October 7, 2005).

**Restricted Supplementary Reading**

Mrs. Nelson stated in an interview that only Open Court materials and stories could be used in the classroom. Mr. Moody stated that “they” want him to just do the curriculum and that the Latino picture books didn’t fit well at school. Mr. Moody, in his affiliation with the school, approached the picture books cautiously. He read them through with little expression in his voice and offered students limited opportunity to talk about them during class story-reading events.

**Scripted Programs**

As might be expected in a district where a scripted program is used, the directives in the Open Court series had a profound influence on what teachers did in relation to reading the Open Court stories. The teachers opted to read aloud stories from the reading curriculum based on the assumption that their Latino/second language learners needed more modeled reading and instruction in order to understand the parts of reading (basic information) in order to later understand the complexity of the whole stories. The teachers were trying to provide entry for students into texts that the teachers felt were too difficult. Students who are struggling with reading actually need more practice with text, not less. This situation is reflective of the Matthew effect which describes the phenomenon that a child who falls behind in reading, reads less (Stanovich, 1986).
The core curriculum directives influenced (differently across the two classes) how the teachers introduced the stories, the content (such as vocabulary words to focus on) that was emphasized, the stops that were made in the story reading in the interest of comprehension, the content of comprehension teaching, and the ways in which teachers discussed the story after the reading. Teachers differed in the ways they implemented core curriculum directives. For example, Mr. Moody often read scripted questions verbatim to his students while Mrs. Nelson was never observed reading aloud the script to her students. Mr. Moody required his students to follow the story text in their anthologies while he read aloud whereas Mrs. Nelson had students use an Open Court graphic organizer for note-taking during her story-reading events.

Topics of Talk

Topics of story talk during Open Court literature discussions were determined by Mr. Moody’s reliance on the questions scripted in the teacher’s manual. There was no evidence of topics initiated and taken up in his Open Court story-reading events apart from the directives in the Open Court teacher’s manual. This study concurs with Chinn, Anderson & Waggoner (2001) who investigated teachers’ transition to more open classroom participation structures. They found that “teachers had only moderate success in giving students control over [discussion] topics” (p. 404) when it had been their practice to retain control over literature discussion topics.

The findings from my study imply that professional development at a school level needs to give greater attention to teachers sharing topic control with students during literature discussions. Future research must investigate the kinds of professional
development that foster identification of discussion frames that positively affect patterns of discourse and student achievement.

Teacher Control of Discussion

Mrs. Nelson, like Mr. Moody, retained control of discussion topics during story-reading events. However, unlike Mr. Moody, her topics did not always correlate with Open Court directives. For example, when she identified a detail in the story that she could connect to students’ personal experiences (having a birthday), she selected that topic as the subject of a spontaneous performance, which often functioned to lead the students into the story. Students in Mrs. Nelson’s class initiated topics, but Mrs. Nelson reserved control over which topics were taken up and which ones were ignored or rejected.

Parameters of Classroom Discussion

A key decision that frames classroom literature discussions is who controls the topic of discussion. Chinn, Anderson & Waggoner, 2001, reported that in some curriculum formats, students respond to teacher questions and have little control over what to say. My study gives evidence that this was typical in the teacher-led discussions which relied on the core curriculum script for questioning.

Part of the reading meaning-making process is for readers to engage with the text themselves. The idea behind the handing-off activity was for students to express their personal engagement with the stories in their own way. By controlling the topics discussed during the handing off activity, teachers were actually limiting the ideas students could express about the readings. The differences between the whole group
and the peer group discussions demonstrated that students had some different interests (particularly with regard to language) from those discussed while the teacher was leading the discussion.

The handing off activity as designed by Open Court (2002) set students up for a discussion with each other; students were to be seated such that they could see each other. Presumably, if the students were discussing the stories with each other, then they would bring up topics interesting to themselves and there would therefore be more choices for topics of discussion. Teacher control of discussion, however, kept students in a relatively passive position. At a school and district level, greater attention needs to be given to implementing the handing off activity in the classroom in ways that encourage student-initiated topics of discussion.

*Discussions of Language Difference*

Issues of language difference arose in the classroom but the discussions were bounded by the perspectives of both Open Court and the two teachers. This topic was initiated in the Open Court teacher’s manual with regard to *In Two Worlds, The West Side*, and *Love as Strong as Ginger* and both teachers initiated the topic during those story-reading events. Yet, in every instance, teachers separated language from ethnic heritage, and reinforced their belief that English was the American way to a better life. Teachers never referred to students as Mexican; rather as Hispanic. When Mr. Moody explained about language loss, he authoritatively ended the conversation by asserting that he was Greek although he didn’t speak Greek. Students, in contrast, consistently expressed their identity with a fusion of language and ethnic heritage. Mrs. Nelson
revisited the topic of language difference within and across story-reading events, affirming students’ second language; yet in seeming contradiction, erasing their heritage language from the story text of The West Side. Both teachers suggested that students had the opportunity for a better life because they were bilingual.

This study documented the experiences and actions of two teachers who cared about their students and who wanted to be effective teachers while at the same time emulating the beliefs in the superiority of U.S. society, predominance of European and Euro-American culture and the pragmatic utility of proficiency in English over heritage language. As mentioned in Chapter 4, these teachers chose not to speak any words in the children’s heritage language or to position themselves as learners of that language, thereby acknowledging their students’ expertise. This suggests that the heritage language of their students was not valued in the classroom.

This study reflects Halcón’s argument: “those who control school still treat Spanish as a deficit to be eliminated if Latinos are to succeed in schools. In contrast, Latinos argue that affirming the primary language is a necessary component of academic success,” (Reyes & Halcón, 2001, p. 75). The issue of language difference between teachers and students implies the need for pre-service and in-service teacher education to facilitate collaboration between teachers and other professionals such as ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers in order to develop classroom practices that demonstrate acceptance of students’ home language as an asset. Given the English Only laws, future research must seek to identify community-based activities and programs that support students’ use of their heritage language.
Differences in Teacher Implementation of Curriculum

Realization of the Script

While the program they were using was scripted, neither teacher followed the entire program or even portions of the program exactly as written. While I did not set out to examine this during the process of my research, it has turned out to be a finding that has significant implications and something that should be investigated in future research. By exploring the opportunities teachers have to effectively adapt the scripted curriculum to their students in ways that foster meaning making across cultural and linguistic differences, future research may identify ways in which increased literary understanding is realized. A highly scripted program carried out by two teachers who both believe in the program and who have had training in how to use the program ended up having significantly different features across the two classrooms. The purpose of having a scripted program, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, is to have consistency across classrooms and to ensure a certain level of quality of teaching (Lee, Ajavi, & Richards, 2007). The fact that the programs are not consistent even across two supporters of the program suggests that despite explicit scripting of reading instruction, individual teachers indeed affect curricular implementation in ways that make instruction in each classroom unique to the teacher and the students therein.

Since a script denies teachers the opportunity to make instructional decisions (Garan, 2004; Lee, Ajavi & Richards, 2007; Richards, 2000), the message from the publisher (and the state/district that approves the curriculum) is that teachers are not sufficiently competent to make instructional decisions. If teachers do not have a sense of
self-efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984) about teaching literacy because their authority has been denied them, then they are likely going to be less successful in the teaching process (Kagan, 1992). This study documented the reduced opportunities teachers had to make instructional decisions when implementing the core curriculum, given the script and the pacing schedules. Even so, the teachers did have some opportunity to make instructional decisions. They chose to read aloud the curriculum selections and to conduct handing off activities. These findings suggest that school level professional development needs to give greater attention to the choices teachers do have when implementing the curriculum. Training with supportive coaching are called for to support teachers’ development of how to manage small groups and facilitate peer group discussions in the classroom.

**Ironies of Teacher Choice**

The curricular directives that the teachers in this study chose not to follow become ironic. For example, the handing-off activity following each story was designed by the creators of Open Court to get students talking with each other instead of the teacher leading a discussion and maintaining total control over the content of the discussion. However, neither teacher used the handing-off activity in the way that was specified in the manual. As a result, the goal of having students talk with each other about the story was not met. Student-led discussion would be an opportunity for students to take ownership over their meaning-making process with the story. The teachers’ implementation of this portion of the program, however, kept the students in a relatively passive position regarding meaning-making. The Open Court program also suggests that
teachers can have small groups of students discuss the stories. While these peer groups were a part of the study, they were not a normal practice for either teacher. Again, peer groups would (and clearly did in this study) provide students with opportunities to engage individually with the readings. This choice, like the choice to alter the handing-off activity, continued the passive stance assigned to students in relation to the readings.

Future research is needed to investigate how classrooms incorporate peer group literature discussions within the parameters of scripted curricular programs and their structure, purpose and affect on student achievement.

**Teachers’ Choice to Read Aloud**

The major ironic practice, however, was the choice both teachers made to not have students read extended passages themselves. Mrs. Nelson explained why she read the stories aloud to her students:

> You can’t just give these kids the anthology and say, “Here, go read your story”. They are not going to understand it. You do have to physically read, in my opinion, read to those kids that story. There’s too much of a variance in their reading abilities and their strategies to comprehend the English language anyway. Just the very basic information has to be completely spelled out for them. I have to build the strategies as to what it is I’m looking for; what it is I’m doing to attack the text, so that it will be something they can understand later on down the line. (Nelson interview, 2-26-07)

It is interesting that the only two options the teacher in this situation could imagine were totally independent reading on the part of the students (“Here, go read your
story”) or no reading at all on the part of the students (read-alouds). Clearly the scripted program as implemented in these classrooms is designed for efficient whole-class instruction and does not reflect a focus on individualized instruction based on students’ needs. As discussed in Chapter 3, four intervention components were provided teachers to meet the differentiated needs of individual students. As the data show, teachers taught Standards Plus skill lessons and used the remaining materials for homework assignments. Open Court also offered a variation in organization (Workshop) which could have included small group work. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Pearson and Gallagher (1983) suggest that the release of responsibility model in which over time students gain more and more responsibility for their own reading process is the most effective way to teach the comprehension necessary to be able to summarize a passage of text. Yet the teachers’ implementation of the Open Court program did not approach movement towards individual engagement with print.

The constant time pressure for implementing the program left teachers covering the stories in the most time-efficient way possible, reading the stories to the children, but the result of this mode of instruction was that students had few opportunities to improve their reading skills through direct engagement with text. They were also placed, again, in a passive position listening to stories instead of actively constructing meaning through reading text. Unfortunately, the read-alouds became a substitute for students’ opportunity to practice the whole process of reading connected text. The assumptions and expectations of teachers when reading aloud stories to students in the classroom infiltrated the instructional frame of the read-aloud lesson. These assumptions and
expectations are directly related to the effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation and served as boundaries for what happened during story-reading lessons. This study concurs with Cummins who argues that

Lower income students are more likely to be taught in classroom environments where there is less opportunity to read extensively and less encouragement to engage in inquiry-oriented learning than was the case before the implementation of the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (2007, p. 564).

Unwittingly and ironically, these teachers replicated teaching practices common in classrooms that serve minority students; the teachers did not offer their students opportunities to read extended passages themselves and their teaching decisions put students in passive roles in relation to meaning-making around the stories. Allington (1977) contends that “to become a proficient reader one needs the opportunity to read” (pp. 60-61) yet the students received little practice in actually reading during reading instruction. In fact, if students were following along as Mrs. Nelson paraphrased the text, they would not have heard the words spoken that they saw. Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson erased students’ heritage language and their community-based identities from the classroom.

**Bilingual Children’s Literature in the Two Research Classrooms**

According to Nathenson-Mejia & Escamilla (2003), as reviewed in Chapter 2, “there has been little, if any, study on the use of children’s literature of a specific ethnicity or culture to inform mainstream educators about their student constituents” (pg. 102). The study referenced in Chapter 2 by Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla found that
the use of Latino picture books in the classroom offered pre-service teachers the opportunity to benefit from Latino picture books in ways that could expand their understanding of their own Mexican-American students. In contrast, my study documented that teachers did not evidence benefit from use of the Latino picture books in the classroom. Instead, Mr. Moody minimized the class discussion and Mrs. Nelson erased the Spanish from the stories.

Approved and “Unapproved” classroom literature

When school districts adopted the Open Court Curriculum, they eliminated the children’s literature options offered by the California Department of Education. In turn, classroom teachers were constrained by the district’s directives for the implementation of Open Court in language arts classes. Gensburger (2005), a California teacher, notes: “Just this week I was told that all non-adoption/non-core reading books were to be removed from my classroom—perfectly sound readers for reading-starved children that were paid for by parents, PTA, school and teachers over the years.” (cited by Cummins, 2007, p. 567). While permission was granted by the district for this research project involving Latino/a children’s literature, Mrs. Nelson and Mr. Moody were careful to keep the children’s literature from interfering with the time they were mandated to spend on Open Court materials. They were concerned about following district mandates and, at times, this resulted in some discomfort for them in relation to the use of children’s literature in their classrooms. Mr. Moody, in his affiliation with the school, approached the picture books cautiously. He read them through with little expression in his voice and offered students little opportunity to talk about them during class story-reading events.
The process of this research study provided teachers with the opportunity to revisit the Latino picture book stories with future students. Mrs. Nelson, in a casual conversation after the completion of this study, commented that while she did not read aloud the Latino picture books to subsequent classes, she did offer new students who did not speak English the opportunity to look at the bilingual books.

In my literature review of Natheson and Mejia (2003), they acknowledged that “it is difficult for teachers to tap into children’s extensive funds of knowledge (Moll, 1993) if they don’t have any idea that those funds exist or how to access them” (p. 102). One way for teachers to become informed about students’ out-of-school activities is modeled in the research by Natheson-Mejia & Escamilla (2003) where pre-service teachers read and responded to culturally relevant literature before reading it aloud and discussing it in their classrooms. Pre-service teachers were prepared to position themselves as learners when their students discussed their personal connections to the stories. Findings from my study imply that pre-service and in-service teacher programs need to give attention to the use of culturally relevant literature in the classroom. However, like in the Natheson-Meija study, provision is necessary for teachers to first have the opportunity to read and discuss the literature before bringing it to the classroom.

Reading Aloud Latino/a Picture Books

Influence of Open Court procedures

Not surprisingly, Open Court teaching procedures influenced the reading and discussion processes of the Latino picture books. Both teachers made similar decisions about reading aloud the text of the Latino picture books as they did about reading aloud
Open Court story text. Mr. Moody controlled the text with his voice expression (significantly less expressive than when reading aloud Open Court stories), determination of where to stop in the story (read the stories cover to cover without stopping), and pronunciation of Spanish words and phrases (relying on bilingual students to pronounce and translate Spanish words and phrases). Mrs. Nelson chose to control the picture book text much like she controlled the Open Court story text. She read expressively, and paraphrased the story text. She skipped Spanish words and phrases and renamed characters as she had done when reading *The West Side* (OC-3).

**Literature Discussions**

Many teachers find children’s literature to be an opportunity for children to engage with stories and use language to talk about them (Sipe, 1996; Bishop, 1992). Discussions around high quality stories can support many types of language skills. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Bishop (1997) states there are five purposes that children’s literature can serve in classrooms:

…literature about people of color can serve at least five broad functions: (1) it can provide knowledge or information, (2) it can change the way students look at their world by offering varying perspectives, (3) it can promote or develop an appreciation for diversity, (4) it can give rise to critical inquiry, and (5) like all literature, it can provide enjoyment and illuminate human experience, in both its unity and its variety (p.4).

Unfortunately the Open Court approach to literature, as implemented by these teachers, foregoes high level talk (synthesis and evaluation) about literature in the interest
of testing for basic comprehension. Engagement with high quality books is one activity that would be congruent with the pleasures of reading; unfortunately, Open Court strategies for literature discussion seem to prevent or at least reduce the possibilities for students to have the opportunity to engage in reading or listening to stories for pleasure. Teachers whose professional experience has been limited to classrooms that use scripted programs, are unprepared to use children’s literature in the classroom, whether for pleasure or for development of literary understanding. Implications from this study are that school and district level training needs to give attention to the opportunities within the school day when teachers and students can choose story-reading for pleasure.

Teacher Control of Discussions

Many teachers feel challenged by the thought of giving students control in the classroom. According to Chinn, Anderson & Waggoner, 2001, when teachers responded to the experience of relinquishing control of interpretation during literature discussions, teachers expressed concern about “whether students would understand the story sufficiently” (p. 539) and some [teachers] are “uncomfortable with the idea that there are no right answers to issues raised in the discussions” (p. 539). Mrs. Nelson maintained control of which topics of talk were initiated in relationship to the story by the questions she asked. Mr. Moody transferred questions from Open Court Reading to his brief discussion of the Latino picture books, asking students to identify the point of view and the author’s purpose. Mrs. Nelson’s topics of discussion were similar to the topics she initiated during Open Court story-reading events; they were centered on identification
with the characters in the story and on the connections she assumed students made to the story situations.

In controlling the discussion of these books and in choosing not to engage with the complexities of derogatory names (a choice Mr. Moody made in response to the use of the word “wetback” in *Friends from the Other Side*), the teachers placed students in passive, silent positions. The peer group discussions demonstrate where a class discussion could have gone in terms of the topic choices the students had. But to have this kind of discussion would mean the teachers would have to give up control over the discourse of the classroom. There are probably a number of reasons Mr. Moody and Mrs. Nelson would hesitate to give up control, including fear of student misbehavior if students were given greater freedom (although the peer groups were reasonably well-behaved), concern that the discussion would take time away from accomplishing district mandates, and discomfort discussing topics where they had no expertise.

*Using Multicultural Children’s Literature in the Classroom*

Proponents of multicultural literature suggest that putting it into the classroom will be beneficial to children because they can find themselves in those stories (Medina & Enciso, 2002; Nathenson-Mejia & Escamilla, 2003). Students are less likely to find characters they can identify with in basal readers. In this study, the read alouds of the Latino Picture Books ironically reinforced the cultural and linguistic differences between the teachers and their students. For example, when discussing *Calling the Doves*, Mrs. Nelson assumed that the students would not use the “crazy” home remedies and that these methods were inferior to American doctors. Also, as previously mentioned, neither
teacher spoke the Spanish words in the texts; Mrs. Nelson took this privileging of English further, paraphrasing the texts to avoid Spanish words and changing the name of a character when a Spanish word could not be avoided.

Both teachers distanced themselves from the culture of their students, and used the Latino children’s literature as a conduit for expressing their attitudes towards Latino culture. What could have been a real support and point of engagement for the children became a demarcation between the teachers and their students. This use of Latino children’s literature demonstrates exactly the phenomenon that Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003) hoped to prevent in their efforts to teach pre-service teachers about the importance of engaging with children’s culture in a reasonably complex way. While multicultural children’s literature has been touted by so many as a supplement to basal reading programs, this type of literature can be used just as well to reinforce the cultural gap between teachers and their students if teachers are in the position these teachers were: constrained to a reading system in which neither they nor their students could make much choice as well as a system of education that attempts to erase the role of culture and language in students’ lives. Teachers need to know not just the importance of using multicultural children’s literature but they also need to know how to use it in a way that is respectful of the cultures of others. Teachers run the risk of turning students off from literature and from learning, which has implications for their lives as adults.

Pressure and Culture on Teachers

Both teachers cared about their students and wanted them to be successful. Both teachers worked hard to deliver the curriculum in accordance with their administration’s
directives and both teachers wanted their students to succeed. Yet, the teachers themselves were socially constructed by their white, middle class, monolingual US-American culture, which limited their ability to imagine their students’ lives (assuming everyone has a dishwasher, a garage door opener, and depends on medical doctors for treatment of illness). For example, when reading aloud *Land That I Lost*, Mrs. Nelson generated an imagined scenario situated in students’ presumed experience by stating: “We come home, we pull in the drive way. You might push a button – make the garage door go up…” (N, 591, Land I Lost OC-1, 1-3-07).

Teachers were socially constructed by California English Only school practices, the limitations on the literature they could have in their classroom, as well as the scripted reading method they were using. This unfortunate combination made it impossible for them to bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps between themselves and their students; it made their story-reading as irrelevant to their students’ lives as they felt it was to the task of reading instruction, as defined by the state-approved core curriculum. The teachers had limited self-awareness of their own approaches to culture and language and what those approaches likely communicated to their students. These data suggest implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education. Attention needs to be given to increasing teachers’ self-awareness of cultural issues in the classroom and to increasing their repertoire of instructional content that addresses cultural difference in positive ways.

Students who have not had access to the materials and social interactions of the dominant culture will continue to be marginalized if the dominant practices persist (Delpit, 1988; Martin, 1991). Classroom practices underpinned by assumptions about
common experiences across student populations do not serve all students equally well; items common to the teachers’ home lives would be rare in the lives of some of these students, and vice versa. One cannot assume that all home lives are essentially variations of the typical American home life. The specifics are evident in every published book and in every text that students and teachers construct when they read it. The dominant practices may seem comfortable to teachers, but there is ample evidence to suggest that these practices disadvantage students who are from outside the dominant culture. Classroom teacher-student interactions and the predominance of core reading curriculum instruction are only two examples of such evidence. By ignoring or refusing to consider the sociocultural nature of such practices as teacher-led classroom literature discussions and exclusive use of core reading curriculum for reading instruction, teachers perpetuate discourses that systematically exclude certain students whose experiences are not valued within dominant discourses.

Gee (1997) argues that responsible pedagogy requires a juxtaposition of differences in such a way that commonness can emerge (variable and changing patterns, associations, or generalizations) without obliterating the differences as lived and situated realities. He encourages teachers to view each child as a network of associations formed by his or her sociocultural experiences, a network from which specific ways of knowing the world emerge (pp. 296-297).

The findings in my study document that the white US-American way of constructing minority students, particularly English Language Learners, as enacted in law, curriculum, and teacher practices, fails to address the real lives of the students and
therefore fails to provide appropriate opportunities for learning. The relationship of teachers’ cultural knowledge and practices (such as informed and sensitive use of culturally relevant children’s literature) with students of diversity to student achievement is a topic that could be investigated by future research.

Students

So much of what happened in these classrooms was a result of the state’s, district’s, Open Court publisher’s and teacher’s ideas about who the students were and what they needed. Yet, on so many levels, these ideas were essentially wrong. The idea of English Only in instruction and the short exposure to bilingual education is in direct opposition to the findings of researchers such as August and Hakuta (1997) that English Language Learners actually learn better when they are allowed to use both their languages. As researchers described in Chapter 2 have pointed out (e.g., Ajavi as cited by Lee, Ajayi & Richards, 2007; and Peck and Serrano, 2002), the Open Court series is particularly problematic for bilingual learners. The activities do not support the linguistic needs of these students and the pacing is also wrong (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Gutiérrez, 1997, Peck & Serrano, 2002). These issues are borne out in the research classrooms. Both teachers felt the need to read to students instead of having students read independently because the texts were apparently too difficult. Teacher assessment of the students indicated that most of them (with one notable exception, Michael) were reading significantly below grade level (see Appendix B). Finally, the teachers’ distance from the culture of the students silenced students’ perspectives on the stories they were
hearing and also contributed to the continued privileging of English/American culture at the expense of the students’ own culture.

Peer Group Discussions

According to Freeman, Freeman, & Freeman (2003), reviewed in chapter 2, “research shows that students read better and read more when they make personal connections with the books they are reading” (p. 6). The peer group literature discussions provided important insights into students’ own perspectives and meaning-making processes as well as their use of Spanish to reclaim their language and culture in the unsupervised small group discussions. In contrast to the study of peer groups completed by DeNicolo (2004), where there were a number of problematic dynamics around gender and language, the peers groups in my study seemed to be largely a positive experience for students.

First, I found that the peer discussion groups allowed more children to participate since there were fewer students contending for the floor but also because the teacher was not present to regulate who spoke and the topic of conversation. In fact, Cummins (1996) posited that peer interactions were of greater significance than specific teaching methods. Students in peer group discussions in DeNicolo’s (2004) study had the opportunity to contribute to the group, help others and share their knowledge. These opportunities, however, are limited or non-existent in whole class discussions and yet are the very practices that second language learners benefit from (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000).

Naturally, there were some similarities between peer group discussions and whole class discussions, including topics of discussion and the occasional use of a teacher
strategy by a student to control the group. The differences, however, demonstrated that the ways in which students constructed their own lives were significantly different from the state/district/publisher/teacher construct. And, the students were able to use the group to reclaim language and culture in some powerful ways. This data implies that district and school level teacher development needs to give attention to methods of organization and management of small groups in the classroom and demonstrate the benefits of peer group literature discussions for students.

Spanish in the Peer Groups

Speaking Spanish was non-existent in the classroom, and the children conducted their peer groups in English, but they took the opportunities offered by the bilingual children’s books to read and play with Spanish text. They noticed its structure; they found out they could read in Spanish; and one group even used the Spanish text as a dictionary for the purpose of teaching a non-Spanish speaking member the heritage language. Ironically, this led to them to doing sustained reading, to discovering that they knew a lot more about reading than they thought they did, and to taking pleasure in reading that was not observed in the context of whole class reading experiences. Their conversations also reflected a shared understanding of culture in that they spoke of aspects of their experiences with each other that they did not choose to share in the context of the whole class and under the scrutiny of their teachers. In that sense, the peer discussion groups offered students the opportunities to author their own world (Holland, 1998) in contrast to the world authored by their teachers.
Even in the most draconian of circumstances, oppressed people find means of resistance and ways to preserve what is important to them. In fact, these children were able to find the opportunity to bring into the classroom what the adults in their lives had attempted to leave out. Granted, the students were in the peer discussion groups at the behest of the researcher. But, clearly, they saw this as an opportunity to take control over some significant linguistic aspects of classroom life. They did not simply discuss the stories in English; they chose to explore the Spanish. These students were not so controlled by the teacher-enforced norms of the classroom that they couldn’t enjoy the process of jumping into something they enjoyed—their own language in written form.

In this way, teachers who are experiencing the straitjacket of legal and curricular demands can take a lesson from these children and look for fleeting yet significant opportunities to make the language of the classroom meaningful despite the dominion of outsiders to the classroom community. This is actually a realistic expectation because it is clear that even in a scripted curriculum, there is significant “wiggle” room. A teacher who has a strong background in ways to support children’s meaning-making across reading, writing, speaking, and listening and who is knowledgeable about culture and reflective about his or her own cultural attitudes and practices, can make use of the fact that choices are available.

Classroom

As Pratt (1991) states, the classroom is the “contact zone,” the place in which disparate cultures meet. The contact zone can be a place where the external factors of the classroom control what happens in the classroom, particularly when people who have
authority are unconscious of the effect of their perspectives on the people over whom they have authority. The strategies used by Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003) with pre-service teachers, helping these teachers learn about the lives of their students in the process of using children’s literature, can help teachers mediate how they discuss literature even when much of their teaching is constrained by external factors. In other words, the contact zone can become a community where all members are respected for what they bring to the community when teachers have the cultural tools to understand the lives of their students as well as the tools for understanding the ways in which the state/district/publisher construction of students does not work. In this way, teachers can create a constructive classroom community by choosing to mediate between regulation and meaning: the demands of the state and the cultural knowledge of the students.

The ideal situation would be to change the laws and the curriculum so that teachers could use the best possible instructional strategies and to ensure that teachers learn those instructional strategies in teacher education programs, both preservice and inservice. However, in the current situation, pre-service and in-service teacher education must give attention to practices that develop increased cultural understanding of students. Teachers apparently don’t stick to the script anyway and time constraints demand that teachers choose only a few activities out of a range suggested by the core curriculum. Developing an appreciation of what students bring to the classroom linguistically and culturally, approaching student cultures as a learner, and developing a time and place for students’ heritage languages to matter would allow teachers to choose the Open Court strategies that would be best for their students. Cultural understanding of this type would
also allow teachers to implement these strategies in culturally appropriate ways. This would include making sure students have the opportunity to read extended texts (which can also happen in the process of teaching social studies or other curricular topics), and using the peer discussion groups that are one of the optional strategies. While teaching time is prescribed for speaking English, teachers could choose to create a Heritage Club or some such optional activity where Spanish language skills could be supported in relation to English language skills through the medium of children’s literature. These suggestions are in line with the suggestions of Cummins (1989) to support the success of English Language Learners.

Peer Discussion Groups

Latino Children’s Books and Peer Group Discussion

When DeNicolo (2004) implemented Open Court discussion groups, there were some significant issues and problems. One was that for many of the Open Court stories, students did not relate to the characters and issues and therefore had a difficult time finding things to discuss about their reading. When the literature does not reflect students’ experiences, it is necessary for the teacher to initiate activities and identify additional resources in order to support student learning. One reason the discussion group strategy worked so well in the present research study was that all the stories, from Open Court and the Latino children’s literature, had numerous points of interest for the students. Choosing literature based on recommendations from Medina and Enciso (2000) was a successful strategy and reinforces the importance of well-written multicultural children’s literature in classrooms. While all students need to read a range of literature
from a variety of cultures in the long run, students need to have access to literature from their own cultures so that they will be doing a new thing (reading for enjoyment) using a familiar thing (known vocabulary and word usage). When we ask students to learn to read with a focus on isolated skills using unfamiliar vocabulary, we are setting them up for failure and for a reduced perspective of the multiple purposes of reading.

*Respect for Language*

A second problem in DeNicolo’s implementation was the way in which the student groups excluded students who were less articulate in English. This was clearly not a problem in the present study’s implementation of peer discussion groups. Possibly the focus on multicultural literature, and the privileging of the children’s heritage language through the bilingual children’s books, prevented this problem from arising. It is possible that if the classroom as a whole has a habit of valuing home language and school language (Genesee, 1994; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005), then this kind of exclusion would not arise. Another factor that could have been significant is that while DeNicolo’s research took place in a bilingual school, my research took place in a monolingual school. The differing dynamics in relation to language and how language gets privileged across the two types of schools would be worthy of further research.

In contrast to DeNicolo’s groups, one group in the present study actually privileged Spanish to the point of students insisting on the non-Spanish speaking student learning some Spanish. Michael, the student in question, was a better reader than the other students and initially he was using that characteristic as a source for authority. But the other students used Spanish as a collective source of authority. They turned the
linguistic tables around in a carnival (Bakhtin, 1973) spirit and it is possible that some of
the engagement in the Spanish portions of the text arose from the respite from the
dominant linguistic rules of the classroom. DeNicolo’s groups also had some gender-
related issues that did not appear to arise in the groups during the present study.

Another common issue between DeNicolo’s study and the present study is the
problem of derogatory names. DeNicolo recounts an interaction around the word
“nigger” in a story and Mr. Moody was clearly uncomfortable saying the word “wetback”
in one of the Latino picture book stories (Mrs. Nelson would have come up with a
paraphrase, but Mr. Moody was not in that habit). A surface-only approach to culture
(food and festivals, a monolithic conception of a culture) makes dealing with derogatory
words challenging because shallow understandings cannot address the complexities of
language. The fact is that derogatory words occupy a complex territory in the lives of
people who live in minority cultures. Simply forbidding the words to be said or read
erases the possibility of students exploring what those words really mean across the
different contexts in which they are used. It also erases the possibility of students being
able to process their own emotional reactions to those words, which can be a highly
significant aspect of their lives and therefore something around which to use language to
make meaning. A complex approach to culture opens up the possibility of classroom
discussion around how that language is used, which opens the door for deeper
understandings of the power of language in general.
Regulations Versus Meaning-making

Politicians may have legal expertise, but it is clear from the laws enacted in California that they and the majority of the voters do not know much about how children use language or learn to read and write. Although their goals of providing high quality, effective education to all students are laudable, they actually undermined their own goals through mandating the process by which these goals were to be met as well as the instrument used to assess whether the goals were met. As a result, teachers are robbed of their own authority and professionalism and are given inadequate materials and methods with which to teach reading. In turn, the teachers limit the students’ opportunities for shared or independent authority over their own meaning-making processes. The teachers adjust to these methods and materials to the point that, when they are given materials of a much higher quality, they are not able to investigate the deeper complex issues presented in multicultural children’s literature within the school context. They miss out on the opportunity to engage their students in the kind of meaning-making processes that actually lead to the development of strong literary understanding.

There are two fortunate circumstances which suggest that change in teaching is possible even if laws and mandates stay the same. First of all, my research clearly shows that scripting curriculum delivery does not mean that the curriculum is delivered consistently across all classrooms. Due to time constraints, if nothing else, teachers have to make choices about which activities to use. With some professional development, particularly in the area of cultural understanding, teachers can take advantage of these opportunities to make choices in the interest of authentic meaning-making on the part of
their students. For example, Mrs. Nelson initiated the construction of a chart for recursive class discussion across multicultural literature. Such adaptations within the core curriculum would allow for literary understanding to not only matter, but flourish.

The other fortunate circumstance is that even after five or six years in Open Court, when given an opportunity, these students found the power of children’s literature for themselves. They appreciated the illustrations and how those contributed to the story. They found the aesthetic aspects of the language. They dove into reading their own heritage language and discovered joy in that. When teachers position themselves to learn from students, linguistically, culturally, and maybe even in terms of strategies for resistance, then classrooms can become places where teachers and students meet along the continuum between regulations and meaning in ways that matter.
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Appendix A: Description of Student Participants in Peer Group Discussions

Interviews were open-ended but themes that were visited across them all included: family, travels to Mexico, home language, family stories, reading, classroom discussions of books, small group discussions, connections to stories in Open Court, and connections to the Latino picture books.

Mr. Moody’s Peer Group Participants

Michael (sat on front row in Mr. Moody’s class)

Michael was 10 years old, and in his first year at Jackson Elementary school. His Accelerated Reader score was 6.9 for instructional reading level in Jan., 2007. He was the youngest child in his family; all three of his older brothers were still living at home. Michael was born in the United States and even though both of his parents speak Spanish, English is spoken at home. After completing an assignment in class, Michael was observed reading his library book, Holes by Louis Sachar.

Michael explained how discussions took place in Open Court story-reading events:

Mr. Moody would read the entire story and then try to get us to read along with him (“not just ‘oh yeah’ and messing around while he’s reading”). Mr. Moody’s probably the only one asking the questions of the kids. He reads it, then he calls on someone to read, (cause if we do it, it’s just like once sentence, or something, and not that much.) then he reads a little more, then he calls on someone to read
like after that. When I raise my hand and answer Mr. Moody’s question I’m
talking to Mr. Moody. I think, not only him, but I think maybe some of them are
saying it also to the class so they’ll know. We don’t take our Open Court books
home.

According to Michael, peer group discussions had “less kids and it’s .. but in this
group, it’s like everyone’s going to ask the questions [not just Mr. Moody]. It’s easier if
you're discussing with kids. It helps you understand the story a bit better. Like you get
to know what other kids’ thoughts are on it (Michael, exit interview, 4-10-07).

Michael explained why his favorite Open Court story in the unit on heritage was
Parmele: “It’s like us going to our grandparents’ house in Bakersfield. It’s like four
hours. And so, we always have to pack our things and stuff. And like, sometimes we
stop somewhere. It’s actually pretty fun, yeah.” Michael gave the following rationale for
not selecting a favorite picture book:

I didn’t rate them that good because I wasn’t reading them. I haven’t been to
Mexico, like that many times. I wasn’t born or raised there, or anything.
Probably didn’t pay attention to ‘em as much because they…‘cause if they’re not
testing on them, why should we even do it if it’s not even a test?

Saul

Saul was 10 years old and he had attended Jackson Elementary since
kindergarten. His English Learner classification at school is English Only. His
Accelerated Reader score for instructional reading level was 3.7 in Jan., 2007.
His parents divorced when he was in the second grade. He and his mom live with his grandparents and one uncle in a peach-colored house that had a new carpet. Saul has his own bedroom; he has no brothers or sisters. He saw his dad regularly on weekends and for holidays. Both Saul and his mother were born in California. His dad was born in Mexico and Saul thinks his grandfather was born in the Philippines. Saul explained his perspective of speaking two languages:

My mom speaks Spanish or English. She’s bilingual. My dad too. I think half of my family is bilingual. I can speak a little Spanish. Both languages are important because, like, if you - when you get older and like, you’re going to work and someone only speaks Spanish, and then you go – and then, like somebody else doesn’t understand it and you can speak both

When asked to recall a memorable event in his life, Saul related the following story:

There’s a lot of fighting in my family. We lived in these apartments because we couldn’t afford a house and my cousins lived there and my tia moved here to the apartment. Then we moved to Vallejo and we moved into these apartments and two other cousins. My cousin left with my mom’s car. My mom goes, “I told him not to take the car.” Then my own nino came and said he let him take the car. And then my mom goes, “why?” And then a big fight started to happen. My nino gets a skeleton on and he shows a machete and then my mom pushes him and then my nino pushes my mom and she goes flying. She hits and it left a scar.

(Saul, initial interview, 12-06-06)
Saul described whole class story-reading events in the following way:

It’s like asking questions about the story, like sort of going over it. So, you can
learn more in comprehension. The question might be on the test we take every
Friday. Ask a question about it, and then you see the question on the test. It’s
like easier for you, cause you got it right the first time, and you might get it right
the second time. And you can find a question [on the test] sort of like the same as
the question [in class].

Saul was in Mr. Moody’s classroom, where he sat in the front row and therefore
was offered many opportunities for participation. Saul explained the classroom rules for
turns to talk:

When Mr. Moody is talking, you can’t talk while he’s talking and while the other
person is talking, you’ve got to listen to them. Mr. Moody either goes down the
rows, or he reads like a paragraph and he calls on somebody, or, he’ll call on
somebody that’s raising their hand. When he’s looking, or when he stops and
he’s looking for somebody to read, you can just raise your hand and say, “oh, I
got a question,” or, you can just go, “Mr. Moody.” When you answer, you’re
talking to the person who asked the question. And, the person who asked the
question [Mr. Moody] is talking to the whole class.

Saul named Land I Lost as his favorite Open Court story, referring to the episode
when the grandmother used karate to subdue a stranger who was harassing her and her
husband. Saul chose My Diary From Here to There as his favorite picture book, relating
his experience of moving from one area of California to another, which he felt enabled
him to identify with the main character’s feelings in the story. Saul also said that he thought the presence of Spanish text in the book gave him an opportunity to learn more Spanish.

Enrique
Enrique was 10 years old, and had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. Enrique was reclassified as English proficient in 4th grade. His Accelerated Reader instructional reading score was 4.3 in January, 2007. Enrique and his older brother were born in the town where they lived. Enrique said that his mom and dad mostly speak Spanish at home. Enrique’s favorite room in his house is his brother’s room “cause it has carpet in it.” (Enrique, initial interview, 12-6-06)

Enrique, initially labeled at school as an English Learner (EL), was reclassified as English proficient when he was in fourth grade. Enrique speaks Spanish at home and sometimes translates a little for his mom. His mom is taking English classes at a local community college; Enrique’s dad works construction. Although they have family in Mexico, they do not travel to Mexico regularly (Enrique, initial interview, 12-6-06).

Enrique, who sat in the back row in Mr. Moody’s classroom, explained that class discussion was talking about the story and about the main characters “so we could understand it more.” He added:

Some questions are for the test so we won’t have to stress out for the test. Mr. Moody asks somebody a question. You raise your hand if you want to. If I don't know the answer, [then I can] hear others say the answer. When I answer a question, I'm talking to the group. I look at Mr. Moody when I answer, but my
answer is for everybody. Students don’t talk to one another (Enrique, exit interview, 4-10-07).

Enrique said you could just say what you think about the story when talking with other students in the small group. He said, “It helped because we could understand the story we read more.” “It helped me more because I could just talk without raising my hand.” “Small group was different ’cause I heard more stories about the other people in the group.” (Enrique exit interview, 4-10-07).

*Parmele* was his favorite Open Court story. He could relate to the grandpa in the story because he told his grandchildren stories. “I could relate to my life, because it’s like when I go somewhere far in the car; he tells us stories” (Enrique, exit interview, 4-10-07). *I Speak English for My Mom* was his favorite picture book. “I could relate” “’Cause my mom, every time she goes to work at a house, she needs me to translate.” “I help her with her homework.” Enrique also helps his mom with parent-teacher conferences. Enrique said he also related to *La Mariposa* because the little boy didn’t know English. Enrique said, “In first grade, I didn’t understand ’cause I didn’t have much English.” “In school, in kinder, my teacher said “don’t speak Spanish, only English” so I just stayed quiet.” (Enrique, exit interview, 4-10-07).

He said that he had not seen books with Spanish text in his other classes at Jackson Elementary. He said he had seen *My Diary From Here to There* in the local public library (Enrique, exit interview, 4-10-07).
Marlen

Marlen was 10 years old at the time of this study. Fifth grade was Marlen’s first year at Jackson Elementary. She was reclassified as English proficient in 3rd grade. She is also classified as gifted. Her Accelerated Reader instructional reading level score was 4.5 in Jan., 2007.

Marlen was born in California but both of her parents were born in Mexico. Her grandparents and extended family live in Mexico. At the time of this study, Marlen lived with her mother, her 16 year-old cousin, her older sister, who is 15 years old, and her baby (Marlen’s infant nephew), and her younger sister who is 8 years old. “My mom’s room is my favorite room in our house.” “I just sleep with her because it’s warmer.” “My room’s cold.” Marlen’s mom works at a local golf course. Since the birth of her nephew, Marlen and her family have not traveled to Mexico as often as they did before he was born. When they go to Mexico they visit family.

Marlen’s mother and father were divorced when Marlen was younger. Later, her father was in prison in Mexico. Her grandparents and extended family live in Mexico. Marlen explained that

My great-grandpa, he used to be an Indian. My family doesn’t look like an Indian; only me and my mom. My grandma, she was Hispaniola (I don’t know how to say it in English). My mom told me it was my grandpa [who was Indian].

My mom can hear, like really far away, and she can see like really far away. Her grandma died a hundred and sixteen. When grandma was like ninety-three, she could see far, far, far away. My mom said she would steal some trees,
because she wanted to sell them. And she would be far away – far away. And then they could still see her and knew who it was. And then, my mom said she could never get away with it. (Marlen, initial interview, 12-06-06)

The 2006-2007 school year was Marlen’s first year at Jackson Elementary. Previously labeled as an English Learner (EL), Marlen was reclassified as English proficient during her third grade year. She was also classified as a gifted student. Marlen’s little sister was in second grade (“because she flunked”) at Jackson Elementary.

Marlen reflected on living in Mexico:

I would come every day to walk, to cross the border from my aunts’ house to go to my mom’s house. I didn’t like to stay over in Mexico. I didn’t like to sleep at my aunts’, ‘cause my aunts treated me bad. When my dad wasn’t there, ‘cause my dad had to work, they would treat me bad. My aunts, they would be angels when my dad was there. My dad didn’t like anybody to mess with his daughters. My dad gave me twenty dollars, and I bought a little dress for a dollar. And then, they [my aunts] kept the change. “I’m not supposed to have change?” I asked. ‘Cause, I was really good in math. I was in first grade. And I still am really good in math. And I was like, “‘hey, twenty minus one is nineteen--where’s my change?” [They said] “We don’t have no change.”

When asked about an experience that she would never forget, Marlen responded in the following way:

When my big sister cut her veins, before the baby was born. [This event occurred two months prior to interview] She fainted and then all the ambulance
came. She didn’t go to the hospital. They just wrapped her up and they took her to a place for 3 or 4 days and then we’re gonna pick her up. My mom found her. She was in the room ‘cause my mom and her got in a fight. She threw a glass in my eye. She got mad. She broke the window. She went back in the window and then I went outside and wanted to go check on the window and my little sister, my big cousin, my big sister took a piece of glass and poked me in the hand and then I got bleeding. I didn’t know I was bleeding and then my little sister ran inside and told my mom and I was like, “don’t tell her yet” And then mom said, [she’s] too quiet; go check on her and she was thrown in the closet. Things are way better now ever since she had her baby.

There’s another thing I forgot. My big sister ran away from the home for four days. She ran away from the house for four days because she had found out she was pregnant and she was scared that my mom would tell her something. She was with her boyfriend. I knew where she was when she ran away but I couldn’t tell. We went looking for her and I found her and she told my mom that I knew.

When describing small group discussions, Marlen explained, Sometimes, like when people are shy, and then, when people talk too much, they try to be polite and they don’t jump in. Like in our group of six. Like Enrique. You could tell he felt left out, because he was trying to be polite and let us talk and he almost never had a chance to talk. [In the small group] I look at the person I’m talking to. They help you like understand more of the story. Sometimes Mr. Moody shows it to us one way. And when you have those conversations you can
– you look at it different. You look at it more interesting. You look at it – it helps you a lot. When lots of us are all talking it helps you think what their side is. It helps you know how they think. And it shows there’s different kinds of answers to a question.

With regard to whole class story-reading events, Marlen explained,

You have to listen to the story so you can answer some of the questions. And then, you have - mostly you have to raise your hand, or, ask Mr. Moody. And then, you just have to follow along in the story. And then, you have to infer.

Because Mr. Moody asks a lot of inferential questions. I feel like I’m talking to the whole class and not Mr. Moody when I answer a question. Sometimes you can go ahead and talk, [without raising your hand] ‘cause it’s kind of like listening. But, if you have, like, a total different thing, that doesn’t relate with it at all, you have to raise your hand.

In Two Worlds was Marlen’s favorite Open Court story; she gave the following reasons:

Because that one helps us think like other people’s culture and it shows you more stuff. Like, it’s not just our culture. There’s many different ones. And, some other people don’t have what we have. Like they had to sleep in a straw bed and then some people suffer. I thought it was bad living in the hot, but I guess it’s better living in the hot than in the snow.

Marlen connected strongly with all of the Latino picture books; she discussed each one at length, particularly in relation to experiences she had had. Many of them
called to her mind many of the struggles and challenges members of her family faced.

For example, in relation to one of the books (her gesture did not make it clear to me which one led to this memory), Marlen said:

And this one [I’m not sure which one she is pointing to] – this one’s the one where she goes . . . Is this one (unintelligible)? Oh yeah. This time my cousin – my cousin – she, her – her – her dad – no . . . She left to the United States. To stay with us because she had papers. And, her, her dad – all our families had to gather money. So we can, like, pass her – so we can bring her over here. Her mom and her dad. She had to stay months and months without them. She stayed with us. With me. Or, sometimes she would stay with us, sometimes she would stay with my aunt. My aunt lived in Bakersfield. She likes staying better with us, ‘cause my aunt, she has only big daughters – sixteen and up. And that’s why she likes to stay with us, because she can play with us and everything. This happened last year when she was like, like, six. She . . kinda’ she felt lonely whenever her dad called she would like . . , she would spend hours on the phone with him. And then like – and then, she – well, um – and she would feel kind of sad sometimes. She was scared sometimes because she didn’t like to sleep by herself. She likes to stay with her mom. And – ‘cause she was an only child. And then, she’s not used to being by herself. Her mom and dad were still in Mexico. We went for her because she had her papers. she was afraid of, what if her parents didn’t come, what if they never could come, was she gonna go back, was she gonna stay here? She didn’t know what she was going to do.
I have another cousin. Her parents wanted her to leave. And like, you know how they kicked them out. They kicked her out and some houses they didn’t treat her right, because like, sometimes she would – she would – she would – sometimes when she changed, she would leave her clothes there – like, on the bed. Or, her brothers will be crazy and so, the kicked them out. She’s still living with us. Not the seven year old, but the other one. The sixteen. She left on, um, Thursday. She left with her parents, apparently. Her parents come up from Mexico. Her step dad? He had papers, but her mom doesn’t. So, they got her and they took her to Tijuana. Her step-dad took her back. He came with his mom and one of her brothers. She’s gonna go back with her mom. She’s with her mom right now to Tijuana. We don’t know if she’s gonna come back or not. My big sister’s kind of happy that she left. She’ll buy, sometimes, like, chips. And then like, um – and then the – uh – my cousin would take ‘em to her room and she’ll hide them. And she’ll finish them all by herself. And then, sometimes my big sister has make up. You know how they go ahead and need make up. She would take her make up, or she would wear my clothes, and she’s already big. I kind of got tired of her. But at the same time she was kind of nice. They never paid nothing. My mom bought everything for her. When my mom get everything for her, and – but she – but when her friends would come, she would wear the same clothes. Like, she had a lot of clothes, but she would wear the same clothes. Like (unintelligible) she would wear the same clothes, but she had a lot. And her friends would tell her “you don’t have clothes”? Like, “No, my aunt doesn’t buy
me none.” But, my mom would buy her a lot. And my cousins – my cousins like
spoiled her.

Marlen seemed hungry to tell her about her own life and the Latino picture books
provided her with the opportunity. The following are some of the connections she made
between her life experiences and those portrayed in the books:

*Calling the Doves* (LPB-2)

…they work in the – in the – in the field. I don’t know how to say it in
Spanish – in English. my mom, she used to – my cousin that lives in Bakersfield;
my aunt does, and so does my uncle, does, um, the field. They was – they said it
was too hard and like, and they – it was like – like, ‘cause they lived across from
the field. All they gotta do is cross the road. And they said that they would – and
there was no work when they would finish. They couldn’t leave that – that place,
because that’s where all their family was. And, so, they had to wait until next
time, and they couldn’t find no jobs. ‘Cause there’s only like a Kmart and a
gasoline place in Wasco. It’s an hour away from Bakersfield. (Unintelligible)
practically in Bakersfield, is away from it, in a little town called Wasco. And they
would just be in the field. And, they had no work, so they moved here. My uncle
– he came over here to live, in a golf, and bighorns. He raked in a golf course,
and he sends money to her, to my aunt. So, ’cause over there, there’s not work.
You have to drive the bus, like an hour.

When Mr. Moody was reading this story, I was thinking about my aunt
and my mom used to work in this. And how hard – how my mom would stay in

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my mom’s ranch. At my mom’s ranch, they would have like roosters and horses. And we were taking a shower. And then my grandma used to do this – she was like a medicine lady – my grandma. So, my mom’s friend. My mom – when they moved already to Indio, we got an apartment, and we met a lady. And her name was – we called her Assencion. She had like a book of preven – medicines. And she would do that, too.

One time I had a really bad earache. I went to the hospital. The hospital gave me some medicine, but it didn’t work. And then she, she gave me a – she gave my mom something with uh, Yerba Buena, and I don’t know what else. And so, my mom made it like into a little tea and she put drops into my ear. It got better, like on the second day.

I think it’s important to have stories to connect to because you can – you can like – if you understand the story more, you can get more into it. If you, like – like –you’re part of the story. Because like you know more about the story. And that’s how you feel; like you’re in it. Like, when you – like, with most stories, when you know nothing about it, you’re like, okay. You learn, but you don’t feel the same as like, when you know the (unintelligible), you can connect to it. Like, when you know – like – kinda; - ‘cause like, when you cook an egg you kinda’ know what’s going to happen. And you feel good, like – It’s like, if you wrote a story about you. That’s it.

*I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4)
Cause *I Speak English for My Mom.* My – I – I – I do that for my mom. I go wherever my mom goes – up to the dog den and everything. I do that for my mom. And then, like, one time she didn’t want to go with her mom, but she still went with her. I’ve been like that too. Like sometimes you get tired of speaking English for your mom. And . . but – except my mom, she’s gonna take classes for English, too.

*La Mariposa* (LPB-5)

This one, I can connect to it. My class and my kindergarten. My teacher – my teacher, she had a house. And she was moving from her house. Her husband called her and he was all like, ‘there’s a bunch of caterpillars’. They got like fifteen caterpillars and they put three in each and each group had to take care of them. And then, whoever’s made it to be a butterfly . . and then . . they – they – they gotta get it free. And we – we –we feed them every day. And then we would – and then we put them – and then we’d put it – and then they would turn into a cocoon. And then, - and then in the morning when they came, it was – two of them had already broken. But, there was one more to be (unintelligible) and then, we were watching that one crack. And then we did a circle. Everybody did a circle outside. And then – and then – and then my group, we let ours go and they each let people – let theirs go. And then, we were learning a song about the butterflies, but I forgot how it went. And then, we would sing it to the butterflies when they left.So, when Mr. Moody was reading the story, that’s what I was thinking.
I connected, but not to me, but to my cousin. The one that – she was seven. She couldn’t speak English at all. And she couldn’t speak English and she like – and then – like, she has only eight months since she came with her family and – and – and now she -- And then, she – she feels – um – she couldn’t speak English and she came on – I think last month. And she could speak it clearly. Like, she could speak it clearly. Like, she spoke it better than my little sister. And my little sister, she was born here. I was impressed.

She learned so fast because she wasn’t shy at all. She wasn’t a shy girl. She was like . . . and when –she – her – she had lots – she was easy – she made friends easily. Like, if she (unintelligible), and then – and then –that’s how – that’s how she learned. Like, I think that’s how she learned. Like, she had a lot of friends and she talked with her friends. And like, she would – she didn’t like to speak Spanish anymore with us. She always liked to speak English to like, - to improve it. And that’s how she – I think that’s how she learned.

And, I think, like, sometimes I look out the window and I think – ‘cause you know how you can see the mountains and the trees? And I think, “well, I’m gonna’ go to recess right now” and I think, “I wonder what my mom’s doing right now?” because, like, she does different things every day. And, (unintelligible) part what is she doing. Is she – her – her friends. Like, when there’s this rattlesnake. They – they – they – they can’t just . . . They have to keep on working and (unintelligible) and sometimes the rattlesnakes attack, and they have to kill it. And sometimes my mom, she keeps a part; like last time she kept the rattle. It
was – it was a – the rattle was eleven years old a the time, I think. 
And, but, they stole it. I had it in my folder, and then I left it out at recess. My 
mom said it’s really hard to kill a rattlesnake and to get the rattle. And cause, 
now, everybody wants a rattlesnake. They say it’s good luck. And everybody wants it. 
So, it’s pretty hard to do that.

You know how you (he) colored that page (in the book)? They took a 
picture of me. they said they were going to give it back to me, but they never 
gave it back. They never give it back, and then they told – and then they told me, 
just like a month ago, that the wanted me to be a model for them – for 29 casino. 
and then, I was happy. I think they’re going to put them on to the casino, on next 
Monday. They’re gonna come up huge.

In general, Marlen enjoyed having stories to which she could connect and she was 
able to articulate not just that she liked the stories but why they were important to her:

I feel it’s really, really fun to have stories you can relate to, because you know – 
you know like – I don’t know how to explain it, but, like, you can – you – it’s 
better. I think it’s funner, because you know what they’re talking about. Lots of 
other students that connected to these stories, because, like, some people would 
like after they would read the story and at recess they would talk about it and say 
– they would say, like, “oh, how did you know about this?” And I’d say, “yeah, 
me too.” And that’s how we (unintelligible) and if it’s a good story, we talk about 
it at recess, or in lunch.
The use of Spanish in the classroom had been prohibited by the teachers; it is likely that the students had not had many opportunities to read Spanish in relation to school activities in Mr. Moody’s class. Marlen liked the fact that she got to read Spanish texts:

These books, there was a lot of Spanish .. Um, that’s the part I kind of like, ‘cause like, I know how to read Spanish and I and I – I like speaking it, ‘cause I speak it clearly. I can speak it better than English. ‘Cause it – and then, I can translate, ‘cause like (unintelligible) in English, I can translate it perfectly. Like, so, like exactly how the way they said it.

(At the school where she used to go) I had other books at school that were like these but I don’t know which one’s they were. And like they were fun – I could – I could relate to them because some books, they have Spanish in them. I could kind of relate to them. And – and – they’re kind of – they – they’re kind of funner . .because, like, I know what they’re talking about and like,

In different grades, other teachers had stories that were like these --. Kinda’ like that, but not - not so, like, I don’t know. They had stories like this. I know my fourth teacher – my fourth grade teacher had her some.

After Mr. Moody read these, I looked at the books. I did. I got this one. This one, and I got that one. “Calling the Doves”, and “La Mariposa” and “My Diary”. And “Calling the Doves”.

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Not only did Marlen appreciate the stories and the use of Spanish, but she also responded to the illustrations and connected her admiration of the illustrations with her own experiences in the visual arts:

This is a picture when I read this one. I would read it and it had like beads around it. I liked this one because it had Spanish all over. It was like, in this one a lot, too. Like most of the pictures were in Spanish. Like these. They’re really colorful. Like, this one’s really colorful and so is this one. Most of them have lots of color. like this one, and like they know how to mix up colors. And they know how to make it bright. in the Boys and Girls Club, there’s an artist and taught – he was teaching me how to draw roses. And teaches you how to blend colors and make them stick out. And he’s the one that made me the model. And he paid me for that, too.

The artist (illustrators)—they could express the people. Like, when they draw these pictures, I’m thinking that they would think, like, how to go (unintelligible). They drewed it this way for a reason. Like, not just because it’s a picture, but like – cause – and because they drewed the lizard thing. They have a reason for why they try to paint, not just because it’ll look pretty.

Like, in (unintelligible) you could get a picture, and you think: why’d he draw it this color? Why couldn’t he draw it this one? Like I said, why couldn’t he color this more green? Why couldn’t he color the butterfly pink? Like that. Or, could he wear a different shirt. That’s what I start thinking when you see pictures.
Marlen’s response to the pictures indicates that she is a creative and capable thinker, as she considers the choices the artist made in creating the illustrations. Marlen gave detailed responses to each of the five Latino picture books, relating personal experiences for many of the situations depicted in those stories. She summed up by saying, “they’re all my favorites!”

Ana

Like Saul and Enrique, Ana was 10 years old and had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. Ana was reclassified as English proficient in 4th grade. Her Accelerated Reader instructional reading level score was 4.1 in January, 2007.

She was born in the same city where she now lived; however, her mom and dad were both born in Mexico. “We have Spanish names,” Ana explained, followed by a small nervous laugh. Ana lived with her parents and younger sister, who was three years of age, in a house trailer. Extended family lives in Mexico and Ana’s family goes to visit them on holidays or when grandma is sick and needs their help. Spanish is Ana’s home language; in fourth grade she was reclassified as English proficient. Ana said she wasn’t sure if she could read or write in Spanish, but thought she could figure it out. Ana added that she translates for her mom at parent-teacher conferences, “’cause she doesn’t know much English.” Her mom went to school in Mexico and knows how to read and write in Spanish. Her mom told her that she used to have to run in PE just like Ana does. But her mom had to wear shorts instead of the school uniform. “When my mom was small they didn’t have a lot of things; didn’t always get what they wanted” explained Ana.

When asked to reflect on a memorable event in her life, Ana talked about her dad:
One time we went where my dad was born in Michoacan and we went to this place where there were mountains and under it there was like a rock; there were like grass and everything and we were walking down and when we got there, there was a river and we climbed to the top of the mountain and the river looked so pretty but I slipped on a rock and my dad caught me. I was about to fall in the river but my dad caught me. That’s why we went back because he didn’t want anyone else to slip. So we climbed on top of the mountain and my dad went first. I tricked my cousin. I told him a snake was behind him but it was really my tio. (Ana, initial interview, 12-6-06)

Ana, who sat in the front row of Mr. Moody’s classroom, described whole class story-reading events, stating: “Mr. Moody’s questions are important because he says they’re going to be on the test. The purpose of our discussion is to pass the test. Mr. Moody wants us to get good grades.” When Ana takes a turn to talk in class she feels like she’s talking to her friends and to Mr. Moody. She added:

Talking about the stories helps you remember for the test. Mr. Moody’s rules are that you have to raise your hand if you want to talk and you have to keep your place where you are or else you get detention. If we lose our place we get mixed up and then he has to call on somebody else and it takes more time.

According to Ana, small group discussions were different than whole class discussions, in the following ways:

It is smaller; you only have a little bit of time, but you can still relate to it. Like if we were reading ‘I Speak English for My Mom’, people say, “I do that for my
“mom, too” and “yeah, I do that too” and then we’re passing it on to different people, what they were saying about the story. When I say what I think, I can relate to it. We just talked and we didn’t have to raise our hands. It doesn’t make much difference whether we’re sitting in a small group facing one another or if we’re in class and different ones across the room are talking. What connects it is “somebody saying “that was a good story” and somebody else saying, “yeah, that was a good story because…”

Ana commented on student roles during small group discussions:

Michael was trying to calm them down, like to quiet them, Saul says funny stuff. I don’t know who is in charge because we never like put someone to be in charge but the one person who should be in charge should be Michael. I felt like I was the teacher when things were in Spanish. There was words and we were saying them and like Michael said, “Okay,, let’s get back to the story” I never felt there were certain jobs in that group. I felt like sometimes we switched jobs because sometimes it would be Marlen and Saul. Like Marlen was trying to talk and then Saul was “Be quiet, we’re trying to do the story, and I’d be like “just listen or “no listen to Michael”

Land that I Lost was Ana’s favorite Open Court story because, “it showed the grandma first of all being all shy and all and she steps out of her shell and she speaks for him because he’s weak and that’s why I liked it.” Ana compared herself to the grandma she had just described: “I’m not that quiet in the house and I don’t listen to my mom that
much. And like, others say “Ana’s so short.” I’m short from the outside but not from the inside.”

Ana’s favorite picture book, of the ones Mr. Moody read aloud to the class, was *I Speak English for My Mom*, because of an experience she shared with the main character of the story:

Once I tricked my mom at my parent teacher conference. Mr. Moody said, “she’s a really good student” and my mom said, “what did he say right now?” and I said, “I’m a really bad student” and like she said, “pero, pero, pero” and I said “just kidding, mom”

Xochilt

Xochilt was 10 years old and had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. She was born in California where she now lived with her parents and two older teenage sisters. Spanish is spoken in Xochilt’s home and Xochilt often translates for both her mom and her dad. She and her family travel often to Mexico to visit her mom and dad’s relatives and to celebrate holidays and family events. During her third grade year, Xochilt was reclassified as English proficient, losing the label English Learner (EL). Her Accelerated Reader instructional reading level score was 4.7 in Jan., 2007.

Xochilt offered a definition for discussion and described Mr. Moody’s practice of sharing personal examples when reading stories aloud to the class:

A discussion is a conversation about reading. A discussion is interesting. A discussion is when everybody has different ideas and we talk over something, like
a story, where everybody has questions and ideas. The teacher is teaching us about a story. Mr. Moody tells examples of his daughter, Moriah. He said that he didn’t listen to his friend Carmichael because one time he was fixing the car and then he told him not to turn it on and he got electrocuted. (laughing). He tells us those stories so we’ll understand more. Like in Love as Strong as Ginger, Mr. Moody said his dad worked in a factory and he wanted to work in a factory too, ’cause he thought it was easy, like the girl in the story. But he had to go to college to get a real job.

Xochilt added a detailed description of lesson procedures and classroom rules for turns to talk:

On Monday, we come back from the prep and he writes the things on the board. When he writes it, we read the story. We read it silently for a little while. I think reading the story with Mr. Moody and then going over it and getting ready for the test is better. We get ready for the test; getting information.

On the board, Mr. Moon writes questions and we answer them when the story is through and we do our question/concept board and we write the questions and he reads it to us and then we get the story and we look for the questions. Nobody can speak when another person is speaking because everything is gonna get all scrambled. They raise their hands or they make noises. When Mr. Moody calls on me, I am talking to the teacher when I answer.

Xochilt explained how small group discussions differed from whole class discussions and how she benefitted from participating in the small group:
The difference was that everybody had different questions and it was
different because right here in the little group we only agreed on some stuff but in
the whole group of the class, people didn’t know if we agree on the stuff. We just
have a question, we just say it and we could interrupt the person and right here
(whole group) we can’t. We have to raise our hands. They don’t talk; they call
on us.

It helped me because in the little group we have six people and every
person has different ideas and if somebody didn’t like or know exactly, we could
help them. It’s interesting and sometimes fun.

Xochilt’s favorite Open Court story was *Love as Strong as Ginger*, because
I could infer because of my own grandma and me. I spend time with her and I
like it because the little girl wants to have a job at the Chong and her grandma
says that she really wants her to have a better job than working right there. My
grandma says to me to follow my dreams to be a veterinarian.

*My Diary From Here to There* was Xochilt’s favorite picture book from the ones
Mr. Moody read aloud to the class. She especially liked the story because, “when she
leaves her friends and she goes to the other place so her family could get a better job.
And the pictures. I like the pictures. She could make new friends and her old friends will
write her. And then she could visit back.” However, Xochilt did not feel there was a
situation in the book that was similar to her own experiences: “No there wasn’t anything
in that story that was like anything that happened to me.” Xochilt then proceeded to
review three more of the picture books (*Calling the Doves, I Speak English for My Mom,*
and *La Mariposa*), relating some of her personal experiences and evaluating the characters’ decisions.

**Mrs. Nelson’s Peer Group Participants**

Cristian
Cristian was a small 10-year-old boy. He had been a student at Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. At school, Cristian is classified as a fifth-grade English Learner (EL). In January, 2007, his Accelerated Reader score was 4.1 instructional reading level.

Cristian’s parents were both born in Mexico, but Cristian was born in the city where he lived and where he attended school. Cristian lived with his parents and two younger brothers, 6 yrs and 3 months in age. His six-year-old brother was a first grade student at Jackson Elementary. Cristian’s aunt, his mother’s cousin and her two children, ages 6 and 11, also lived with Cristian and his parents and his two younger brothers. Both of his cousins also attended Jackson Elementary. Cristian’s father works construction and his mother is busy with a household of eight in their two-bedroom apartment. Cristian’s favorite room in his house is the living room “cause that’s where I read my book about two penguins.” (Cristian, initial interview, 12-05-06).

Spanish was spoken in Cristian’s home. Cristian reads Spanish and when asked about writing in Spanish, he responded, “a little bit.” Cristian sometimes translates for his parents and other family members. Their family travels to Mexico every weekend to visit relatives.

Cristian described an Open Court story-reading event in Mrs. Nelson’s class as follows:
I would have my paper out and I would be writing … I write on a piece of paper what I would like to talk about. We get the book and we go page by page to see the pictures. You raise your hand and Mrs. Nelson picks the person to talk first and then the next person talks. People talk about what Mrs. Nelson is reading. She asks questions from the book. We talk so we can know about the story and learn what the other people say. It helps ‘cause sometimes you don’t know some of the stuff that other people know and then they say it and then you know it.

When I hear other people’s stories [like about crossing the border] I felt the same ‘cause I knew what it felt like. In here, if they say something you don’t laugh at other people. (Cristian exit interview, 3-29-07)

Cristian also described how talking about stories in the small group was different than talking about stories with the class: “There was more talking in the big group [whole class] Instead of just a few people, lots of people in class got to talk. I think the small group helped me understand the story. I would be in a group again.” Cristian’s favorite Open Court story was *The Land I Lost* because it talked about jungle animals and it was from a different country. He said he had never heard of Viet Nam before. (Cristian, exit interview, 3-29-07)

Cristian also talked about the picture books. He liked the bilingual books in part because they gave him a scaffold for reading English:

They talked more about Mexico than other stories. They have Spanish. It helps having English and Spanish so if you don’t know Spanish you can read it in
English. I would try to read the English but then I could look at the Spanish to help me.

He had a personal connection to the main character in *La Mariposa* because Cristian’s experience had been similar:

I liked *La Mariposa* best because he was a little boy and when he went to English class he didn’t know English. I liked that part because I started to speak Spanish in kindergarten. I know how he felt. I think Mrs. Nelson should read these stories again next year. They would like them. (Cristian, exit interview, 3-29-07)

Ubaldo

Ubaldo is a tall, solid-built almost eleven-year-old who, like Cristian, had attended Jackson Elementary since kindergarten. Ubaldo was born in California. His English Learner classification at school is English Only. In February, 2007, Ubaldo’s Accelerated Reader score was 4.2 instructional reading level.

Ubaldo’s parents were both born in Mexico. Ubaldo lives with his parents and his younger brother, a pesky three-year-old, in a trailer. Ubaldo’s mother works at the Department of Motor Vehicles and his father works for a local pool cleaning company. Ubaldo described his family in the following way: “My dad tells us to do the chores, to help mom clean, with the dog and a lot of stuff and my mom tells me to do my homework. My little brother makes us laugh.” (Ubaldo, initial interview, 12-05-06)

Ubaldo’s family travels to Mexico to visit his dad’s side of the family. His mother’s family (an uncle and two aunts and his grandmother) lives in the same city as he does. When they get together, everybody usually goes to Ubaldo’s house. At home, Ubaldo’s parents speak mostly English, even though both are fluent in Spanish.
However, grandma, with whom they spend lots of time, only speaks Spanish. When asked if he could read Spanish, Ubaldo answered, “kinda-sorta.” “If I was going to write a note in Spanish to my grandma, I’d have to have my dad help me a little bit.” According to Ubaldo, his parents want him to know Spanish and be good in English too.

Ubaldo said he enjoyed hearing his dad tell stories about when he used to be in school with all his friends, playing soccer, and visiting his cousins. Ubaldo related one story in particular: “One Sunday he told me the story that I had long lost cousins in Mexico but I didn’t know that and he showed me a picture of them and he told me they played the drums.” (Ubaldo, initial interview, 12-05-07)

Ubaldo watches his favorite movie “Tokyo Drift” (about racing cars) in English, although he explained that you could also pick Spanish. Ubaldo added that he hopes to be an actor and that he wanted to go to Mars.

Ubaldo’s understanding of classroom discussion was based on the idea that he and the other students did not have sufficient knowledge to adequately understand the text:

She discusses the story with us so we can have more background information. So we can read; so we can remember, “oh, my fifth-grade teacher told me about that stuff”. Story discussions make a difference because when you’re actually talking about it, there is background information that you don’t know about it. When you’re just reading the story, there are little clues that kids our age don’t see and when the teacher reads it, she sees clues. We go over it, and we think, “Oh, I didn’t see that” and then we can recognize what it is.” We just learn from the teacher; she says everything that is mostly important.
In relation to the function of class discussions, Ubaldo commented:

Sometimes there’s people smarter than me in class and sometimes they pick up on something that I don’t get when I’m reading it and they clear it up for me.

Sometimes Mrs. Nelson says it, but I don’t click on; but when other kids say it, I start clicking on and that helps me learn more.

The personal stories Mrs. Nelson told helped Ubaldo to connect more to his teacher by giving him insight into her life:

She does that because she’s trying to relate it to the story and she is trying to get us to see; it’s like a side conversation. When she tells her stories, I find out that even though I thought she was just an average teacher, like playing and being mean sometimes, now, when she talks about everything, she seems nice. Sometimes she can get crazy and it seems like she’s gonna go overboard, but its fun when we’re with her. She’s not just a teacher at school, she’s a real person.

When she’s telling a story about her own life, then other kids raise their hands and tell about their own lives … like ME! Like right now the story we’re reading is about scheming people out of money. I do that to my little brother sometimes [laughing] and it connects me to the story. It’s scary because you never know it’s going to start happening. It just builds and you start talking and it’s down here [motions low] and then you start, and you keep going, and then you make it to the top – it’s really fun! When everybody tells their stories you get to know them better and it makes me feel like I’m not the only one that’s been
going through that. Like one time our car broke down in the middle of the desert and someone else said their car broke down in the middle of the desert too.

Ubaldio felt he most connected with *The Land I Lost* (OC-1) because at the end of the story the main character’s grandmother died. Ubaldio said, “Sometimes I hang around with my grandma a lot and then the next day, in the story, the grandmother passed away. I would be sad if that happened to my grandma.” Ubaldio also mentioned *Love as Strong as Ginger* (OC-4), in terms of the little girl wanting to be like her grandma and her grandma wanting her to have a better life:

My grandma came from Germany and my grandfather was very sick for a long, long time and so he couldn’t work, so my grandmother had to work and they didn’t have a lot. She just always wanted me to go to school and have a better life than they did, so you know, that would probably be my favorite – my connection.

Ubaldio felt he related to *My Diary From Here to There* (LPB-1) because “I have a really, really close relationship with my dad and I felt like she did when she missed her dad so much when they were separated and how they felt when they finally got back together. I probably related to that one the most.”

The small group experience seemed to be positive for Ubaldio because of more opportunities to share his thoughts; constructing meaning together with the other students was enjoyable for Ubaldio:

In the small group it was better because we could speak up and when Mrs. Nelson is discussing, she doesn’t notice our hands sometimes. Sometimes we had good conversations about the story and I would jump in and we would connect and that
helped everyone understand the story…Everybody was like their own boss and they were just themselves and they could say what they think good or bad about the story.” (Ubaldo, exit interview, 4-11-07)

Abraham

Abraham is a medium-built boy with a heavy Spanish accent. At school, he was classified as an English Learner and also as gifted. His Accelerated Reading score for instructional reading level was 3.1 in October, 2006 and 3.0 in May, 2007. He and his younger brother, Julian, 7 yrs., were born in Indio.

Abraham’s dad hangs dry wall (construction) and his mom works in a hair salon. Both of Abraham’s parents were born in Mexico, where his paternal and maternal grandparents still reside. His mother’s father is a mechanic and his grandmother sells clothes in the swap meet. At Abraham’s trailer, he and his brother share a bedroom; Abraham sleeps on the top bunk and his brother sleeps below him. Abraham said his father came to the United States when he was fifteen. He went to one or two years of high school in Mexico. When he came to the U.S., “he had to pass rivers” with two of his uncles. Some relatives live in Mexico, some in Indio and some aunts, uncles and cousins live by Riverside, CA. Abraham’s dad tells Abraham to try hard in school so he can get a good job. Abraham’s family has a Toyota and it has a hand brake that goes up.

Abraham is interested in driving cars.

Like over there there’s like these little poor cars and they like to win a lot of money; dollar bills and they put it right there in a big old stack. The cars are like taxis. They go around a centro where they sell stuff and food. They make good
shows and they sell good good snacks. Working construction like my dad does is a little too hard. Driving is more relaxing.

Abraham also likes boxing.

Abraham and his family travel to Mexico to visit his grandparents (both sides of the family).

Last summer we didn’t go to Mexico because every day I had to go to the Boys and Girls Club. My mom went to a little beauty college over there by Kmart. I would like living in Mexico better than living here. When I’m older I will go back and stay there because it’s fun.

Abraham speaks Spanish at home and only speaks English when at school.

I remember my mom bought me a book at a garage sale and I said, “What does it say, what does it say in Spanish?” And my mom taught me how to read it. She told me that “H” never has a sound. It’s just silent. So every single day I started reading it by my own and when my mom came home I told her all the words I missed. It was fun reading Spanish.

Sometimes when they give us xxxx they have to be in English and I have to read them for my mom. Sometimes I translate for my mom at teacher-parent conferences. I don’t tease my mom about English ‘cause she understands it. She would know.

Abraham admitted to getting into trouble when he discussed his memories:
I get in fights. They start pushing. But sometimes when they’re coming they go and hide and they’re talking about stuff. They want to get close. Then they start staring. Then they start arguing.

I remember the first fight with that kid. He’s all like, “punch him, punch him” and I’m all like “okay.” “Boom!” They told me to do it. My mom and dad don’t know ‘cause I hang out with xxxx in my park. There are trailers. So I made a place where we could do everything we want. One time we made a campfire and they told and I got in trouble. My friend gave me a lighter and I got alcohol and we threw it right there. I knew about using alcohol with fire because over there in Mexico my tio told me. I went “whoosh, whoosh” and it went “foom.”

So I made a place in my trailer park where we could do everything we want. One time we made a campfire and they told and I got in trouble. My friend gave me a lighter and I got alcohol and we threw it right there. I knew about using alcohol with fire because over there in Mexico my tio told me. I went “whoosh, whoosh” and it went “foom.”

I got in a fight in my front yard. Every single kid came in my front yard (from the trailers) and I felt kinda nervous and that kid wouldn’t get out of there. We were fighting.

In the Living Desert I was getting all happy and my parents are all like “we’re going to the monkey bars” and in the middle of the way there was a big animal; a rat, I think. I ran back with my parents.
Another time I was in a car going up the mountain, and my window was down and the car hit a little ramp. I was doing my homework and it took it up. I was trying to finish it and I only needed three more pages and I was going ’man, what ma I going to do about my homework? But it was a big sandstorm.

When I was five, my grandma from Mexico came to our house for a visit. I saw her car and I was scared. I had only come on an airplane and I didn’t know you could come or go with a car.

He appears to have a strong relationship with both of his parents:

My dad taught me how to change the oil in the car. He shows me but sometimes I don’t pay attention. I just look in the car.

My dad teaches me how to work like he does doing the drywall. There is a little bar that you grab it and pull it down into those little things. That’s one of my favorite this to do. If I do a great job they might give me more than what I need. When it gets to the end of the month, my dad might buy me something I want.

I can tell when my mom’s not happy with me by the way she talks to me. I just hug her and she acts like she doesn’t care and that means she’s mad. I can tell my dad is upset by what he says and what he does. Sometimes if I get in trouble he’ll tell me ‘go to your room’. My brother will be helping my dad and I think, “boy, it’s better being grounded than helping out.”

He reported other concerns and events in his life:
When I go to my room I just grab up my MP3 and listen and when they come to my door I hide it under my pillow.

I worry about my hair ‘cuz when my hair grows it’s hard to handle and I don’t like it. That’s why I have it like this (cut short). I don’t even have to worry about it. All I worry is shampoo and that’s it.

When I have a birthday we can go to the manager’s place and there we open up and there’s the air conditioner. We can eat in there, watch TV or something. They let you rent it for a little while. My mom and dad makes our special food. We had a big, big thing full of meat. I miss that food because I love meat. Lots of family and friends come from down here in Indio.

What I dream of is my parents making me a birthday in Mexico. I would stay up late so the day would not be over. We’d have fireworks. In Mexico at Christmas we do big fireworks and I like hearing them.

Abraham was not all that enamored with the Open Court anthology:
We read those stories every single year from first, second, third, fourth, fifth. I had to read those stories and it bored me. I’m at school all day and I always see that book (student anthology). It’s not that interesting. It reminds me of test, test, test, over and over and over again.

About Mrs. Nelson’s discussions, he stated:
Mrs. Nelson talks about the story with the class because you could understand the book. It’s better to talk about it because you’re reading and you might be tired
and can’t talk about it. She explains what’s happening. The teacher will tell you how it’s happening.

He reported that most of the students raise their hands. His conclusion about the basal reader was: “The stories at school are boring. It all repeats the same thing over and over. It’s much more interesting when the characters get to do something cool like taking a shower in the front yard” (reference to *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2).

According to Abraham, students participate in the discussions that Mrs. Nelson leads, but responses by the students seem to be directed to the teacher:

When I’m at my desk in the class and I answer a question I’m talking to Mrs. Nelson about the story and telling one of the things that happened to me.

Other kids tell stories during discussion. Our stories help. Like I found out things about other kids from their stories; things I didn’t know. If nobody tells things then it’s boring.

Cesar also reported that his class was a comfortable place for interaction:

Sometimes when they get too nervous, too excited xxxx. In class it feels safe to tell our stories because if it was all the fifth graders it wouldn’t be safe because the teachers teach in different ways so there’d be others. Most of the time they think the same way. There’s respect in our class.

Of the stories from her own life that Mrs. Nelson used in class discussion, Abraham stated: “Mrs. Nelson’s stories about her family make it real and then we’re more interested.”
Although Abraham had stated that he didn’t care for “school stories,” he did find some connections between his life and the Open Court story, *The West Side:*

*The West Side* (OC-3) was my best one because when they had those big houses (New York City); where I go to Mexico it’s like those big houses together. It makes me happy.

*The West Side* (OC-3) made me think about Mexico. When they were playing in the street it’s like in Mexico there’s an entrance all the way deep (like an alley in between) and they live there but you could play there. We played stickball like in the story. We played hide and seek outside. I like the story with Spanish in it. Every time I go to the library I read them and they’re more interesting.

I remember *The West Side.* Every time I go to Mexico there’s another wide hole. We were passing through there I always used to see the wires. The electrical wires were hanging down. Then we passed by these big buildings. Abraham commented on the different format of the picture books: “I like the stories because they are easier to handle. They’re not all together in a big book.” The picture books caused him to remember incidents in his family’s life:

I like two of ‘em. *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2) and *I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4). In *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2), I liked the little house (on top of the car) ‘cause I like it when it’s quiet or you can hear the music. He built the house onto their car. I’ve only been in little tents. My dad worked on the farms.
When he was like 16 he was in Mecca and he worked on the farms. He’d steal the oranges.

I was born in Indio but my dad came with his cousins and his uncle and he started working and he decided to stay. He knew my mom in Mexico. He lived there and then he went to visit my mom and they met. They told me a little part. They came by airplane. They landed some place, then they went by car, then they went through the desert and then they just got their papers.

*I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4) reminds me when I was little I had to help my mom. It felt kinda cool.

*La Mariposa* (LPB-5) – he showed his jacket to the guy and they had a fight. I remember when the door had a little sign and it had my name so I started kicking and punching the door and they found it out and the teacher came out and she gave me a referral. I didn’t know how to speak English. So I went back to my class and I started playing ’cause everybody else was playing and I started going to play with the cars. I made a little ramp and I used to throw the cars. And the wheel broke. So I put it back. I put it hidden so the teacher wouldn’t look at it. The other kid got it and he’s yelling, Who broke it? There was yelling, yelling, yelling. It sounded like Chinese to me but he was speaking English. Almost everybody in my class knew English.

In describing his participation in the small groups, Abraham stated:

It’s fun because you don’t have to do the classroom. We had more chance to talk with each other. When I’m at my desk in the class and I answer a question I’m
talking to Mrs. Nelson about the story and telling one of the things that happened to me…In small group there was no teacher. It was really fun. We could laugh.

In the class we might get in trouble for laughing too much…I liked talking about the stories. It helped.

Katrina
At the time of this study, Katrina was 11 years old; she had been born in Indio. She entered Jackson Elementary at age six, in first grade. She retained in first grade the following year, a fact which she commented upon: “I’m supposed to be in 6th, but then they held me back. I flunked first. I felt bad. But now I have more friends.” Her English Learner classification at school is: English Only. According to the Accelerated Reader assessment, Katrina was reading at a 3.2 instructional level in January, 2007.

Katrina and her two siblings live with their mom and step-dad. Her dad is remarried, and Katrina has a little step-sister who lives with Katrina’s dad and his wife. Katrina sees her dad, step-mom and step-sister on the weekends.

Katrina has her own bedroom. Her dad does construction, including electrical. Her mother works afternoons and evenings at a bar and Katrina’s step-dad watches the kids in the afternoons (after school).

Katrina has a grandmother, her biological father’s mother, who lives in Indio. Katrina has a strong connection to her: “I love her so much. She’s the only grandma I have. She likes to have fun and she likes to do anything I like. She helps me to cook and watching her, now I know how to cook. I cook cake, cupcakes, eggs, pappas. And she taught me about tortillas.”
Katrina wants to be a professional boxer when she grows up. She has an uncle who has coached her and encouraged her. She has a professional boxer as her trainer. He bought boxing gloves for her. Being a boxer presents her with a variation on the typical girl’s obsession with weight:

I can never eat whenever a fight’s coming up. I need to get on a diet. When I get on a diet I feel like quitting. And then I start crying because I want to eat something and I can’t. I just eat salad. I have to stay under 75 pounds.

Katrina says she likes to read, but she likes boxing better than reading.

In addition to boxing, Katrina wants to be a teacher: “I want to keep up my boxing, finish high school and go to college. I see my brother Jesse’s homework (like multiplying pi) and I think I could be able to do that.” Katrina says school helps her in math and she says she could be a teacher and teach kids how to do math. Her fourth grade teacher at Jackson inspired Katrina’s desire to be a teacher. That teacher likes to work out; she runs. “I really want to be like her. She teaches things that people are supposed to know and that they don’t get. And I want to be like her. And she’s funny, too.”

Asked about memorable events in her life, Katrina mentioned one from her home life and one from her school life:

I won my first fight at the 20 Spotlight (local casino). I won a belt.

We did a science experiment with Mrs. Dobson and we needed to get a wire and a magnet and a battery. And we put the wire on the magnet only and then if you touch it, it’s all hot. I showed it to my dad.
Katrina, her step-dad, mother and brothers, travel to Mexico to visit her grandpa (step-dad’s father) in San Luis for his birthday and for holidays and in the summer Katrina goes to stay for two weeks. It’s fun; they go to the beach. Katrina’s mom and step-dad speak both English and Spanish at home (even though the school records indicate that they speak only English). Katrina says she knows how to read Spanish but not how to write it.

About reading, Katrina says:

I don’t get to read my reading book all the time. I just read like one page, ‘cause then you have to get back to work. I don’t ever take my reading book home. I think people read so they can get better at it. And so you can read the words in math to learn the angles and how many degrees there is. You’re supposed to learn how to read ‘cause if you don’t then you can’t be passing grades. And it’s fun at home. I have chapter books and whenever I’m bored I just read it. It’s sort of boring at the beginning but when there’s an exciting part I just keep reading and reading and then it makes sense and I want to keep reading. I get into the book and I want to keep reading. Maybe what’s happening in the book happened to you and it’s interesting and you want to learn more about it.

Katrina defines a discussion as the class talk that compares what happens to the teacher to the characters in the story. (“they’re having a discussion about something that happened to her (Mrs. Nelson) so she discusses it”). Katrina stated: “You know Angela, the volunteer? (classroom aide). Here she acts all nice and she still acts nice at the Boys
and Girls Club; she’s the staff and she acts cool. Mrs. Nelson just reads the story and
tells a little bit about it.”

The purpose of going over the stories in the class for Katrina is preparation for
assessments: “If Mrs. Nelson asks me a question, then I answer back and I end up getting
it right and it makes me feel happy because I got the answer right and when I get the
answer right that might be the answer on the test, and I can get it.”

The Open Court story to which Katrina expressed a connection was *Love as
Strong as Ginger* (OC-4), “…because I like crab and I always wanted to work with my
grandma like Katie got to go to work with her grandma. My grandma used to work in a
hotel but she passed away. She would always take me. I helped her fill up the water
bottles.” Her connection to the Latino picture books appeared to be strong. When asked
about the picture books, she grabbed one and said:

This one! *I Speak English for My Mom.* Because if you speak Spanish and
English you can help someone. I connected with the little girl in the story because
my grandpa speaks Spanish and I speak Spanish too. My brother Jesse, he
doesn’t speak Spanish. So when my grandpa speaks Spanish to Jesse I always tell
my brother what he said. Sometimes my brother tries to speak Spanish but he
doesn’t know how. He says, “Grandpa, you get’um milk” and it’s funny. Then
my grandpa goes “que?” He goes “you quiero leche” I’m like, “Jesse, he says you
get milk” Jesse goes I don’t care.

Katrina mentioned that she also liked *La Mariposa* “because he imagines things,
like he’s flying and I like butterflies like he does.”
Katrina discussed the printed language issue in relation to the school privileging of English:

At my house we have books that have Spanish and English in them. “At school those books don’t …In my class I think you shouldn’t have those books because we’re not supposed to be learning Spanish; we’re supposed to be learning English and we get all mixed up cause we want to go to Spanish and then we keep reading the Spanish but we’re not supposed to ‘cause we have to learn English.

In terms of the small discussion groups, Katrina seemed to have a good experience:

When we’re in the group I have more things to tell because I don’t have to raise my hand and I can just tell a big old huge story and it makes me feel comfortable when we’re in a group. We can each take turns and tell them about the story.

If I would answer a question, the other kids would just pay attention to me and when I was done they would answer back. We were like little teachers taking turns.

Nathaly
Nathaly is ten years old and has been at Jackson Elementary for five years, since first grade. Although she was initially classified as an English Learner, in fourth grade she was reclassified as English Proficient. In first grade she was also classified as gifted. Her Accelerated Reader score was 4.3 instructional reading level in October, 2006. In Jan., 2007 it was 6.5, Feb., 6.3 and May, 2007 it was 5.7.
Nathaly lives with her mother and father and her twenty-one year old twin brothers. At the time of the research, her mother was pregnant with a baby boy. Nathaly’s dad is a printer and her mom works as a housekeeper. Nathaly’s brothers share a bedroom and Nathaly has her own room. They decorate their house for Christmas; put a Santa Claus up on the roof. One set of her grandparents lives in California. Her other grandmother lives in Coachella. Her maternal grandmother speaks a little English; the paternal grandmother speaks only Spanish. Nathaly has an aunt that lives in Yuma, Arizona.

Nathaly and her family travel to Mexico to visit her great aunts and uncles. My family over there in Mexico is poor and I love giving clothes to them so they can be clean and healthy. While school records say that only English is spoken at home, actually both English and Spanish are spoken there. Nathaly says she can read in Spanish but would need to use her Spanish dictionary to write in Spanish. She mentioned book from the library, Viva Heather! that has Spanish words in it.

About the classroom discussions, Nathaly says:

A discussion is how you describe the story and break it into parts so you can understand it better and read it more than once. You break it into parts by reading it paragraph by paragraph and slow down. You wait until you understand it better before reading the next paragraph. If you keep on reading it and reading it you’ll know more about what it says and you won’t get confused about what the words mean.
After Mrs. Nelson reads the story we do lessons about it. Every unit has a different meaning and kids need to understand the meaning. She has discussions about the stories so we can understand the story more. If you don’t understand when it says “he” or “she” did something, you don’t know which character it means and then Mrs. Nelson explains the whole thing.

Nathaly’s comments about pronouns likely reflect the fact that because Spanish verbs indicate not just the tense but the gender of the subject and the number, the subject pronoun is only used when there might be confusion or to place emphasis on the subject. By way of contrast, English verbs do not convey as much information about the subject of the sentence and therefore subject pronouns are used all the time; emphasis in English comes about through tone of voice. Therefore, Spanish speakers learning English can find themselves struggling with the English use of pronouns.

About the classroom discussions of the Open Court stories, Nathaly had a lot to say:

When Mrs. Nelson asks a question, and I answer it, I don’t feel like I’m talking to her. I feel like I’m talking to my friends in the class. The people who don’t respect me, I try not to pay attention to them but it kind of hurts sometimes.

We learn from each other. What other students have in their minds and what they are thinking about and what kinds of questions they have lets you know what kind of person they are. If they ask rude questions, they’re rude people. It helps you see there’s more than one answer. It might lead to the same thing (conclusion) but it’s in each student’s own way. Some students are really shy. If
you’re nervous or sad you have something in your heart and you don’t want to let it out.

Mrs. Nelson tells us to connect to the story. It’s like you put yourself in the story; you imagine you’re in the story and you’re talking. It’s more fun that way and it helps us remember. When students tell their stories, like our most fearful days (my friend told me he was in a terrible car accident in the mountains. His mom was squished by the car and his father and his little brother and him and he shared that story with the whole class.

I think some students stay quiet in class because they’re afraid to tell their stories. They’re quiet, like me, ‘cause I don’t like to tell what happens. But, after he told his story about the car accident, then I raised my hand and told about my worst thing. I almost got shot because at my baby sister’s house there was two men outside and they started shooting.

Sometimes the teacher asks, “what happened?” but I’m still shy because things happen to my family a lot and I don’t like telling them all but I told some stories. Sometimes our stories matter to one another and sometimes they don’t. It’s just nice to say “I hope you feel better” and respect them. Sometimes I worry that if I say something personal about my family that someone will laugh or disrespect me. That’s what happened to me in first and second grade. I never wanted to speak about my life. Sometimes I messed up my words because I mostly spoke Spanish then. I went to kindergarten in Coachella. I speak more Spanish, and when I came here I couldn’t really understand the teachers much.
And when I messed up words, like I might say something bad or something silly, but it was something personal of mine and the kids laughed. But then in here, I got courage from other people speaking.

In this class the rules in class are to respect each other and when someone else is speaking, don’t interrupt them. Mrs. Nelson is not the only one that asks questions. The students ask lots of questions but sometimes they don’t raise their hands and someone else is talking and that’s kind of rude. In the end, they almost end up saying the same thing.

Nathaly recognized the role of the personal stories that Mrs. Nelson told in connection with the literature they were reading:

Mrs. Nelson tells stories about her family, connecting them to the story. Some of her stories are funny and sometimes they’re sad. Once she told a really funny story about being in a canoe. She shares with us when she’s connecting to the story. Sometimes students tell things that have happened in their life. Sometimes Mrs. Nelson tries to make their stories connect to the story but the kids don’t really know that it’s connecting to the story, but it is. Mrs. Nelson’s stories are sometimes about her religion and what has happened to her when she was young and that tells us what she is and was. When she was a little kid she was a trouble-maker but now she’s become a school teacher. She’s a teacher, a wife, a mom, and a daughter too.

Nathaly finds reading valuable and she has books at home. She also goes to the library:
You read so you can learn more about what it’s about. Maybe it has things about your life and your culture.

At my house I have this closet that’s about this big and this wide; about this tall from the ground, right here, and that’s where I keep all of my books. My favorite one is La Betito. The Treehouse chapter books are my favorite chapter books.

When I go to the library I’m supposed to check out yellow books (4.3-4.6). Her favorite book from the library is La Patitio Feo (The Ugly Duckling). It’s in Spanish.

At school, the first day we do the story we do the picture walk. Mrs. Nelson starts to read the story but sometimes I don’t listen to her read because I’m just reading it myself and I keep on reading it over and over because you can understand it better if you’re reading it yourself. With regard to the picture books, Nathaly said, we don’t usually read books in class but when you put them on the projector, I liked reading them myself.

When asked about important memories, Nathaly described the loss of several animals:

We had two birds that had some babies. Some falcons by our house came and ate two of the babies. My dad made a trap for the falcon, to protect the third baby. But it didn’t work; it got the third baby. Also, a few weeks ago, my bunny, Chewy, died. First I bought two rabbits, a girl and a boy. They had babies and...
Chewy was the only one that lived. He liked to chew on my fingers so I called him “Chewy”. My Chihuahua used to fight with Chewy because she was jealous.

Nathaly mentioned her history of pets: a German shepherd dog, 12 puppies, other rabbits, a Pikachu, and her cousin’s cats.

Nathaly found some characteristics in common between herself and a character in the Open Court story, *Love as Strong as Ginger*:

I connected to *Love as Strong as Ginger* (OC-4), because when I go to my grandmother’s place, she doesn’t know English well. It’s like (in the story) her grandmother not knowing English, but her granddaughter knows English and Chinese; two languages. Like I have to speak Spanish to my grandmother. I help her do the dishes and I take care of the kids she’s taking care of. I’m like the little girl in *Love as Strong as Ginger* (OC-4) ‘cause I’m more fascinated with what my grandma does and I love helping her. I’m the one that cleans her face. I like to sleep over at her house just like the little girl did. My grandmother lives in Coachella. I love to sleep over on the weekends. She lives in the Mecca Vineyards. It was an apartment but that was the old name. Sometimes my grandma goes to my aunt’s house in Yuma, Arizona.

When Nathaly goes to visit her aunt in Yuma, she gets to visit her friends that used to go to Jackson Elementary.

In discussing the Latino picture books, Nathaly mentioned several of them as having some significance to her. She stated that she enjoyed reading the books herself as
they were projected during the class reading. Also, she wondered about *La Mariposa*, if it was a true story. Additionally, she said:

*I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4) is just like me. I speak English for my aunts and uncles and cousins and translate for them. I connected with the little girl and I thought about my aunt being the mom in the story. My aunt knows a little English but not a lot. It feels exciting when the story is connected to your personal life. We have it in our school library.

[Regarding *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2)]: My grandmother and grandfather used to take all my cousins and me traveling. When my parents had to be gone, they used to leave us with our grandfather and grandmother. They would always take us to Mexico. We used to have lots of kids in the car and we’d have little fights. My grandfather didn’t get made. My cousin Jenev, we called him nino, is the one I hang out with. We got a pot and we were going to make food for my grandparents to thank them for what they always did for us. We put some water in the pot and we put in tomatoes, potatoes, peas and rice. We didn’t cut anything up we just put it in. When they came in we said, “here’s your lunch!” My grandmother was quiet and my grandfather said, “you have to cook it first.” That’s why I connect with *Calling the Doves* (LPB-2). Because they were traveling and cooking. And I traveled to Mexico and we cooked.

Regarding *Friends from the Other Side*, Nathaly said her parents knew people that had come across the border without papers. They had to hide from immigration. Nathaly said, “that’s a huge risk doing that. Helping them hide. It takes a lot of trust and it takes
lots of friendship to do that.’’ She concluded, “Books like these, about people from Mexico, make us feel more at home.”

The small group experience did not seem to be as positive experience for Nathaly as it did for many of the other students. She saw herself as choosing not to take authority in the group:

I talk more in the whole class discussion than in the small group. It’s better when it’s me and just one other person. In the big group I don’t feel like people are looking at me. Since there was no teacher and no tests over those stories, the kids wanted to goof off more. When we met in the small group, I was trying to read the books.

Ubaldo was kind of in charge. He used to say, “it’s our turn” and stuff like that. Sometimes I didn’t like it even though he’s a friend. Our parents know each other.

Ubaldo wasn’t always in charge. Sometimes Bianca – in fact everyone took turns being in charge except me. I was the one that was quiet.

Genesys

Genesys had just had her tenth birthday when I interviewed her. She showed off her new earrings. She was born in Indio. She lived in La Quinta when she was a baby and then moved to Indio. Genesys was reclassified as English proficient in 3rd grade. She was classified as gifted (Raven) in the 1st grade. Her Accelerated Reading score was 3.9 in October, 2006, 4.0 in Jan., 2007, 3.7 in Feb., 2007 and 4.5 in May, 2007.
Genesys lives with her mom and dad, her four brothers and her uncle Rafael. Genesys says her baby brother cries a lot. He wakes up crying at 3 or 4 in the morning and Genesys wakes up too. Her dad works in construction and mom works delivering pizzas. Uncle Rafael works in a restaurant. Rafael was born in Jalisco, Mexico. Genesys’s paternal and maternal grandparents also live in Jalisco, Mexico. Dad came first to the US, with his job. Mom came later, afraid that he was going to leave her. They married in La Quinta. All the children were born in California.

Genesys and her family go to Jalisco, Mexico to visit her grandparents and other extended family. Mom and dad speak Spanish at home. Genesys says, “I talk like a little baby to my mom and my dad. I say, donde es water instead of donde agua.” Genesys translates for her mom at parent-teacher conferences. Her mom can understand some English, and can write a little in English, but she does not speak English. Genesys knows how to read and write “a little bit” in Spanish. Genesys’s mom asks Genesys to help her make her English correct. Genesys Her mom asks her:

“How do you say this or say that?” Then she says, “if I say this sentence, does it sound right?” Or “do I need to put like a”…she gets mixed up; “did” and “do” ..she says, “Do you hold it like that?” and I’m like, “you’re supposed to say “did,” not “do.”

Genesys says “my first language is Spanish.” Her mom always speaks Spanish to her. Like many kids her age, she says, “when I hear my whole name I know I’m in trouble.” [laughing]
In regard to reading in general, Genesys’s library book is ‘The Empty Pot’ 4.0 reading level. She chose that book because she said, “All my teachers; they always used to read that book and I like it.” Genesys mentioned a story that she felt was kind of like her own family, “The Mystery of the Fair:”

It was like a mystery but there was a family and they were trying to get something for their mom or dad but when they went to the store they didn’t have enough money to buy that present so they got an idea to go to the fair. They were trying to look for it and they found it and they solved the mystery and then they got the present and then they got fifty dollars so they could buy their present for their mom and dad.

Genesys seems to be a strategic reader, as she states in relation to the Open Court anthology:

I don’t ever read the stories out of the book myself. Sometimes I read a sentence, like when I’m following along. If I don’t understand the vocabulary word I could go back and read the sentence and I could try to figure out what it means.

Genesys described the typical classroom discussion and student participation from her perspective:

The rules in our class are that you have to raise your hand and say what you felt or thought. There is not just one right answer to Mrs. Nelson’s questions. People talk about the story but they don’t always agree. Once I was trying to say something and someone else said “no” but it was because I couldn’t express how.
I can understand more of the story when I grab the meaning. If I’m afraid and I don’t really want to say anything I can just listen to what others say.

People talk about how they feel and where they come from. When I listen to their stories I find out some of them are like me.

A lot of times I think I know what I’m gonna say but I don’t say anything and then someone else talks and then I know I was right. I can learn from what they said. Sometimes I don’t say anything because I’m not sure.

In terms of the Open Court stories, Genesys liked *The Land I Lost* (OC-1) best, “because sometimes it’s sad; sometimes it’s happy. Like when the grandmother dies, it was sad and like when the grandma was funny.” As for the Latino picture books, she stated she liked *I Speak English for My Mom* (LPB-4) because “I remember when *I Speak English for My Mom*. I played a trick on my mom like the little girl in the story did. Mrs. Nelson said I was a good student and then my mom asked, ‘what did she say?’ and I said, ‘she said I was not a good student.’” [laughing]

Finally Genesys reported that she liked the small group discussions about the Latino picture books:

It was different than being with the whole class. We could talk free; we didn’t have to raise our hand. I got to say what I wanted to say. Different kids said whose turn it was, like “your turn, your turn, go after…” I think the small group was important because we could express how we feel about things. It’s important to know how others feel. If they know how I feel then I feel like they are understanding me.
### Appendix B: Student Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years At Jackson</th>
<th>Primary Language (first language spoken)</th>
<th>Proficiency/RFEP (Reclassified Fluent English Proficient)</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>AR Reading Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moody</td>
<td>10 yrs. 11 mos.</td>
<td>1 yr. (5th)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English Only</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>10 yrs. 9 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English Only</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrique</td>
<td>10 yrs. 3 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>RFEP, English Proficient 4th grade</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlen</td>
<td>10 yrs. 8 mos.</td>
<td>1 yr. (5th)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>RFEP, English Proficient 3rd grade</td>
<td>GATE</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>10 yrs. 3 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>RFEP, English Proficient 4th grade</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xochilt</td>
<td>10 yrs. 8 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English Proficient 3rd grade</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>10 yrs. 4 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English Learner</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cristian</td>
<td>11 yrs. 1 month</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English Only</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cristian</td>
<td>10 yrs. 7 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English Learner</td>
<td>GATE</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>11 yrs. 5 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (1st)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English Only</td>
<td>Retained 1st grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathaly</td>
<td>10 yrs. 11 mos.</td>
<td>5 yrs. (1st)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>RFEP, English Proficient 4th grade</td>
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<td>Genesys</td>
<td>10 yrs. 2 mos.</td>
<td>6 yrs. (KG)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>RFEP, English Proficient 3rd grade</td>
<td>GATE</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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Table B.01 Student Information
Appendix C: Latino Book Collection Chart

This appendix presents a list of Latino/a children’s literature selections chosen for use in this study. As is evident in the table, almost all of the books offer interrelated themes associated with varied meanings of the border, home, family and languages. The books allow listeners to explore Latino/a identity in terms of labor and economic relationships, language status, and the meaning of home and citizenship. These books “embrace the breadth and complexities of shaping a Latino/a identity in a society that highly values assimilation to European, English, middle class norms” (Medina and Enciso, 2002, p. 39). This literature speaks to both the specific and shared dimensions of Latino/a experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Focus</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication Year</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Literary Awards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home (CA) Borders Languages</td>
<td>Voices from the Field: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories</td>
<td>Interviews and photographs by B. Atkins</td>
<td>1993, Little, Brown and Co.</td>
<td>Photos, Poems, interviews</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
<td>1994 Américas Commended list;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (CA) Borders Languages</td>
<td>Calling the Doves/El Canto De Las Palomas</td>
<td>F. Herrera</td>
<td>1995, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>Personal narrative Biography/Memoir</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
<td>1995 Américas Commended list; Ezra Jack Keats’ Award</td>
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Table C.01 Description of Latino Picture Books
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country (Region)</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Awards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/CA) Languages</td>
<td>My Very Own Room/ Mi propio cuartito</td>
<td>A. Pérez</td>
<td>2000, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>Contemporary realistic fiction</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
<td>2004 Américas Book Award</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/CA) Border Languages</td>
<td>My Diary From Here to There</td>
<td>T. Johnston</td>
<td>2003, Sierra Club Books</td>
<td>Contemporary realistic fiction</td>
<td>Inter-lingual; English and Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico)</td>
<td>Isabel’s House of Butterflies</td>
<td>T. Johnston</td>
<td>2003, Sierra Club Books</td>
<td>Contemporary realistic fiction</td>
<td>Inter-lingual; English and Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/ U.S.) Border Languages</td>
<td>The Upside Down Boy/ El niño de cabeza</td>
<td>J.F. Herrera</td>
<td>2000, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>Personal narrative; Biography; memoir</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico) Gender roles</td>
<td>Elena’s Serenade</td>
<td>C. Geeslin</td>
<td>2004, Atheneum</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual; English and Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/CA) Border Languages</td>
<td>La Mariposa</td>
<td>F. Jiménez</td>
<td>1998, Houghton Mifflin</td>
<td>Fiction; autobiographica l</td>
<td>Interlingual; English and Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Cuba/U.S.) Border Languages</td>
<td>My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz</td>
<td>M. Brown</td>
<td>2004, Luna Rising,</td>
<td>Picture-book biography</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Costa Rica/ U.S.) Border Languages</td>
<td>The Remembering Stone</td>
<td>B. T. Russell</td>
<td>2004, Farrar, Straus and Giroux</td>
<td>Contempor ary realistic fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual; English and Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/ CA) Border Languages</td>
<td>Super Cilantro Girl La Supernina del Cilantro</td>
<td>J.F. Herrera</td>
<td>2003, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/ U.S.) Border Languages</td>
<td>Friends from the Other Side Amigos del otro lado</td>
<td>G. Anzaldúa</td>
<td>1993, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/ U.S.) Border Languages</td>
<td>My Name is Jesus On Both Sides of the River</td>
<td>J. Medina</td>
<td>1999, Wordsong/Boyd Mills Press</td>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Oaxaca, Mexico/ CA) Border Languages</td>
<td>Becoming Naomi Leon</td>
<td>P. Munoz Ryan</td>
<td>2004, Scholastic</td>
<td>Contemporary realistic fiction</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award; Américas Commended List;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Puerto Rico/ U.S.) Languages</td>
<td>Felita</td>
<td>N. Mohr</td>
<td>1979, Penguin</td>
<td>Realistic fiction</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Puerto Rico/ U.S.) Languages</td>
<td>My Name is Maria Isabel</td>
<td>A. Flor Ada</td>
<td>1993, Atheneum</td>
<td>Realistic fiction</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (CA) Family</td>
<td>Baseball in April and other stories</td>
<td>G. Soto</td>
<td>1990, Harcourt</td>
<td>Realistic fiction; short stories</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1996 Pura Belpré Honor Book; ALA Best Book for Young Adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (Mexico/CA) Border Languages</td>
<td>Downtown Boy</td>
<td>J.F. Herrera</td>
<td>2005, Scholastic</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>English/ Interlingual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home (U.S.)</td>
<td>Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems</td>
<td>F. X. Alarcon</td>
<td>1997, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
<td>1998 Pura Belpré Honor Award</td>
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**Table C.01 continued**

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<tr>
<th>Home (Los Angeles, CA) Languages</th>
<th>Angels Ride Bikes and Other Fall Poems</th>
<th>F. X. Alarcon</th>
<th>1999, Children’s Book Press</th>
<th>poetry</th>
<th>Bilingual; Spanish and English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home (CA/Mexico) Languages</td>
<td>From the Belly Button of the Moon and Other Summer Poems</td>
<td>F. X. Alarcon</td>
<td>1998, Children’s Book Press</td>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>Bilingual; Spanish and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (Dominican Republic) Family</td>
<td>Before we were Free</td>
<td>J. Alvarez</td>
<td>2002, Alfred A. Knopf</td>
<td>Contemporar y realistic fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (CA) Family</td>
<td>Parrot in the Oven; mi vida</td>
<td>V. Martinez</td>
<td>1996, HarperCollins</td>
<td>Contemporar y realistic fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (TX/Mexico) Family</td>
<td>The Tequila Worm</td>
<td>V. Canales</td>
<td>2005, Random House, Inc.</td>
<td>Contemporar y realistic fiction</td>
<td>Interlingual</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix D: Sample Transcript

(M. 739, Love as Strong as Ginger, OC-4, p.2, 1-25-07)

OC: Ask students what they can infer about the relationship of the grandmother and the granddaughter. (They enjoy spending time together and they are very close. p. 231)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>017</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>Can you tell me something that you can infer about their relationship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>018</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>[raises hand]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>019</td>
<td>Marlen</td>
<td>[raises hand]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>Saul</td>
<td>[raises hand]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>021</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>[Looks at Jesus] Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>022</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>[Looks up at Mr. Moody] What can you infer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>023</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>[Looking at Jesus, increased volume] What can you infer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>024</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>that...hmm...like hmm...[head down, bouncing up and down, touching open book]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>025</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>[looks up at teacher] what was it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>026</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>[Looking at Jesus] Okay. [Looks away; up to front] Let me go to some-- Saul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>027</td>
<td>Saul</td>
<td>[looking up at teacher] umm, it’s good? [rising intonation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>028</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>[Looking at Saul] Okay. It’s good. [Looks away; looks to back of class]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>029</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>What else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>030</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>Enrique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>031</td>
<td>Enrique</td>
<td>[looking down at text] that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>032</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>let me read...let me read the paragraph one more time then I’m gonna go back to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>033</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>and then Saul added something that I want him to share too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>034</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>Listen to this and tell me about their relationship [rereads paragraph on page 230].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>035</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>Now Enrique. [Looks back to Enrique]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>036</td>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>What can you infer about their relationship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>037</td>
<td>Enrique</td>
<td>[looking at Mr. Moody] that they like to spend time together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Moody okay

Mr. Moody I want more though. [Looks away to Saul on front row]

Mr. Moody Saul.

Saul [looking at Mr. Moody and then down at book] because xxxxx

Mr. Moody Okay.

Mr. Moody It’s ..it’s a nice relationship

Mr. Moody and Saul has inferred that they have a better relationship than the mom and dad.

Mr. Moody Very good.

Mr. Moody [looks over Saul to Marina, on back row] What were you gonna say?

Mr. Moody Your hand was up.

Marina [looking at Mr. Moody] they don’t have like a lot of time to do things together

Mr. Moody they DON’T have a lot.

Mr. Moody So you think the time that they do have is very important?

Marina [Looking at Mr. Moody, Marina nods]

Mr. Moody Okay. Good. [Looks at Marlen] Marlen

Marlen [Looking at Mr. Moody] uh..they have a pretty good relationship ---[Mr. Moody interrupts her]

Mr. Moody okay

Mr. Moody very good.
## Appendix E: Teacher Experience and Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of Classroom Experience</th>
<th>Years at Present Grade Level</th>
<th>Years of Teaching/Administrative Experience</th>
<th>Degrees Held</th>
<th>Training In Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Moody</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>4 years (including 2006-2007)</td>
<td>7 years Classroom teacher CA, OH, WA</td>
<td>1989, MA Administration WA</td>
<td>2006 Open Court Training Corrective Reading Direct Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 years elem. principal WA, CA</td>
<td>1986 Elem. Certification</td>
<td>Under-Graduate Elementary Education classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 years middle school principal, WA</td>
<td>1985, BA History Secondary Education</td>
<td>2005 CLAD credential (Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Nelson</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>9 years (including 2006-2007)</td>
<td>12 years, elementary school, CA</td>
<td>1997, MA Instructional Technology, CA</td>
<td>2006 Open Court Training Corrective Reading Direct Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1995, Elem. Certification</td>
<td>2005 CLAD credential (Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1993, BA Liberal Arts, CA</td>
<td>2005 CLAD credential (Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E.01 Teacher Education and Experience
Appendix F: Teacher Beliefs

In order to consider the ways teachers engaged students in discussion when reading aloud two different types of text, it was first necessary to examine the beliefs and practices of teachers when reading aloud stories to students in the classroom. Teachers’ beliefs and practices influenced who got to make which decisions in a storyreading lesson.

Six categories emerged from the data with regard to teachers’ beliefs about storyreading lessons: (1) Teachers’ view of their role, (2) Teachers’ lesson preparation, (3) Teachers’ view of the stories, (4) Teachers’ focus of instruction, (5) Group format and (6) Teachers’ view of students.

Teachers’ View of Their Role

Mrs. Nelson: “I sit down and I do the entire unit of lesson plans all at once.” (Nelson, 4-19-07)

“...I'm just glad I'm the type of person I am that I can self-train. And, trust me, I'm sure I'm not doing certain pieces correctly or could do it differently, or more powerfully, but without the resources, without the modelling, it's the same things as kids. If you don't role model what it is you're asking them to do, you're not going to get success.” (Nelson, 4-19-07)

“I have relied on the student anthologies. I have all the CD's which I use weekly” (Nelson, 4-19-07)
“…by being out in portables, doors are shut. She never comes out here so that gives us that liberty.” (Nelson, 4-19—07)

Mr. Moody: I think I…I guess it’s my job to start it [classroom literature discussion] and to give them something to grab a hold of, but then it’s just a facilitator, ideally, to like to have just a discussion going. That’s been hard for me because sometimes I think if I’m not (chuckling) doing direct instruction, I’m wasting time. And yet I’ve begin to see that, um..uh, what Open Court comprehension is about is discussion ... and talking about what you’ve learned and them sort of working their way through it through discussion. And you know for years, as a principal, walking into a classroom you know, if I saw a teacher up front teaching the kids, you know where someone’s engaged, you know, I thought “what a great teacher” now I’ve come to appreciate more the teachers that can lead a discussion … I think the output probably is better. (Moody, 3-30-07)

Teachers’ Lesson Preparation

Mrs. Nelson: “…you look at the way the TE is designed. They don’t very clearly say, "Oh. You know what, the intervention page, 'blah, blah, blah," really helps EL students with this. Or 'this would be a great point to pull in your EL supports’ They don’t give you that. I’ve never found that anywhere in that book. I know those are great resources. But unless I spend the time and energy digesting it, marking, re-designing it into my only little notebook of madness, would I be able to use it.” (Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: I never really looked at any of the books before ...I mean I do that with everything…I just…I hate myself if I read it…or misconceptions…preconceptions…I
mean there's all kinds of things that can throw a story off if you have too much knowledge ahead of time so I always made sure to never look at the books -- I mean a lot of times I might look at the book MAYBE the evening before but it would be just a picture walk kind of a thing just to kind of see where the story's going...(Nelson, 4-19-07)

Teachers’ View of the Latino Picture Book Stories

Mr. Moody: And then, the picture book...what is your outcome? What outcome do you need? … the picture books don't really need to -- we're not really doing anything with the story that we're reading the picture book, right?  (Moody & Nelson, 1-9-07)

Mr. Moody: I didn't…you know, pre-read the book, but...I just felt a little uneasy with the ...with it in there, you know … I would NOT read that book again if I had pre-read it  (Moody, 3-30-07)

Mr. Moody: I think it helps them in that, in that, they did go along with the unit themes, and I think that it gave them another opportunity to see, you know, a story of writing; for the background of some … that I don’t do a lot of read alouds because I think we just have to follow the curriculum. You know that’s what they want us to do … I think I’m afraid to… but for me to do it, I’d feel like it was forced…or you know… something that might not fit as well…. feel that the students made any more or different connections to the picture books as compared to the stories in the …but Oh, Yeah! I think they made far more connections to them… because they, you know, in a lot of the discussions they’d relate to those and bring those in and then, (Moody, 3-30-07)

Mr. Moody: (Patricia) I kind of thought of her ’cause I knew she moved from Mexicali (Moody 1-09-07)
Mrs. Nelson and then you've gotta worry too...are they gonna take it negatively or positively.

Mr. Moody yeah

Mrs. Nelson like, oh my god, I have parents that are farm workers...I better not say anything..

Mr. Moody yeah

Mrs. Nelson because then people are going to think I'm that person. I mean I don't think our children that we have this year are like that...I think they're very positive. (Moody & Nelson, 1-09-07)

Mrs. Nelson: Um hmm. Any book... They’re not part of the Open Court series, they’re not part of our social studies, they’re not part of Avenues, so they should not be read. But yet, they link with what we're talking about. (Nelson 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: This district PROHIBITS that kind of a room environment [storybook reading]. It is strictly related to the core curriculum - end of the discussion. So, you know, how often teachers have wanted to just pick up a book - HOLES-- and just read it because it connects the kids into common day things like -- it's okay to be a kid -- you know that kinda thing -- and you're really not allowed to even do something like that...throws that whole thought out there then you're losing the idea of reading should be fun. You know. Read for recreation. You don't have to read just to learn.” (Nelson, 4-19-07).

Researcher: what are students' opportunities to read in their anthologies?
Mrs. Nelson: Well obviously, for structured reading in Open Court time it's daily, but obviously it's also limited to the teacher's direct instruction. It's not like I can say as I'm talking about the background, go ahead and read the story...cause I'm supposed to cover what's in each of those daily lessons.

Mrs. Nelson: according to the Open Court teacher guide, the reading should be student read; not teacher read, but I make that choice not to have them do that only because you lose the ability to understand for THEM what they're comprehending and what questions they have. Some CAN'T read that level of text. Others can read well beyond that...they'll be bored with it so therefore why emphasize a good reading on it? So I have made the choice to read the stories aloud so that I know that it's been read and it's been understood and it's been discussed.

Mrs. Nelson: But according to Open Court, though, you're supposed to just say, "Okay, it's Monday; we've done our vocabulary, we've done this, we've done that...okay, go read your book. According to Open Court that's how it should happen. I don't think that's the best method. There's no provision for differentiated reading levels. And then to find time for them to just go get a book and read...there is no time. Even for them, they go to the library once a week. They've got a book. You NEVER see it pulled out. It's RARE if they have that book out during the day, in MY room anyway.

Mrs. Nelson: By choosing to read aloud, I'm including those kids that are at each end of the continuum of reading ability and proficiency -- they get to hear the story, they get to talk about the story, they get to understand the story and then have something
(weekly test) to demonstrate their understanding on that assessment. Given the constraints, it is the most support I can offer. That's how I look at it.

Mrs. Nelson: I mean, you give the kids a story to read; I mean some of these stories are very...I mean I even have a hard time reading it aloud in two days...and you expect the kid in ONE day to get the first read down and then on top of that, the way the TE is designed, they kind of expect the kids to be reading about the same pace because all of a sudden.."oh, when you get to the bottom of this page, here's some discussion we're supposed to have..."

Mrs. Nelson: Well, if these kids are reading this independently, or even as a choral read or whatever the situation might be, you can't...it disconnects everything because...you cannot keep the pace if you have them read it; so if I read it aloud to them that allows me to bring everybody along together. And I don't always use the direct instruction...I don't always use that as my backbone. I know it's there and it's available to me. I just...for some odd way, have been successful with opening up the discussions to what the students feel as need versus what is forced to be understood and somehow it has -- my method has been pretty successful in attaching to the test.

Mrs. Nelson: I don't look at the test until the day they take the test. But yet, even though I haven't done exactly the questions in the TE along our reading, haven't PRE-looked at the test questions and prompted myself to ask those directly, somehow within our discussion, our reading, we've really hit upon most of...sometimes a little more side-tracked or in a little more detail than I think the kids need -- which then sometimes can hinder them and their ability to answer it but I think it's a method that's working. I think
it would be more challenging to sit there and try to reason with yourself as a teacher because I've gotta get these three questions answered....hold on boys and girls, let me give you these three questions...what do we think about these three...okay, now let's go back and figure...I mean, to me, that's just too chopped up.

Mrs. Nelson: “I like to try to keep the flow moving. I am experienced and confident enough that I’m not relying on the script. I know what the content of the story is and I know basically what the script is headed toward, whether it's vocabulary or grammar or whatever they're bringing out but rather than letting the script direct that, I feel that the way I'm covering it is inclusive of that in a way that's more meaningful for the kids and for my method of delivering that.”

Mrs. Nelson: However, judged by proper Open Court methodology, would be the WRONG way to do it. I would be one of those, this is what NOT to do in Open Court, even though I am still successfully accomplishing the same common goal of building student achievement.

Mrs. Nelson: School is a different environment than their lives outside of school. Yet they spend more time at school then they do at home most of the time anyway. The stories are obviously of the majority culture in my room...and so therefore their gonna have that instant connection...but as we discussed even with Mariposa and just the school setting...even some of the EL’s are going to have some common thread that's going to link them to that

Mrs. Nelson: I think the stories were well illustrated in regards to ...refreshing my mind, or reminding me because I have that tendency...I mean these kids are in here and
they're all equals, you know...okay, I've got somebody at the homeless shelter but it's not like I wake up every morning going “oh yeah, you're at the homeless shelter so I have to treat you different”...I mean they're all the same and by having those stories it was like “oh yeah. you know we do have parents in here”..I've had parents in my past while being at this school site who have been in that position. Have had to live that life style. These kids have got uncles, or aunts, or cousins or moms..or whatever the situation, that are now currently in those positions that can share..

Mrs. Nelson: So that just kind of again allows me to feel like I am a part of them; that there is that equal-ness. I'm not just this teacher that's up here much better off than they'll ever be and they need to just deal with that difference. I want the room environment to be equal. I want it to all feel justified. (Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: I think the book certainly held a big piece of that puzzle..had we just been reading the Open Court stories about Viet Nam...I don't think you'd have had quite the in-depth that was brought out and because of those and yes there was a common thread that linked to what we were talking about but because it seemed more comfortable that that would certainly allow it....

Teachers’ Focus of Instruction

Mr. Moody: I really didn't have a very strong foundation in reading, at all. We had a couple classes that told you how to do learning centers, but essentially where I learned was when I was a principal they gave us copies on how to observe good teaching, and and how, you know, I think, uh, specifically, you know how to see if Open Court is being taught wrong. Walking in, looking at the bulletin board; the question-concept, is it
up-dated? umm, can I tell right when I walk into the room, what lesson they're on? Um, what, you know, it's a routine that tells me specifically that you know, day in and day out it's being taught. And it really, Connie, wasn't until you came in that I really understood that Open Court is about talking about what you're learning; the dialogue, if that makes sense. (Moody, History of teaching reading, 2-13-07)

Mr. Moody: my first year I was in the classroom, it was more throwing out the information than discussing with the students or having them discuss. (Moody, 2-13-07)

Mr. Moody: I got a bachelor's in history, with a minors in economics. And, uh, that allowed me to teach high school. I had some education courses with it, so I was going to teach history, business. I went back for a year...right...before I even graduated, I went back and got an extra year so I could do elementary education, so then, so I had both elementary and high school and then (Moody, 2-13-07)

Mr. Moody: I just love it; I love teaching; I always have. And then when, I had the best class in the world, back...it was like 1989. I got my Masters in administration, just to go up the pay scale and then the Supt. came in and said, hey, I want you to apply for this vice-principalship in this junior high. I said, well, and he came by my classroom and said, just do it. I didn't do it, but they asked me to come and be like a dean of students. Well, I did that for a couple weeks and then they moved me into the vice principalship. (Moody, 2-13-07)

Mr. Moody: I love it. I love the classroom. I just think it’s neat. You know, I just love coming in in the mornings (Moody, 3-13-30)
Mrs. Nelson: “I have to make the best decisions that I see my kids respond to...”

(Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: Because I'm choosing to read aloud, they're relying on their listening comprehension. For me listening comprehension is a lifelong skill. It's something that it has to be strong. It has to be well-developed. It's not that reading comprehension is not important, but more often than not, in the everyday world, the listening component becomes more of a priority than a reading component. You've gotta listen to that boss explain the objective and where the project's going and then from there put the pieces together. So, for me, I take that into the reading (Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: At the same time, the reading comprehension; they do have to know that tool as well. Listening comprehension requires them to practice holding more and more information at once. In a sense, it is expanding their memory facility to practice that so that they can recall it. With reading comprehension, you have the word representation on the page, and in listening comprehension it's actually more difficult because you can't rely on that representation on the paper. If you develop listening comprehension to a more and more sophisticated level, it would be a support to reading comprehension. (Nelson 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: For EL's it is tough at the beginning but if it's something pursued daily, it's gonna build faster. When I'm reading aloud I'm modeling to them how it should sound in their heads. It's a real practical way to support EL's in the transition...I think they build their listening and oral before their reading and writing., that would be
their process...we all have our first language orally...by reading aloud to them it is similar to the way they acquired their first language. (Nelson 4-19-07).

Mrs. Nelson: I think an effective read aloud is audience participation. Anybody can read a book but if you don’t somehow get the students to interact with what's being read, you might as well be in a closet reading to yourself.

Mrs. Nelson: During the story as opposed to waiting to the very end. I mean the story has to come...like in the movie, if you're really listening and being a participant in that movie, you're constantly asking yourself questions...”why are you doing that?” “where are you going?” If the movie's doing its job, it's going to suck you into it emotionally as well as physically with your thinking and your thoughts of ...and that’s how I approach my read alouds.

Mrs. Nelson: You've gotta get them engaged..you've gotta get ‘em to be a part of that story. So then, as you're reading aloud, having them WANT to share freely, thoughts that are just fleeting through their minds.. doesn't directly link to what the heck is being read, but yet it's a thought that's going through their head that is somewhat conducive to what's being there so let ....that's showing you that they are listening; that they are trying to attach and that to me is a success.

Mrs. Nelson: I mean, cause how boring would it be to sit there and, “okay boys and girls. I'm gonna read you a story; now everybody be quiet...”

Mrs. Nelson: I almost needed -- a greedy need of mine -- I need that to feel like I'm not talking to myself; that there is somebody out there listening. I use inflection in my voice to model taking on the identity of the characters that are in the story...and I
choose chunks where to stop subliminally -- model my own train of thought and model what makes a connection for me. It turns out to be entertaining and it offers the “entertainment” piece of reading. Their enjoyment contributes to their understanding. It lowers that stress and makes the room environment a success.

Mr. Moody: Meaning…Well, they have to connect it. It has to be something that they can identify and connect with. Otherwise there is no meaning at all … you know, or it’s hard to get the meaning. So I think, in Open Court, that’s why it’s so important to go over, you know, building background, the vocabulary…and if they have no clue about anything, they can at least connect it to what we’ve talked about (Moody, 3-30-07)

Group Format

Mr. Moody: Well … the understood rules in here when there’s a discussion going on … one person talks and everyone listens, and that’s not necessarily me talking …that's whoever is listening.(Moody, 3-30-07)

Mr. Moody: I think with a discussion, you know, uh thoughts sometimes… answers, you know, that I may have in the back of my mind, here’s where I’d like them to go… don’t come up, but better answers do… You know their little minds work pretty, work pretty sharp, so in a discussion, so often, I think they might, um, learn more, you know, than just me leading them To the … to the answer (Moody, 3-30-07)

I mentioned to the principal, that one of the things that has helped me this year is uh, when you came in and started doing this, it showed me that uh… you know, reading… discussion is really important to reading… I think that , well it just…you
know... well, this being my third year back in the classroom, it was kind of... it was, uh, I think everything just clicked really well..(Moody, 3-30-07)

Mr. Moody: I think there’s a respect in here that students respect each other and they kind of stick up for each other and we’re both sort of a team, you know (Moody, 3-30-07)

Mr. Moody: We’re all together and so, they do respect and so, kids are all … feel very comfortable and, and they even get a little out of it because one will play off the other when we’re talking… yeah what she said, and then sort of carry it further. Um, um, so that has to happen and obviously it has to be a classroom environment that is organized, that’s orderly, but…

Mr. Moody: the understood rules in here when there’s a discussion going on… Well … one person talks and everyone listens, and that’s not necessarily me talking … that’s whoever is listening.. Now one thing that you had talked about and we saw on that film now (review of DVD of classroom discussion) and I’m trying to get them to do; haven’t done to well, obviously, uh, everybody looking at the speaker. You know, I think that’s really important, so, but uh, uh, so I think, you know, just the respect issue, so listening, raising your hand; not talking out. (Moody, 3-30-07)

Teachers’ View of Students

Mrs. Nelson: I think at the beginning of year because we're all so new and we don't know each other; we don't each other's personalities; we don't know our expectations of each other and of ourselves and all of that, we all are held back; we're all
a little unsure. And so therefore, there isn't anything but rigid structure. You know, this is the way it's gonna have to pan out.

Mrs. Nelson: And then as we develop and spread our wings and you know, change, metamorphically, each person kind of comes to life and I think for myself, what I do is I feed off of that and I allow those first few that are a little more extroverted to shine hoping that I can still contain it so it doesn't become “oh well, you're gonna become the class clown -- you can just be an idiot.” But yet, allow the students to realize, “oh, it's okay if I want to stretch a little bit and try things out” and I then try to build from there by the time we're getting into the end of the first tri-mester I try to build on the idea that now it's the opportunity that I'm not going to force you to respond...You know, you want to be quiet and silent the whole year that's fine but I can guarantee that there's great things going on and wouldn't it be a shame for you NOT to share that and so by that end of the trimester I really try to pull more in a little more forcefully those that might be a little more resistant to doing that just so that they can get a taste of it.

Mrs. Nelson: But I do it in a way like I said, at the end of the trimester, so then they can go back to being in their home environment, not shell-shocked to the severeness that they can't handle it, but then come back after that break and kind of let the classroom come back to life and many times there will be those more reluctant ones that will all of a sudden start to “oh, you know, I liked that...that was kind of cool” ...let me jump in and ...and by this point in the year, I mean, they're a fully changed soul. And so I can then...I feel comfortable enough that I can just kind of let the conversation run...they're not gonna be all over the place and one gonna be dominating it; they're all respecting each other
enough...like, okay Nathaly, we've had enough of your ya ya stories -- we're not going to
tell you to shut up but as soon as she's done there's somebody else ready to jump in and
get us back on... “oh remember when we read the story...” so it’s not again that direct
hey, you took us way off task, let's get back...it's just a real polite little, okay...instead of
ME doing it. They have just learned to do that. (Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: In the beginning everyone raised their hand and got permission in-
between each person that talked. Now the expectations are clear and what remains
constant is respect. I value and not lower my expectations for respect and at the same
time I allow them what seems like more freedom. (Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: I don't remember being taught how to do this...and I don't think I'm
ever consciously aware...you know it's not like I sit there making my weekly plan and go,
"okay, well this week, since we've gotten to this step we're gonna...I mean it kind of
naturally happens...some of the success comes from the very beginning I set those
expectations that you're always going to be respectful; you're always gonna stop and
listen and then even when it does get to this point in the year and they're a little freer with
their chance to socialize or to communicate, I'll still try to bring them back – “All right,
we've got great conversations going on right now, but, we have to remember that to share
those, we all have to listen--so jot it down; that way you don't forget what you want to
say so when your turn comes around you can ...” (Nelson, 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: While I hold a high expectation - requiring respect from them, I also
demonstrate an incredible amount of respect for each individual. I guard them when they
write how they feel. If you choose to share something that you wrote, fine, but you don't
have to...those kinds of those opportunities to demonstrate my respect for them evoke their respect for me and for others. It also reassures them...when they tell their stories, at first they feel really afraid but then they come to know that no one will laugh at me...people didn't laugh when another student shared...Nathaly - I've had a lot of things happen in my family and I don't like to talk about them but when I heard Elidieth share I had my hand in the air...I felt safe and my hand went up (even though I didn't make a conscious decision to share).

Mrs. Nelson: There's always a risk in investing in life-long learning. If they are a classroom environment where risk-taking happens, it's not that it isn't risky but it's valued and protected....the students take more risks.

Mrs. Nelson: I'm not going to go digging into their files to figure out all the horrible things or all the good things. I'd rather see and observe and know the child for the child...and if they then want to go further in trusting me with tales of what's going on at home, more power to them because they've gained a friend beyond a teacher. Something that they probably won't have very frequently in their lives, especially with adults. So that's kind of how I look at it.

Mrs. Nelson: Yeah, the stories are gonna certainly bring those to the surface and if they're feeling comfortable in sharing it...it's always interesting to hear from somebody...you know, Alfredo said well I was sleeping in KG...you know, who in the world would have ever known? He felt comfortable sharing that and that demonstrates that he's had this school behavior forever and no one's ever really understood it so therefore couldn't properly handle it. And yet, this simple story brought that back to the
surface. Doesn't mean I have a correction for it either, but now it's a better understanding. (Nelson 4-19-07)

Mrs. Nelson: It isn't that they tell their stories for me to solve their problems or fix something; it's just another part of who they are or my experience. I mean, you want your students to be human -- you want them to be interactable versus -- okay well you're a student, sit down...you're a robot, this is your information, regurgitate and move on....that's how I always felt when I was in school... “here's your information...memorize, memorize, read, read, read, arithmetic,” ....and it was like I might as well not even be alive because this teacher doesn't give a stink if I won my soccer championship yesterday and we happen to be talking about soccer in class...he doesn't stinkin’ care and you know, the kids need that...they need that little out because again, how many of them really truly go home and have conversations at home. Most of them are “just go in your room; do whatever, just don't bother me.” Well, they don't even have that communication...so if they can tie it in here and it kind of again, makes the learning environment comfortable; fun...interesting, that's just going to encourage them to keep learning...(Nelson, 4-19-07)
Appendix G: Four Minute Conversation with Abraham.

Mrs. Nelson and Abraham.

(Nelson, Drive C, Love as Strong as Ginger, OC-4, 1-24-07)

Mrs. Nelson: It’s kind of a weird kind of a thought, isn’t it?

Abraham: [eye contact with Mrs. Nelson; did not raise hand]

I seen xxxxxxx smell nasty

Mrs. Nelson: [bends, positioning her face up close at Abraham’s level]

Why is it nasty?

Abraham: ‘cause when xxxxxxxx

Students: [noisy, overlapping voices]

Mrs. Nelson: Hold on, we can’t have nine people talking at once. If you want to share, we have to be respectful. Correct? Abraham, why do you think it would be nasty?

Abraham: It’s smelly because…I don’t know. When they die they smell nasty. Smells like …

Mrs. Nelson: They can get rotten. I agree with you there. But do you think this culture would have rotten fish? [long pause; Abraham does not answer]
Mrs. Nelson: Possibly not. Let’s travel back a couple of units. Unit one when we were talking about cooperation and teamwork and we had our abacus contest.

Mrs. Nelson: That too was the Asian culture. Remember what that particular girl was seeing everyday on her way to school? [Mrs. Nelson continues describing the event from the previous story where the little girl saw an open fish market]

Mrs. Nelson: We have to remind ourselves, Abraham, that culture’s not like our culture.

Abraham: it could be Spanish

Mrs. Nelson: Our culture, Abraham, we’ll go to the grocery store; we’ll buy fish in the freezer section or over by the butcher. We’ll take it home and where do we put it?

Students: [choral response] in the freezer

Mrs. Nelson: in the freezer to keep it fresh or to keep it ready

Abraham: how come

Mrs. Nelson: most..

Abraham: put it in the freezer and it smells

Mrs. Nelson: it shouldn’t

Abraham: before she puts it in the xxxxx taking off that thing and when she opens the bag, I xxxx smell xxxxx

Students: [laughing out loud]

Mrs. Nelson: All fish smells like fish. But if the fish is cleaned properly and treated properly, it won’t smell as severe.
Abraham: oh it’s probably the food that they eat …over there by [name of town]. It doesn’t smell nasty cause they give ‘em [the fish] this food.

Abraham: Go to the grocery and helping your mom to get the fish right there every time it smells. Smells like fish.

Mrs. Nelson: And you made a point but you didn’t connect. When you go to [town] Abraham you physically get the fish, right out of the water. That means it’s fresh fish. Correct?

Abraham: yes

Mrs. Nelson: And you know that a fresh fish is not gonna be as stinky and you’re gonna take that fresh fish and you’re gonna eat it rather quickly. You’ll either eat it that night or within a day or two. Correct?

Abraham: Sometimes xxxx like fish xxxxxx

Mrs. Nelson: but you still, in a short period of time, eat that fish, correct?

Abraham: xxxx

Mrs. Nelson: Which is what this culture does. This culture will go down to that open market that we just talked about from the Abacus Contest. That morning, they go down, they find their fresh fish. They go home. They hang it up in their kitchen like we just heard in this particular story, because for the day it dries out.

Abraham: oh xxxx

Mrs. Nelson: That way that night, when they go to cook their fish, it’s ready to go. What happens, Abraham, when you go to the grocery store [two students raise their hands] to buy fish? It is not a fresh fish. The fish in the store, even if it’s in that glass
container, with the little butcher guy. And you say, I want that one and he goes into the ice and he gets that one. They’re frozen. And the reason they’re frozen is because they have probably shipped that fish thousands of miles

Abraham: yeah but sometimes that’s smelly xxxxx and they taste good

Mrs. Nelson: yeah they will taste okay because they’ve been frozen.

Abraham: hmm mm

Mrs. Nelson: but the reason they’re smelly is because they haven’t been kept at a constant temperature

Abraham: because over there when we go to fish it kinda tastes like xxxxx

Mrs. Nelson: Because you haven’t allowed them to dry properly. See fish is a delicate food item

Abraham: delicate

Mrs. Nelson: And if you don’t treat it correctly it can get sour on you. It can get nasty on you and that’s what we have to get everyone to understand. That’s why, in these Asian cultures, as we just read about, it’s not a surprise for them to go down and get that fish out of a bowl of water but then go hang it up in their kitchen for an entire day while they’re at work and then that way, at dinner time, they just pull the fish off the line, cut it up and prepare it for their meal

Abraham: and when you, when you go get it over there they try to make xxx I like to eat it and lift the skeleton like that [holding up right hand]

Mrs. Nelson: hmm mm

Abraham: and leave it like that ‘cause it looks cool
Mrs. Nelson: hmm mm

Abraham: and you go over there; I tried to make it and then it broke in half when I

Mrs. Nelson: ‘cause the skeleton of a fish is very fragile

[Mrs. Nelson looked away, recognized another student’s raised hand and nominated her to speak, ending the conversation with Abraham. The nominated student proceeded to tell her “fish” story and then Mrs. Nelson returned to the story text to resume reading aloud]