Re-imagining Reading Instruction for English Language Learners: A Performance Ethnography of Collaborative Play, Inquiry and Drama with Shakespeare in a Third Grade Classroom

Dissertation

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By

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Abstract

This research documents the use of a pedagogy called *dramatic inquiry* (Edmiston, 2011) and active, rehearsal room approaches to reading Shakespeare (Royal Shakespeare Company Toolkit, 2010) in one third grade classroom during the 2010-2011 school year. Simultaneously, this research describes classroom events built around the skills-based models of reading instruction while it also documents the introduction of a new way of structuring reading events in the same classroom using multiple ways of knowing beyond verbal and abstract (e.g. dramatic play, somatic, kinesthetic, gestural, musical, etc.). The findings describe the key linkages between changes in reading instruction towards dramatic inquiry and the changes in ELLs access to academic literacy and expanded repertoires for meaning-making.

I had a unique research position at the intersection of these issues because I was able to extensively observe two quite disparate ways and purposes behind the structuring reading events within a single class of students. One set of reading events was structured in the ways 3rd grade reading instruction had always been done by this teacher without intentionally using any active approaches and dramatic inquiry strategies. The other set of reading events used the long-term, multimodal and inquiry based pedagogy of dramatic inquiry where all of the students explored four Shakespeare’s plays. Over time I found that these two ways of consistently performing reading events seemed to shape and be shaped by the creation of two entirely different classroom cultures of reading—a *culture of comparing reading skills* and a *culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking*.

This research was a performance ethnography conducted in five phases during 2010-2011. The theoretical frame was informed by critical social cultural theories of literacy education (Cynthia Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007), a performance theory of participation in social life (Goffman, 1959) and performance theories in education (B. K. Alexander,
Multiple ethnographic methods such as extensive participant observation and case studies of three ELLs (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) were used across the school year to collect and recursively analyze data on typical performances of reading events—both non-dramatic and dramatic practices. The case studies on three ELLs participation in these performances gave insight into the affordances and limitations these recurrent reading practices offered to intermediate and advanced English Language Learners. My data corpus was constructed from field notes and my research journal, video and video-coded data of student and teacher talk and actions, collected student artifacts, ethnographically grounded assessments on vocabulary, fluency and comprehension of Shakespeare, focus group reflections and interviews and informal reflections with the teacher and focal students across the five phases of research. Data analysis relied on grounded theory informed by a priori theories of drama, reading, and ELL literacy education. I employed data reduction methods through constant comparative charts, photo analysis of movement and embodied meaning, and visual data maps of related events and word knowledge.

Non-dramatic reading events were characterized by inauthentic reading tasks, IRE patterns of talk (Cazden, 1988), individual displays of fluency, and ‘knowing words.’ These performances of knowing limited students’ opportunities to collaboratively and gradually shape complex vocabulary and develop deeply embodied understandings of the relational concepts, themes and literary qualities of the texts. Furthermore, the seeming need to get through the story and the reading instructional purpose in a linear fashion and the social positioning strategies used by some students during some of the non-dramatic events detracted from the focus on students actively negotiating authentic meanings and engaging intentionally in higher order reading comprehension strategies.

In contrast, the embodied ways of understanding through the cyclical and long term nature of the dramatic inquiry reading events supported ELLs’ literary awareness and deepened vocabulary knowledge, fluency and comprehension of all of the Shakespeare stories even when the text was highly challenging and far from the typical fictional texts.
offered for reading instruction with third graders, and even less so for English Language Learners (Porter, 2009). This was in addition to all three ELL finding new spaces from which to social re-position and expand their sense of themselves as readers precisely because they could access multimodal forms of communication, they had space to inquire about language and misunderstandings and the multimodal, social and long term inquiry supported them to make visible higher order thinking visible with complex texts and language. In this culture they were not just reading the words of isolated texts they were critical interpreters, creators and deep thinkers about the words at sentence, interaction, passage and text level including the overarching themes and subtexts.

Findings from this research extends the scholarship in ELL literacy education by showing the significance of long-term collaborative and inquiry based multimodal forms of learning. The ELL students in this classroom were highly engaged with the dramatic reading tasks precisely because such tasks were perceived by the students as challenging and created authentic reasons to re-read for deepening meaning. The dramatic inquiry was sustained over the long term because the entire ensemble of learner’s (which included teachers) displayed an ongoing willingness to collaboratively face the intriguing and complex stories and rich, rhythmic and figurative language of Shakespeare. It was also significant to the long-term retention of language and conceptual understandings, that the dramatic inquiry took place in cycles of returning again and again to similar concepts, inquiry questions and language and over the long-term across four different Shakespeare plays. Lastly, it was essential to sustained the ELLs high engagement in reading comprehension strategies that the dramatic reading events not only valued the students active, embodied and playful engagements with learning, but this set of practices made highly visible long-term intertextuality and other forms of higher order thinking by the students so as to become a semiotic resource for everyone to use in the ongoing inquiry. In this space, ELLs were not just talking abstractly about what made a good reader but they were consistently engaged in and embodying the processes lifelong, critically literate readers go through in deeply engaged reading--living through the stories and character’s perspectives, developing authentic understandings, sharing and shifting
their ideas through talking with others and imaging and creating other possibilities. Within this playful and poetic space, the ELLs (and their teachers and classmates) built deep passionate relationships with the literary language and texts of William Shakespeare and they all began to author different stories of themselves as engaged readers.
Dedication

Dedicated to the Ms. G and her amazing class of third grade students especially to Ino, Dasjah and Yusef who can now say things like:

“We know a lot about Shakespeare. Now we’re smart!”
Acknowledgements

This was a labor of love for me. After having spent my entire time in my doctoral working with Dr. Edmiston use dramatic inquiry in classrooms, I actually got to experience its benefits not only for students and teacher but for me. I have to first give a moment of deep gratitude to Ms. G for opening up her classroom, her heart and her willingness to take risks, try something new and share her sincere concerns and honest opinions with me. Without her this dissertation would not be possible. Secondly, I want to express my genuine appreciation to her entire class of eight and nine year old children who also were so willing to take some deep risks and try out some quite different forms of learning than they were accustomed. The depth of their thinking and insights were unbelievable. I especially need to thank the four English Language Learners Yusef, Dasjah, Ino and Febea who were gracious enough to allow me a peek into the ways they were experiencing reading in this classroom. Each of them will in their own unique ways be embedded in my heart.

I also must admit prior to this work I wasn’t a huge Shakespeare fan either but now from my own active participation in dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare both with my colleagues in the professional development program and with Ms. G and her students I am forever transformed. Therefore, I need to first back up in history and acknowledge the timeless contribution of Mr. William Shakespeare. Because of his incredible power of storytelling a group of children and their teachers fell in love with exploring the poetic nature of language and the aesthetic and embodied ways of understanding and expressing experience through drama. I also need to thank Rachel Gartside and Virginia Grainger, the lead drama in education practitioners at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) for their enthusiasm in our teacher development project. Along with the many other partners from the RSC, Rachel and Ginny’s amazing performances as teaching-artists helped stand up Shakespeare for me and for so many children and their teachers in central Ohio.
I especially need to thank Dr. Brian Edmiston for transforming me entirely as a teacher and a scholar. Dr. Edmiston has given me tireless support and encouragement as my doctoral advisor throughout my four years and my co-advisor on this dissertation. Dr. Edmiston has been an inspiration to me in the type of teacher and teacher educator that I hope to become (if I ever grow up). He first shed light on how effective process-drama can be in the classroom and he showed me so much of what I know about dramatic inquiry and creating a sense of an active, ensemble of learners in any classroom with any age of student. Through reading his scholarship and in our many, many hours of conversation, he has pushed me to consider and talk back to a wide range of innovative theories about multimodalities, drama, play and inquiry in the classroom, and has collaborated with me on various approaches to theorizing and documenting dramatic inquiry. The thing about Dr. Edmiston is that he never directly told me the answers he asked me the tough questions and supported me along my path to come up with answers that made sense to me and he always has pushed me to be more thoughtful about every word I read, hear, speak or write. In doing so, he disrupted everything I thought I knew about teaching and learning and transformed it in a way that focuses not on teaching things but on building relationships with other people.

I would like to sincerely thank my research mentor and co-advisor on this dissertation, Dr. Patricia Enciso. Dr. Enciso has taught what it means to do high quality and yet human-centered qualitative research in education. She has also shown me and supported me to not only do extensive classroom based research but to also see the project through to its completion. Dr. Enciso’s powerful scholarship and teaching on critical socio-cultural theories in literacy education and with deepening not just literacy but literary awareness provided me an essential piece to the work I have done is this dissertation and throughout my doctoral education. Her help in the final days and hours of completing this dissertation were invaluable.
I wish to express my deep thanks to Dr. Leslie Moore. Starting with my very first doctoral seminar, Dr. Moore caused me to delve much deeper into language socialization research and sociocultural oriented second language research and this deeply informed my understanding of the unique issues of English Language Learners. Through serving as a teaching assistant with her, taking her coursework, and following her extensive recommendations of readings on ELLs, Dr. Moore has supported me towards a more nuanced understanding of ELLs in classrooms based in empirical research. Her support and advice on career opportunities and choices has been invaluable throughout my doctoral career.

I also need to express my appreciation to Dr. Barbara Seidl for her unfailing optimism and kindness. Her own multicultural education and teacher education scholarship and coursework inspired me to imagine pedagogies of love and possibility and she offered many concrete examples of how to do so, even in how she lives her everyday life. Dr. Seidl sat on my exam committee and extensively advised me on my own publication and her research and our past work together gave me and continues to give me great inspiration and insight.

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I have to also give a special thanks to Robin Post, who has been a constant during the whirlwind of the Stand-Up For Shakespeare Project (SUFSA). She is an amazing theatre instruction and performance artist with whom I had the fortunate opportunity to extensively work with during the SUFSA project and in a related university and community partnership—bringing disenfranchised youth into the use of active, ensemble-room rehearsal approaches. She has taught me what it means to facilitate performance-based ensemble by asking tough questions and accepting unknowns. She also has taught me to look at drama from an entirely different perspective—the performance artist’s perspective.

I also have three different sets of people that have taught me, inspired me and supported me through my doctoral program. The first set of people are all of my friends in Masaya, Nicaragua and those here at Ohio State who first went with me on that life-changing experience. I am indebted to Dr. Katy Borland for bringing us all together and for pushing me to return to Masaya. Dr. Borland inspired me to stay true to my (many) passions and to always lend a listening ear to everyone. The second set of people I need to thank were all of the student teacher supervisors and colleagues related to that work—Dr. Anette Melvin, Dr. Kathy Trundle, Dr. Laurie Katz and Sue Wightman, who helped me to re-think what it means to be a responsive teacher. A special thanks goes out to my mentor in that work and my dear friend Jody Wallace for she has been in my corner the whole way! The last set of people I truly need to thank was my writing group over the past year, Meredith Whittaker, Allison Volz and Denise Davila—their discussions around my writing and tentative data analysis and their patience and flexibility were invaluable for me to finish this project. I don’t have enough words to thank Meredith who has been through almost all of these academic experiences with me as I would need to thank her for a million different reasons. She has pushed me to think more complexly but she has also shown me how to listen to silences and find new ways to see.

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Vita

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Chapter 1: English Language Learners & Performances of Multimodal Literacy Understandings

“How do we arrange for children to tell many literacy stories in which they are the successful protagonists?”

--Peter Johnston (2004)

Johnston raised this question as the essential problem to solve in literacy teaching. With this simple but provocative question, he succinctly summarized my re-framing of literacy education, which organically grew out of my work on this research project. I began this project with a particular interest in transforming literacy learning conditions for English Language Learners in U.S. public school classrooms, where teachers have little to no training on how to meet their unique needs (Haneda, 2008). In my own experience teaching in the classroom, I have been concerned that the dominant ways of defining school-based literacy do little to actually help young English Language learners (ELLs) authentically read for understanding and to appropriate academic language and literacies across specific contexts and functions. Through my doctoral program I have also developed a deep interest in the multimodal pedagogy of dramatic inquiry (Edmiston, 2011), for its potential to make lasting transformation on reading instruction and to enable us to see ELLs as engaged readers and collaborative, multimodal meaning makers.

ELLs represent a wide range of learners whose primary language learned from birth was a language other than English. ELLs are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools (The U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Even with the rapidly expanding presence of ELLs in U.S. schools, there is still little consensus or consistent teacher training on how to deal with the particular needs of ELLs (Haneda, 2009). Acquiring academic literacies is a complex process that goes far beyond simply learning how to communicate in social
environments. Thus, ELLs in U.S. schools face a unique conundrum in that they must rapidly learn academic content and skills while still learning the language in which these skills are taught (Goldenberg, 2008). Groups of scholars at the National Center of Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) (Dalton & R. G Tharp, 2002) and the Center for Language Minority Education and Research (Aguirre-Munoz & Amabisca, 2010), reviewed a wide range of sociocultural research to create clear standards for the most effective instructional practices for all students, with a special focus on linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Building from these standards, English Language Learners need access to:

1) opportunities for multiple uses of language for authentic purposes;
2) challenging tasks that demand complex thinking;
3) language-based social interactions and joint productive activity.

Unfortunately for ELLs, the dominant public discourse of ‘school-based literacy’ (Gee, 2007) has created classroom learning environments that seem to work in opposition to the development of classrooms practices that follow these standards for effective literacy and language pedagogies. The definition of literacy most prevalent in school seems to have created a notion that reading and writing are a set of isolated skills. The reading practices shaped by the skills-based model of literacy expect little higher-order thinking of students: they are asked to answer only lower-order questions (i.e., literal recall), to display knowledge they have passively received from the teacher or text, and to imitate abstract, detached forms of verbal reasoning (Gee, 2007; Street, 1995). Little attention is paid as to whether or not students are building deeper understandings of complex academic content and vocabulary across multiple interrelated contexts.

In observing another teacher’s shifts in practice towards using dramatic inquiry as a regular part of reading instruction I was able to see the intersection of two different sets of reading instructional practices and how they affected ELLs literacy learning and their access or lack thereof to multimodal repertoire of ways of engaging with texts. The first
set of non-dramatic reading events seemed to be associated with the school-based forms of literacy and the related classroom practices in some ways limited the ways ELLs could socially perform themselves as readers. The second set of dramatic reading practices significantly expanded the repertoire of ways for students to make meaning with texts and opened space for the ELLs to perform themselves and be seen differently by others in the classroom. During the non-dramatic reading practices verbal, abstract talk was one of the few officially sanctioned resources that was expected to be used by students with a set of disconnected texts simplified for the assumed needs of transitional readers (e.g. familiar settings, everyday uses of oral language and dialogue). During the dramatic reading practice students were highly encouraged to use multimodal tools (i.e., gesture, movement, music, drawing), along with the verbal engagement, to live through, collaboratively inquire about, and create multiple interpretations of the complex language and stories of four plays of William Shakespeare.

This research on understanding how reading practices get co-constructed in a classroom is informed by socio-cultural and cultural-historical theories of classroom life. Gutiérrez & Rogoff (2003) provide a brief summary of cultural-historical theory in education when they assert "individual development and dispositions [towards learning] must be understood, not separate from, cultural and historical context" (p.22). The authors argue that classroom research and pedagogies need to attend to “individuals linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires” or the patterned ways of approaching situations. Within recurring situations or events, students may access and move across multiple repertoires of cultural practices and ways of making meaning with texts. As Gutiérrez & Rogoff (2003) point out, the cultural-historical paradigm is useful for critical sociocultural literacy research because it helps classroom research and pedagogy move away from deficit thinking where teachers and school institutions make assumptions about students based on static and monolithic labels such as ELLs and struggling readers.

From a sociocultural and cultural historical view, each classroom culture is unique as it is shaping and shaped by the students’ and teachers’ history of relationships with each other.
through recurrent social performances of being a student and using new (and old) repertoires of meaning making across events.

It is possible, then to view the classroom cultures that emerged during this research, as a coordinated group of teachers and students with some traditions and understandings in common, extending across time spent in similar sets of practices informed by histories of action, interaction, and use of texts in institutions of schools. The two sets of reading practices proved to create entirely different social and cultural contexts for students to read, think and talk about what they were reading. Following Heath’s (1983) definition of literacy events as social activities and ways of using and talking about texts—I labeled each of the culturally and historically constructed reading-instruction specific events as reading events.

The methodology of performance ethnography helped provide an analytical lens on the different patterns of structuring and participating in reading events. Using Goffman’s idea (1959) that all social interactions are performances of our social roles, I began to document the regularities in ways students and teachers seemed to be negotiating and performing their roles as a part of the reading events. The recurrence of performances during these events co-constructed the classroom cultural practices of reading, or the common understandings among the specific students and teachers about the expected actions, interactions and use of texts.

Over the 2010-2011 school year, the co-construction of these practices contributed to locally situated classroom cultures of reading among the adults and children who were members of this cultural community. One pattern and repertoire of practices around reading I characterized as a classroom culture of comparing reading skills. It became highly visible across the non-dramatic reading events and seemed highly dominant towards beginning of the year. The other patterns and repertoire of practices around reading I characterized as the culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking. It became visible with the implementation of dramatic inquiry and it began to organically grown
and overlap the original classroom culture around reading as the year progressed. By the end of the year the classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking seemed to overtake the culture of comparing reading skills.

In Chapter 2, I offer an overview of my use of Dwight Conquergood’s conceptual categories for performance ethnography. In Chapter 2, I used Conquergood’s categories of power, process, play and poetics as a means to outline my critical literature review on previous sociocultural research on ELLs and literacy learning conditions. I use Conquergood’s categories of power, process, play and poetics to describe the kinds of teacher performances that seem to create certain kinds of literacy learning conditions for ELLs. In Chapter 3, I outline my research methodology, the classroom context created by the teacher (“Ms. G”), my methods of data collection and data analysis, and my researcher positionality in the classroom.

In the beginning of Chapter 4, I describe the social positioning of the three ELLs—Yusef, Dasjah, and Ino—in relationship to the given circumstances and ways of doing school reading and classroom reading events set up in a large part at the beginning of the year and sustained by non-dramatic ways of co-constructing reading events. In the rest of Chapter 4, I describe my findings across the data corpus on and the recurrent performances of students and teachers within non-dramatic reading events. In Chapter 5, I present a second set of findings on the recurrent performances of the same set of students and teachers within dramatic-inquiry reading events, which in many ways disrupted the norms of the non-dramatic reading practices. This made visible an entirely different set of locally specific reading practices which focused students on using collaborative and long term dramatic inquiry with complex texts and expanding the social and multimodal resources available in that process. In both Chapters 4 and 5, as I documented and analyzed the patterns of social performances during reading events, I began to see how the teacher and students joint performances contributed to the norms for classroom reading practices. This analysis of the recurrent performances gave insight into how power relations, social status, authority over knowledge, and valued ways of
making meaning with texts were reproduced, and transformed by the cultural practices surrounding reading fictional texts. By comparing these divergent ways of structuring reading practices, I was able to study the shifts in power relations, social status, authority over knowledge, and valued ways of making meaning with texts when participants as a result of such shifts in classroom cultural practices around reading. I also present how each set of reading practices influenced the limitations and affordances for ELLs in regard to gaining academic language and literacy. In Chapter 6, I conclude with a discussion of my findings, offering some implications for the introduction of play and poetics into educational theory and the possibilities for pedagogies that bring together dramatic inquiry and effective literacy education for English-Language Learners.

Framing The Problems With School-Based Literacy For Ells

Juan loved stories...

The moment I pulled out our “story-telling couch,” Juan raced, book in hand, to be the first one on the carpet, with his face as close as possible to the pages of the book. He would jump up, point out pictures, and talk “back” to the characters. He loved to offer interpretations of actions and events in the story and explain things when other students had questions. He was equally competent doing this in both English and Spanish. Of all my twenty-two Spanish-English bilingual first graders that year, Juan seemed the most flexible in moving back and forth across the languages, especially in helping other students understand the stories told in English. Juan not only loved to hear stories, he had lots of stories to tell.

However, in his mainstream classroom, when it came time for Juan to “read” a story in English, from a small trade book written at his “appropriate instructional level” for reading (per his test scores), Juan did everything he could to avoid it. After much persuasion on my part, with the two of us looking through the book together and predicting some of the plot and words he might see, he would get to the first or second word and give up. “I can’t,” he’d say. Many iterations of this would occur as we all
tried to help him write down his stories and read other stories. Juan remained labeled at basically the same instructional level all year. One “deficit” label after another was suggested, blaming his inability to “read” on his family, his socio-economic background and immigration status, on his undiagnosed “ADD” or “bad, highly disruptive behavior,” and of course, on his status an “ESL” student. The stories Juan had to tell about himself as a reader were not the tales where he was the successful protagonist... As a result, I could see the signs that Juan was starting to hate reading—at age six! It broke my heart for I knew how much Juan loved stories.

Given the backdrop of high-stakes testing in contemporary society, the kind of reading or “school-based literacy” expected of Juan and other ELLs is commonly treated in public opinion and federal policy as an unproblematic and apolitical practice that will solve all of the world’s problems (Gee, 2007). In an effort to focus on increasing “literacy” through “technicization” (Apple 2004) as a means to decrease the “school achievement gap” for students from multiple linguistic and cultural-minority communities (Gay 2000, Nieto 2010), federal and state governments have severely discouraged the use of classroom time for instruction in the actual social and cultural meanings and purposes of literacy. Instead, schools are encouraged to focus on what discrete, procedural skills can be measured on standardized assessments (Menken, 2008), regardless of whether or not ELLs and their non-ELL classmates are actively performing conceptual understanding (Blythe & Perkins, 1994). Because this ”school-based literacy” has been so normalized through psychological and cognitive models of development, literacy is viewed almost exclusively in terms of mental processes and individual skills (Apple, 2004; Gee, 2007). Students’ scores are used to label and group them into hierarchical categories of meeting grade-level standards, being well above the standards, or well below them. School districts, schools, and teachers are evaluated and compared based on these scores. Complex children with a wealth of knowledge, like Juan, become equated with low test scores and schools consistently structure the conditions for these students based on static,
institutional identities (Gee, 2000; Lewis & Del Valle, 2008), such as “our low students,” “ESL,”¹ and “at-risk.”

As Brian Street (1995, 2001) and many others (Gee, 2007; Kalantzis & Cope, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) have argued, current political and public rhetoric seems to perpetuate an extremely limiting notion of literacy, which devolves into isolated, decontextualized skills and abstract ways of talking and reasoning typically used only in academic institutions. This brand of school-based literacy invites certain ways of talking about and performing literacy while denying the existence of other ways of knowing and making sense of the world; school-based literacy seems to assume that the “standard” or correct forms of communication are, and should be, devoid of people’s emotions, desires, and subjectivities (Gee, 2007; Street, 2001). The way this ideological concept is implemented in many schools narrows the depth of curriculum to “drill and kill” approaches, in which students memorize disjointed bits of information and “formulaic procedural” skills (Menken, 2008, p. 131).

I have observed in many elementary schools what Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez (2003) documented in a series of research studies. In the least effective literacy classrooms in these studies (Taylor et al., 2003, 2002), students were taught a specific skill (i.e., finding main idea, comparing and contrasting) by using a series of random, isolated texts; they demonstrated their “skill” by answering lower-order thinking questions in multiple-choice form (the typical form of a standardized reading assessment). The focus on individual performance of skills and high-stakes testing shaped by this brand of literacy seems to paradoxically destroy what may have been one of its overarching intended purposes: creating more critically literate global citizens. This

¹ It is inaccurate to use the term “English as a Second Language,” or ESL, to refer to a person, though that is often how I have heard it used in schools. ESL is a supplemental class required by many U.S. public school districts, though it may have different names attached who have primary languages other than English. In this paper, I have used the slightly less stigmatized term, English-Language Learners (ELLs). I realize, however, that any label creates “othering” and comes with its own set of stigmas and conflicts. For example, all children in the school are technically learning English, whether or not it is their native language.
practice has particularly severe consequences for English-Language Learners in U.S. public schools.

Critical and multicultural scholars have documented that when literacy competence is confined to transmitting the procedural skills of the reading or writing test, many immigrant students, English-Language Learners, students of color, individuals with disabilities, and students from a low socio-economic background are hard-hit by the learning conditions implemented as a result of this limiting definition (Nieto, 2009; Tharp, 2000). As biased assumptions are constructed about intelligence, many English-Language Learners are denied access to a rigorous curriculum rich with authentic uses of language (Medina & Campano, 2006; Menken, 2008). The practices in which many ELLs participate during the school day severely limit access to a wide range of authentic uses of texts, language registers, and academic discourse patterns desperately needed in global knowledge economy (Gee, 2007). Consequently, English-Language Learners are not given consistent multimodal (i.e., visual, non-linguistic, physical semiotic systems) and social supports to perform authentic literacy understandings, such as collaborative work on meaningful and complex tasks; nor are they asked to actually use language and literacy for authentic purposes. While this issue should be a concern for the education of all students, English-Language Learners cannot afford the time spent on isolated skills practice with little focus on meaning. ELLs are in a particularly difficult position because they must rapidly and simultaneously develop oral academic English vocabulary while developing the foundational competencies related to reading. Developing academic literacies though goes far beyond the mechanistic process of decoding to the sociopragmatic understandings of how such vocabulary is used in talking about and working within literary and non-fictional texts across other academic content areas. Monolingual English speakers have the luxury of having a much richer linguistic repertoire and much more extensive exposure to oral English in other contexts from which to draw from to face this daunting task.
A problem with the prevailing definition of literacy competencies is that it disregards our human agency. By birthright as humans we are all offered the “dimension of the possible,” where we not only experience the world, but we can also imagine and create new possibilities (Tedeschi & Manfredi, 2011). However, instead of seeing literacies as a set of generative tools that allow us to tap into not only what is, but what is possible, school-based literacy has isolated skills, such as the “foundational reading competencies,” so that the way literacy instruction is practiced classrooms often denies the social, emotional, and imaginative parts of our selves living relationally together as humans. The predominant version of school-based literacy fails to see students and their teachers as performing possibilities based on the resources they have available or the dynamic improvisations among the various communities they inhabit (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003).

Even though English-Language Learners come to school with a rich and dynamic repertoire of linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and relational capabilities, they are not seen for what they can do but are inscribed with a mark of what they can’t do; they are affixed within institutional identities from which they can rarely break free (Gee, 2000, 2007). Scholars have shown that many students fail to overcome these labels and over time begin to act as their label has suggested (Oakes, 2005; Rose, 1999). The different ways of making sense of and performing their various possible selves among the many intersecting cultural communities in which they are participating (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003) are not validated by singular definitions of skills-based literacy.

In other words, the notion of school-based literacy constitutes an ongoing, but often unexamined, set of discourses in public policy, schools and classrooms about the right sort of literate identity (Gee, 2007). From an institutional perspective a competent literate identity is seen as consistently performing the isolated skills of school-based literacy: passive reception and abstract, detached forms of verbal reasoning (Street, 1995). The display of these skills is assumed to make visible an inherent, individual intelligence and ability. Other “sorts” of individual performances are seen as a less competent
performances of literacy, even though in less artificial conditions, the same student shows a flexible repertoire and facility of using both oral and written language to solve authentic, personally relevant problems and successfully negotiate their social interactions and purposes (Varenne & Mcdermott, 1999). If ELLs and other struggling readers and students continually hear stories told about themselves as not capable or not intelligent enough, how could they even begin to imagine other possibilities?

To summarize both what I documented through this study and what has been shown across other socio-cultural research in classrooms, the language and repeated social practices of U.S. public school classrooms, as well as cultural and societal discourses (e.g., education as exercise for the real world, narrow definitions of literacy), are “constituting and inviting certain identities” (Peter H. Johnston, 2004) where literacy is defined narrowly as:

- *individual performance of isolated procedures and skills*;
- *abstract, rational, and detached reasoning with a generalized audience*;
- *passive receptacles for transmission of “given knowledge” without question*;
- *assuming students have shared worldviews and background experiences*; and
- *overprivileging verbal and print-centered forms of language systems and ways of making meaning*.

**Performances of multimodal literacy understandings**

By using a conceptual frame of performance I seek to document pedagogies that disrupt this narrow definition of literacy and move beyond the traditional way of performing “knowing” as final product (i.e., imitating a skill with an isolated text, such as finding the main idea) to actually performing an authentic understanding (Blythe & Perkins, 1994; Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1996). According to Blythe & Perkins (1994), an *authentic performance of understanding* is being able to do a variety of higher-level thinking processes related to a topic and for a specific purpose. These processes might
include explaining, finding evidence, drawing inferences, evaluating, synthesizing, and representing the topic in a new way; the performance of these understandings often leads to more questions and more opportunities for deepening understanding. Therefore, if the goal for teachers is to center literacy learning on understanding and making higher-order thinking visible through multimodal meaning-making tools, the most effective and long-lasting reading instruction must consistently engage students in what I have called *performances of literacy understanding*. Students who engage in performances of multimodal literacy understandings necessarily make use of literacy skills (i.e., vocabulary, fluency) in conjunction with multimodal meaning-making (including collaboration and using other people’s texts as semiotic tools) in order to do something meaningful with language. Examples of such engagement could include students not only telling what happened but performatively engaging with the text, such as generating critical questions to be able to talk “back” to the author or characters (Sipe, 2000) and create alternative possibilities.

**Multimodal Pedagogies: Disruptions of School-Based Literacy**

When the world-renowned drama educator Dorothy Heathcote (Heathcote, 1978) described what it means to rise above teaching that is viewed as skills-based instruction, she summarized a huge argument into two sentences: “*An excellent teacher is one who knows the difference between relating to things and relating to people. Both need great skill but the greatest skill lies in how we relate to people.*” (p.18) While it seems this would be a common-sense principle from which to approach teaching, in actual educational practices in many U.S. public schools, exploring human relationships and ways of communicating and building authentic understandings have become marginalized in exchange for the “real work” of school, which for many students is experienced as the practicing and taking tests on isolated skills (Menken, 2006, 2008). Paradoxically, the real work outside of school involves shifting across multiple social interactions within overlapping communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) and effectively collaborating with other people. Learning in life outside of schools in the 21st century
demands a nuanced understanding of complex human relationships in order for individuals to grow in their ability to participate more fully in each of the cultural communities of which they are a part; contemporary society demands deep conceptual understandings in order to both improvise and innovate and to be able to critically and ethically analyze the texts we are producing for and with each other. Process-drama or adult-mediated forms of classroom drama used for learning (as opposed to creating a theatrical performance) have been offered as means to bridge this gap and disrupt the status quo of school-based literacy-as-isolated-skills model.

Other education scholarship has determined that the most effective literacy-learning conditions for English-Language Learners include: contextualized literacy-learning opportunities using a wide range of speech functions within oral and written academic discourses; complex and creative higher-order thinking; and joint productive academic tasks that are meaningful, authentic, and cognitively challenging (Brock, Diane Lapp, Salas, & Townsend, 2009; Goldenberg, 2008; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Roland G Tharp, 2000). These same factors are among the most prevalent classroom outcomes created when process drama is used as a means for literacy development (Beach et al., 2010; Heath & Wolf, 2005; Wagner, 1998a). Therefore, I decided dramatic inquiry, a long-term inquiry-based version of process drama used in a diverse third-grade classroom, could offer a lens to begin to understand the significance for ELLs when the school-based literacy model is challenged. It also provided both a intertwined theoretical and pedagogical lens that attempts to see children as already thinkers and active agents within interpreting and questioning texts and it provided a lens that attempts to see children for what they can do, not for what they can’t.

Drama in Education

Dorothy Heathcote (1969) was a pioneer of adult mediated forms of informal drama in classrooms in England where she perfected the idea that the teacher and students using drama in the classroom negotiate and create the imagined world together (as opposed to dramatizing a pre-printed text) and Heathcote first introduce the notion that the teacher
take part in the dramatic play by using the highly effective and now often used drama strategy of *teacher-in-role*. Gavin Bolton, David Booth, Jonothan Neelands, and John O’Toole and countless others across the world have sought ways to translate Heathcote’s work into other educational contexts and classroom settings. Cecily O’Neill (1995) introduced the idea *process drama*, (though the term in the US has become a commonly used term for many process oriented types of drama), Process drama involve the use of a wide range of dramatic forms among a sequence of episodes where the entire group is engaged in fictional roles but without a pre-written script. The work is built up over an extended time frame and not shown to an external audience beyond the participants themselves. Thus gradual construction of a complex drama world “depends on the consensus of all those present for its existence” (Cecily O’Neill, 1995, p. xiii). These scholars and educators and those who’ve built work upon their shoulders are disrupting notions of what it means to teach and learn and disrupting the teacher’s authority over texts and knowledge. They are taking up the challenge to blend the teacher self with the artist self so as to use the art form of drama to bring significance to language and action.

Dramatic play and embodied meaning-making in specific contexts are central to adult-mediated forms of process drama. Students and teachers work together to use forms of performance and improvisation where their bodies become key tools to imagine and collectively negotiate meanings within any kind of text, including a story that is co-constructed as they go along. In classrooms, this pushes forwards the collaborative use of multimodal literacies and expand students repertoires for understanding to include playful, embodied, emotional and collaborative ways of learning. Thus, process drama is particularly well-suited to Vygotsky’s (Vygotsky, 1978) ideas on the social construction of learning.

Vygotsky (1962) argued that children make sense of their worlds through symbolic play and contextualized problem-solving in collaboration with other people. Process-drama students create authentic understandings through collaborative problem-solving throughout their negotiations in their co-constructed drama world. It is in the negotiated
space of process drama where ideas are socially constructed. As (Montgomerie & Ferguson, 1999, p. 13) write these ideas are co-created in classrooms “on the upward thrust of the spontaneous [emergent ideas] meeting the downward thrust of the scientific” (1999, p. 13). In this way, children develop true conceptual understanding not as a top-down transmission model of the teacher telling the students. Instead, students and teachers physically, imaginatively, and collaboratively create active, contextualized story worlds, make multiple meanings, and create possibilities. In doing so they build a common base of language and knowledge, as well as authentic reasons for using a wide variety of language functions (i.e., expressive, persuasive) and language systems beyond what is typical in classrooms (Wagner, 1998b).

**Dramatic Inquiry**

*Dramatic inquiry* (Edmiston, 2011) is a specific form of process drama centered around critical and ethical inquiry about human relationships. Brian Edmiston (2010) describes the pedagogy, *dramatic inquiry*, as “a hybrid of dramatic play, dramatic performance, and inquiry based education” (p.7). Dramatic inquiry focuses student learning through active, collaborative forms of dramatic play and dramatic strategies involving elements of theatrical performance and collective, reflective processing which is centered around inquiry and higher order thinking processes and inquiry. Like process drama students and teachers negotiate themselves into fictional roles and the imagined drama world and therefore the participants do not create a final production in the traditional sense of a full theatrical performance. The learning within dramatic inquiry happens within the collaborative and dramatic processing and inquiry which often happens over the long term (i.e. a month-long unit, year-long fictional frame, etc.).

In dramatic inquiry, students and teachers use their physical gestures, movements, embodied visual and verbal performances, and other multimodalities to co-construct significant meaning within and across texts. Through playful embodiment, students are protected into taking risks and critically inquiring about texts and the world. Similar to process drama, students and teachers use informal dramatic play to build a shared
imagined context and to imagine themselves and interact “as if” they are other people. Expertise and knowledge is distributed across the learning community as they use the multimodal tools of drama to authentically listen and connect—both with those present and those across time and space (Beach et al., 2010). Dramatic inquiry was particularly suited for this study because of its potential for creating active, multimodal ways of making meaning with text and in making the higher order thinking in reading comprehension more concrete and visible to ELLs and other students.

A child’s imaginative potential is tapped into and cultivated as dramatic inquiry often pushes at the edges of texts (Wolf, Edmiston, & Enciso, 1997), where students act as agents to explore issues and perspectives implied but not heard or generate alternative possibilities and create new understandings. Because action and dialogue in dramatic inquiry can be stopped and analyzed through drama rather than abstractly discussed, the group can simultaneously experience and explore social and cultural references, as well as authentically reflect and examine their own beliefs in a new light. As argued by Wolf, Edmiston, & Enciso (1997), it is only through this “joining of hearts, hands, voices, and minds” that we begin to shift the ways we think and act not only in the imagined space but also in the present and in our future everyday worlds.

**ELLs & Dramatic Inquiry**

When I began this study I had previous expectations about dramatic inquiry built from my experiences with observing and using dramatic inquiry with general populations in classrooms and from prior research by Edmiston (Edmiston, 2011). Both from prior research and my teaching experiences with ELLs I determined a list of some effective literacy-learning conditions that research has shown to be particularly effective for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. These include: a) authentic uses of language across the curriculum; b) creative and complex thinking processes; and c) joint productive activity (Dalton & Tharp, 2002). Drama has been shown to meet all three of these criteria for general populations (Podlozny, 2000) and improve oral vocabulary,
conceptual understanding and reading comprehension for ELLs through foregrounding embodied and other multimodal ways of making meaning (Marzano & Pickering, 2005; Rieg & Paquette, 2009). Prior to the study, I expected that educational environments created by dramatic inquiry could expand ELLs repertoires for meaning-making and allow them simultaneous develop their oral and written academic language and literacies.

The experiences of English-Language Learners then during a classroom with high implementation of dramatic inquiry throughout the year, provided me a particularly rich lens to document and begin to understand the influence dramatic inquiry has on expanding the multimodal resources in a classroom and the literacy practices of this classroom. It is in this intersection that I began to document how the intentionally collaborative and multimodal pedagogy of dramatic inquiry gave ELLs access to authentic literacy understandings and creative uses of language in various contexts and with different functions, while still building academic literacies. It was also from this intersection that I developed my research questions around reading instruction in the classroom.

**Research Questions:**

In considering these problems and concerns for literacy instruction with English language Learners, I was reminded of my early classroom teaching days. As a novice teacher in a typical “English-only” classroom in a public elementary school, I usually had five to six ELLs along with my first, second, and third grade monolingual English speakers. Looking back, I realize that I contributed in the limiting of academic-language learning opportunities for my English-Language Learners and other struggling readers and writers. I allowed my own better judgment and my belief in the potential for all students to be clouded by institutional pressures for one kind of individual “display” of literacy skills. Inadvertently, the school’s definitions of ELLs as below-proficient readers, writers, and English speakers lowered expectations of the capabilities of my students. As a result, I, like many teachers untrained to support ELLs in their classrooms, did not consistently
provide the kinds of learning opportunities where it was possible for my students to use multiple language forms and social ways of making meaning so that they would be better supported in adopting and adapting the social and cultural practices around texts (David Bloome, Beierle, Grigorenko, & Goldman, 2009). Experiences such as these continued to fuel the line of inquiry driving this study. I began first with a series of questions, including: What are the consequences of the school-based definitions of literacy on actual literacy practices in classrooms? What are the learning opportunities made available to students, particular linguistically and culturally diverse learners, as a result of these practices? How could any of these practices and their resulting learning opportunities for ELLs be transformed by the introduction of alternative pedagogies and philosophical models?

However, as I moved into my relationship with Ms. G, I found I wanted to limit the parameters of my study to focus on what she suggest to me she was hoping to change—her reading instruction. The more detailed research questions for the study then became the following:

1) In this classroom, how do reading events get co-constructed by the performances of teachers and students and how do some of these performances become typical reading practices?

2) What affordances and limitations do the recurrent non-dramatic and dramatic reading practices offer to intermediate and advanced English Language Learners?

**Ensemble-based Rehearsal Room Approaches to Shakespeare**

My research questions have both autobiographical and theoretical roots. Through my praxis among teacher development and classroom-based research on using dramatic inquiry, I have come to see the power of co-constructing a performance-arts based learning ensemble in classroom settings. From the summer of 2009 to the summer of 2011, I served as a research and teaching assistant with a teacher-leadership program
called Stand-Up For Shakespeare-America (SUFSA), which was central to a three-year partnership between the Ohio State University and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). According to the RSC’s manifesto for bringing Shakespeare into K-12 schools, children and young people need “to do Shakespeare on their feet, see it live and start it earlier” (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2010, p. 5). The teachers in this program were offered training in active, dramatic inquiry and ensemble-based teaching approaches. My ongoing involvement in this project about the use of long-term, dramatic inquiry (Edmiston, 2011) with the ensemble-based rehearsal room approaches to interpreting Shakespeare and other texts (Neelands, 2009; Royal Shakespeare Company, 2011) has deeply informed the line of inquiry apparent in this study.

In the following quote from the Royal Shakespeare Company’s, *RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers* (2010) the RSC educational team delineates the significant alignment between the two processes—ensemble based rehearsal room approaches to complex texts and active and collaborative inquiry-based approaches to reading and interpreting Shakespeare’s plays in classrooms.

> The process of rehearsing a play is collaborative. It is a focused artistic enquiry, in which the actors and director make discoveries by working playfully together. As a group they make choices about the plot, characters, themes and language of the play. This process is similar to enquiry in the classroom where teacher and pupil explore a play text together. Our simple premise is that the more active and collaborative that enquiry is, the more effective it will be. The more the teacher works as an enabler and fellow explorer, the better the teaching and learning will be. (RSC Toolkit, 2010, p.8)

**Ensemble-based classroom learning.**

Jonathon Neelands (2009) used the term *ensemble*, at it has been used in many artistic and professional theatre contexts, in order to describe the democratic process of a group collaboratively reaching a creative goal through collective experimentation and
negotiated processes as opposed to a top-down, authoritative directorship led by one person. Neelands argued that bringing a sense of ensemble into classroom settings disrupts the insistence on verbal ways of knowing and on the teacher as the sole authority.

Edmiston (2011), Neelands (2009) and other drama practitioners and scholars including my own prior research (Enciso, Cushman, Edmiston, Post & Berring, 2011) are at the nexus of ensemble-based forms of performance and of learning in classrooms. Through my involvement with the larger teacher development project and in other research prior to this research, I consistently observed the democratic and collaborative nature of an artistic ensemble provides a highly effective model for sustaining collaborative, active engaged inquiry to create transformative literacy learning in public school classrooms. The sense of shared purpose and authentic care for each other as members of a learning ensemble seems to be crucial to maintaining the investment of all participants. The challenge of processing challenging inquiry questions together as an ensemble is essential to building authentic learning as it initiates and sustains a collaborative meaning-making project, and which seems to push its members much further than one could have achieved on their own. Furthermore, the playful and the dialogic nature of the ensemble creates a liminal space that can support the accepting of uncertainty, and the questioning, (Enciso, et. al. 2011) deconstruction and reconstruction of the texts demanded by critical literacy scholarship (Janks, 1999; Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2007; Luke & Freebody, 1997).

Edmiston (2011) and Neelands (2009) argue for classrooms which promote a productive, democratic style ensemble. This notion of ensemble applied to classrooms involved in dramatic inquiry and other multimodal pedagogies with similar goals of focusing on the dialogic ‘art’ of collaborative inquiry and meaning-making, where the learning is negotiated among multiple voices and ways of seeing, questioning and contradicting, improvising and playfully trying out different ideas. The philosophical and pedagogical intersections of dramatic inquiry and the idea of a collaborative, performance arts-based
ensemble of learners as part of reconceptualizing literacy education firmly established the necessity of using a performance-based conceptual frame for this study.

**Overview of Research: Purpose, Significance & Questions**

This year-long ethnographic study explored and described the nature of the reading-specific instructional practices among a diverse group of students and their teacher in one third grade classroom. Because the intentional use of *dramatic inquiry* (Edmiston, 2011) to explore four of Shakespeare’s plays became a common reading-specific instructional practice over the course of the school year, I was able to document the patterns of interactions between teachers and students during both non-dramatic and dramatic inquiry reading events over time. As a result I began to see two entirely different cultures of reading develop and overlap within the same group of students and teachers. My documentation and analysis began to uncover just how the overall cultures of reading may have been co-constructed and sustained by these literacy practices. Specific case studies of three intermediate to advanced English-Language Learners illustrated the affordances and limitations of literacy learning created by these practices and their associations with the two overarching cultures of reading. Overall, dramatic inquiry offered me as a researcher/ dramatic inquiry co-facilitator a space to explore what happens in the moments where there is a disruption of school-based definitions of literacy competence, especially in regards to English-Language Learners, and what happened when it became more common for literacy practices to demand higher-order thinking processes and authentic performances of understanding, as well as when learning resources were expanded to include multiple-language systems and collaboration.

**Significance of Study: Moving towards Multimodal Reading Instruction**

I built my work from a rich source of critical sociocultural scholarship that recognizes the multimodal nature of children’s literacy learning. Karen Wohlwend (2008)) showed how young children use play as a highly valued multimodal resource. This use of multimodality occurs even if it is not validated in the official spaces of the classroom., as in Ann Dyson’s and colleagues series of studies( (Dyson, 1993, 2003; Genish & Dyson,
2009) which shows children continue to find ways to build on a wide range of multimodal texts and related resources both present and outside of the classroom during their storytelling, reading and writing in their classrooms. Using social semiotics, Charles Suhr (1984) and later Marjorie Siegel (2006) have shown the depth of understanding students develop through transmediation across multimodal sign systems (e.g. visual drawing → verbal talk about drawing → embodied play related to drawing). Being able to transmediate, or translate information between multiple sign systems was a means for students deeply solidify their conceptual understanding and to use higher order thinking in Siegel’s research (2006).

Because of the pedagogical focus in this classroom on dramatic inquiry, I was able to focus on the ways that adult-mediated dramatic play and embodiment influenced a re-centering of children, particularly ELLs as active agents and “multimodal meaning makers” (Wohlwend, 2008, p. 128). As students became more actively involved in the multimodal meaning-making in the classroom, they helped me begin to understand how they were being supported in quite different ways to perform the school-based literacy skills or the “foundational reading competencies” (as they were called by Ms. G, the classroom teacher in this study). By doing so, I hope to clarify and support the rich literature on creating critical and multimodal forms of literacy for the benefit of all students, particularly linguistically and culturally diverse students.

This study helped me to begin to dialogize multimodal literacy understanding though this notion will be further explored in more detail as it relates to supporting English-Language Learners throughout my other sections and chapters. Performing multimodal literacy understanding is my reconceptualization of school-based literacy towards the multiple social, emotional, collaborative processes of making meaning, which valorize students dexterity across language systems. My research findings and discussion that follow put school-based literacy into an overlapping and productive philosophical dialogue with other more expansive and generative ways of viewing reading and writing competence. However, because both existed in the same classroom, it is not my intention to pit one
definition in dichotomy but to work both within and against the dominant ways of viewing school-based literacy for a recognize its valence in students and teachers lives.

Working within school-based ways of conceptualizing reading skills, I must recognize the abundant scholarship in emergent literacy begun by Marie Clay (1966) and continued by many others; this literature has provided a clear research basis for developing the foundational skills and processes needed for people to learn the procedures of reading printed text. A variety of well-publicized documents (e.g., (National Reading Panel, 2000) offer a clear understanding of these needs for beginning readers, such as phonemic and phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and basic comprehension. Yet, I also push against the narrow definitions of school-based literacy as isolated skills because the ways these ideas were realized in the everyday performances of the classroom reading events I studied sometimes limited the access to effective academic literacy learning resources needed by English-Language Learners. The recurrence of these events created a commonly understood set of cultural practices, and in some cases this tended to perpetuate or disrupt the power relationships and social status of the actors. Chapter 2 offers a more detailed explanation of these issues.

When documenting the alternative sets of reading instructional practices created by dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare, I used a broader sociocultural orientation towards reading and writing for various social purposes within particular communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), including enjoyment and developing literary awareness (Hade, 1991; Sipe, 2000) and building competent literacy identities across the lifespan (Alexander, 2005). As opposed to performance of only some isolated literacy skills, Leondar & Perkins (as cited in Montgomerie & Ferguson, 1999) argued for a more expansive view of school literacy where “competence encompasses the entire repertoire of knowledge, skills, and strategies available to a subject.”

I began to see at least some of the ways dramatic inquiry disrupted or sustained the status quo of school-based literacy. First, dramatic inquiry reading events began to disrupt by
opening space for a transformative shift from teachers and textual authority towards the social processes of inquiry-based, multimodal learning and center students as active agents across a wide range of complex texts (Beach et al., 2010). It also opened significantly more access to imaginative, emotional, physical, social, and intellectual resources to deepen conceptual understandings far beyond the surface, especially in our understandings of each other. Dramatic inquiry offered a means to highly support the exploration of complex human relationships while it centered the students as active agents within printed texts so they were able to engage in and live through stories, critically talk back to and within or against any text, embody perspectives, meet challenges, pose questions and solve all sorts of problems (Edmiston, 2011).

**Significance of Study: ELLs & multimodal literacies**

My study contributes to scholarship on building the academic literacy of linguistically and culturally diverse students in several important areas. In this study, I took a close look at practices which expand the multimodal semiotic resources available for teaching and learning and how this expansion creates or limits ELLs’ access to effective literacy-learning conditions, such as: complex thinking, authentic purposes for using academic language, and joint productive tasks with new academic concepts and language.

The first set of issues that affects their literacy-learning conditions is the persistent practice where English-Language Learners’ linguistic abilities in English are often confounded with assumptions about a lack of intelligence or ability to do complex thinking. Researchers have shown the damaging effects of ELLs’ consistent segregation into “low-track” or remedial instruction in terms of language and literacy development (Crawford, 2004a; Harklau, 2000; López, 2010; Menken, 2008; Toohey, 1998; Wall, 2000; Wright & Choi, 2006).

A second issue, directly addressed in this project, was the fact that intermediate and advanced English-Language Learners in the intermediate elementary grades (3rd grade
and up) are particularly susceptible to what Chall (2003) has called the “fourth grade slump.” Even if these students had progressed at similar rates to their non-ELL peers, once they progress beyond the emergent literacy stages of ‘learning to read’ and are expected to ‘read to learn’ (Allington & P. H Johnston, 2002; Chall & Jacobs, 2003a), the expectations for students to recognize and apply complex content vocabulary and abstract academic concepts and language about texts rise dramatically ((Cummins, 2000; Goldenberg, 2008). Thus, a broad base of fluency, morphological and semantic understanding of academic vocabulary, and the extensive exposure to language in authentic contexts and for many different uses and purposes are particularly imperative for ELLs’ academic success beyond the 2nd grade level (Folse, 2004). To reach such goals, research with English-Language Learners concurs that, especially from the intermediate grades (3rd grade and up), ELLs must have access to educational settings that develop high levels of oral and written academic English, rich exposure to and use of content specific vocabulary, and access to various academic literacy genres and purposes for using academic language (Cummins, 2000; Valdés, 2004). Since dramatic inquiry is built less around individual skills and more around supporting students to fully engage and live through stories and to perform multimodal literacy understandings, this approach gave me a lens to clarify the limitations and benefits for ELLs: their ability to appropriate language when they gain more access to academic-language-rich social interactions, collaborative and multimodal supports for complex thinking processes, and authentic purposes and connections to literacy across the curriculum (Aguirre-Munoz & Amabisca, 2010; Brock et al., 2009).

While there has been some research focused on the influence of process drama for students learning English as an additional language, most of this research has happened within the English-as-a-Second-Language classroom (Kao & C. O’Neill, 1998). Less research is available that establishes the impact of adult-mediated forms of drama with intermediate- to advanced-level English-Language Learners set within their everyday literacy instruction in an English-only classroom. There seems to be a dearth of research on the use of active approaches to the complex texts of Shakespeare with ELLs in
elementary schools; I only located one teacher’s anecdotal article about this topic in my review (Porter, 2009). Therefore, I have used a qualitative case study (A. Dyson & C. Genishi, 2005) to describe the academic literacy-learning conditions created by and for a small group of intermediate to advanced English-Language Learners participating in this particular community of practice (Wenger, 1999), reading and interpreting texts together with a special emphasis on using dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare texts. This set of three case studies will create a rich description and documentation of the opportunities and limitations for learning provided for a small group of English-Language Learners within the classroom literacy practices, where a high percentage of time was devoted to active explorations of Shakespeare texts using dramatic inquiry (Edmiston, 2011).

**Significance of Study: Making Thinking Visible in the Intermental Zone**

It seemed that because of the validation of active, performative engagement with the stories each of the focal students expanded their own understanding of Shakespeare’s stories. Importantly, it also made their thinking visible to others which further deepened other’s understanding of the stories and conceptual ideas and supported further questioning and performative interpretation and risk-taking. In other words, the typical ways dramatic reading events got collectively performed in this classroom seemed to push forward an *intermental development zone* (Mercer, 2000) which builds from Vygotsky’s idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The way classroom research and pedagogy often interprets Vygotsky’s notion of ZPD tends to focus on the assessment of the how an individual learner can progress just beyond their capabilities due to the support and scaffolding of a more competent other (usually in classrooms this is equated with the teacher). Yet, the reconceptualization of classroom learning as an intermental zone as defined by Neil Mercer pushes the focus on the variable contributions of everyone as complex thinkers and learners including teachers.

**Theoretical Frame: Performance Paradigm in Literacy Education**

Because I am seeking an understanding of a disruption of the status quo of the narrow definitions of school-based literacy, I needed to find an analytical frame and the
appropriate language to make sense of and express my emerging understanding of the
dialogic meaning-making that occurs for the people creating the cultural practices of this
classroom. Because I have also been an elementary school teacher I needed an
ethnographic lens from which to take a step back and make the familiar seem strange
(Heath & Street, 2008). In order to see the ways in which dramatic inquiry opened up
spaces for new ways of viewing literacy competence, as not only isolated skills but the
collaborative and authentic use of language and literacies to make deep and rich
meanings, I sought a lens that disrupts the norms, privileges the messy processes of living
and learning together, and pushes forwards the ideas of play and constructed shared,
imagined worlds. In order to reframe school-based literacy towards imaginative and deep
engagement with multiple language systems and higher order thinking processes– or
what I call the performance of multimodal literacy competence – I have chosen to use the
intersection of performance theories with education as my conceptual framing of issues
of power, identity and agency in classrooms, classroom based research, literacy
instruction.

Performance of the possible in classrooms

Performance-based theories in educational settings offer a new realm of possibilities for
language and analytical tools for pedagogies and classroom-based research. All too often
in education and educational research, the sense of wonder, curiosity, and generativity
children bring into the world is easily passed over because of our desire to help them, to
make them “better”—better readers, better writers, or good “future” citizens (Tedeschi &
points out paradoxically how our education system is actually reducing the generative
and innovative potentiality of so many of our students. Robinson cites an unidentified
longitudinal study where children’s abilities to generate possibilities were measured in
intervals over time: kindergarten, 5th grade, 12th grade, etc. The children in kindergarten,
before they had been ingrained into the ways of doing school, were actually the most
generative as a whole; while the generative capability declined steadily with the increased
amount of time students spent in school.
The interdisciplinary ways performance theory has been taken up are varied but offer a rich theoretical sources and arts-based, dialogic inquiry and process-oriented models of playful, authentic, and collaborative meaning-making. Building such practices within schools would begin to disrupt the dependence on abstract and verbal discourses, isolated displays of skills, and individual forms of knowing that in practice tend to keep students separated from the very elements which would most authentically ask people (both children, youth and adults) to collaboratively inquire, imagine new possibilities and perform new multimodal literacy understandings.

**Performances of classroom-based research**

The conceptual frame of this study builds on work by Alexander and Gallagos (2005), which is meant to move critical socio-cultural educational theories towards a productive “theoretical” dialogue among performance-based theories in order to focus on the collaborative meaning-making process over individual finalized products and to avoid a reinscription of the mind/body dualism. Dwight Conquergood (1989) points out that research moving towards the performance paradigm does not seek to pin down concepts but instead involves the relationships of the researchers to their own and others’ performances as they “attempt to listen over time to the unfolding voices, nuances, and intonations of performed meanings” (p.83). This seems to move research towards a focus on process and less on finalized product.

A performance view of people in the classroom isn’t limited to only studying individual development traits or characters but it is noting the regularities and variations among the many emerging ways we perform, or in others words, present our everyday social roles to ourselves and to others (Goffman, 1959). People are always a work-in-process as they socially construct a self-in-relation-to-others (Edmiston 2008). A performative frame privileges a more agentic and dynamic view of the culture of the classroom as a verb instead of the culture of the classroom as a static, objectified noun where the participants in the cultural practices are also helping to shape them through their language and social
interactions and performances in the moment. Classroom culture seen as a performance, then, is an ongoing, fluid, and unpredictable process of voices coming into contact with each other, where “social actors make moment-to-moment decisions about performing a familiar narrative or transforming or disrupting it” (Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos, 2005, p. 2). In effect, performance reframes the whole educational enterprise as a mutable and ongoing ensemble of narratives and performances, rather than a linear accumulation of isolated, discipline-specific competencies” (p. 23).

**Performances of authentic understandings**

A turn towards the performance paradigm in education places an emphasis on authentic forms of learning and understanding (Blythe & Perkins, 1994). In this view, educational goals are not set and pushing towards “performance” in the sense that people imitate knowing or display routine skills in discrete, isolated contexts for school-based purposes only (i.e., getting a good grade, avoiding punishment, etc.). In the case of actively working with a printed literary text in an elementary classroom, students often are given a stage to perform “knowing” in the traditional sense, where they retell the plot elements, but still are not asked to perform multimodal literacy understandings where they generate multiple possibilities and inferences about how character’s own intentions might be portrayed or use visual and physical images to deepen their own word knowledge and to make synthesis across scenes, themes, or plays. Literary understandings aren’t just skills that can be demonstrated and then imitated by a student—they are performances of understanding built through extensive play with a variety of authentic literature, asking questions, playing with ideas, taking risks, reflecting, and sharing ways of making meaning with others (Hade, 1991). In the process, they are appropriating a literary sense of self, or in a Bakhtinian (1984) sense they are filling the words and language of others with their own intentions and meanings so these literary understandings become more of their own.

Just as when you are learning to snowboard or ride a bike, you don’t learn simply by reading the instructions or watching others; you learn by doing, reflecting on what
worked and what didn’t and working on your performance, which often includes the support, resources, and competencies of other people (Blythe & Perkins, 1994). In a classroom, if we want children to be able to learn for authentic understanding, then they “need to spend a majority of time engaged in the performances of understanding” (p.2) rather than displaying performances of knowing the most amount of “information” or performing the skills in an isolated context, with no way to gradually shape and socially construct authentic understandings for themselves. For example, research on acquiring academic vocabulary has shown that students will build deeper, more long-lasting word knowledge when the students are exposed in multiple ways to words by having to use them for a meaningful purpose in ongoing, collaborative projects. Authentic understanding is gradually shaped as students have to figure out both linguistic and nonlinguistic ways to represent the meaning behind the words and ideas they want to express (Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

**Performances of literacy instruction & dynamic and performative literate identities**

The collective of ideas of the performance paradigm offer a powerful and critical theoretical lens for re-framing literacy instruction. A performative frame is useful for understanding the social and cultural contexts, and how they contribute to power relationships and to students’ sense of agency with texts, access to resources and possible ways of performing literate identities (i.e. ways of socially positioning themselves and being positioned as readers and learners in the classroom).

Theoretically, I don’t disagree with helping children acquire literacy skills (i.e., decoding and combining phonemes, identifying main ideas, using footnotes) if they are doing so as part of engaging in an authentic performance of multimodal literacy understandings. Engagement in such performances of understanding necessitate that children use all of their social and multimodal resources, especially their innate powers to imagine the possible, to generate new thoughts, to innovate, and to create change. However, I think one of the obstacles to this in many classrooms and schools is a limited or even romanticized notion of the child, where they aren’t seen as already capable thinkers. I
take a similar view to that offered by the Reggio Emilia educational approach (Tedeschi & Manfredi, 2011), where each child is viewed as a whole human being capable of active citizenship with all the same capacities to think, imagine, and create as aduPerformance, Literacy Education & ELLs

In my literature review in Chapter 2, I explain how my conceptual frame closely aligns with Dwight Conquergood’s (1989) organizational framing of the performance paradigm within the fields of anthropology, where he used four key words—*power, process, play,* and *poetics*—to create four inextricably interconnected spheres of concepts. While much critical educational research has focused in the areas of power and process, the areas of poetics and play are less visible in classrooms and classroom-based research and thus are particularly important areas for my study to more fully explore. As this study focuses specifically on the literacy learning of English-Language Learners, in Chapter 2 I will also use this conceptual frame to move within and against some of the socio-cultural-oriented literature focused on the issues regarding power versus process and its influence on the linguistically and culturally diverse learners’ access to learning opportunities that allow them to grow into the literacy practices around them. Because the current research basis specifically connecting the literacy learning of ELLs with drama is limited, in Chapter 2, I will also further flesh out research that has been done documenting the influence of drama on literacy for all students in relationship to play. Lastly, during my work with the third-grade students and their teacher using dramatic inquiry, many important ideas emerged related to play and poetics that became sensitizing concepts. These concepts related my grounded theorizing to prior theoretical and practical applications in areas such as the appropriation of words of others (Bakhtin, 1984), transmediation (Siegel, 2006; Suhor, 1984), and the social construction of intertextuality and what counts as text (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1995). During my final discussion chapters, I will return to how these ideas map onto and extend the categories of the performance paradigm, as well as add a fifth category of ensemble.

**Summary: Playful and Poetic Performances of Understanding**
This philosophical turn towards the performance paradigm in education offers a way for reconceptualizing the dynamic movements of people “culturing” (to actively use culture as a verb) a classroom. Specifically, in regards to literacy, people are constantly involved in a playful and poetic performance negotiated among the dialogic (Bakhtin 1984), overlapping texts (where texts are viewed broadly). A productive tension is maintained as the imposed academic literacies and curriculum are mediated by the playful and imaginative thinking, improvisations, emerging subjectivities, and poetic multimodal transmediation and representation that go along with the messy dialogic process of meaning-making with complex texts. It is in this place where we are all brought together to play, to learn about what others have already done and thought about the world before us, and to make sense of that world. Performative views remind us too that we are brought together to imagine many possibilities, to refashion and reconstruct the world in our own ways. The dialogic possibilities offered by viewing a classroom through power, process, play, and poetics has given me a new set of eyes from which to see us all in the messy process of living, and learning and imagining and creating our worlds, together.

Philosophically and pedagogically, this study builds from and challenges traditional ideas of language and literacy—and even challenges ways of doing research on this issues—that prevail in public-school policy through its shift from literacy as a performance of knowing and the skills-based rituals of school-based literacy (Fraser et al., 2009) to a collaborative and multimodal meaning-making process. Developing dramatic inquiry as common practice in one third-grade classroom was a collaborative, dialogic, and messy process; the classroom teacher and I were in a reflective cycle of dialogue and learning with each other and with the students. One of our main goals was in trying to shift the focus away from performance of the traditional ways of “knowing” in classrooms, where students tell us “the knowledge” or demonstrate “the skill,” towards a collaborative authoring of their own authentic performances of understanding (Blythe & Perkins, 1994), as well as deepening literary awareness and love of Shakespeare. As an ensemble of learners—which importantly included the children and adults together as learners—we struggled all year to figure out how to reconfigure at least some of the classroom literacy
practices using dramatic inquiry tools, as well as to understand how these multimodal tools were influencing students learning. This work is in some ways an unfinished performance-in-process, as there are many changes to be made and ideas to be heard and explored as we all continue on our life journeys. Though it has left some ritual practices still firmly in place, it has been at the same time transformative for all involved. Therefore, it could be considered a part of a movement of critical socio-cultural theories in literacy education (Cynthia Lewis et al., 2007) to build transformative action-oriented research in classrooms (Lather, 1986).

Returning to Johnston’s original question at the beginning of this chapter, I am particularly interested in using performance theories to offer other ways of looking at and transforming literacy learning in elementary classrooms, especially for young English-Language Learners. To do so, I sought a better understanding of one example of a pedagogy of possibility—dramatic inquiry—precisely because it could and did help me see students more for what they can do, not for what they can’t. Particularly, I observed how English-Language Learners were able to consistently perform multimodal literacy understanding precisely because they were given more access to multimodal ways of making meaning. To create this type of classroom, we must demand that education become a collaborative, meaning-making process that distributes expertise and valued ways of knowing across learners, where students’ agency and co-authoring of complex identities become infinite energy for inquiry and deepening the learning ensemble.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In this chapter, I provide an overview of current socio-cultural research on the specific issues faced by English Language Learners (ELLs) within the prevailing definition and resulting practices of school-based literacy. To create this review of the literature, I use a critical, sociocultural perspective and the four performance conceptual categories of Dwight Conquergood (1989)—power, process, play and poetics. I use this conceptual frame to review research on ELLs and drama and I review some concepts developed by other educational theorists which emerged during my study.

Critical, Socio-cultural conceptualizations of literacy

I see literacy as always culturally and socially situated and influencing and influenced by power dynamics as well as people’s own sense of agency, identities, needs and social desires (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). This type of critical, sociocultural paradigm for research on literacy is useful for understanding literacy development. It creates a new paradigm for looking at the ways classrooms get co-constructed both by the existing power structures and people’s improvisations on their own social and cultural positions or in other words, their performances of self set within the institution of school.

Gutiérrez & Rogoff (2003) point out that the research and pedagogies related to culturally and linguistically diverse students needs to move away from deficit thinking and "attribute regularities to the students' participation in familiar cultural practices as well as to their public school experiences that restrict engagement and limit the use of the
cultural resources that are part of their repertoires" and that these regularities have to be understood in the "light of the colonizing practices of which they have been a part (Tejada, Espinoza, & Gutiérrez, 2003).” I follow this epistemological shift towards a socially, culturally and historically contextualized understanding of classroom reading instruction because it recognizes the agency of students and teachers to improvise on the social and cultural positions and identities imposed on them by the institutional structures and school based literacy practices. These improvisations in the moment though are always mediated by the available semiotic resources (i.e. language systems, social ways of constructing meaning). Over time, then students build onto the cultural-historical and linguistic repertoires they already have developed from other communities outside of school (e.g. home, church, etc.). Importantly, the literacy practices of a classroom community have the opportunity to significantly extend students dexterity to move from those repertoires into more expansive repertoires of ways of knowing, communicating and participating in reading in school (Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003). Though as seen in the literature review that follows on literacy conditions set-up for ELLs, many classroom practices do little to promote such dexterity or expansion of academic language uses and linguistic repertoires.

**Effective literacy instruction for ELLs**

ELLs are at a precarious intersection of ideological and pedagogical confusion. According to Darder (1997), “the majority of bicultural students who are in need of greater school resources and educational opportunities find themselves in less challenging and less stimulating environments.” Instead of developing alternative literacy practices that would provide access to a wide range of language discourses and authentic literacy experiences and interactions, which could be used as resources for ELL students to gain better command over the academic language proficiency valued by educational systems, schools and teachers continue to promote a homogenized experience with literacy and thereby further limit ELLs’ access to authentic audiences and purposes (Valdés, 2004). Other sociocultural factors further intensify these problems (Menken 2008). These
include devaluation of ELL students’ own prior knowledge, a lack of access to linguistic and cultural resources, negative school climate, and high-stakes testing in conjunction with teachers’ long-held myths and misunderstandings of second-language acquisition and low expectations of cognitive abilities (Darder, 1995; Menken, 2008; Samway & McKeon, 1999).

Conversely, a large body of educational research has carefully documented the most effective teaching practices for the academic success of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (e.g. Aguirre-Munoz & Amabisca, 2010; Dalton & Tharp, 2002; Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Freeman & Freeman, 1998). These teaching practices have been shown to be effective for all students but have been particularly effective in helping to narrow the well-documented achievement gap between students whose home language and literacy practices, while rich and expansive in their own right, aren’t necessarily in alignment with dominant school-based literacy practices (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2009a). These pedagogical practices include: valuing and building on other linguistic and social resources outside of school, validating multiple language systems (e.g. drama, visual arts, gesture) in order to connect with academic discourses and registers, joint productive activities, and complex texts and challenging curriculum (Dalton & Tharp, 2002; Tharp, 2000).

Using critical, sociocultural approaches to literacy research about ELLs, I have not necessarily intended to focus on the psychological notion of the individual’s “characteristics” or skills but I am focusing specifically on the ways participants in the institutional setting of one public school classroom are set up to perform themselves in relationship to the expectations of their social roles as teachers and students during reading events which is significantly influenced by issues of power, identity and agency. Instead of focusing on skill outcomes on tests only, I adopt a theoretical and methodological framework at the intersection of critical, sociocultural literacy education and performance theories. In the next section I outline how these areas overlap.
The Performance Paradigm in Critical, Sociocultural Education

Bringing sociocultural theories of literacy education into dialogue with performance theories forces a reformulation of our view of performers, audiences, texts, and contexts. Both fields of study have taken a more performative, improvisational, and self-reflexive turn in how they conceptualize identity and classroom culture (See Alexander, et. al. 2005; Lewis et. al, 2007). Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) offers the notion that everyday people are acting simultaneously as performers and as audience members of their presentations of themselves, or in other words, all social interaction is a performance. From this view, the learners in classrooms are not static identities but engaged in an ongoing, dynamic process of performing themselves and how they make sense of the world from within their given circumstances. From this performative view of literacy in education, cultural context is not regarded as a concrete entity but is both shaping and shaped by imposed power structures, as well as the moment-to-moment interactions where people make agentic choices to assimilate these structures, disrupt them, or creatively adapt and build something different (Lewis et. al, 2007).

Texts are also re-defined much more broadly through both of these theoretical paradigms. According to sociocultural educational theorists David Bloome and Ann Egan-Robertson (1993), what counts as text cannot be determined a priori, as it depends on what people do with it. “Text is something done by people to experience” (p.311). To experience or to “textualize,” one must act upon and within a text to make it part of a language system (1993 p. 311), where language systems are also broadly defined (i.e., pictorial, architectural, oral, electronic, gestural). From this view, a student is similar to a performance artist in that she is not passively receiving the text but doing something with it as a means for her to experience. Theoretical alignment exists in some ways between both fields as both are seeking to shift towards “understanding performance as an essential agent of human experience” (Alexander et al., 2005), as compared to only seeing the meaning as a finished product residing solely in the text, the teacher (or director), or even solely in the individual reader, as typically happens in many classroom-based literacy events.
Performances of Knowing

I have used Blythe and Perkins’ (1994) distinction between performances of knowing and performance of understanding to make sense of the ways classrooms can expand or severely limit ELLs’ opportunities to engage in reading for authentic purposes. Performances of knowing in school settings are displays of being able to recall information or imitate a skill on demand; an example of a performance of knowing within reading instruction might be a score of oral reading fluency or isolated spelling or vocabulary tests, with little regard given to meaning-making. Performances of understanding, on the other hand, are created when students are asked to do something thought-demanding with the topic, “like explaining, finding evidence and examples, generalizing, applying, analogizing, and representing the topic in a new way” (Blythe & Perkins, 1994, p. 5). These performances of understandings seem quite similar to the kinds of reading-comprehension strategies that have been provided to teachers as a model of what “good readers” do to make sense of a text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

ELLs face high pressure to perform knowing, but they are typically only given verbal, abstract ways to make sense of passively received knowledge. They are given little access to multimodal supports, such as non-linguistic and kinesthetic ways of making meaning, nor to social supports, such as consistent substantive academic conversations and purposeful collaborative tasks with multiple competent English speakers, which might help them grow in their ability to perform multimodal literacy understanding in order to complete challenging, purposeful, and meaningful tasks (Haneda, 2008). Another concern about this pressure on ELLs to perform knowing in literacy is that the tasks become inauthentic; the texts are highly simplified and the language is often isolated from authentic contexts, thereby insufficiently challenging English-Language Learners to sustain engagement and investment in authentic uses of academic language and learning tasks overall. The literacy narratives that are told to them by others, and the ones they begin to enact, concern the many school “things” they can’t do and how they aren’t quite capable of critical and complex thinking. These narratives negate the fact that in other communities and learning contexts, they display daily the ways they are capable,
multimodal meaning-makers who can (and do) question, imagine new possibilities, and actively construct new knowledge and create change.

Similar to the performance artist needing an in-depth understanding of the underlying and implied relationships, Blythe & Perkins (1994) argue students need to create authentic and genuine performances of understanding as opposed to a more surface imitation or inauthentic performance of knowing. To do so they have to be given consistent opportunities to purposefully engage in authentic and meaningful reading comprehension tasks, which necessarily includes many more language systems beyond verbal-linguistic input and output; such tasks would require students to negotiate meanings through collaborative completion of the exercise. As Blythe & Perkins (1994) found, though teachers complained that their students lacked a deep conceptual understanding, when the authors observed these teachers’ classrooms, many students weren’t actually asked to consistently perform understanding that moved them beyond displaying surface knowledge.

Many students in U.S. schools, especially linguistic and culturally diverse students, find little opportunity to authentically use multimodal literacy tools and collaboration as resources for performances of multimodal literacy understanding in their classrooms. In literacy instruction, this most often stems from a lack of learning opportunities where students are asked to use complex thinking processes to build on and understand the varied uses of literacies in particular contexts for specific purposes. The narrow definitions of literacy as equated with displaying skills on tests has tended to create classroom conditions which value a display of skills or which severely limits the opportunities to perform authentic understanding. This definition has moved the instruction of literacy away from understanding the actual uses of written language in context for authentic purposes. This occurs even though in our day-to-day lives as humans, we move back and forth among all kinds of communities of practices, language systems, and working with other people in order to understand and to act on and transform our worlds.
Performative Engagements with literary texts

Literacy researchers have documented the desire of children to engage deeply and performatively with authentic literary texts (Enciso, 1992; Hade, 1991; Sipe, 2000). As Sipe (2003) and Hade (1991) argue for building classroom practices that intentionally support literary understanding, fascination with language and literature and critical thinking and talking back to stories. Unless they are already avid readers (Parsons, 2006) a large majority of students are unlikely to build such a personal relationship with literary texts, stories and language in the ways reading is defined by school-based literacy because it tends to focus on learning mechanics through simplified and unconnected texts. According to Hade (1991) in order to deepen students’ literary understanding they must be engaged in a generative exploration with challenging texts and literary forms as to be constantly going on a passionate adventure with the language. They must be pushed to reconsider other possibilities while sharpening, justifying and clarifying their reasoning. Sipe (2003) documented that classrooms who were consistently promoting such deep engagement with reading, then consistent performances of literary understanding were readily visible.

Yet, the appearance of such performances of authentic engagement and deep literary awareness with high quality literature is atypical in many other US public schools classrooms, where ELLs and other students are rarely expected to bring their own meanings to texts by connecting, generalizing, finding examples, inferring to solve meaningful problems, considering ethical questions, generating multiple possibilities and alternative ways of acting and making change (Blythe and Perkins, 1994). As Beach et. al. (2010) succinctly argued if students are expected to be academically and socially successful and to be critically literate, they need many opportunities use literacy as lifelong tools for building conceptual understanding and for acting and transforming their worlds.
While this is a concern for all students, ELLs need to acquire academic language and literacies and conceptual understandings simultaneously and therefore ELLs especially need access to rich oral and written language experiences within the context of high quality literature and within multimodal ways of making abstract concepts more comprehensible. In other words, all students but especially ELLs need consistent engagement in performances of multimodal literacy understandings for a meaningful purpose. According to Peter Johnston’s (2004) study of the most effective fourth grade classrooms, students who are treated as already capable thinkers and able to choose ways of performing literacy understanding they are more likely to tell many more stories of themselves as the successful protagonists in the literacy narrative. For it is only in actively imagining our many dimensions of the possible, where we could possibly begin to transform ourselves and our worlds.

**Critically engaged readers & performers talk back to the text**

Another tenet shared by both performance and critical sociocultural theories in education is that all students and teachers need to have many opportunities to be active agents within the texts and subtexts co-written by human interaction and relationships. For a performance artist to create a “genuine performance” in their role (B. K. Alexander et al., 2005), and likewise for a student to create a genuine performance of understanding, requires much more than a surface reading of the texts, where texts are defined broadly (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993). Highly engaged readers, like performers, are actively interacting with texts, talking back to them and talking over them by adding their own interpretations and worldviews (Sipe, 2000).

Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos (2005) point out how performance artists use the rehearsal process as “a medium for asking questions of the text, experimenting with possible solutions, and shaping a formal presentation of their research into a theatrical production” (p.30). This notion aligns with recent education scholarship on recognizing and developing “multiliteracies” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1999) and critical literacies in classroom settings, which pushes for deeply integrating new ways of collaborating and
new ways of producing/critiquing/using texts (Lewison et al., 2007; Luke & Freebody, 1997). These shifts offer instructional models with the potential to disrupt the commonplace assumption that learners are passive recipients of text and information or even passively accepting the status quo without question. For example, critical-literacy pedagogies move students towards using literacy as a tool to critique and question texts and the world around them and to change it. Lewison, Leland, & Harste (2007) offer a key reason and purpose for using critical literacy:

[C]ritical literacy practices encourage students to use language to question the everyday world, to interrogate the relationship between language and power, to analyze popular culture and media, to understand how power relationships are socially constructed, and to consider actions that can be taken to promote social justice (p.3).

Many critical-literacy scholars (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis, 1999, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, 2008) also take up “multiliteracies” perspectives, where expansive and innovative uses of multiple forms of language and texts are highly valued resources for critical meaning-making and for an authentic and meaningful purpose. Such new multiliteracies scholars take into account the countless new technologies, digital capabilities, and on-screen literacies being used, and they respond to this need for transformative teaching practices that align with children’s lived experience in the 21st-century world (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, 2008; New London Group, 1996).

Cope and Kalantzis (2008) make it apparent that the new learning of and through the multiliteracies should strategically construct our schools in supporting a variety of knowledge media and ways of representing knowledge and sign systems—written, oral, visual, audio, tactile, and gestural (p.203). My only critique is that, as many of these practices are most often taken up through a new technologies standpoint (i.e., blogs, networking sites, iMovie, YouTube, etc.), we may unintentionally reinscribe the dangerous binary of mind over body (Slattery, 2006). Furthermore, we may have a
tendency to overprivilege verbal, intellectual discussions and abstract processing of human relationships. Reconsidering the overprivileging of verbal discourses is of specific concern for effectively supporting linguistic and cultural learners.

Critical sociocultural and language-socialization researchers and educators have critiqued many of the classroom literacy learning practices for English-Language Learners Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Tejeda, 1999; Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez, 1994; Tharp, 2000). In the following, sections I review recent literature about literacy learning conditions created for ELLs. I will outline this research using Conquergood’s (1989) notions of power and process. However, my work with dramatic inquiry lies with the performance conceptual spheres of play and poetics as I have found they further push the boundaries of how educators and educational research can most effectively build authentic literacy understanding and disrupt the mind-body dualism that is still firmly entrenched in schools (and even in some of these practices). My research lies at this nexus.

I recognize not all of the research I reviewed on ELLs necessarily intended to take a critical and sociocultural perspective about classroom practices. However, understanding issues of power, identity and agency set within their social and cultural contexts of the classroom (which are also informed by larger social and cultural contexts such as schools, school districts, public discourses about literacy and the institution of schooling) is necessary for understanding the ways school as an institution has limited many students opportunities to engaged purposefully with literacy. Therefore after my initial introduction to the performance paradigm within education, then I use the performance categories as means to create a critical, sociocultural-oriented review of classroom-based research on ELLs.

**Performance concepts and Effective Instruction for ELLS**

Throughout this study, I was able to build on and extend my ideas based out of
Conquergood’s (1989) signification of four conceptual spheres of research interests. These four spheres *poetics, power, process* and *play* collectively define the performance paradigm in anthropology but seem quite translatable to educational contexts as well. In the next sections, I will provide an overview of ways in which these four categorizations of the performance paradigm move within and against my reconceptualization of reading instruction for English Language Learners in English-only classrooms. I will also use diagrams to visually outline the evolution of my conceptual frame because I feel it more succinctly illustrates how I see performance theories informing, extending and refashioning current conceptual understandings of classroom reading instruction.

As much as been written about the influence of power and more recently about process-oriented forms of teaching, the performance frames of *power* and *process* offered by Conquergood (1989) worked especially well for describing the last few decades of classroom-based research on literacy learning conditions offered to English Language Learners in their schools. Each of the ways of structuring or consistently performing the culture of a classroom depended on how the teacher and the school fell along the continuum of power and process.

I also argue in this chapter that a focus solely on *power* and *process* in classroom-based research and pedagogies is problematic. Transformative, adult-mediated and multimodal, drama pedagogies such as dramatic inquiry flow readily between all four performance categories but intentionally include *play* and *poetics* into the classroom. In the two sections below devoted to play and poetics I specifically outline research on drama, multimodalities and literacy (though not necessarily only focused on ELLs). Specifically in the play section, I provide a brief summary of dramatic play research as it has been for several decades explicitly linked to literacy achievement for the general school-aged population. The sphere of poetics section is much more theoretical in the sense that I found little previous research specifically on dramatic inquiry and ELLs in mainstream classrooms but I did find a few apriori theoretical concepts which became essential in helping me better understand and explain the patterns I was observing in this
classroom. Therefore, in the section-Performance Conceptual Sphere: Poetics I present a review of a few key conceptual tools defined by other researchers but that proved to be significant to understanding the patterns I observed over time among the ELL focal students in this study. These conceptual tools included appropriation (Bakhtin, 1981); social construction of intertextuality (David Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993); and transmediation (Suhor, 1984) and I give a brief overview of their contributions to my study.

Because my research is intended to explore the expansion of school-based literacy to performing multimodal literacy understandings I will use the subcategories of effective ELL instruction—authentic uses of academic language, complex & creative thinking, and joint productive activity to organize the literature review within each of the four performance conceptual spheres.

**Performance Conceptual Sphere: Power**

Conquergood’s (1989) performance model loosely associates power with relational concepts such as “politics, history, ideology, domination, resistance, appropriation, struggle, conflict, accommodation, subversion, and contestation” (p.84). I have been immersed in critical and sociocultural based research for the last four years, where I have become accustomed to the abundance of critical scholarship pointing out the need for recognizing and disrupting the concentration of power and authority flowing to the all-knowing teachers (Britzman, 2003) and to the texts because this severely limits the agency of students which often leads to a lack of learning engagement and academic achievement.

Power is an area of focus for many educational researchers when they are theoretically considering classroom literacy practices where all too often the power (e.g. imposed curriculum and singular interpretations of texts) is seen as an object to be deposited into the minds of students. Paulo Freire’s (2000) banking model of teaching is an appropriate metaphor to describe classroom practices where the teacher holds the given authority over knowledge without question and the right sorts skills that needed to be given out like
charity (Heathcote, 1991). Figure 2.1 shows a visual example of this conceptualization of the banking or transmission model present in many of the classrooms.

![Diagram of Transmission Model of Teaching & Learning]

**Figure 2.1: Transmission Model of Teaching & Learning**

As both circles are surrounded by solid bold lines, *power*, or the authority over knowledge and meaning in this model is seen as a concrete entity unchangeable and unaffected by the people and their processes of thinking and making meaning together and across various texts and experiences. The person-in-process is labeled as such to represent the ever changing person’s linguistic, cultural resources, experiences, emotions, values, needs, social desires, though in this model this person-in-process is located almost entirely outside of the classroom culture. The student then in this view is seen as passive receptacle of given knowledge and procedural skills (Britzman, 2003; Freire, 2000; Kumashiro, 2004). Britzman (2003) points out that teachers take up and perpetuate this authority over knowledge due to prevailing cultural myths of teachers as all-knowing, all-powerful and possibly because they experienced this in their own education (Lortie, 2002). Contradictions to this model of maintaining authority and power then are implicitly seen as threats to their own way of being the teacher.

Within this transmission model of teaching, if students can’t imitate the skills, then they are basically shut out of a large majority of the classroom cultural practices around
reading and writing which could have scaffolded them towards more competent participation rather than less. This top-down banking model of teaching has been documented to have detrimental effects for ELL learners because it creates classrooms that limit their access to complex thinking, meaningful and authentic uses of language and joint productive activity.

**Power & lack of access to authentic uses of language**

Ideological stances of teachers towards multilingualism, cultural diversity and teaching in general play a part in viewing the literacy competence of their ELL students. In research by Stritikus & Garcia (2003), it was shown that a group of teachers who built on a subtractive conception of bilingual students focused their instruction entirely on routinized practices included emphasis on correct pronunciation, isolated vocabulary and routine grammar practice. Teachers in Stritikus & Garcia’s (2003) study such as “Connie,” explained that ELL students needed [her version of] the “basics” before they could learn anything else. This static, deterministic view affixes student’s literate identity within inescapable categories such as ESL—with little attention paid to students subjectivities and identities or how the students actually make sense of their worlds (Gee 2007). Teachers who are complacent with the deficit mindset (Gay, 2000) and the dominating views of a school-based literacy create classroom instructional practices which play out unexamined assumptions about how these “kinds” of children need to have interventions in order to be fixed into the “right” sort of academic identity (Gee 2007).

The problem with this it leaves the institutional status quo of literacy intact. (Stritikus & Garcia, 2003). English Language Learners are often negatively viewed and consistently segregated due to the confounding of language proficiency with academic ability, which exerts pressure to create programs to intervene on the behalf of these students so they can increase their academic English. However, the way this gets implemented varies widely in practice. (Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Stritikus & Garcia, 2003) both documented the isolated literacy tasks and skills focus of such interventions.
Menken (2008) showed where ELL students spent their ESL instructional time routinely memorizing procedures to fill in on the essays on the New York Regents Exams or students are tracked into the “low” level English or ESL classrooms where little academic thought or rigorous work is expected of them and there is little access to diverse models of authentic language use. In Haneda’s (2008) study, she followed a group of students going into “ESL” class. Haneda observed that the ESL teacher implemented isolated language and skill based work. The ELL students described these practices as worthless and a waste of their time and they saw their ESL teacher as ‘not caring.’ Valdés (2004) points out that these learning conditions for ELLs tends to erase the subjectivities and shifting sociocultural identities of the students. Valdes argues ELLs (and all students) need to use language for a purpose so they can develop authentic dialogue with others or as Bakhtin noted we all want “to be heard, understood, responded to, and again to respond to the response” (as cited in Valdés, 2004, 123). Even still, in many schools little academic success is expected to come of these students and regular classroom teachers are often unprepared to transform instruction so that a rich curriculum and contextualized academic content can be acquired by English Language Learners as part of their regular classroom instruction. English Language Learners are not given access and support to actually using language for a specific purpose, which would give them access to all of the dimensions needed for successfully using academic English. These dimensions of academic language and literacies include linguistic (e.g. vocabulary, phonology, grammar), cognitive (background knowledge, higher order thinking and reading strategies) and sociocultural (social pragmatics, recognizing the specific cultural practices of audience) dimensions of academic English (Brock et al., 2009; Scarcella, 2003).

**Power & lack of access to complex thinking**

From this top-down, transmission view of teaching, the students’ need the teacher and by extension the teacher’s interpretation of the text in order to tell or give the students the information, procedural skill or the correct interpretation or even to ‘give’ them the access to or power to move on to the next skill. In research done by (Neufeld & Fitzgerald, 2001) in a first grade English only classroom, the teacher limited three ELL
students access to challenging complex thinking and conversation Neufeld & Fitzgerald documented that the teacher’s belief that the ELL students needed to learn the ‘basics’ (e.g. learning to say and spell the alphabet, learning to spell a few words, learning to write neatly and improving their English oral language) before they could be given access to reading authentic books. Even after a whole year of instruction all three ELLs who had remained segregated in the lowest reading group with similar basics activities could still not pass the pre-primer assessment or demonstrate any significant gains in English proficiency.

Other educational researchers have shown how unexamined assumptions and high stakes testing have served to perpetuate an extremely limited notion of literacy to a set of isolated procedural skills and limited ELL students access to challenging curriculum which has done little to actually decrease the literacy achievement gap (Center on Education Policy, 2005; Crawford, 2004b; Gandara et al., 2003; Menken, 2008). In the New York High schools studied by Menken (2008) learning conditions are similar to those reported in other schools across the country, “because of the high-stakes consequences attached to standardized tests in combination with lower test scores among ELLs, the tests greatly impacted the instruction and educational experiences of ELLs in the schools studied. Menken extensively documented the way these tests forces a high value on the kinds of instruction which has been shown to be less effective or even detrimental to ELLs simultaneous academic understanding and language development. The consequences shown in Menken’s study were a narrowed curriculum, limited access to a wide variety of language genres (including primary languages and literacies) entirely teacher-directed discourse, and memorization of rote procedural skills and content. While Menken’s research focused on secondary level passing of exams, similar evidence has been shown that neither the achievement gap nor instruction has improved for English Language Learners across grade levels (Gandara et al., 2003).

As a result rote memorization of these skills and transmission forms of teaching are highly valued and instruction is narrowed down to teaching only certain isolated reading
and writing skills in order for students to pass the tests (Ferrell, 2005; Heubert & Hauser, 1999; Jennings & Rentner, 2006; Menken, 2008; Nieto, 2009b). Similar to other empirical research (Harklau, 1994, 2000; Toohey, 1998) the schools in Menken’s study used the testing information to further segregate students by assumed ability. Some students are perceived to be competent enough to handle higher order thinking and certain kinds of more cognitively challenging tasks while others are not considered competent. Often based on misconceptions, assumptions about intelligence and unfair testing practices many ELLs are usually perceived at the bottom end of the literacy competence hierarchy. In other words, English Language Learners have been shown to most often be statically segregated into low-ability groups with less access to challenging, higher order thinking tasks and had many less opportunities to elaborate and reason about authentic challenging academic tasks with other non-ELL students (Haneda, 2008; Harklau, 1994; Olsen, 1998; Katharine Davies Samway, 1999) which are the instructional strategies which have been shown by a rich body of research to be the most effective for ELLs to simultaneously develop oral and written English (Dalton & Tharp, 2002; Freeman & Freeman, 1998)

**Power & lack of access to joint productive activity**

Because they are involved in large amounts of teacher-directed instruction or separated from their peers for long periods of time ELLs often lack access to productive, academic goal focused work and social interactions with peers who speak English as their primary language (Haneda, 2008; Harklau, 1994b; Toohey, 1998). Haneda’s (2008) study corroborates evidence that ELL students are placed in learning conditions which give them less access to negotiating meaning in conversations with multiple English competent peers (Harklau, 2000; Toohey, 1998) Stritikus and Garcia (2003) documented a mainstream classroom with a large proportion of ELLs which was supposed to be implementing schools’ balanced literacy program (where phonemic awareness, decoding and meaning based aspects of reading are balanced in amount of time allotted). In reality, the students were only involved throughout their “literacy” time in a tightly teacher controlled, script only emphasizing sound-symbol relationships and phonemic
awareness. The instruction was always teacher-directed with the whole group (e.g. students repeating sounds the teacher had read) or students worked on individually on worksheets practicing isolated skills again directed by the teacher. These isolated activities were done with little regard for making meaning with each other or authentically connecting the language and texts to other texts or to their lives.

Kelleen Toohey (1998, 2000) conducted a longitudinal study of a group of children ages 5-7 who spoke a variety of first languages as they moved through kindergarten, first and second grade in English only classrooms. She showed consistent practices that limited certain ELL students access to being seen as competent and valued learners, which could further increase their access to more participation in social activities of the classroom. The ELL students labeled most in need were often pulled out of the social classroom and then kept close to the teacher during in-class time, which inadvertently limited their access to developing peer allies and being involved in a wider range of authentic conversation. Secondly, in one classroom Toohey (2000) observed that the teacher inconsistently enforced rules about the borrowing and lending of materials. Though officially the practice was forbidden, students who were considered less in need of her help (and thus physically positioned further away) were often able to do these communicative exchanges much more often and they were able to read and talk about more topics of their choosing which could increase their own abilities to communicate. Whereas the ELL students by being physical positioned next to the teacher actually had less opportunity to make these interactions. In the social economy of the classroom—they had little opportunity to build the social capital that came with the borrowing and sharing practices and to increase their access to being seen as linguistically competent which then may have helped them be seen as “ready” for more challenging tasks (Toohey 2000).

Lastly, Toohey’s work pointed out that another “rule” based on the individualistic notions often found in classrooms-no one was allowed to copy from one another’s oral or written productions. This was a problem for some of the ESL students because repeating the words of others was often the only way they could participate in the social interactions of the classroom (Toohey 1998) and it could have allowed them a way to begin to
appropriate words (Bakhtin, 1981) so their meanings could slowly become understood and become more of their own.

From the top-down transmission model classrooms perpetuate ways of doing reading in school as performing correctly the individual skill of decoding at the word level and only when the ELLs can perform these skills will he be ready for the “real” reading others do. Importantly for my case studies with intermediate to advanced ELLs, even after ELLs can overcome some of these obstacles and begin accessing some of the “normal” practices of the classroom, developing a deep literacy understanding in order to accomplish an authentic purpose is still not any part of the goals of instruction. While in most other out-of-school contexts learning tends to happen socially and with a particular reason for doing so (e.g. high challenge, interest in topic, to help out your group or team, to earn more respect and responsibility, etc.) many of the schools “normalized” practices are still highly decontextualized and isolated from the real work of life outside of school (Street, 1995). This does little in regards to building opportunities for complex thinking, authentic uses of language and joint productive activity.

Instead by using performance analysis in education draws attention to the classroom as a site of struggle over power and authority, which leads into this issue of power not as predetermined object but as a relational process. As Conquergood (1989) explains, performance theory takes up the critical examination of performance as “sites of power struggles where competing interests, intersecting and different viewpoints and voices get articulated” (p.84) Within highly asymmetrical power relations in many classrooms, teachers struggle over how to demand a rigorous curriculum all within the difficult emotional work of sustaining authentic relations and meeting the wide differences in needs of learners. Yet all of these highly uncertain and shifting power relations are almost entirely subsumed by the official and ongoing discourses of individual performances of imitation and conformity. Even though there are countless unofficial and multimodal ways students are making multimodal meaning in the cracks and corners just barely out of earshot of the official curriculum (Dyson, 1993, 2003). Literacy
teachers may suggest that they want their students to be critical thinkers and find their own voice yet in reality the imposed curriculum and normalized practices of the classroom create and sustain a “figured world” which doesn’t give room to flesh out their conceptual understanding through collaborative and multimodal ways of knowing, or open up room for highly variant interpretive frames.

**Performance Conceptual Sphere: Process**

Conquergood’s (1989) “commitment to process” over a finalized identity or product includes a move towards the “irreducible and evanescent dynamics of social life-all the forces that resist closure. (p.83).” From this view, our everyday process of interacting, or performing our many selves, and living through the world doesn’t just happen as the officially sanctioned actions or in the easily visible, final products. It happens in moment-to-moment interactions (Holland et al., 2001) and emotionally, physically, sensorially, aesthetically or in other unconscious ways which often may lie just under the surface of what’s made visible by the language systems and tools available to students in schools. Conquergood (1989) describes the idea of *process* in the performance paradigm as seeing culture as a verb, or as a process in constant flux. In contrast to a stable system or noun, Conquergood’s concept of *process* could be associated with words such as “emergent, temporal, contingent, provisional indeterminate, dynamic and destabilizing p.83”. This fluid, culture-in-process mediates how we make sense of the world and thus how we use literacy to experience and communicate in the world.

As critical, multicultural scholars have shown (Gutierrez et al., 1999; Kumashiro, 2004) it’s in the liminal spaces of the process and of the unknown, where teachers really challenge their students’ thinking. A particularly effective space to facilitate authentic learning and deepen critical perspectives is located in what Gutierrez et. al (1999) called the “third space” where students and teachers’ lived subjectivities, cultural resources and ways of making meaning are negotiated into the curriculum. It’s at this intersection--this negotiated space flowing between the power of the school/teacher role and the
subjectivities of the children and adults in the room where process begins to matter. Figure 2.2 shows a theoretical model to illustrate this notion of the negotiated and fluid flow of a more negotiated curriculum

![Diagram of power and process relationship]

Figure 2.2: Idealized process-oriented teaching and learning

A classroom that allows for slippage and negotiation over a curriculum occurring between power and process would fall somewhere on a continuum of power (e.g. product and imposed curriculum) overlapping with process [es] (e.g. individual subjectivities, social and emotional concerns, questions and interests of students). The person-in-process is viewed as much a part of the classroom and contributes to the negotiated curriculum of the classroom. The semi-dashed lines indicate the person-in-process and power flow is slightly more fluid.

Because of my own commitments to seeking equity in schools, I must be interested in how larger structures of power—institutional, historical and cultural influence the ways classroom practices are structured but also how our own actions and interactions as person[s]-in-process influence and re-shape our communities. Following Conquergood’s process conceptualization and the improvisational ways we co-author our identities

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(Edmiston, 2008; Holland et al., 2001), then we have the choice to be in a process of constantly challenging the power structures and helping reconfigure the ongoing, emergent ways we all are agents in our own variable performances of ourselves as a person-in-process. (Holland et al., 2001) argue people don’t passively accept social positions and cultural and historical locations but we always have the choice to actively, improvise on these positions through their moment to moment interactions with each other. Similarly, in the process of preparing for a staged performance, actors research the social and cultural locations of their performed “roles” and consider the many ways their possible choices of dialogue, intonation, prosody, tone as well as spatial, gestural, and physical choices influence the way they are identified and responded to by other characters (B. K. Alexander et al., 2005). In performances of our many everyday selves, most people don’t have the time to reflect on and reconsider the choices in the way we are presenting ourselves to ourselves and others. In process-oriented classrooms, we can begin to see the formation of people as always in-flux—an ongoing, dialogic process (Holland et al., 2001) which includes the individual as well as the group’s own process of identity work as a dynamic—a cacophony of voices. Within this process we, as educators, can move towards an acceptance of our own and our students’ struggles to be heard in an ever changing process of defining and performing ourselves along a continuum of many possible selves that we could become (Markus & Nurius, 1987).

In my review of classroom-based research, I noticed a move towards research with more emergent and dynamic process oriented ways of teaching. Various researcher-practitioners of critical pedagogies Lee, 2007; have offered a rich source of process-oriented pedagogies such as affirming students own community based resources (e.g. Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005); pushing high expectations (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1992); and giving voice to the problems and concerns of their own lived realities and moving them towards action and social change (Morrell, 2004).

Thus, a wider and wider variety of alternative pedagogical models for literacy education have been created which relate to this more process oriented education model. Some
classrooms as in those seen in the research above developed as learning spaces where adults form highly responsive, collaborative and productive working relationships with linguistically and culturally diverse learners. However, other research on process-oriented classroom has shown less than effective results with ELLs (Gutierrez, 1992). The underlying differences in outcomes depends on whether the students are involved with others to collaboratively make meaning and the extent to which classroom structures explicitly expect students to use their experiences, interests and their prior knowledge to specifically develop higher level thinking, academic literacies and authentic uses of language while engaging in performances of understanding for a meaningful purpose. In the next two sections, I offer examples which best illustrate the research done in these areas following by a description of a few limitations of this work with regards to effective instruction for ELLs.

**Process & access to complex thinking and authentic uses of language**

Prior research on classroom settings for culturally and linguistically learners has shown “typical classrooms provide infrequent occasion for sustained conversation (Dalton & Tharp, 2002, p. 189)” where students are not generating multiple possibilities, gradually shaping meanings of words nor offering justifications of their answers. For example, Long and Sato (1983) showed that teachers asked far more display questions than genuine questions of which teacher didn’t already know the answer. Further research in second language learning settings has also reported disproportionately higher numbers of display or closed over genuine or open-ended questions though in some cases the teachers used the closed questions for scaffolding the students towards more linguistic output rather than less (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In a mainstream middle school setting Haneda (2008) compared the teacher talk among three different learning conditions for the same small group of ELL students. Haneda found in the environment where the students were in a “low” level ESL or English class, the teacher talk consisted of mostly IRE questioning and the only oral production occurring was at the word or sentence level.
In contrast, the talk in content and language integrated classrooms in Austria was audio-recorded by (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Students in those classes produced more language and with higher quality of elaboration and productive output after open-ended questions. The most complex linguistic outcomes occurred when learners were asked to offer reasons or explanations. Therefore, in ESL classrooms focused on developing communicative competence, teachers ask more genuine questions require more complex, cognitive processing and linguistic elaboration (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In order to provide instruction that research has shown increases students academic vocabulary ELL need opportunities to be exposed to and authentically use robust and sophisticated words along with basic words (Collins, 2010; Folse, 2004) as part of engaging in rich academic conversations.

More negotiated models of classroom practice related to language and literacy growth, have been developed which arrange for students to have more access to the curriculum while learning academic uses, registers and functions of language. This includes ample amounts of sheltered content instruction for teaching content to ELLs (Echevarria et al., 2008) where the teacher specifically plans for both language and content goals and develops a wide range of visual and social supports to make the content more comprehensible, in manageable chunks and with appropriate feedback. During this type of sheltered instruction the teacher works with small groups on a regular or frequent schedule guided by clear instructional goals and the contributions of the students facilitated by the teachers’ questions and other student’s input. In Haneda’s (2008) comparative study of the three teachers, the non-tracked math teacher who seemed to be most effective in increasing ELL students engagement, active participation and performances of understanding of learning used the following practices consistently: closely listening to students, open ended questioning, encouraging and elaborating on their contributions and helping them explicitly connect their prior knowledge towards their instructional goals. This teacher carefully planned specific structures to ensure student talk occurs at higher rates than teacher talk and that all students were able to be active participants in the conversation (Haneda 2008). New vocabulary was effectively
introduced in similar ways building on visual models, physical movement and other examples that also pushed the ELL students specifically to be active contributors.

**Process & access to joint productive activity**

Numerous studies have documented the effectiveness of small collaborative group work for all students (Mercer, 1996; Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, & Sams, 2004; Mercer & Hodgkinson, 2008; Peterson & Miller, 2004) and specifically for improving active participation and student achievement for English Language Learners (Bejarano, 1987; Klingner & Vaughn, 1999, 2000; McGroarty, 1989; McGroarty, 1993; Porto, 2001; Swain, 2001). For example, (Hernández, 1991) used a version of cooperative learning called reciprocal teaching where he used the students primary language and each other as resources first for effective scaffolding of strategic reading strategies in small groups and then gradually students began reciprocally teaching each other. Students were able to more actively participate in the expected school-literacy practices as well as begin to access a broader range of strategies for meaning-making. They began to use question generation, prediction, and summary because there was support in their first language, collaborative and adult scaffolded activity preceded individual performance, social interaction was based on their prior experiences and students were asked to take responsibility for their own and others learning.

Second language acquisition theory offers various reasons as to why these academic goal-focused, social interactions are essential for learning (Doherty et al., 2002; Echevarria et al., 2008) and participating in school through an additional language. First, students have the opportunity to hear more language input directed towards them specifically and the opportunity to hear and speak with a variety of other speakers. Because of the pressure to communicate and complete the task cooperative learning has built-in opportunities for negotiating meaning, linguistic redundancy (e.g. repeat known ideas, state or clarify new information, repeat information but elaborate with explanations) and for producing different kinds of genuine questions (McGroarty, 1993) and more opportunity to produce language. As the students work together they produce contextualized units of language
that are manageable for the student (comprehensible input) often more so, than when they only listen passively to the teacher and lastly the ELL student is producing expressive and interactional linguistic output as the student has to find a way to make themselves more clearly understood (Swain 1995).

Secondly, this use of joint productive activity as a means to negotiate the curriculum to include the person-in-process validates the idea that has been argued by sociocultural oriented second language research (but also could go for all forms of learning)—learning and making meaning in a second language is intricately involved and mediated by social and emotional needs (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Because cognition and emotion both originate in social interaction, negotiations for meaning and new understandings are always shaping and shaped by ELLs subjectivities, emotional values and desires (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Duff’s (2001, 2002) work with adult ELLs in work training and Lam’s (2004) work with Chinese immigrant students both showed that the most active engagement with second language learning is when the student finds a personal investment in solving a challenging problem building from their own resources and when they are socially motivated to locate and use other resources in order to negotiate meaning in the second language and to help them reach their social goals and emotional wellness. For example, (Duff, Wong, & Early, 2002) showed that adult ELLs training as nurses made the most growth in linguistic competence when they were able to negotiate authentic meaning across various languages (e.g. 1st language, non-verbal movement and gestures) within emotionally, fulfilling contexts with people (e.g. patients) to whom they came to care about through these negotiations.

Lam (2004) showed how the human, emotional need to construct a positive social identity and a sense of belonging and connecting with others, helped two recent Chinese immigrants to a US public high school develop deeper investment in literacy by using both Cantonese and English in a bilingual chatroom. Through creating a new social identity through this online space, they also gained access to more socially and linguistically competent English speakers who were also Cantonese speakers. They were
able to take more risks in using English in informal social settings which in turn showed up in the teenagers taking more risks in social interactions at school which led to more social connection and more use of English which further gave them more access to English language and literacy learning opportunities. Researchers (Morrison, Cosden, O’Farrell, & Campos, 2003; Stevens, Hamman, & Olivarez Jr., 2007) have shown that this sense of belonging is essential for students to build a sense of competence and sustain academic success in school settings.

Lastly, validating the student’s hybridized identities shaped and shaping their participation in multiple communities outside of school is also essential to bringing the ongoing person-in-process into the classroom. This idea of intentionally tapping into the rich sources of knowledge within the communities to which the students belong has been documented as a crucial resource for increasing student engagement with learning and achievement, especially for historically marginalized populations. Linguistically and culturally diverse students in work by scholars such as Valerie Kinloch (2009; Morrell, 2004), and Gerald Campano (2007) sustained long term collaborative inquiry related to relevant concerns to their students own communities. Students’ critical engagement and sincere desire to affect change were an impetus for performing multimodal literacy understanding in many different settings for many different purposes. Among the many Funds of Knowledge projects started by Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti (2005) and their colleagues. When their teachers and other adults from their own communities worked alongside English Language Learners as co-researchers and supported them to focus on personal stories and inquiries into the issues directly impacting their own lives and communities, ELLs learning engagement and achievement flourished.

Limitations to Process: student-centered classrooms only?

In considering my future study of dramatic inquiry and its influence on the social processes of school-based literacy and collaborative, strategic reading for ELL students, I am particularly interested in recent critiques of cooperative learning as taken up by several researchers who have collected evidence that not all collaborative or cooperative
learning groups are effective. Often students (including students with English as their first language) don’t know how to talk and think together in groups to do effective work and to learn more about the concept (Mercer et al., 2004) and thus need to be scaffolded explicitly about social group processes. Xiaoping Liang (2004) investigating Chinese immigrant high school students perceptions of group work showed students had often conflicting opinions about cooperative group work on whether they like or disliked the process of group work. Liang suggested various social and cultural factors could be at play such as competing cultural and socio-economic discourses among the students about social cohesion and cooperation vs. individuality and competition. Furthermore Liang observed the students working in cooperative groups and noticed they did not always cooperate in the ideal ways as described in other literature, as there was evidence of cooperation, non-cooperation and mis-cooperation. This is consistent with other work among a wide variety of students by Mercer and her colleagues (1996; 1999; 2004) showing the need to explicitly help student learn effective forms of collaborative work.

Though some research has shown that not all cooperative learning is productive (Neil Mercer & Hodgkinson, 2008; Xiaoping Liang, 2004) as long as teachers ensure ELLs and other students are clear on goals and ways of working together and as long as the activities are goal-focused, groups are appropriately matched and the social processes of collaboration are specifically structured (Holt, 1993), then students are able to draw on many different resources, interactions and shared thinking which helps to create a Vygotsky’s theoretical “intermental zone” (Mercer 2000) where students through social mediation are pushed just beyond their original level of capability. Joint productive activity can open up ELL students to access more comprehensible input and interactive output and opportunities to build on resources of everyone in the room and their resources they bring from outside of school. Classroom practices which truly support ELLs in their attempts towards a collaborative, “intermental zone” gives them space to invest in the negotiation of meaning with others, and develop their own academic language, reasoning and elaboration through more active involvement with and linguistic support from a wide variety of competent speakers of English and other peers. For ELLs
the intermental zone can create deeper understanding about content and provide access to higher levels of linguistic capability then they could do on their own which then can lead to more opportunities to use even more sophisticated language and more expansive ways of making and representing meaning.

Lastly, while many classrooms have begun to move towards more authentic experiences there is a danger in terms of actual academic literacy development for English Language Learners which can stem from shifting too far in creating individual, student-centered classrooms where the focus tends to be only on giving the students a voice or to have an engaging experience. While many teachers such as Mr. Baker in Haneda’s (2008) study set up “collegial” or caring atmospheres in their classroom, this form of “caring” can have different manifestations in the access ELLs have to higher order thinking and authentically using academic language. The ELLs in Haneda’s (2008) case study students in Mr. Baker’s low track English class reported that Mr. Baker ‘cared’ about them because they had many opportunities to narrate their immigration experiences and he joked around with them. However, in Haneda’s observations in the classroom, students had little substantive or goal-oriented discussion of stories. Mr. Baker rarely pushed students to think critically or elaborate on responses even though students in his advanced and regular English classes the students were involved in more extended reading and writing projects that involved critical thinking and complex texts (e.g. Greek mythology). Haneda noted Mr. Baker’s confounding of the ELL students linguistic ability in English with their overall intellectual ability when “he explained that low-track students are generally low-performing and need to work at a slower pace and that while he considered some ELLs competent, he felt that they needed to overcome their ‘linguistic deficiency’ to be included in his regular class” (2008, p.67) This is contradictory to the fact that supporting them to access a rigorous and language rich curriculum would give them access to much more sophisticated vocabulary and authentic uses of language in thematic and project based instruction.
In either of these examples of limitations of the research on effective learning environments for English Language Learners, one of the key components missing is that it pushes forward the appearance of student-centered experiences at the expense of the actual process of dialogically making meaning together which necessarily includes the imposed curriculum: the rigorous academic English language and literacies expected for ELLs to be successful in school. An example of this exaggeration of the individual, student-centered model of teaching is shown in Figure 2.3.

![Figure 2.3: Individual student-centered process](image)

In this model, the imposed curriculum, which for English Language Learners includes specifically academic forms of language and literacies is almost entirely subsumed by the individual students’ chance to perform a story or to have their personal interest or experience validated. Pedagogies of possibility for English Language Learners to increase academic success should be seen more as an overlapping process of validating the person-in-process in a negotiated space that isn’t only student centered but also is in dialogue with the imposed academic curriculum.

**The Addition of Play & Poetics**

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Why does any of this matter in creating opportunities for students to perform multimodal literacy understanding in classrooms? In an effort to disrupt the literacy status quo, we can’t just build individual, student-centered classrooms, we have to find ways to build meaning centered classrooms that can provide a dynamic dialogue between academic literacy demands and expectations and the student’s own subjectivities and cultural repertoires and ways of knowing. My use of multimodal literacy understanding throughout my work is not intended to settle on a finalized identity but is meant to suggest the ongoing negotiations as person-in-process in dialogue with the imposed curriculum of academic language and literacies.

Using performance theories in relationship to how students and teachers negotiate and disrupt dominant version of school-based literacy, revealed an active, ongoing and dialogic process often going on among the people in the classroom—however, what seemed to matter was how much this process was validated officially by the cultural community in relationship to printed texts and the forms of reading comprehension students were expected to use.

As I argue in the next section—portions of performance theories have and could add a unique playful and performative tension to the process of meaning-making in classrooms. Past research has informed classroom pedagogies by promoting dramatic play for increasing early literacy, oral language development and creative thinking. However there is less documentation of students in the middle grades use of flexible improvisation and multimodal literacy tools in order to publically make visible the type of higher order thinking attributed to people who are avid readers and good reading comprehenders. Even thought the expanded repertoires for meaning-making could help support ELLs and other students to better conceptualize the ideas and re-center students sense of themselves as strategic agents around the interpretation and production of texts. Conquergood’s (1989) categorization of the ideas of play (e.g. improvisation, experimentation, reflection and innovation) and poetics (e.g. collectively invented, imagined, and socially constructed nature of human realities) were particularly helpful for my work in a third
grade classroom because they reinstall imagination and creativity as an essential part for young people in developing a powerful relationship with literacy. Play and poetics bring dialogic meaning-making within and across texts into a multi-dimensional life.

**Performance Conceptual Sphere: Play**

Conquergood links play to “improvisation, irony, parody, jest, clowning and carnival…and opens up a privileged space for sheer deconstruction and reconstruction (p.83).” As Bateson (1972) explained there always exists between people (or animals) meta-communicative signals that ‘this is play’ or that “these actions we now engage do not denote what those actions for which they stand normally denote (180)” which allows for this space of self-reflection or unconscious regard for the implications of one’s actions in the everyday or real spaces. Students in a classroom where the ‘this is play’ frame are validated in their somatic, gestural, emotional ways of making meaning. In classrooms, where teachers officially signals that ‘this is play’ through the use of embodiment, then learning may begin to be seen as an open-ended exploration and play, which is often quite different than the way the activities of school are framed as serious business.

With the addition of Conquergood’s (1989) frame of *play* we are bringing in “performance as a way of knowing.” (B. K. Alexander et al., 2005, p. 30). Full body engagement, gestural and somatic ways of knowing opens up many possibilities to deepen the process of experiencing, reflecting and interpreting relationships and texts (B. K. Alexander et al., 2005) and deepening understanding of the many complex uses of the English Language for all students. This serves to disrupt and problematizes the notion that the ability to verbalize somehow completely proves deep conceptual self-understandings. Instead play is a concept that when brought into classrooms, it can increase access to authentic uses of language, complex thinking and joint productive activity.
Play & access to authentic uses of language

Building on Vygotsky (1978), it is a commonly held notion among early childhood educators and scholars that young children develop an understanding of symbolic meaning and authentic uses of oral language through play. Dramatic play has long been linked to early literacy and more sophisticated oral language development and reading-like behaviors (Christie, 1990; Schneider, Crumpler, & Rogers, 2006; Vedeler, 1997; Wagner, 1998b; Williamson & Silvern, 1991). This link between play and early literacy has been shown to lead to higher reading growth at earlier ages (Wagner, 1998b). The exploratory multimodal nature of play if given space in early childhood classrooms has been shown by recent scholars (Rowe, Fitch, & Bass, 2003; Rowe, 1998; Wohlwend, 2008) to help young children develop literate behaviors and authentic purposes for using reading and writing. As Deborah Wells Rowe (1998) documented children’s book related helped students to retell stories, including the story dramatized as well as retelling other stories at a later time. In Podlozny’s (2000) review of research about a wide range of uses of adult mediated drama significantly supported students to appropriate the narrative elements and language of the stories which builds their participation in literate interactions. Rowe (1998) extensively documented how young children developed a broader repertoire of multi-modal meaning-making tools, and created connections with their own lives and books they heard and read. They engaged in more in-depth writing and oral production when using dramatic play in relation to books.

Importantly for this study, Podlozny’s (2000) conclusion in her meta-analysis of 80 creative drama studies suggested that drama instruction has a particularly significant effect on story understanding and reading achievement for remedial readers. Based also in Podlozny’s (2000) meta-analysis, drama’s influence on oral language development had significant effects with even larger effect sizes created for older school aged students then for younger pre-school students. English Language Learners, in late elementary and middle schools are uniquely in need of oral language development simultaneous with written language development and therefore, this finding is important to my study as it
offers another significant reason for using drama as students enter more into the “real” work of the later years of elementary school, where classroom spaces typically lack imaginative and dramatic play that could build their oral academic language along with academic literacy.

From an instructional standpoint for ELLs, many authors have written about the pedagogical need for authentic uses of language in context such as using total body response to develop understanding of basic action words a dramatizing stories and role playing (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Rieg & Paquette, 2009). While there is limited empirical research linking drama and ELLs specifically, some work by second language researchers in other educational settings helps promote drama’s importance for any person learning a second language. For example, Wilburn (1992) found that elementary school students involved in learning a second language in a Spanish immersion classroom were able to more authentically use language. As cited in Kao & O’Neill (1998) the immersion students in Wilburn’s research were able to “extend their word choices, language functions, registers and stylistics in drama, which makes their language use more authentic and communication-oriented” (p.49).

**Play & access to complex thinking**

Because of the way dramatic play demands that students represent symbolic meaning as in a ‘stick can become a horse’ (Vygotsky 1978), Wohlwend (2008) further argues that play connected with literacy helps students develop more agency with seeing texts as malleable and in becoming more capable of developing facility with multiple modes of representation. As students have to learn ways to negotiate in and out of the “this is play” frame (Bateson, 1972), it provides ample opportunities to use language in rarely used ways and for abstract thinking (Heath & Shelby Wolf, 2005; Vedeler, 1997; Wagner, 1998b).

Researchers have documented how students involved in imaginative play and process-oriented drama develop metacognitively as they think about their thinking such as
planning and managing ideas and communication (Heath & Wolf, 2005). Shacker, Juliebo and Parker (as cited in Wagner 1998) described the degree children involved in adult-mediated informal drama used four functions of language (informative, directive, expressive and imaginative) across five different dramatic contexts. While the informative function was used at the relatively highest frequency across contexts it was highest during teacher-directed instruction and children in role. The directive function was used most when student leaders had to direct others. During problem-solving and reflective sessions, expressive function was used more than half the time which went well beyond repeating the expected response. As Shacker et. al (as cited in Wagner 1998) detail, “They went beyond simple statements or inquiries by expanding upon their own or other’s idea, by explaining in length their reasons for accepting or rejecting others ideas and opinions, and by extrapolating on possible cause and effect relationships and on hypothetical outcomes of events. Using the expressive function in this way required thought and high level thinking skills (p.8)”. Thus ELL students involved in the expressive functions that are required in the higher order and metacognitive reflection in drama, had many opportunities to use complex thinking and higher order reasoning and elaboration of linguistic output.

Haneda (2008, 2009) documented a teacher whom created meaningful long term, dramatic play-based projects involving complex tasks and using higher-order thinking questions with ELLs. Ms. Brent (Haneda, 2009) was able to used drama to incorporate complex thinking within instruction for her ELL students in social studies. This teacher asked students to be involved in dramatic interpretations and rich ethical debates while they were imagining themselves as pharaohs and how they could use their power as part of a richly contextualized study of democracy. The students had opportunities to work in small groups, and in multiple contexts and perspectives through drama and role play. The teacher gave consistent focus on goals and linguistic structures but also asked students to critically think and offer reasoning beyond their answers, which showed her value for ELLs as active, complex thinkers and learners (Haneda 2009).
Dramatic play asks students to do more thinking about symbolic meanings and the effects of language, which leads to developing a metalinguistic awareness (Heath & Shelby Wolf, 2005) such as attending to the possible shades in meaning and patterns of language derived from using language in contexts for specific purposes (e.g. persuading, informing) and reflecting on how these changes affect meaning (Booth, 1985). Building creative and complex thinking and access to complex texts is one of the key goals of and reasons for using drama pedagogy to dialogize and expand notions of literacy in classrooms. ELLs in an effort to grasp the English Language could benefit significantly from classroom contexts that build such creative and complex thinking and metalinguistic awareness.

**Play & access to joint productive activity**

Drama has been shown to develop students social skills and ability to work collaboratively with other people. As has been documented by numerous drama and literacy researchers – fictional contexts are collaboratively created in adult-mediated process drama and dramatic inquiry and students work in cooperative groups and with partners or the whole group to collaboratively reach authentic goals (e.g. Beach et al., 2010; Edmiston, 2011; Heath & Wolf, 2005; Wolf, 1994). Because the fictional space has been socially constructed through agreed upon imagined worlds (such as imagined people, ways of talking and using language) groups of students become invested in authentic reasons and purposes for reading and writing (Montgomerie & Ferguson, 1999). The students involved in dramatic inquiry are motivated to align with the social norms of the everyday classroom interactions by imagining as if they are someone else though confined by the given circumstances of the jointly constructed, imagined context. The tasks are challenging but yet relevant, authentic and engaging (Beach et al., 2010) while they push students to make their thinking visible.

From their work with Latino ELL students using dramatic forms of inquiry about their lives, Medina & Campano (2006) argued that critical engagement with drama disrupts the “literacy for domestication that narrowly circumscribes teaching and delimits the
learning experiences in so many culturally diverse multilingual schools (p333).” Medina and Campano (2006) found in their case studies of fifth grade Latino ELL students, negotiating and developing social relationships is of key importance to the students. Through drama in those classrooms, the ELLs literacy experiences were deeply situated and contextualized within local and political legacies. The drama “privileged cooperation and collaborative creativity over individual performance, multilingualism over monolingualism, directed improvisation over pre-set objectives and ongoing group response over alienating individual assessment (p341).” The students they studied showed that when the students were building off their rich and complex identities, experiences and linguistic resources they constantly challenged the notion that the only way to fully participate in school is through the full mastery of English.

The classroom contexts which incorporate adult mediated dramatic play and dramatic inquiry make more available social, physical and emotional tools that go beyond verbal, abstract and decontextualized discourses (Jim Cummins, 1999, 2000) typical of school based-literacy. It is through these playful, multimodal engagements with words, phrases and texts, where ELLs can gain more access to the varied uses of language and literacy in purposeful context, complex thinking and authentic explicit and implicit feedback within meaningful and collaborative tasks (Beach et. al 2010). Thus, play can provide ELL students specific support for them to take “command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling” (Cummins 2000, p.67) than is offered in many mainstream English-only classroom.

In the previous three performance conceptual spheres, I showed how views of power, process and play in classrooms either limits access to or highly values and supports students to use joint productive activity, complex thinking, and develop authentic uses of language and literacies in personally meaningful contexts and for genuine performances of understanding (Blythe & Perkins, 1994). With poetics though I add in the salience of a few key conceptual tools which arrive from critical sociocultural theories and multimodal literacy education but contribute significantly to the performance conceptual sphere of
Poetics as they push forward the recognition of the socially and imagined nature of human realities. During my research a few conceptual tools: appropriation (Bakhtin, 1981), the social construction of intertextuality (David Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993), and transmediation (Siegel, 2006; Suhor, 1984) became essential to my line of inquiry in reconsidering ELLs access (or lack of access) to opportunities to perform not only literacy competence but multimodal literacy understandings. In the next three subsections, my literature review provides a brief overview of these three conceptual tools which emerged in my study and which deeply inform this performance sphere of poetics. I will outline what these tools offer in the expansion of what it means to reconceptualize how we make meaning within and across texts, language and entire sign systems and how that relates to the study of ELLs and dramatic inquiry. However, these concepts will also be more fully explored in relationship to my data analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Performance Conceptual Sphere: Poetics

Poetics as a category adds what Conquergood (1989) calls the “imagined, constructed nature of human realities. Cultures and selves are not given, they are made…(p.83).” Extended this poetic view into literacy education, the meaning we make around texts is always a fluid and holistic project of trying to make our thinking visible and to create representations that can articulate our experience in ways that may be socially accepted (or not) but recognized by others. Therefore, we try to make sense of the cultural symbols, signs and language systems created within the social fabrications, or “figured worlds” (Holland, et. al. 1998) of which we are part so that we can find our voices and needs validated. But as I have already argued, Conquergood (1989) points out human beings aren’t just created but we also seek ways to creatively imagine new possibilities. People may consider who call themselves poets as being able to create poems. Yet, every social performance to which people take part creates cultural poesis (Stewart, 1994) or the emerging, juxtapositions and overlapping of language, metaphors, perceptual experience and the sign systems and texts used to express those experiences.
As described by Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 1981), all thought and language is part of heteroglossic overlapping of prior language, texts and sign systems but in the moment people appropriate the language to fulfill one’s own intentions, to make meaning.

Just as many poets make certain signs such as imagery and metaphor more meaningful through poetics, teachers and students can intentional construct deep understandings and create poesis more readily with access to a wide range of multimodal resources beyond only verbal language such as physical embodiment, gestures, somatic. (B. K. Alexander et al., 2005) offered an example showing that when education students were creating physical images and metaphors for their teaching practice—the students more deeply grasped and began to internalize the concepts when having to “perform” or represent something meaningful to the audience as it forced them to critically reflect on the implications of their enactments. Dialogic meaning-making in a classroom is not just a simple substitution of one thing for another (Siegel, 2006) and is much more than the sum of its parts. Dramatic inquiry as Beach et. al. (2010) write intentionally creates “imagined-and-real spaces” specifically for the purpose of critical and dialogic inquiry. Moments of poesis are constantly being created and recreated as students and teachers collaboratively inquire and evaluate and dialogize the consequences and implications of their actions both in the imagined (as-if-other people) and everyday spaces (as their everyday selves).

Poetics is a loose concept that incorporates the socially and imagined way humans construct our own realities (Conquergood, 1989) and the socially constructed language systems to express that reality. It is in this turn towards the social construction of the texts/contexts and performers/audience and the influence on people due to the heightened responsibility to audience that we develop an awareness of the performative tension—or an awareness that we are performing, where poetics becomes important.

Poetics & Appropriation: Authentic Uses of Language
Bakhtin (1981) theorized that all language is socially constructed and yet at the same time it is mediated by our authentic purposes and reasons for using language, or in other words, we inherit language but we appropriate it for our own usage. Bakhtin (1981) writes “the word in language [or utterances of others] is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates if with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates it to his own semantic and expressive intention (p.293)”. In order for English Language Learners to become more active meaning-makers with texts, they can’t be expected to rely on the definitions given to them by their teachers. Instead vocabulary researchers have shown how important it is for students to be exposed to and use language in authentic ways and to gradually shape their words meaning through multiple opportunities to play with words and represent their own understandings in non-linguistic and linguistic ways (Marzano & Pickering, 2005). This opportunity to appropriate deep word meaning non-linguistically is especially important for English Language Learners.

In one of the few limited articles linking dramatic interpretations of Shakespeare with ELLs Christine Porter (Porter, 2009) described her classroom based reading of Shakespeare with high school aged English Language Learners. Porter illustrated how she was able to build deepened and nuanced word knowledge related to tone vocabulary (e.g. synonyms relating to anger-annoyance, hostility, etc.) by asking students to interpret and act out their particular performative and thus interpretive choice for the tone a certain character could make. The students were faced with performative tension of not only creating possibilities but grounding and justifying their reasoning in the given circumstances of the text. The poetics created by Porter’s adult-mediated explorations of drama and a dramatic text, pushed forward space for ELLs to experiment with words for an authentic purpose. Through the pressure to perform many possible physical and emotional meanings underlying abstract concepts Porter’s ELL students had opportunities to truly appropriate the words in ways they made sense to them and how they were actively interpreting the Shakespeare texts.
Poetics & social construction of intertextuality: joint productive activities

Bloome & Egan Robertson (1993) following Bakhtin (1981) argued that any text only is made meaningful through people’s ways of making meaning within and around it. This is helpful in re-framing the idea of literacy competence when the possible intratextual and intertextual connections can be viewed more expansively to include the physical, emotion and relational forms of knowing as well as to include intercontextuality within and across time (David Bloome et al., 2009). Furthermore, Bloome & Egan-Robertson follow the Bakhtinian notion that “no text—either conversational or written—exists in isolation; every text exists in relation to previous and forthcoming texts (1993, p.311).” What counts as a validated text and recognizable intertextual connections are always socially constructed by people interacting with each other. Therefore, the development of an intertextual relationship depends on which sorts of texts, language and representations of meaning of texts get recognized and acknowledged by other people and thereby gain social significance in the space.

As Siegel (2006) points out, signs are an association between a material form and the signified concept. Siegel (2006) builds on Peirce to point out it is the process of people enlarging and expanding meaning or as Bakhtin has called appropriating language for our own intentions that goes far beyond “a simple substitution of one thing for another (p.68).” Therefore, we all, including young children are creative in using what resources and signs we have available to dialogically make meaning. The more access we have to shared signs and cultural symbols the more metaphors we can draw on to articulate our experience in ways that may be recognized by others. However, within the dominant definition of school-based literacy the learner is not often viewed as the multimodal meaning-maker or social actor which can severely limit students engagement and sense of agency in making sense of texts in school.

In the dominant skills-based view of literacy instruction, intertextual connections as Worton pointed out as are often located in the reader “as something they should do” (as cited in Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993, p. 306). Because it is assumed to be a
characteristic strategy used by avid readers, using intertextual connections is explicitly taught to students as a reading skill where are expected to display the following: a) making connections from [printed] text-to-self; b) [printed] text-to-world, c) [printed] text-to-[printed] text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). This can occur as a performance of imitation or a performance of ‘knowing’ more than a peer, regardless if these connection helps people make new meanings, shift ideas or build a more sophisticated understanding.

Conversely, from a poetic view and critical, sociocultural orientation the idea of texts is expanded and intertextuality is always seen as a socially, and jointly produced activity to create new meanings across a wide range of texts (e.g. gestural, linguistic, pictorial, architectural, musical). This also matters when it comes to reconceptualizing literacy practices for ELLs because reframing intertextuality more broadly can push the focus towards more opportunities to be validated as important contributors to the multimodal meaning-making process. As an example, intertextual relationships and the transfer of academic language and literacies through long term projects and thematic inquiry has been shown to be important pedagogically for ELLs. Rieg & Paquette (2009) delineate how using dramatic experiences creates this sort of socially constructed intertextuality and common language to build ELLs literacy. Thus, long term, adult mediated forms of drama could provide a means to re-center ELLs as active literacy agents in making rich intertextual connections.

Poetics & Transmediation: Complex & Creative Thinking

Within classroom practices where students act as performers and actors as well as the appreciative and critical audience simultaneously, the goals are the dialogic, process of playfully and poetically making meaning. If the focus is moved away from displaying individual skills in an isolated context but to coauthor meaning about a rich but highly complex set of texts — and with the addition of the performative tension, or a sense of responsibility to the audience there is a need to generate as many possibilities and create different ways of representing ideas that are socially recognized. Being able to develop
complex thinking is supported by classroom practices, which push forth the movement across sign systems-or *transmediation* (Suhor, 1984). Sign systems are a loose cluster of ways of using language to represent conceptual understandings of material things or ideas. Sign systems could include but are not limited to linguistic (oral and written), gestural, kinesthetic, pictorial, musical, constructive (sculpture, architecture), mathematical, etc.

By *transmediation*, I build on Suhor’s (1984, p. 250) term which he defines as “the student’s translation of content from one sign system to another (p. 250).” For example a group of students creates a collage to represent themes from a book or creates a physical embodied representation of a key moment from a piece of text. Semiotics is the study of signs, or something that stands for something else. Suhor builds from social semiotics which suggests the socially and culturally construction of signs occurs as we attempt to express our experiences within the socially constructed nature of all of the cultural communities and figured worlds we inhabit. Therefore, Suhor (1984) argued, while there is somewhat of perceptual, external reality the signs or ideas we have in our mind for making sense of what we perceive can only be coded, processed and represented through our cultural repertoire or available categories, names and ways of talking about the concepts. Sign systems are then the ways we culturally and socially communicate the meanings we make of our experiences within the world and express our conceptual understandings. Suhor (1984) points out that in reality many of these are never happening alone but happen simultaneously. For example, most everyday language is accompanied by facial and bodily gestures. Scholars working on exploring the multimodal tools of expression in classrooms with young children (Anne Dyson, 1993, 2003; Gallas, 1994; Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1984; Deborah Wells Rowe, 1998; Siegel, 2006; Wohlwend, 2008) also have documented children’s overlapping use of many different languages, sign systems and ways of expressing their understandings that go far beyond verbal discourse.
In Suhor’s model linguistic expression is elevated because he asserts “language is the primary organizer of human experience and is essential to virtually all school learning.” However, what is important to reconsidering literacy education is that this cross back and forth into various linguistic and non-linguistic modes of expression significantly stretches students capacities for understanding and communicating. As Siegel (2006) points out this idea of transmediating or moving across sign or language systems is important that it can be generative in producing critical thinking. As students aren’t necessarily supplied with a “ready-made link (p.70)” and in their efforts to expand on and create new meanings, they generate deeper conceptual understandings that are far greater than the sum of the individual parts.

In other words, poetics, broadly defined here is the component missing in many top-down, individual student centered or even process-oriented reading instructional models. A performance of teachers and students classroom that moves away from trying to reduce reading to finalizing one singular meaning and towards a layering of many different performances of understanding is also asking students to be involved in cultural poesis and as Katherine Stewart (1994) calls it the creativity of emergent ideas.

As they take up and overlap multiple dramatic roles, students act as performers, actors, receptive audience and constructive critics simultaneously. Their generativity of ideas is spurred on both by their playful embodied affective experiences and collaboration but also by attempts to represent and perform their still growing understanding that is recognized by the audience. In responding to their heightened awareness of the responsibility to the audience, people have more resources through transmediation to be both creative and make sense to the ensemble in regards to the text being studied. Yet, there is also room to be a work-in-progress so that more learning may take place by watching, reflecting and working with others more even after they’ve shown a “draft” of a possible performance. Learners, who are a part of creating fictional worlds as in dramatic inquiry pedagogies, are still confined by the given circumstances of the particular geographical, historical, cultural and social contexts and the needs and
obstacles of the characters involved. In having to create a performance of understanding such as a physical embodiment of an abstract feeling, desire or other inference from the text, students are involved in the poetics of performance as they are responsible to make visible their understandings using multiple sign systems which can be recognized by others. This transmediation then is further reflected on or even justified and thus, the meaning-making process is dialogized by the creators need to offer a performance that is both creative and recognizable to an internal and external audience.

**Summary: Re-centering ELLs as multimodal meaning makers**

Without meaning to disregard the resilience portrayed by individuals who have break free of such institutional barriers (Harklau, 1994; Harlen, Malcolm, & Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1999; M. Rose, 1999), researchers have shown that many youth who get so-called “tracked” as a low student continue to stay in that track throughout their academic career (Oakes, 2005; M. Rose, 1999). Students such as ELLs after consistently hearing this story told about them begin “to behave in ways that appear to validate the track the child is in” (Gee, 2007, p.60) regardless of the actual potential and multiple intelligences living, breathing students carry through the world. Therefore, many children who are learning English as an additional language implicitly learn from school-based practices that they aren’t as capable of complex thinking and learning. In these classroom contexts, though it’s been shown over and over again by research the necessity of giving ELLs access to rich, oral language and complex texts and multimodal ways of making yet in many classroom instructional practices they are often given much less access to authentic uses of language and social interaction which could scaffold them more towards deepened literary understandings and more participation in the literate practices of schools and other communities.

The tenets that cut across both critical sociocultural theories of literacy education and performance theories in education is that all students and their teachers need to have opportunities to be active agents, to play, to improvise and to transform themselves and
their worlds by collaboratively learning how to read not just the words of the text (where text is broadly defined to include any form of meaning-making including bodily and gestural) but to deconstruct and reconstruct the subtexts and nuances of human relationships. A focus on the way texts and relationships get constructed involves a complex understanding of subtexts of interactions, language and actions that are co-written by human intention, emotion, and need (Vygotsky 1986). There is much evidence that adult-mediated drama in classrooms (at least in some process-oriented forms) allows nuanced critique and deeper understanding of humans socially living out this world together (Bolton, 1998; Edmiston, 2000, 2010; Edmiston & Enciso, 2003; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995).

It seems then teachers using dramatic inquiry as learning tools could entirely re-structure literacy learning conditions by challenging students to embody other’s experiences, use creative and complex thinking and reflect on the implications and consequences of relationships and actions. Within such dramatic inquiry practices, ELLs then would be able to co-author multi-dimensional experiences of living through stories and create productive intertextual connections among the many overlapping texts that make up their lives. English Language Learners who are able to consistently “stand” the text up to active and multimodally explore literacy and language by “living through drama,” could begin to grow in their active participation in the playful, authentic and critical reasons for using literacy. ELLs could begin to imagine and tell many more stories of themselves as successful multimodal meaning makers.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

“There is not ‘the’ view of reality but a view”.
- Carol Frank (Ethnographic Eyes 1999, p.4)

Overview of Research

Embedded within this research project is my commitment to seeing what is possible for children particularly English Language Learners whose unique literacy and language needs are often marginalized by existing literacy instructional practices in US public school classrooms (Valdés, 2004). My two research questions were the following:

1) In this classroom, how do reading events get co-constructed by the performances of teachers and students and how do some of these performances become typical reading practices?

2) What affordances and limitations do the recurrent non-dramatic and dramatic reading practices offer to intermediate and advanced English Language Learners?

Three different interrelated layers of research have come together to help me to construct my findings seen in Chapters 4 and 5. These layers of research included:

1) an ethnography of typical performances of students and teachers within non-dramatic and dramatic inquiry reading events and how the recurrence of these performances influenced and was influenced by the ongoing co-construction of two entirely different cultures of reading
2) three case studies of English Language Learners access to authentic uses of academic language and vocabulary, creative and higher order thinking, joint productive reading comprehension tasks and in-depth story comprehension with complex texts of Shakespeare

3) critical and collaborative classroom action research and teacher professional development focused on using active and dramatic inquiry approaches with Shakespeare texts to transform one teacher’s reading instruction

My data corpus was collected over five overlapping phases of research during the entire 2010-2011 school year in one third grade classroom. The phases of my data collection were the following: *Exploratory Ethnography* (7 weeks); *Extensive Ethnography Phase 1-Romeo & Juliet* (4 weeks); *Extensive Ethnography Phase 2-Macbeth* (4 weeks); *Recursive Phase 1-Midsummer Night’s Dream* (4 weeks); and *Recursive Phase 2 with Member Checks-Hamlet & Comparative Essays* (6 weeks). An extensive research calendar can be seen in Appendix A. The analysis was ongoing and iterative. Because there were intentionally three breaks between phases I was able to do extensive comparative analysis of field notes, video and video-coded data of student and teacher interactions and purposive samples of reading events.

Upon returning to the field after each round of analysis, I compared my emerging conceptual understandings and recursive analyses against new observations and data collection to inform the content of further informal conversations with teachers and students during and after reading events. I completed further recursive analysis of my emerging concepts using individual ethnographically grounded reading interviews with Ms. G and the focal students midway through the year, collaborative interviews with the ELL focal student groups, follow-up vocabulary and comprehension assessments with focal students, ongoing teacher reflections and conversations and emails between myself and the teacher. I also used a collection of my own research process notes written in the
field but separated from my field notes and my reflexive research journal and conceptual memos as part of my entire data corpus.

**Living Through Stories with ELLs**

I define reading from a sociocultural orientation (Smagorinsky, 2001), that situates reading as a socially situated and culturally performative practice which is intertwined with the power, status and cultural norms of the setting in which reading takes place (Lewis, 2001). Building on literary scholarship infused by the transactional theories of reading first introduced by Rosenblatt (1978), I see reading a dynamic and aesthetic experience which necessarily involves the reader in the co-creation of the story world. As literacy scholars have shown highly engaged readers develop a deeply lived through experience with the stories (Enciso, 1992, 1996; Parsons, 2006). Sipe (2003) and Hade (1991) both argued that teaching literacy as discrete skills doesn’t necessarily lead students to lifelong engagement with reading, nor does it lead students to a deep fascination with language and literary understandings. An essential component then for a literacy teacher to promote engaged performances of literacy understandings and this sort of living through the text then is to create literature rich environments where students are deeply engaging with “the sensations, feelings and images that result from their transaction with the text” (Parsons, 2006, p. 493) through access to a wide repertoire of collaborative meaning-making practices and multi-modal tools.

Yet, the reading performances most often expected of English Language Learners tend to limit their access to the collaborative and multimodal resources needed to engage in aesthetic and purposeful ways of reading and to engage in performances of multimodal literacy understandings. I focused my research more closely, on the social and multimodal tools made consistently available to English Language Learners during the reading practices of one third grade classroom.

Through my past commitments and research, I recognized that a more multidimensional literacy learning culture tends to get created through a pedagogy of dramatic inquiry than is typically on offer in many primary classrooms. Brian Edmiston (2011) has theorized
and documented how dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare in one classroom positioned students and teachers to be deeply collaborative inquirers and actively engaged with critical interpretations of complex issues and texts. As a result the students in Edmiston’s study were positioned to playfully live through texts and yet they also used creative forms of what I have called poetics to talk back to the stories. Building from this scholarship creative poesis in classrooms using dramatic requires students to synthesize a wide range of multimodal texts to publically perform new understandings and deeply inquire about the ethical issues and implications of human actions created within the story world. Yet, the concepts and images in the stories do not just remain on the page during dramatic inquiry. Instead the embodied and visual nature of the dramatic play and dramatic inquiry strategies (See Chapter 5 for an exhaustive description of these strategies) offer a possibility for the story world to become more visible and concrete for ELLs. I designed my study, then, to understand how the addition of the conceptual spheres of play (i.e. living through the stories) and the visible forms of poesis (i.e. creative transmediation across sign systems and embodied elaborations on ideas and images) affects performances of reading comprehension. Secondly, I set out to understand how these shifts in access to multimodal resources and visible forms of higher order reading comprehension affected the literacy opportunities for students with different degrees of English language proficiency.

**Performance Ethnography of Reading Events**

This project gave me the opportunity to study in-depth the specific interactions between teachers and students both in non-dramatic and dramatic reading practices. By trying to see this restructuring of reading instruction through the eyes of three English Language Learners helped me to better delineate the specific academic affordances and limitations created by the two distinctly different ways of viewing “reading.” I also was able to document more clearly how the addition of the play and poetics of dramatic inquiry with complex texts contributes to the transformation of literacy learning spaces for ELLs. This intersection of ELLs, literacy education, teaching, and the multimodal resources available
through the performance arts created whole new way for me to conceptualize my own research and work in classrooms.

The following sub-sections describe the three layers of epistemological frameworks and research methodologies that came together to help me create a performance ethnography of reading events in this classroom.

**Ethnographic research on reading practices over time**

The first layer of this research enterprise was a long-term ethnography of the co-construction and collective performances of *reading events* over the entire 2010-2011 school year in one third grade classroom. I use the term reading events following Heath’s (1983) description of literacy events as a particular set of social activities structured around ways of using and talking about texts. Using an ethnographic lens in one classroom, allowed me a way to create productive dialogue between the emic perspectives of both the teacher and the students on the reading practices they experience and the etic, or researcher’s comparative analysis of similar and dissimilar ways of patterning these reading events so that over time the recurrent ways of performing these events—I labeled as typical reading practices. Specifically, I sought the key linkages between changes in reading instructional practices and the changes in specific students access to expanded repertoires for meaning-making. It was by naming these key linkages where I began to more clearly see what was behind the shifts in performances as readers.

In addition to the plethora of literacy events already consistently enacted in this classroom, the addition of dramatic inquiry also introduced a whole new set of literacy events. I found focusing on all of the literacy events of the classroom was far too extensive and complex for one researcher in one academic year, and because it aligned with the teacher’s desire to use dramatic inquiry to transform her reading instructional practices, I chose to document and analyze only reading-specific instructional events.
Fortunately, I had a unique research position at the intersection of two entirely different ways of structuring reading events within the same group of students and classroom teacher. I used this vantage point to document and closely analyze the recurrent performances of students and teachers. One set of reading events was structured in the ways 3rd grade reading instruction had always been done by Ms. G (and admittedly by me when I was teaching) without intentionally using any active approaches and dramatic inquiry strategies. The other set of reading events was structured using the long-term, multimodal and inquiry based pedagogy of dramatic inquiry where all of the students explored four Shakespeare’s plays. Because of the introduction of dramatic inquiry as an entirely different set of reading practices, I was able to take a theoretical, pedagogical and analytical step away from the familiar ways of doing reading in school and I was able to recognize that two different discourses around what it means to perform reading were coming into contact in actual classroom practices.

Following Heath and Street’s (2008) description of ethnography in literacy and language research, I needed to constantly look “in multiple ways and directions (p.32).” I needed to locate patterns and disruptions to the patterns of interactions during the classroom reading events in order to make sense of how two different cultures of reading were constructed over time. Secondly, my ethnographic research methods helped me to document and begin to understand the larger classroom culture of reading that seemed to be both shaping and shaped by these performances. The long term relationships I built with the teacher and the students through my extensive participant observation and position as an assistant and co-facilitator of dramatic inquiry help me to have a more nuanced understanding of people’s perspective underlying the performances of reading events that were co-constructed between teachers and students. Through creating a thick description across time, I was able to not only see what people were doing together in the moment of each reading event, but also how students were performing themselves as ‘readers’ within the larger classroom culture of reading that was being co-constructed by their past, present and future interactions related to reading.
The ways people interact and represent experiences as Dyson and Genishi (2005) point out can depend somewhat on their individual repertoires for making meaning. In classrooms, the shared practices and contexts for learning can have a huge influence over how people act, attend to and respond to others and the kinds of resources the students can use in the moment and add to their repertoire of semiotic resources. Often unequal power relationships (as often found between teacher and students) influence the expectations of behaviors built on implicitly held notions of the right sort of values imposed by schools and cultural institutions(Gee 2007) which are then perpetuated by certain teacher-centered interpretive frames. Thus, learning conditions can be quite different for two students sitting right beside each other in the same class due to how the teacher interprets their performance, and how the student responds as part of this performance. Certain performances get validated and others silenced often based often more on the teacher’s preconceived assumptions and interpretive frames.

The sheer complexity of all of the intertwining performances, multiple perspectives and possibilities of interpretive frames was a formidable challenge for me as a researcher. Thereby, I was forced to limit my research to specific parameters such as only focusing on reading events that were specific to reading instruction or directly related to the performance of reading instruction (e.g. the ways students performed independent reading seemed to relate to the construction of reading groups) and even within that I focused my cross comparative analysis only on the reading events that seemed to have similar counterparts across both non-dramatic and dramatic reading events. In addition, because Ms. G and I were able to collaboratively try out and reflect on changes in reading instruction, we began to question some of the unexamined assumptions about reading instruction with implications for other reading teachers who may have ‘always done’ reading in similar ways with their classes’ of third grade students.

I needed to see this though through the eyes of specific students to truly make sense of the implications on learning that the two disparate cultures of reading created. Therefore, I also designed the three case studies of ELLs to shed light on the multimodal and social
resources students actually made available and how they were used during the two sets of reading events. The case study research process helped me create a more nuanced look at my first research question and of course provided a lens into my second research question about the limitations and affordance on the kinds of performances of reading made available to English Language Learners as a result of the two distinctive reading cultures.

**Three Case Studies of ELLs: Ino, Dasjah and Yusef**

The second interrelated layer of research was based on the stories and in-depth case studies of three English Language Learners who lived through the experiences and performances of both reading cultures. Case study research as delineated by Dyson & Genishi (2005) can offer context specific knowledge about how specific people negotiate among the ever-changing power struggles and relationships within that space and interpret the events they are and have faced. My set of three case studies followed Ino, Dasjah, and Yusef, three intermediate to advanced ELLs as they talked, listened, watched and read with other students and teachers during non-dramatic reading events and during dramatic inquiry to collaboratively read and interpret the complex texts of Shakespeare. My extensive observation and the ELLs own reflections on their engagement in reading practices of the classroom, and on the specific dramatic inquiry events with Shakespeare offered context specific knowledge about the ELLs and other students negotiation of these reading events.

Over time if the ways teachers and students’ performances together became a reoccurring pattern, I referred to this as a specific classroom culture of reading practice. As in any cultural community, the recurrent events that socially construct the particular culture of a classroom, are always energized by different purposes, characterized by particular relationships among participants, marked by anticipated moods and possible interactions and expected topics and structuring of activities. As Miller & Goodnow (1995) argue these recurrent everyday events, or social practices “come packed with values about what is natural, mature, morally right or aesthetically pleasing” (as cited in Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p.7). Through their participation in the shared reading practices of the classroom,
the focal ELLs developed a sense of identity and of belonging to that group and the consistent ways the group performs these events becomes a part of that collective identity (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). The valued performances characterizing the group then seemed to influence how ELLs performed (or how they desired to perform) themselves as readers and the cycle continued.

An example of this collective performative identity which is explained in my findings in Chapter 4 around the non-dramatic reading events. A pattern developed from my observations which showed that because the ELLs participated in different groups based on their oral reading fluency levels, the three focal students were not always a part of the performances of the same reading identity. In the dramatic reading events in Chapter 5, the grouping patterns were more flexible and fluid and over time an entirely different performative identity around reading developed with the whole class. Because I purposefully chose ELL focal students that fell across the three different reading groups as created by Ms. G, then I created a maximum variation sample. This maximum variation sample of three ELL students from each of the three “reading groups” provided me a lens for documenting the practice of grouping (or not) on the basis of fluency levels and what it influence it had on the access to resources and ways of performing reading made available to ELLs.

**Collaborative and Critical Teacher Research**

The third layer of research came out of my relationship with Ms. G and our involvement together in the larger teacher professional development project. I was not only a researcher in her classroom for as part of my graduate assistant position, I was expected to create informal reflections, and before, during and after the school year interviews with Ms. G. I was also expected to collect observational, anecdotal and survey data from students about their dramatic inquiry work with Shakespeare and provide Ms. G support on implementing the pedagogy of dramatic inquiry.
While my study was not explicitly focused on teacher research such as to determine Ms. G’s changes in attitudes or practices. The fact that Ms. G and I were both involved in a professional development project with dramatic inquiry approaches to reading Shakespeare can not be separated out from this specific research project. Our relationship together in the larger teacher development project ensured there was a significant willingness to collaborate, experiment, reflect and make changes to the dramatic inquiry and non-dramatic reading practices along the way. Some evidence that disconfirmed the original patterns I saw in non-dramatic reading events could be directly linked to other data showing patterns of extensive changes in Ms. G’s performance as a reading teacher as a result of her work with the larger Stand Up for Shakespeare-America (SUFSA) teacher development project. Such changes proved to have direct and indirect results on the choices ELL students had in performing themselves as readers. Our collaborative and informal reflections and ethnographically interviews which related to her own development (and mine) as a dramatic inquiry facilitator also provided invaluable insight into my specific research questions about the linkages between the changing reading practices in one third grade classroom and how ELLs were able to change performances of reading.

Research Design

In the following sub-sections I first will outline the small pilot study I did with Ms. G during 2009-2010 school year which paved the way for the current study followed by the overall emergence of my research questions as I went into Ms. G’s room in 2010-2011. Then I provide an overview of my selection of the school, classroom and English Language Learners as focal students and then I will more specifically detail the specific context of the classroom under study. Next I describe my data collection and analysis methods. Lastly, I conclude with an explanation of my researcher positionality.
Pilot Study with Ms. G

Ms. G and I met as part of a professional development project for area school teachers called Stand Up for Shakespeare. I had the opportunity to travel with 20 public school teachers, which included Ms. G (the classroom teacher of this study), to Stratford-upon-Avon where we worked extensively every day for a week long intensive summer program lead by the two drama practitioners from the Royal Shakespeare Company along with a few actors and educational leaders from the organization. Upon returning to Ohio, I worked with the rest of the Ohio State University SUFSA team to support the use of dramatic inquiry and active, ensemble based approaches to Shakespeare.

As a research assistant in the larger SUFSA project, I was able to go into Lorraine’s classroom approximately 10 times during the 2009-2010 school year (the year prior to the current study) as she worked with the lead classroom drama practitioners from RSC and at time with Dr. Edmiston. I sat in on reflections during this work and I did a final interview with her over the summer which I retrospectively used as pilot data for the current study.

A large portion of our final interview following the 2009-2010 school year revolved around Ms. G’s reflection on the changes in her teaching practices due to her involvement in SUFSA. (Ms. G also linked her shifts in practices to the changes she witnessed in many of her students as readers and some of which I supported with observational data from my intermittent visits that school year. ) Ms. G described that her biggest shift was in her intentional focus on building an ensemble of collaborative learners. She explained that the SUFSA project validated and supported her desire to build collaboration and active, engaging learning in her classroom. As we talked about the changes she saw in her practice related to her involvement with SUFSA, Ms G reflected back on the 2009-2010 school year and the following interview excerpts illustrate her shifts as a teacher towards a collaborative atmosphere across the school day. (From here on I signify others talk in interviews and reflections by using italicized font.)
In my mind I tried everyday to allow my students to do something collaboratively or with a partner or engage with another student, whether it was reading, or math or science. They needed to not be working by themselves they needed to be working with someone else, someone of their choice or my choice—most of the time it was their choice. So that became a real goal for me. That I can say I successfully did that. The other thing I decided from this SUFSA project (which I probably decided years ago in my teaching but never really consciously made sure it happened) was I wanted to have fun. I wanted my kids to have fun. So everyday, there had to be something that was enjoyable and I don’t mean frivolous fun, I mean researching castles was fun.

(Teacher Interview 6/10/10)

As we reflected together on her first school year using dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare she shared that many of her struggling students and especially her five ELLs (all US-born Ethiopian heritage) were highly engaged and much more willing to take risks after the dramatic inquiry work in the classroom. Ms. G linked this push for active, ensemble approaches directly to Anon, an ELL student in her class that year, being able to participate with a wide range of conversational partners.

Anon was kind of a loner anyway so it became important to make sure that she did become actively engaged in this activity with someone else or it would just continue this whole cycle of being on the perimeter and being alone. And I know towards the end of the year, after all of this active work with different people, it was much better. I saw her forming friendships. We had a new girl come in at the end of the year and I saw her [Anon] forming a friendship with someone new that she never would have done in the fall.

(Teacher Interview 6/10/10)

Ms. G explained that the active approaches of the ensemble using dramatic inquiry together meant an ELL student like Anon couldn’t just fade off into the edges and not verbally, physically, and emotionally participate. Her words on this issue are seen below:
with the active approach of dramatic inquiry, you have to be in it. You are just one of the kids. You can’t be on the edge you have to be a part of it….

(Teacher Interview 6/10/10)

Ms. G and I agreed that there was something almost magical about bringing three-dimensional life to Shakespeare’s texts, which are so often viewed as highly complex due to their early Modern English and iambic pentameter verse and poetic forms. Even though Ms. G only explored one play that year, Shakespeare’s Macbeth, she saw that as a result of her student’s fascination with the story and language, her English Language Learners and others were deeply interested in returning again and again to the same language and words they had embodied during the dramatic inquiry. She also reported huge gains in reading fluency, and confidence in taking risks in a large part due to the dramatic inquiry work with Shakespeare and other texts. Ms. G described the addition of the dramatic inquiry was “a huge success for all of her students” but especially her struggling readers and her ELLs (and these two categories mostly overlapped.) When she described changes in confidence for one of her struggling readers she said,

He really loved Shakespeare. He loved doing that stuff and his mom said that he was doing another Shakespeare thing at home because he just loved Macbeth so much and um... and I think... I think the experiences that he had with the dramatic inquiry and Shakespeare I really think it helped boost his self-confidence because if you looked at this kid he was really lacking in self-confidence.

(Teacher Interview 6/10/10)

She had similar stories about several of her ELL students who also struggled with reading. She explained that she couldn’t “believe how much they loved the language of Shakespeare” and she felt using dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare’s plays play a major role in the rise in confidence, risk-taking and collaboration she had seen in her ELLs and struggling readers.
From this pilot study I first began to recognize that we were onto something—a shift towards collaboration, active participation in dramatic play and inquiry using intriguing and complex stories seemed to create a new kind of literacy learning space for the ELLs in her third grade classroom. However, I didn’t have the ethnographic data, answering the who, what, when, where and how questions which might identify the co-occurrence between the specific changes in teaching practices with the changes in reading performances of ELLs. What specific resources had become more available to ELLs that could help explain Ms. G’s observation? What was so different about the structuring of dramatic inquiry events? If and how had students and teacher’s performances of reading events specifically changed in the moment and over time? This led me into my current line of research and research questions that emerged as I did extensive participant observation in Ms. G’s classroom the following academic school year: 2010-2011

**Emergence of the Research Questions**

After my initial exploratory ethnography and based on my commitments to a reciprocal and collaborative relationship with the teacher, whom had told me she intended to use dramatic inquiry to align with her “district’s expectations for reading instruction” (Teacher Reflection, 8/25/10), I limited my observation and analytical gaze to only those literacy events specifically related to reading instruction. I broadly categorized these reading specific instructional events into non-dramatic and dramatic reading events. Because the students participated in both non-dramatic and dramatic reading events in their classroom, my overarching ethnographic question was: what is the nature of the two different ways of structuring reading specific instructional events in this classroom? However, I refined by research questions as more information emerged in my early data collection and analysis and based on my performance ethnography methodology. The specific research questions and how they emerged are outlined in the next two subsections.
Research Question #1

*How do reading events get co-constructed by the performances of teachers and students and how do some of these performances become typical reading practices in this classroom?*

Early on in this classroom, I began to note some patterns in the reading events, which seemed to sustain certain typical performances of students and teachers around reading events. During non-dramatic reading instructional events for example, the performances were mostly verbal and contain a high proportion of teacher-centered ways of talking about and interacting with printed texts as part of school-based reading instruction. The consistent enactment of such performances for and with each other, I began to regard as the *non-dramatic reading practices* and these practices seemed to be both influencing and influenced by the ongoing co-construction of one particular classroom culture of reading—a culture of comparing reading skills. On the other hand, as the ensemble became involved together with dramatic inquiry reading events, I also began to locate some quite different patterns in the performances of students and teachers.

Possibly because they had been in school already for three years, the students seemed already accustomed to the more typical, non-dramatic ways of doing reading and “performing” themselves as readers in school but prior to the 2010-2011 school year the students had never been involved in dramatic inquiry reading events. Both the teacher and I had prior experience of teaching reading non-dramatically or in other words, in the ways reading had always been done—but both of us were still novices at using dramatic inquiry to structure reading events. Thus, it was only over the course of the whole school year as we grew together as an ensemble and extensively used dramatic inquiry with four different Shakespeare play units that Ms G and I began to see an entirely different classroom culture of reading become visible. The ethnographic descriptions that follow in the next chapters, delineate two different sets of reading practices and how they contributed to ongoing and collective performance of two overlapping but quite distinct
cultures of reading in this classroom and with highly distinct literacy learning opportunities created as a result.

During the dramatic reading events social and multimodal resources for meaning-making became more readily available for teachers and learners and an altogether different culture for reading began to develop—a culture of wonder and collaborative inquiry.

Just because Ms. G and I began to notice a distinctly different classroom culture of reading developing did not necessarily give plausible explanations of some of the many overlapping factors which contributed to this occurrence. I fortunately also came into the research with a deep concern for the literacy learning conditions created for English Language Learners. Therefore, throughout the ethnography I was also keeping an in-depth case study of the patterns of performances within reading events created by four English Language Learners (though I only ended up reporting on three of these students). My close analysis of the variation and patterns of reading performances improvised by these 3 ELLs proved helpful in understanding ELL specific affordances and limitations as a result of the co-construction of two different cultures of reading. I documented the ways ELLs typically performed in these events and some of the possible influences upon the small or whole group’s recurrent performances of reading events that helped to create and perpetuate these cultures. My second research question was focused on ELLs within the ongoing ethnographic study of the two cultures of reading and their related practices.

**Research Question #2**

*What affordances and limitations do the recurrent non-dramatic and dramatic reading practices offer to intermediate and advanced English Language Learners?*

Using prior research on the most effective instructional settings for English Language Learners to acquire both oral Academic English proficiency simultaneously with acquiring academic literacies (Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002), I located an intersection with the literature on the uses of adult mediated process drama for all children (and dramatic inquiry falls within this category.) The most effective
instructional settings documented for ELLs consistently include among other factors: highly contextualized literacy learning opportunities using a wide range of speech functions and oral and written academic discourses, complex and creative higher order thinking and joint productive academic tasks that are meaningful and authentic (Goldenberg, 2008; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Valdés, 2004). These same factors are among the most prevalent classroom outcomes created by using adult mediated forms of process drama as a means for literacy development for all students (Heath & Wolf, 2005; Podlozny, 2000; Wagner, 1998). Then by creating an in-depth case study of intermediate to advanced English Language Learners involved in both traditional ways of structuring reading and in dramatic inquiry (a version of process-drama). While both sets of reading practices were intended by the teacher to promote reading comprehension, this case study of three ELLs helped give me a more informed understanding of access or lack of access to multimodal resources and effective literacy learning opportunities created by different ways of structure reading.

School and Classroom Selection

Purposeful sampling (Patton 1990) was used in order to locate an information rich case for this particular in-depth study. Because I was particularly interested in understanding the nature of literacy learning experiences made available to English Language Learners through the intentional use of dramatic inquiry, I needed to find a high quality, experienced teacher who had at least some experience with using dramatic inquiry pedagogy and was committed to using it extensively in their classroom. Secondly, that same teacher needed to be working with a ethnically and racially diverse class of students so that it contained a small subset of English Language Learners. Especially in states like Ohio and North Carolina (where I used to teach elementary school), ELL students often find themselves in a small linguistic minority grouping (<5-8) within a classroom of monolingual English speakers including a monolingual teacher with little to no training on the specific needs of ELLs. I chose to focus my sampling purposively based on locating similar situations where ELLs are in a small linguistic minority grouping of a
classroom and yet the teacher was attempting to use dramatic inquiry for a large portion of their language arts instruction.

Therefore sampling based on this criteria was used to locate an information rich school, teacher and classroom site. The classroom sample for this proposed research was specifically based on pre-determined criterion including the following: the teacher had more than 5 years of experience, had prior extensive training in the use of dramatic inquiry, had shown consistent attempts in using dramatic inquiry methods for an extended period with students in the previous school years and who had shown high degree of willingness to use dramatic inquiry with complex texts as a part of normal literacy instruction throughout the upcoming school year (2010-2011).

This particular classroom was chosen because Ms. G, the teacher had over 20 years of experience teaching and was highly thought of by other teachers and administrators in her district for innovative and high quality pedagogy’s. Furthermore at the beginning of the study she had already been involved in one year of extensive teacher professional development in the use of dramatic inquiry pedagogies, with a special emphasis on the complex texts of Shakespeare. In the prior school year (2009-2010) the teacher explored non Shakespeare texts using the dramatic inquiry methods for at least two 2-3 week units and also integrated the strategies in a 3-4 week unit studying Shakespeare’s Macbeth.

**Teacher Selection: Ms. G**

*It’s really good when you have that opportunity to really listen to what kids have to say. And they were sharing a lot of things today-a lot of thoughts and a lot of connections. I think sometimes we don’t and I am really guilty of this. We don’t always allow lots of time for that to happen. Were so focused. We gotta do this we gotta do that.* (Reflection 12/20/10)

The reflection seen above occurred immediately following almost an entire school day devoted to listening, sharing and reviewing the past month of work her class had been
doing on William Shakespeare’s play, Macbeth. In this quote Ms. G illustrates a common theme I noticed in her reflections throughout our work together. She has a strong desire to connect with her students and make them feel valued as well as connecting them to each other. She has weekly tea time that she does on a rotating basis with small groups of students at lunch time specifically to have more time for informal discussions with students. This desire intertwines with her teaching philosophy that the best learning is social as she consistently works to provide students opportunities to work cooperatively with partners and small groups on academic tasks. However, she also recognized that there was immense pressure on her to get to many things and possibly exchange depth of knowledge for covering and getting through many goals and topics.

Ms. G already was a dynamic teacher before starting this work and as she described her best teaching was when she could work with kids on highly engaging, active and challenging and yet, fun tasks such as taking students to do scientific experiments on the local watershed which she did at least 4 times during my research. She then explained that these same reasons were what attracted her to joining the SUFSA project. She shared that when she learned that the Stand Up for Shakespeare-America project was in fact for elementary teachers too at an early organizational meeting, it aligned well with what she determined was her best teaching self: “an out of the box” kind of teacher. She reflected that after the SUFSA meeting:

I came away thinking I would really like to do this because they have almost given me permission to have fun and do something totally different with kids. And I like that idea. (Teacher Interview, 6/11/11)

During an interview prior to this research, Ms. G stated her professional development goals for the upcoming 2010-2011 year were incorporating dramatic inquiry practices even more into the school district's reading curriculum or the “foundational reading competencies” as she called them later (Teacher Interviews, 6/16/10 and 6/11/11). She
also explained her hope that using active strategies to support students' comprehension of Shakespeare, her students would be pushed to collaborate with many different people, complete higher order thinking tasks as they used dramatic inquiry to read and interpret complex texts. These ideas aligned with the line of inquiry that I had already began developing so working with an already dynamic teacher and therefore, Ms. G and her classroom of third graders seemed to be perfect fit.

Importantly, Ms. G enthusiastically agreed for me to collaboratively work within her classroom throughout the year. Through our previous work together Ms. G and I had already begun to establish a rapport from our previous work together. By working together with her as a collaborative, critical action research project to support the teacher’s efforts to meet her goals, it was ensured for a portion of the instructional day this classroom would explore the complex texts of Shakespeare using dramatic inquiry (Edmiston 2010) so as to make this study feasible. Our reciprocal relationship proved to be highly beneficial both for planning, reflecting and transforming pedagogies in the moment but also for providing us the researcher lens to take a step back and look again through different eyes on the workings of the classroom (Frank, 1999).

**Defining & Selecting Focal ELLs**

All of the parents and guardians of the children assigned to this classroom signed consent forms to be in the research, though my intent was to focus mostly on English Language Learners. Students in this school were classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) by the state of Ohio if they were “not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English (Ohio Dept of Education, 2010) until their parents officially removed them from the program or they are exited from the program by reaching a certain level of proficiency. The state used Limited English proficient (LEP) as a label, while the teachers in the school tended to call them ELA or ESL students because some go to English as a second language instruction (ESL). I prefer to use a term that has a positive connotation for these students—English Language Learners (ELL), though I realize there are complications with every label.
Every year ELLs were given the Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA) to determine their level of language proficiency—prefunctional (Level 1), beginning (Level 2), Intermediate (Level 3), Advanced (Level 4) and Proficient (Level 5). However, in grades K-2 English Language Learners are only assessed through the classroom teacher’s observations and filling out of a checklist, whereas at the end of grade 3 and beyond students were classified by taking reading, writing, listening and speaking portions of a standardized OTELA assessment. There were six students identified originally by the system as intermediate to advanced LEP students and there were no students considered pre-functional or beginner at the start of the study. All of the students originally identified by the school as LEP upon entering in kindergarten can be seen in table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OTELA 09-10</th>
<th>Fall OAA-Reading</th>
<th>1st quarter Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yusef</strong></td>
<td>3 Intermediate</td>
<td>354 Limited</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dasjah</strong></td>
<td>4 Advanced</td>
<td>392 Basic</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nick</strong></td>
<td>4 Advanced</td>
<td>413 Proficient</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Febea</strong></td>
<td>4 Advanced</td>
<td>418 Accelerated</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ino</strong></td>
<td>4 Advanced</td>
<td>424 Accelerated</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paarth</strong></td>
<td>4 Advanced</td>
<td>424 Accelerated</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Limited English Proficient Students in Ms. G's Class

**Selecting Focal ELL Students in Ms. G’s Class**

If students were assessed in the OTELA at performing at level 3, like Yusef, the minimum for a pull-out program for ESL was 45 minutes per week (Ohio English Language Proficiency Standards-Ohio Dept. of Education). However, Yusef received ESL services well above the minimum at 4 times a week for 30 minutes. Yusef was considered an intermediate level student and he thereby received more ESL instruction outside of class than advanced level ELLs. However, he still fit within the critical case for supporting academic language development as he received the majority of his
language arts instruction within Ms. G’s class. Although he was perceived to be able to carry on social interactions fairly fluently he consistently struggled in the academic demands of math, reading and writing for third grade.

The other five students were labeled Advanced level ELLs at the beginning of the year though Paarth’s mother did not consent for him to enter or remain in the LEP program or receive any extra English as a Second Language (ESL) services as she was certain he was well above proficient in all areas of English language and literacy. Though their parents did not object to such ESL services, the other four students- Dasjah, Nick, Febea and Ino received no extra English Language services outside of the classroom and instead received their language arts instruction in Ms. G’s classroom.

During the initial weeks of my exploratory ethnography I took notes on all five students (excluding Paarth) but found it was difficult to give equal attention to all five students during the follow-up discussions during in-class reading events. Therefore, I decided I needed to narrow down my number of focal cases. Because I had already begun to see the differing learning opportunities offered to students among the three different reading groups Ms. G had created, I determined I needed to closely follow one focal student from each of the three different reading groups. By using Ms. G’s selection of reading groups and the OAA assessments, and first quarter reading assessment scores (see Table 3.1) I began to follow 4 students that spanned the three different reading groups (high, middle, low). Through observations, interviews, follow-up discussions, and assessments across the entire school year I began to create a picture of the nature of participation in reading events by Ino (high group); Dasjah and Febea (middle group); and Yusef (low reading group). However, due to unforeseen circumstances later in the year, Febea proved to be absent often and I was unable to collect sufficient data in relative comparison to the other three students. Therefore, the set of case studies interwoven through this research are specifically focused on Ino, Dasjah and Yusef.
Specific Context of the Study

This school, teacher and small cluster of (3-5) English Language Learners (ELLs) provided a purposeful, information rich case sample (Patton, 1990) from which to understand the influence of reading practices have in creating performances of reading on the continuum of performing knowing and imitating procedural skills towards performing multimodal literacy understandings. The following section provides an overview of the complex array of literacy activities that were going on in Ms. G’s classroom on any one day.

Stone Creek Elementary

Just before the start of the school year, Ms. G, was switched to a different school building but she and her administration still graciously allowed me to continue on as planned. The school where she worked during the 2010-2011 school year was called Stone Creek Elementary school. It was located in a small school district outside of a major metropolitan area.

The school population at the time was made of students from mixed income levels as it holds the 2nd highest index of socioeconomic status of all of the elementary schools in the district with 47% students being economically disadvantaged. The ethnic diversity of the students in the school was varied but similar to the district averages but far above the state’s average as 51% white, 34% black, 11% multi-racial and Hispanic/Latino 3% There was a reported 5% students who were considered Limited English Proficient by the State of Ohio. (Statistics from Ohio Dept. of Education 2007-2008). Therefore, the site selection offered an illustration of heterogeneous classroom settings which aren’t necessarily what is often considered typical populations of many urban schools (entire populations tend to be perceived as economically and/or racially/ethnically similar) or the typical assumption of suburban schools (populations tend to be perceived as majority Caucasian, or middle-upper class professionals). This diversity then was played out in

2 All school names and student names are pseudonyms.
the classroom in a hybrid mix of economic, racial, linguistic and cultural/ethnic social positions.

**Day in the Life of Ms. G’s 3rd Grade Class**

The three students in this study participated in a wide variety of literacy tasks in their third grade classroom. The following chart seen in Table 3.2 is a schedule of activities and the typical set up of events during the 2010-2011 school year in Ms. G’s classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:10</td>
<td><strong>School Officially Begins</strong>&lt;br&gt;Some students eat “grab-n-go” breakfast in the room.&lt;br&gt;Morning Announcements &amp; Mrs. G. checks/stamps homework logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15</td>
<td><strong>“Fantastic Five” Math</strong>&lt;br&gt;Students work on selected Math problems from the Smart Board/ Projector&lt;br&gt;Ms. G goes over the problems with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td><strong>Teacher-Mediated Literacy Work</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em><strong>Activities vary daily</strong></em>&lt;br&gt;‘Yusef’s’ reading group is pulled out by literacy intervention teacher&lt;br&gt;Ms. G works with 2 other reading groups (20-30 minutes per group)&lt;br&gt;Spelling&lt;br&gt;Word Study (e.g. Prefixes, Suffixes “Word Explorer” Vocabulary Workbooks)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Seat Work-</strong>&lt;br&gt;Other students work on independent or partner work (e.g. research or writing projects, reading skills worksheets, Dictionary practice, Scholastic News)&lt;br&gt;Independent Reading or Writing&lt;br&gt;Computer &amp; Other Centers&lt;br&gt;Read Naturally Program (Fluency practice only for some students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td><strong>Literacy Work Continued</strong>&lt;br&gt;Yusef’s reading group meets with Ms. G&lt;br&gt;Other students continue Literacy Work&lt;br&gt;*Thursdays-Gym 10:10-10:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40-12:00</td>
<td><strong>Dramatic Inquiry with Shakespeare (3-4 times per week)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20-12:00</td>
<td>**Library 11:20-11:50 (Mondays)***Occasional Counselor visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch &amp; Recess</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Calendar of Daily Activities in Ms. G’s Class
In the middle of the school year Ms. G switched from the modular unit in front of the school to inside a newly remodeled classroom within the actual school building. Students had a water fountain inside the classroom and they would ask Ms. G to leave the room to go down the hall to the restroom in either space. Prior to the move of classroom spaces, the only significant difference in schedules was in the modular unit, the in-class work times had to end five minutes earlier so students could put on their coats to go across the parking lot and into the main building for lunch, gym, music, computer lab, etc. Secondly, Dramatic Inquiry often fell for the first 4 months of school from 2-3:30pm whereas the last 6 months it ran from approximately 10:40am-12pm (as seen in this schedule). However, the dramatic inquiry events with Shakespeare still lasted approximately 1.5-2 hours.

**Overview: Non-Dramatic Inquiry Reading Events**

After Fantastic Five Math work in the morning, there was a block of time set aside to focus on literacy work. Though this time was typically focused by the teacher on reading instruction, during times students worked on long-term writing or research projects, this might also be a time that Ms. G helped individuals or small groups of students edit their writing. Generally, non-dramatic literacy work time was characterized by a small group
of students seated around a table with Ms. G for 20-30 minutes while other students worked independently at their desks or with partners. The students were involved in what Ms. G called her *reading groups*, which is a small group of students ability grouped by achievement test scores and teacher observation of “reading skills” (Teacher Reflection-Sept. 3, 2010). The students were mediated by the teacher in reading through a fictional chapter or a non-fiction reading passage at a kidney shaped “teacher table” near the back of the room.

Students not in her group would be doing what Ms. G called “seat work” where the students would work on a host of different activities intended to give them practice in what they had been previously working on with the whole group related to reading and writing. Students set at desks clustered together in pods of 3-5 desks, though at times certain students had their desks isolated from anyone else. Figure 3.1 provides an example of what I called a teacher-less space.

![Figure 3.1: Dasjah doing “seat work” in a teacher-less space](image)

I observed that while the teacher was still physically in the classroom space, it was difficult for Ms. G to offer instructional support to those students doing seat work beyond a quick re-direction or task management of students who were nearby or in earshot. However, students doing seat work also had the ability to work with partners on some activities and engaged in informal talk if the talk didn’t interrupt the lesson at the table. If they were sitting at their desks they usually worked on individual papers copied by the
teacher or in workbooks. They often worked on reading skills practice worksheets, based on skills they had already covered. Sometimes though students worked on small teacher-made booklets which asked them to draw pictures, make connections and predictions related to their reading group book. Approximately, once a month, students would read a Scholastic News-child friendly newspaper and work with partners or independently on the activities in those newspapers. When students doing seat work were finished with a worksheet, there was a designated “turn-in” tray that they turned in papers. As Ms. G said when “they are done with their work they have several choices—Independent or silent reading, sometimes they could complete mini-books, do AR tests or fact-monster on the computer.” This silent reading of fictional chapter books was a particularly prevalent activity chosen by some students when finished with “their work.”

Some students also used technology independently in certain areas of the room. At the fluency center, students used headphones and tape or cd players to listen to repeat readings of passages or they practiced reading the passage and timing themselves with hand-held timers so as to count the number of words per minute they read. When working on the computers in the classroom, students typically worked on a research program called Fact Monster or they took part in school-wide reading program that tracks their scores on tests of books they have read, called Accelerated Reader.

I also noted on several occasions that her “high and some middle [group of] readers” were given “dictionary work” where they would look up words and their meanings and create sentences that displayed their understanding. The only time during literacy work time that I observed low reading group readers working on explicit vocabulary work in these teacher-less spaces occurred when they were working through a page in their Word Explorer workbook which would be part of a whole group lesson. When I asked Ms. G about this she explained, “I always ran out of time to do things like that with them.”

Though on December 20th and 21st, I observed at least half of the students work at various times on a matching game of vocabulary words and word meanings Ms. G created based on a list of review vocabulary words from Macbeth.
When all of the students were in the room and Ms. G wanted to do a whole group (non-dramatic) reading instructional lesson then every student sat at their own desk while the teacher stood near the front of the room, usually next to the Smart Board or projector or rotated through the room if using a paper-based tool for mediation (e.g. student workbook or worksheet). During non-dramatic whole group reading events, I observed Ms. G teaching vocabulary, spelling or reading test preparation skills, as discrete subjects.

Ms. G followed a published spelling program that was required to be used by her school and her grade level team. Ms. G reflected (as did 2 of the ELL students) that she didn’t particularly care for the spelling program as it was highly scripted following of lists of words grouped by similar orthographic patterns. Ms. G later adapted these lists to include some Shakespeare words (e.g. ancient, beguile, barren) the students were studying. Ms. G also used a published student vocabulary workbook, Word Explorer, that was designed to align with the Ohio Achievement Assessment for third grade and also supplied by the school district. As part of what Ms. G called “word study” and to supplement and extend the lessons in the Word Explorer vocabulary workbooks, she also printed and gave whole group instruction using mini-books from the school’s subscription to an online reading resource. These resources focused instruction on word learning strategies such as using context clues and morphological analysis such as recognizing and adding appropriate suffixes or prefixes. The reading test preparation skills involved the children in completing practice reading assessments and the teacher would help prepare them to successfully complete the tests by teaching them how to read all of the answer choices and to go back into the text and highlight the information that helped them arrive at their answer.

There were exceptions to this norm for the literacy work block of time. This occurred when Ms. G opened up the whole morning to exploring writing or reading activities pertaining to the four different dramatic inquiry units with Shakespeare or when she had
arranged another form of long-term, but non-Shakespeare thematic exploration such as in her folktales unit (September 6th-30th) and her castles unit (Nov. 15th-29th).

**Castles: A non-dramatic thematic unit**

From November 10th-29th, Ms. G constructed a range of reading and other instructional activities to create a medieval castles thematic unit. Ms. G and her students used companion fiction and non-fiction Magic Treehouse books both about medieval castles and written by Mary Pope Osborne along with an extensive range of non-fiction expository texts (e.g. *Usborne World History Medieval World* by Jane Bingham *I Wonder Why Castles Had Moats* by Philip Steele—Also See Table 4.1 Books Used in Ms. G’s Class) As I was only able to observe two times during this 2.5 week period, the following excerpt is from her written reflection of their work on the unit together. (Email Reflection November 29th, 2010)

*We started by reading the book, Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve, by Mary Pope Osborne. This is a Magic Tree House book and most kids are familiar with the series. We focused mostly on setting, characters, predictions, and plot. We read this book in a few different ways. Most of it was read as a whole group reading...choosing people to read a page at a time. Sometimes we read a chapter with partners and sometimes I read a chapter with my lowest reading group. We had lots of discussion with the whole class. Then we read a non-fiction companion book, Magic Tree House Research Guide – Knights and Castles, also by Mary Pope Osborne. We read this book as a whole class. There were questions that accompanied each chapter. The students worked on these individually, with a partner and together with the whole class. We did other activities centered around the castle theme....phonics packet on castles, math activities and writing work. Many non-fiction books were available for student use. We used these to find interesting facts about Medieval Life...castles, weapons, food, etc. We wrote our facts on note cards and then glued to large construction paper to make a class book of facts. Students wrote drafts, edited and created a final report explaining the stages to become a knight. Lots of modeling and support was given initially on this writing project, but the
kids were very successful. I also brought in several visual resources: poster of inside a castle, brass rubbings of Lord, Lady, and Knight. Video clips were also shared to illustrate life of a knight and in the castle.

This unit thus defied the norm of using isolated texts or in having to work independently. Over time the ideas and concepts from the medieval court life that were uncovered in their castle research spilled over into their ways of making sense of at least 3 of the four Shakespeare Texts which included the invasion of the castle scenes, executions and power relationships of kings, queens, lords and thanes (Field Notes 12.1) set in the middle ages of Macbeth—the long-term dramatic inquiry Shakespeare unit directly after the castles unit. Later their castles research helped inform their understanding of the embattlements and other key contexts of Dunsidane castle in Hamlet (Field Notes May 6th) and the formality of rules in the Duke’s court in Midsummer Night’s Dream (Field Notes January 26th).

**Dramatic Inquiry with non-Shakespeare -Folktales Unit**

Ms. G first introduced students to collaborative literacy work and to dramatic inquiry strategies by asking the students to explore various folktales. Students spent time reading folktales with partners. They did sequencing activities and created “shoe box theatre” puppet shows, where each student used a retelling of a folktale they had read and created a puppet show that they shared with kindergarten students.

Ms. G went into a fictional role as Justina-the folk teller, who was concerned about the loss of folktales in the world. Justina was able to share new folktales with them such as the Turtle and the Stick and Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughter’s retold by John Steptoe. After hearing the Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughter’s Ms. G introduced students to active approaches to texts and inquiry such as in embodying perspectives of characters, creating interpretations of characters relationships through frozen pictures and developing and sharing thoughts from a character’s perspective such as to argue or advise a teacher or student playing another character’s role as they walked down the “decision alley”
between the other students. Ms. G continued with this story for 1.5 weeks and then switched to do even more dramatic inquiry with another folk tale—*The Woman Who Outshone the Sun* by Alejandro Cruz Martinez.

**Overview: Dramatic Inquiry with Shakespeare Reading Events**

Dramatic inquiry events typically ran for 1-1.5 hours with the whole group being involved in a shared learning process. Ms. G typically structured approximately four weeks of using dramatic inquiry to explore a specific Shakespeare play and portions of original text from that play. Over the 2010-2011, then we all explored together four plays—Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Midsummer’s Night’s Dream and Hamlet (3 tragedies and 1 comedy). Typically she would structure 3-4 days where there would be a solid block of time for dramatic inquiry, though during Macbeth we created dramatic inquiry events daily. 75% of the classroom space was used during dramatic inquiry events as preparation for dramatic inquiry events always involved the students and teachers pushing desks, chairs, stools and tables to the outer periphery of the classroom. Typically Ms. G would also begin with the students making a large circle with their bodies and from here began with some type of warm-up ensemble game involving students moving their bodies and their minds simultaneously.

Though it turned out to be one of its strengths as a practice dramatic inquiry was actually difficult to easily categorize into Ms. G’s reading-specific instructional purposes (e.g. explicit vocabulary instruction, fluency practice) because these areas were all highly overlapping. Dramatic Inquiry rapidly moved back and forth from building embodied background knowledge and experiences to embodying interpretations of the characters interactions and events in the stories. Vocabulary and fluency tasks were embedded in these activities. Furthermore, these tasks were a part of and led to embodied higher order thinking such as asking questions or giving advice to characters at the point of action, “thought tracking” a character’s perspective or creating a frozen picture to metaphorically represent power and familial relationships. These dramatic inquiry reading events were
also cumulative over time as each day’s work built on the days and weeks of work before (See Chapter 5 for the detailed description of the dramatic inquiry reading events). Furthermore, the strength of the work seemed to be that it was long-term and not specifically defined only by arbitrary temporal or physical structures as was the case of non-dramatic reading events such as reading group, where everyone set at the table for 20 minutes and then it was time to go onto another isolated reading instructional task (e.g. vocabulary or spelling lesson).

Extended Living Through the Stories of Shakespeare

Beyond the 1.5-2 hour periods of dramatic inquiry, there were at least 9 days-Nov.11-12th, Dec. 8th, Dec. 20-21st, Feb. 18th, May 2nd, May 17th, and May 26th where students were involved for the entire morning or the entire day in some way related to the ongoing dramatic inquiry events with Shakespeare. Therefore, I included the field notes and video data from these days as dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare events, because these days became especially helpful in making visible the students fascination with the language and stories of Shakespeare. On these days students worked on some combination of the following activities: living through the story (Parsons, 2006) for an extended period of time, developing extensive intertextual and intratextual connections discussions, creating writing projects (e.g. comic strips, letters written as characters, narrations of events, non-fiction essays comparing plays) which portrayed their growing understanding of the Shakespeare story or the connections between the Shakespeare stories or they watched a live or filmed performance of a play and following that with dramatic inquiry work or reflection.

For example, on November 11th, the students saw a child-friendly 45-minute version live performance of Romeo and Juliet at their school. Following the production, Dr. Brian Edmiston brought one of the actors in the classroom and they held a dramatic inquiry event using the actor in and out of role exploring some of the themes and big inquiry questions of Romeo and Juliet since this was a the end of the students work on that play. The following day, November 12th, the students spent the morning finishing their designs
for their imagined section of the Shakespeare Theme Park called Verona and then they performed text extracts from the Romeo & Juliet within their set design (e.g. one group set up the balcony and performed the famous balcony scene, another group had a roller coaster through the Capulet’s mansion, where the audience met an angry Lord Capulet yelling at his daughter.) Later in the year they also saw a live version of Mid-summer Night’s dream (Feb. 18th) followed by a dramatic workshop with a few actors from the show. The students continually asked Ms. G to see excerpts from film versions of Macbeth and Hamlet as well. Students were intrigued by the idea that there could be multiple interpretations of the same play as their teacher often told them. As Brooke told me about why she wanted to see Macbeth so bad, “I wanted to see how other people acted in the scene of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth. I wondered if they did it like us.”

On December 8th, during the morning literacy work time students took turns being crowned by someone else and sitting on the socially constructed “throne” from our Macbeth story (complete with ornate cloth and gold crown) for a while. Then they self-selected a time to get up and “crown” another friend as the “king”. At the same time these ongoing crowning ceremonies were happening, other students set at their desks working on writing-in-role as if they were a young, thane of Scotland who thinks he or she should be king or queen and why they are worthy to be king. During this time, a few students spontaneously started practicing their reading and performing of the “witches” scene from the day before (See Re-Reading for Meaning-Costume Reading) which prompted other students to get up from their desks and practice their readings and performances witches scene as well. This extended living through the story carried over until the last child was crowned—Marquell R. A few students fell to their knees spontaneously and began to pronate in front of Marquell R and started crying out loudly, “All Hail, Marquell! All Hail, Marquell! All Hail Marquell!” All of the other students in the room came over and joined in the physical and verbal “hailing” of Marquell up until Ms. G had to stop them to go to lunch. On May 26th, Ms. G organized a final Shakespeare feast to be held for the Grand Opening of the Shakespeare Theme Park. The students had the opportunity to live through a character as they could choose to dress up like one of the
characters from any of the plays. Parents brought and served food for a medieval-style feast including beef stew (in a cauldron), chicken wings, cheese, bread and sparkling cider to the various characters sitting around the table. The students dressed and acted as their characters and offered reasons for their different props and ways of dressing, talking, walking, etc.

At other times, Ms. G specifically opened up the day for reading multiple versions of the current play (original text, graphic novels, children’s book versions), carrying on vocabulary or comprehension reviews (Dec. 20-21st) or for writing projects related specifically to the Shakespeare plays under study like writing-in-role (Dec. 8), narration of scenes (Dec. 21), Venn Diagrams and non-fiction essays comparing plays (Dec. 20th, May 17th). These culminating activities almost always led into lengthy discussions of intra- and intertextual connections. Over time, such intertextual connections became a favored discussion activity as evidence of the days that the students either explicitly asked Ms. G for this space to make connections (April 27th) or they spontaneously began to create the space for an extensive discussion of intertextual connections on their own (May 12th) even if Ms. G had another plan at the moment for an equally engaging and physical activity such as a creating scenes.

**Specific Data Collection & Analysis Methods**

**Data Collection Phases**

Data collection took place in five interrelated phases throughout the 2010-2011 school year-Exploratory Ethnography, Extensive Ethnography Phase 2 and Phase 3, Recursive Phase 4 and Recursive Phase 5 with Member Checks. Table 3.3 on the next page lists the data collection and interspersed data analysis phases. Appendix A also shows a more extensive version of my research calendar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Phases</th>
<th>Dates Completed</th>
<th>Time Collecting Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploratory Phase</strong></td>
<td>August 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-October 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7 weeks and ongoing: Daily first week of school + 1-2 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extensive Phase 2</strong></td>
<td>October 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-November 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4 weeks: 4-5 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romeo &amp; Juliet Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>November 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3 weeks: Open-Coding of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extensive Phase 3</strong></td>
<td>November 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-December 21st</td>
<td>4 weeks: 5 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macbeth Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Jan. 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;-Jan 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3 weeks: Axial Coding of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recursive Phase 4</strong></td>
<td>January 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-March 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4 weeks 1-2 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midsummer Night’s Dream Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>March 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;-April 21st</td>
<td>4 weeks: Selective Coding &amp; create member checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recursive Phase 5</strong></td>
<td>April 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-June 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6 weeks 2-3 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Member Checks</td>
<td>Hamlet Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Essays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Data Collection Phases

I did not collect extensive data during three brief segments of time and I spent that time analyzing the data from the previous phase of collection. This research design proved highly beneficial as I was able to create a tentative set of ideas after each phase of data collection, then I returned to the field and was able to further support, extend, and complicate my tentative coding schemes.
Phase 1: Exploratory Ethnography

August 25th-October 8th (and ongoing)

Social and Cultural Contexts for Literacy Instruction

The first phase of the research involved understanding the social contexts surrounding the reading instruction in this classroom. Social contexts refer to all of the social activities structured into the workings of the classroom’s ecology which includes social interactions, rules for these interactions and ways of talking to each other, goals, tools/resources available, how labor is divided, but also the arrangement of time, physical space, material objects and people’s bodies. Cultural contexts also refers to sets of values informing these practices or recurrent events which can be affected by ‘extrasituational’ forces such as school district expectations, and historical or economic reasons that shape these contexts but the classroom “culture” is also shaped by classroom social mediation and encounters (Dyson & Genishi 2005).

This initial phase of research was an open-ended exploratory ethnographic study of the configuration of time, space, materials, bodies and rules and ways people work and think together in this classroom. Information was collected on the daily schedules and physical layout of the school and classroom and the arrangement of children’s seating in relationship to the teacher, other students and materials needed. I collected information about district expectations, work samples from focal students on oral and written language and began to collect a running list of texts the teacher uses for instruction and the types of texts focal students choose to read and write independently or with partners. Peripheral participant observation occurred everyday for the first week of school and then I returned 1-2 times per week for six more weeks and observed a variety of non-dramatic but reading specific instructional events on different days and different times—taking detailed field notes and photographs to visually document the recurrent social practices. I also was a full-participant observer three times during ensemble building games and dramatic reading events around non-Shakespeare texts. During these events
dramatic inquiry lasted for 1.5 hours and all students participated in using dramatic inquiry to explore three different folktales on three different days in September where I also collected field notes and photographs of students work.

Typical Non-Dramatic Reading Events

Through the exploratory phase I spent time determining what the most typical reading events seemed to be in this classroom and who was involved in those reading events, where, when and how they happened. During non-instructional times such as when the students were at lunch or in music or gym, the teacher was asked to do some initial open ended reflection about the non-dramatic reading events and my emerging questions about them. Based on my early analysis of my field notes and teacher reflections, I audio taped and videotaped at least 2 video samples of each of the reading-specific instructional events that the teacher had purposefully structured in this classroom including small reading group or whole group test preparation skills, vocabulary, spelling and read aloud. I also observed or videotaped ELL focal students’ interactions with other students and teachers when working on reading and writing tasks independently or with partners without the teacher’s direct intervention. I video-taped either continuously or at random times of other students as to not make it obvious which students were object of focus for that time. The students were not made aware of which students were my focal students. The teacher knew I was focusing on some of her ELL students but she did not know which particular focal students were being observed during each segment of time. Furthermore, the case study students were observed during other non-reading specific instructional times during the day as part of my exploratory ethnography.

When I was a participant observer, I often would initiate informal conversations with students and Ms. G during normal instruction (Bernard 2006) or immediately after a reading event in order to ascertain what the teacher or focal student had noticed or named as significant from the event. Within each reflective session with the teacher or the student, I took copious notes and if possible audio taped or videotaped with a hand-held camera and I transcribed the informal reflections if they were audio taped. The teacher’s
reflections, lesson plans and curriculum guides further provided evidence of the specific expectations of content knowledge and levels of proficiency and growth expected of all of the students as mandated by the school district—including reading goals and content topics, and vocabulary and literacy strategies to be developed in these students. The classroom teacher also provided information about all of the student’s scores on statewide and district wide assessments of students reading achievement data and the school’s “institutional” perception of the reading “levels” of students as measured by a standardized assessment tool given by the literacy teachers of the school Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIEBELS).

**Ongoing Data Analysis**

By cross comparing the field notes and video sample transcripts, I began open coding the teachers and students interactions across different reading events. After coding multiple sets of field notes and video transcripts, I began to notice certain kinds of teacher’s talk and non-verbal signals seemed to co-occur regularly with certain time periods or specific instructional segments set within the larger reading events (e.g. the expectation for students to recall the general plot from the text read the day before, modeling the word part under study). I also noticed that students developed patterns in the ways of verbally or non-verbally participating in those portions of the reading events.

Using my observations of Ms. G’s reading events, lesson plans, stated goals and her overall structuring of the literacy work time as well as from her own informal reflections on her practice I began to analyze what the teacher’s purposes seemed to be for each reading event and what she noted as significant observations. I then compared this to the convergence and divergence with sensitized concepts and apriori theories on research-based effective literacy instructional practices for all students such as the presence or absence of higher order questioning (Taylor 2000) in teacher talk or procedural displays (Bloome, Puro, & Theodorou, 1989) being created by teachers and students together in order to get through the instructional event, regardless if any actual learning occurred. My emerging concepts were captured in my verbal and visual representations and
wonderings in my hand-written research journal and my weekly or bi-weekly analytical memos which were added to and edited on my laptop as needed. From this early analysis, I created major areas of focus for future reflective schemes to focus on during subsequent observations of instruction. Areas of my more focused analysis became the co-occurrences of specific types of teacher talk with specific types of students verbal responses and physical actions, and how students interacted with independent reading books and other reading tasks and what kinds of patterns became visible within or across different “reading groups” in regards to performances of independent reading.

I first analyzed the ELLs ways of participating in the non-dramatic reading events because I had more data on the non-dramatic reading events from the initial exploratory research phase. In order to create an ongoing chart of the focal students typical or atypical ways of performing in reading events, I used constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss 1967) across field notes and video analysis.

Cross comparative analysis of the field notes and video samples were used to create emerging ideas about the patterns of focal students verbal and non-verbal performances in non-dramatic reading events that seemed to result in response to certain verbal and non-verbal performances of the teacher and the other students. This was ongoing and iterative analysis throughout the other Research Phases to see where I could see similarities and disruptions of these patterns with the introduction of dramatic reading events.

**Phase 2 & Phase 3: Extensive Ethnography**

*Phase 2: October 11th-November 5th*
*Phase 3: November 29th-December 21st*

**Extensive Participant Observation in Reading Events**

During the two extensive ethnographic research phases, I spent 4-5 days a week at least for a half-day and sometimes for a whole day as a participant observer in the classroom.
The ethnographic data collection documenting the teacher and student interactions in non-dramatic events started in Phase 1 was ongoing and continued throughout the year as Ms G continued to teach reading groups and offer whole group vocabulary and spelling instruction. During the extensive phase, though, this data collection was also extended to dramatic reading events. I continued taking field notes on planning sessions and informal reflections with Ms. G surrounding the non-dramatic and dramatic reading events. During Phase 3, I was at school everyday and therefore I had a more extensive audio taped reflection 1-2 times per week focusing on the work that had just been done and the emerging patterns I was developing from my ongoing coding.

During Phase 2, the students spent 1.5 -2 hours a day, for four days a week throughout a four week period exploring Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*. The unit was culminated in them seeing a professional production of Romeo and Juliet adapted for a young audience, followed by a dramatic inquiry workshop with one of the actors and the next day the “performance” of their own creation of the “Romeo and Juliet in Verona” portion of the Shakespeare Theme Park. During Phase 3, for four weeks the students spent 1.5-2 hours a day and additionally at least one half day and two full days using dramatic inquiry to explore Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. This unit had several ongoing and culminating projects such as individual creations of comic strip versions and written narrations of events, collective character mapping charts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and a Venn Diagram comparing Romeo and Juliet to Macbeth. Students did not see a full live production but they did have an opportunity to view portions of film versions of Macbeth and the chance to interact with an actor playing Macbeth for one scene.

The times and spaces when students were involved in dramatic inquiry of Shakespeare texts were extensively documented through field notes and constant video taping through both phase 2 and phase 3. Then throughout Phases 2 & 3 I used the following methods to begin to understand how the students were engaging with the Shakespeare stories through dramatic inquiry and what types of teacher talk and actions co-occurred with specific patterns of student talk and actions during dramatic reading events. For this data, I used
field notes and video recorded dramatic inquiry reading events focus groups with video cued-reflection. I also used field notes, video recorded dramatic inquiry reading events, documents and informal reflections with focal students during or directly after the event to determine their perspectives on their “living through” or embodying of events happening in the story. This data was used to document the nature of the collaborative structures and multimodal supports put in place and which types of multimodal and social supports seemed to limit or support the students active engagement in comprehension and interpretation of the stories and the ELLs level of access to collaborative purposeful and challenging reading comprehension tasks and what outcomes seemed to co-occur over time such as appropriating new vocabulary, actively participating in and visible performances of authentic understandings of complex texts.

**Video-Recorded Dramatic Inquiry Reading Events**

During each dramatic inquiry event, students spent time in dynamic motion—constantly moving around the entire room taking part in whole group, small group and individual activity. In this setting I was a full participant observer while also assisting Ms. G’s teaching. At times, detailed written observations were more difficult to achieve and therefore during dramatic reading events I videotaped each session and watched them multiple times after returning from the field to create sets of field notes and transcriptions of specific segments within each larger dramatic inquiry event. Twenty-two full-length videos were collected through both of the phases of dramatic inquiry work (appx. 1.5-2 hrs per day).

In order to try to capture the overall sequence of events during dramatic inquiry, one large video camera sat on a tripod to record the ongoing whole group interactions and movement across space. I set up the camera on tripods in a way as to as a best as possible “follow” the gestures and interactions of the focal children when involved in large group work. Small hand-held Flip video cameras were carried by me and at times by Ms. G into students small group work, whole group work and performances of their interpretations for the group. At times students I asked students to allow the video camera
to sit on a tripod near their group as another “listening member” so as to not have the small group interaction influenced by the teacher’s presence. Each day the video, audio and detailed descriptive notes focused on alternating focal children in both dramatic inquiry and non-dramatic inquiry activities as to systematically offer a breadth of data on their participation in literacy events. However, at the same time I also took notes, collected documents and artifacts and used the other video cameras to follow the other students on the days they are not selected for focused analysis. The data was collected as a means to cross compare with other forms of evidence about the use of complex texts and challenge of tasks, effective collaboration and active strategies and multimodal support for learning, and as will be described in the next 3 sections.

Focus groups, Ms. Fuzzyminds & Informal Reflections

During several lunch periods during phase three, I had an audio and video taped informal discussion with the focal students each within a different small group of students from the entire class about Shakespeare and using drama for learning and reading complex texts together to get a sense of the whole groups’ engagement with the texts (5 small groups with 1-2 ELL focal student per group). In my adaptation of video cued multivocal ethnography first introduced by Tobin, et al (2009) each group of 4-6 students looked at video of prior work they had done with Macbeth and I collected their audio and video responses to what they thought they were doing and what they thought that had do with reading.

During these informal lunchtime reflections, I introduced a fictional character named Ms. Fuzzyminds and I positioned the students as “experts” on reading Shakespeare because of all of this work they had done with Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth. After watching the video tape of their work on the first two days of Macbeth and discussing what they saw, I switched into character with a set of glasses and a reading book and played out the role as Ms. Fuzzyminds who was supposed to be writing a book about reading but from her actions and speech she knew very little about reading and therefore, I had heard they were doing such amazing work with reading Shakespeare that I had come to them for
help. The students as a whole willingly suspended disbelief in Ms. Fuzzyminds and played along. In this way, I was able to collect more meta-level analysis from the students on what kinds of reading comprehension strategies (e.g. visualization, inferring) they were using in this dramatic inquiry work.

There was both a research component and critical action component to using this method. The students were positioned as co-researchers in this video cued reflection. When student did the reflection as a group I served as a facilitator of collaborative thinking using the ground rules for effective collaboration and in helping to summarize, clarify and reformulate what students are saying to help everyone come to a consensus on some of the key issues. Using video cued reflection offered me more insight into what students notice as important and I could ensure I was getting a sense of their perspectives on some of my questions and emerging patterns (both through the editing of the videos and facilitating/questioning during session). The students became more metacognitively aware of the reading comprehension strategies they were using during this work.

However, I did find one of the limitations of doing one focal student in the a small group with non-focal students is that some of the other students would talk more and I didn’t always get to hear as much as I would have liked from the ELL focal students. Therefore, in a follow-up informal reflection, I brought all of the ELL focal students together.

**ELL focal students & Shakespeare “Talk Show”**

At the end of Phase 1 and Phase 2, I held a fictional “talk show” with four ELL students—Ino, Dasjah, Yusef and Febea (Due to his high absenteeism, the overall data on Febea was erratic and thus not reported on in this study). This data was collected as evidence of the students appropriation of new vocabulary, levels of engagement with the stories, themes and larger inquiry questions (e.g. When is killing right or wrong?) The following transcript excerpt from the talk show displays how I negotiated with the students quickly into a fictional frame where the students were imagining as if… they were Shakespeare experts on a TV talk show.
(12/20/10  Shakespeare Talk Show)

11.45am-12:01pm Hallway outside Ms. G’s room

Participants: Yusef, Ino, Dasjah, Febea

Camille starts by talking to them about what it might be like to be on a talk show on TV. They set themselves up in a semi-circle in chairs facing the video camera.

3 Camille: yeah, let’s sit here.
4 Yusef: ooo. I’ve never been on TV
5 Camille: Welcome to the Talk Show.
6 Yusef: (repeats with new accent) Welcome to the talk show.
7 Camille: This is the talk show about Shakespeare
8 Yusef: Shakespeare?!
9 Camille: Yep, that’s right, ladies and gentlemen.
10 Yusef: We’ll be talking about Macbeth today (moves in front of camera)
11 Camille: Can you scoot back?
12 Yusef: sure (still speaking with same changed accent)
13 Camille: because you are blocking the other guests from our show here. Scoot on over. You can make up names for yourself if you’d like. This is?
14 Yusef: This is uh… Superman
15 Camille: This is Superman… (puts imagined “microphone” to each student) and this is…
16 Ino: Carol
17 Camille: Ok. Carol
18 Febea: Jabney
19 Camille: Mia
20 Camille: Ok. Superman, Carol, Jabney, Mia..ok, good to meet you all. Thanks for being on the show today. I was kind of wondering something… I know that you are experts on the stories about Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth.
Yusef: Yeah, we did a lot about those kinds of stories. Both of them. We did a lot about both of them.

Camille: Do you have anything to say about those stories? Anybody? Any thoughts on those stories?

The ELL students built on their own embodied and verbal engagement with the stories to co-construct a 16 minute conversation where I did very little talking but facilitated their conversation on camera with my probing questions much like a talk show host might question guests. The following transcript excerpt illustrates the kind of overlapping talk that occurred during this talk show.

Camille: You were saying earlier that some things were the same and some things were different about the story of Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth. Does anybody have anything to say about that?

Ino: A lot of people changed in both stories ‘cause in Romeo and Juliet, Juliet was loyal to her father, then she met Romeo, well then she changed her mind and Romeo also/

Camille: So you’re saying she wasn’t loyal anymore. She changed her loyalties?

Ino: Yeah and Romeo used to be in love with Rosaline and then he fell in love with what’s her name, Juliet. And So he changed his mind.

Camille: And so he changed his loyalties as well?

Ino: yeah and Macbeth, it would be Macbeth because he used to be a brave knight and valiant cousin. But then at the end just because he sent the letter he doesn’t seem so…/

Camille: valiant anymore

chorus: no/

Yusef: and he’s king now…

Yusef: He killed his friend Banquo. And then

Febea: and he killed his cousin/

... (Shakespeare Talk Show, Focal Students, 12/20/10)
Ethnographically Grounded Reading Interviews-Teacher and focal students

Using the emerging ethnographically grounded photographs and shared participation in events as cues, the teacher and students both work individually with me on an *ethnographically grounded interview* (appx. 1 hr—See sample questions for students Appendix B). In a National Science Foundation Qualitative Research workshop paper Robert Smith (Smith, 2004) described ‘*ethnographically grounded interviews*’ as the type of interview that occurs at regular intervals or directly after the informant and the ethnographer participated in the same event. These interviews were designed to elicit the teacher’s and student’s perspectives on reading events of which I had been observing and taking digital pictures during my participant observation. In prior unpublished research with my advisor, Dr. Edmiston, we found photographs as interview cues to be particularly helpful in eliciting teachers to talk about the specifics of available multimodal resources and ways of structuring reading events rather than talking in generalities about their classrooms. The ethnographically grounded cues in this study then were photographs taken during various reading events and other literacy events, a classroom map and small student pictures. With the students, I also created the fictional frame (See Student Interview Sample-Appendix B) of Ms. Fuzzyminds again in order to develop a “child-friendly” way to mediate the sometimes difficult work that comes with verbally articulating metacognitive reflection on reading and meaning-making. This fictional framing and “play” was not out of the ordinary, because the students were already accustomed to dramatic activity and imagining themselves as if other people as a typical classroom practice.

Because I had taken the photographs through the months prior to the interviews, the focal students, teacher and I had shared knowledge of the events so collecting their perspectives on the meaning of these events allow me to triangulate my observations. I also drew out what the classroom teacher and the focal students considered significant about specific ways of structuring reading events and it therefore, helped me bring their interpretive frames experiences and perspectives into productive dialogue with my
emerging concepts. These interviews were audio-taped, video-taped and photographed as there was considerable talk and manipulation of pictures and cards that would be almost impossible to capture in a written document only.

While the interview with the students started somewhat open-ended asking them general questions about what they liked to do at home, I also moved back and forth into a semi-structured set of interview questions in order to do begin in order to do some analysis to determine the important literacy events and social interactional focus at this early stage. The earliest topics in the interview addressed characterization of their reading interests and themselves as readers at home and school and I asked them to free list (Bernard, 2006) all the reading events they could remember. They gave labels to the ethnographic grounded photographs of reading events and I asked them about the ways the students and teachers were expected to participate in reading and writing events in the classroom. (as to gain their emic perspective and a member check of my observations of the typical reading events). The second half of the interview I asked them to rank sort each of the activities from on a continuum from most interested to least interested. In Figure 3.1, is an example of Yusef’s continuum that he made using the pictures we had labeled together about reading events in the classroom.

Figure 3.2: Yusef’s Continuum of Interest in Reading Events
Towards the end of these ethnographically grounded interviews I again, became the fictional character of Ms. Fuzzyminds. From this I collected some of the focal students’ metacognitive insight on how one does reading and reading comprehension, and benefits and limitations of implementation of dramatic inquiry. Lastly, the students completed a sociogram (Almy & Genishi, 1979) designed to understand who they thought were good readers and learners, that would make good people to work with on academic tasks.

The teacher went through a similar set of questions (See Appendix C) as the students, though my questions were more complex and afforded in-depth insight into her performance as teacher in this classroom. After Ms. G listed all of the teaching events (literacy and non-literacy specific), she put stars at each event and on a continuum where she saw herself acting as the best sort of teaching self that she most desired towards the moments where she felt she was acting as her less desired teaching self. Figure 3.3 illustrates Ms. G’s work on these continuums. Following that I asked her to put “x”s along a continuum for each of the events where she felt she could see her students acting at their best and at their worst.
Near the bottom of Figure 3.3 illustrates Ms. G’s decision that she had to separate out when she thought her students were learning at their best and worst (Green Star) and when she thought they were behaving at their best and worst (Pink Star).

**Sociograms**

During the above ethnographically grounded interviews, the students and teachers also created a sociogram (Almy & Genishi, 1979) using small school printed pictures of the children that were then placed on the metaphorical space of the classroom. Sociograms provide a visual way for the informant to physically place the names or images into relational spaces upon a physical representation of the specific social contexts (the classroom) under analysis. This sociogram made by the students gave me insight into how they felt in relationship to other people in the classroom. For example, Yusef reminded me again of how much he valued Ms. G by asking me to add her name (I
inadvertently forgotten to include Ms. G’s picture in the sociogram with the students). I had more insight into who the focal students perceived as good readers and good people for them to work with as partners. In constructing the sociograms, the teacher made visible which students she considered to be on the “periphery” or the outside edges of engagement in learning or social collaboration. Ms. G’s meta-reflection on her decisions in how to display the sociogram gave me insight into what her assumptions were about the kinds of performances that conveyed that students, in her view were engaged in learning. (See Example of Sociograms in Figure 3.5)

Dramatic Reading Events--Analysis

Open-Coding Social and Multimodal Supports

A modified version of the conditional relationship guide (Scott & Howell, 2008) was developed and adapted as emerging categories and themes continued to evolve (See Table 3.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What (T) Instructional – specific Segments from reading events</th>
<th>Who Whole or small group, etc.</th>
<th>Where Physical Space, materials Grouping &amp; Rules for talk/ ways to participate</th>
<th>Social &amp; Multimodal Supports</th>
<th>Consequences (ST) Students response/ interaction (Later return to this segment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 3. 4 Conditional Relationship Guide

I took both my field notes and video clips and created open codes on them based on this conditional guide. Initially I developed a set of open codes for my video clips by using a computer software program which allows for creating multiple and overlapping keywords to label different portions of film clips. Interview transcripts, informal conversations with students and teachers, focus group transcripts and observational fields notes were then cross-compared with the initial video coded book conditional relationship guide to
make sense of the instructional goals of each segment, who was involved where and how it happened.

Certain segments of reading events tended to co-occur with certain types of instructional goals and students focus of talk and action within a task (having an embodied experience as if…in the setting, verbal inquiry about vocabulary to set up students to work on an embodied interpretation of a specific interaction of characters, etc.) This aspect of the analysis sought the relationship of the teacher’s purpose to the reading task expected of the students. Thus I began to analyze emerging intersections between their varying (and often competing) perspectives, goals and desires in the classroom setting. It’s especially important to note creating an emerging conditional relationship chart pushed me to focus not only on the teacher’s intended purpose but also on the outcomes and perspectives of the children which helped ensure more researcher reflexivity. All too often in educational settings, the researchers and teachers adult perspectives and idealized spaces become privileged over the lived experiences by the specific students in that constructed space (Leander & Sheehy, 2004). Thus, by focusing my analysis towards at the intersection of the teacher’s professional needs (e.g. instructional goals) and the students ways of performing within the circumstances they are given (the structures and resources the teacher and other students have put in place), I began to move towards building a grounded theory about the specific kinds of multimodal and social supports that were made available to students.

Using the reading instructional goals that I determined in Phase 1 and that went across both the non-dramatic and dramatic reading events—fluency (at least for some students), vocabulary (incidental exposure and direct instruction), and story comprehension (plot sequence and character comprehension). I realized that the level of complexity and wide variety of social and multimodal supports necessitated some kind of ongoing chart to keep track of them. Thus, I created and continue to edit and add to my comparative analysis charts of the patterns of multimodal supports observed to co-occur with certain segments of the dramatic reading events--fluency, vocabulary and story comprehension.
Similar to my other comparative analyses charts, I identified the patterns in multimodal and social supports that seemed to co-occur with specific dramatic reading tasks. Figure 3.4 illustrates a portion of one of these comparative analyses charts.

**Figure 3.4: Example of Comparative Chart (Fluency Analysis 1/12/11)**

In the chart seen in Figure 3.4, re-reading for meaning and fluency was done in several different ways either less mediated as in a group of students re-reading and practicing a specific interaction from a play or in highly teacher mediated tasks (e.g. modeled reading, shared reading and rhythmic movement of the body, or shared reading with immediate feedback on pronunciation and meaning). However, I also found that there were certain coded categories highly evident during the dramatic reading events which focused on areas of reading comprehension that I had relatively little comparative data from the non-dramatic reading events. For example, two of these additional categories which seemed specific to only the dramatic reading events were **building embodied background knowledge** and **embodied higher order thinking**. Therefore, I also created extensive comparative analysis charts analyzing for the social and multimodal supports co-occurring with students engaging in the dramatic inquiry specific categories. In the
above example, I analyzed the co-occurrences of specific dramatic inquiry segments of events with embodied understandings of background knowledge and visible performances of higher order thinking.

**Focal Students & Social and Multimodal Supports**

In Phase 2 and 3, the focal students were involved in extensive units of fictional work with Shakespeare along with non-fiction reading and writing related to the fictional contexts. Therefore, the other side of the comparative analysis charts contained evidence of how the social and multimodal supports specifically were used by focal students. During these phases, a particular area of research focus was sought over the long-term units. By using my emerging concepts of appropriation, transmediation and intertextuality, I returned to cross compare the video data, informal reflections, focus group reflections and student generated artifacts for a slightly different purpose to see how and when these concepts seemed to be co-occurring. I analyzed the ELL focal students appropriation of new vocabulary and performances of higher order thinking over time and if and how this co-occurred with transmediation across sign systems (using multimodal supports) and the access to shared intertextual references of the students shared work on reading comprehension tasks and collaborative long term inquiry (e.g. Words on the Wall, continue focus on same story and sets of characters, etc.).

During the video coding, I also coded for focal student specific responses and ways of participating. I kept ongoing comparative analysis charts on each of the focal students responses as seen in the video clips and patterns were noted. These were cross-compared with other past and future reading events and student generated artifacts. The resulting patterns emerged in the consequences column of the conditional relationship guide. I began grouping these consistent patterns seen across various forms of evidence of students responses into creating a reflective coding scheme around each focal student’s specific participation in key moments(Scott & Howell, 2008). As is the goal of grounded theory the charts on the focal students and the reflective coding matrix allowed for systematic interpretation of the larger themes emerging from various data sources and
patterns and in creating overarching, selective codes which still were grounded in ethnographic data.

**Reading Interviews-Data Analysis**

The student and teacher reading interview data was analyzed through constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to determine the various perspectives I was working with about reading and writing and working together in the classroom. Once I transcribed and coded these interviews, I used them to support, contradict and complicate my initial observational data and emerging patterns about the reading events in this classroom. Early in the analysis I stayed at low inference through open-coding. However, later I used my emerging themes to return many times to the interview data using my more developed axial coding system.

Because the teacher and student’s interviews happened midway through the year, it gave me a way to do a member check on what had already emerged as significant from my analysis but it also instigated many more questions and areas that I needed to explore more in-depth. Particularly, from Ino’s interview, I determined I needed to pay more attention to whether she was consistently involved in authentic performances of understanding or just performing her knowing as a performance of high social status, without pushing her to learn more.

Secondly the teacher’s meta-reflection around her creation of the sociogram proved incredibly significant to my analysis on the different type of literacy learning space that seemed to get created by dramatic inquiry. When she first made her sociogram, after explaining in the general instructions of a sociogram, I asked her to use the small pictures to show how she would relationally place the students as to characterize them as being towards the center or towards the periphery of engaged literacy learning? Then I asked her to do this specifically related to learning during dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare.
When Ms. G created the sociogram around drama with Shakespeare’s stories as seen in Figure 3.5.A below she put certain students at the center of the learning on the sociogram. These students tended to be “quiet” at the expected times and “steadily” did the work in the expected ways and thus she gave them labels such “steady freddy” or “trooper.” (Teacher Interview, 12.20.10)

However, after our discussion around that sociogram she realized that her decisions about who was at the center of deeply engaged learning were based more on her desire to manage the students bodily behaviors. Or in other words she seemed to value the students that performed the expected ways of behaving as a good student during dramatic inquiry regardless if they visibly were learning. Whereas through our discussions she actually ended up creating another sociogram this time actually focusing on who she visibly saw deeply engaged with dramatic inquiry and living through and talking back to the story. Ms. G reflected the following statement along with the first drama sociogram that she made (See Figure 3.5 A below):

“what I am thinking about is the behavior management aspect of it.”

![Figure 3.5: Ms. G’s Two Different Sociograms on Dramatic Inquiry](image)
After this statement, she began to point to each of the students such as Yusef, Demetrius, Marquell W, and others that she had placed on periphery of the learning on the sociogram. As she pointed to Yusef, Demetrius, Marquell W and a few others she referred to them as “problems” in the sense that they were always “playing around” (Teacher Interview 12/20/10). From other data, that tended to mean these students were moving and speaking when they weren’t called on by the teacher or causing other sorts of disruptions to expected ways of interacting as teachers and students

However, I contradicted her on this issue by pointing out the way that I would have placed students would have looked quite differently on the sociogram. Since my interpretive frame is focused on students who are making visible deep engagement in authentic learning, I added my take on the sociogram and the following conversation took place:

Camille: And I am thinking that I would put Demetrius and Dasjah in the Central. Even though she’s quiet, I am thinking of people who seem to be highly engaged in the inquiry or at least that verbalize their inquiry and their thought process [with the Shakespeare stories] with the whole group. You know, if I did it that way then I would put Demetrius and Dasjah here in the center.

Ms. G: And Marquell W would be here too

Camille: Right, that’s what is so interesting about it. These guys would be/

Ms. G: all stacked up.

Camille: Even him [Yusef] he is so into these stories. And he has so much to add to the inquiry. He would be here more in the center of learning too…

(Teacher Interview, 12/20/10)
Ms. G then decided that she needed to change her sociogram based more on who was the most visibly engaging in the living through the stories such as asking insightful questions of the characters and justifying actions and ethical arguments. Therefore, she created the second sociogram seen in Figure 3.3B above—and she called the new sociogram: *Verbal Engagement in the Inquiry Process.* In the new sociogram, students that Ms. G originally placed at the periphery during her first interpretation (based on standing still and being quiet) were then placed at the very center of highly engaged learning and simply because Ms. G took up a different interpretive frame on their performances. These re-centered students included Yusef, Demetrius, and Marquell W. The other focal student, Dasjah who was also seen as quiet but still not seen at the center of engaged learning in the original sociogram was also repositioned differently within the new sociogram—because she too was a student who made her higher order thinking processes most visible.

Throughout this 12/20/10 interview, I interpreted that for the most part in any of Ms. G’s teaching events, when the students had their “behavior” managed by keeping their bodies and voices still and quiet, then Ms. G made the assumption that they were the most engaged in learning. Earlier in the interview she had already brought this issue to light. When she created her continuum of best teaching spaces and best learning spaces—on the dramatic inquiry section she had signaled that she saw her students as whole performing their best learning but they performed their worst “behavior.” Figure 3.4 shows Ms. G pointing out the wide spread she had made between her interpretation of her students’ performances.
When I asked her why she thought dramatic inquiry made her students seem to be learning at their best but behaving at their worst, she responded:

It’s more challenging because they’re squirrely and they don’t listen. And they’re ADD and they’re hyperactive. Standing still and look at me in the eye is a difficult task when you take away the confines of a desk and a chair. Yet I still say that they had really good learning. And that’s the thing that’s so….That’s what’s so frustrating, when you are trying to do that dramatic inquiry because you know that they are learning by leaps and bounds by what they are saying, their thought process and their higher level thinking skills all that stuff comes into play. At the same time you’re constantly trying...It’s like trying to reel in a wild horse, that’s like tearing away in a lot of different directions.

(Teacher Interview 12/20/10)

Though this was surprising to me at first, her statements and her reflection on the sociogram above supported other analysis of some of the decisions behind Ms. G’s performance as a teacher. While she seemed to recognize the value of active and social and inquiry based learning approaches offered through dramatic inquiry, I saw, at least in December that Ms. G was still struggling to break free from an assumption that for students to be doing “good learning” they need to be standing still, at a desk and all looking, listening and doing things in the same direction and all at the same time.

These phases of the extensive ethnography part of the study were meant to specifically describe the opportunities and limitations created through dramatic inquiry for focal students to specifically access the social support for learning how to read and write more strategically. The aim of this part of the research was to understand the structures such as the social and multimodal supports which most effectively promote full active engagement of focal students in the task while expanding their opportunities to be
exposed to and appropriate academic language and perform multimodal literacy understandings (e.g. deep engagement with and critical interpretations of literary text, higher order thinking, meaningful reading comprehension tasks, etc.)

This work was ongoing and iterative as I used my tentative codes to create emerging categories which then I to begin to make some relational inferences and compare with sensitized concepts developed through my literature review on typical social practices, organization and classroom discourse inform other areas of data collection as time goes on and more evidence is collected and therefore will be used again for other parts of analysis towards building a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I used participant observation, audio-taped conversations and videotape to determine various ways that knowledge was co-constructed socially among the group as a whole. What became extremely important was the move towards embodiment and collaborative long-term inquiry as learning resources.

Phases 4 & 5 Recursive Data Collection & Member Checks

January 26th-March 18th
April 25th-June 2nd

Throughout phases 1-3, I had developed some emerging patterns. Because of my iterative research design, I was able to “test” the emerging codes during my recursive analysis to see if my codes held up, disconfirmed or complicated new data collection on the focal students. I returned to repeat some of the same procedures I used in Phase 1 to look at the social and cultural contexts of literacy but at that point I had much more nuanced understanding of the complex workings of the classroom as well as I had built up significant relationships with the teacher and students as to understand some of their unique relationship concerns and issues. The recursive data collection included my participant observation across reading events, video taped samples of reading events, field notes and video of informal reflections with students during and after reading
events, student generated artifacts, and field notes, reflection and interviews on planning and reflection with teacher on instruction. Furthermore, I used my emerging data analysis to create ethnographically grounded member checks. I completed a final ethnographically grounded group interview where the whole class reflected on using drama for learning and reading Shakespeare by using digital photographs I had taken throughout the year and had collected into the broad categories of background knowledge, story and character comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, higher order thinking.

To specifically, note the co-occurrences of vocabulary appropriation with transmediation and intertextuality, I first located embodied vocabulary that was frequently returned to by the teacher and spontaneously by the focal students (e.g. false face, vexation, valiant, suspicious, etc.) and related interactions and events to this vocabulary were specifically collected and categorized for later analysis. I also used adapted versions of school-based assessments of fluency and vocabulary assessments with both Macbeth and Midsummer Night’s Dream at the beginning of the content unit and at the end of the content unit. I also collected ethnographically grounded member checks specific to the focal students vocabulary and in-depth story comprehension.

The teacher had also reached a point where she began changing some of her non-dramatic reading practices in relationship with some of the emerging patterns. Because of these changes, she ended up disrupting in some cases the original patterns of data I had collected. This disruption of my evidence occurred mostly within the typical patterns observed in the non-dramatic reading events which gave me the specific opportunity to collect disconfirming evidence about her patterning of the non-dramatic reading practices. In our final reflections and the ethnographically grounded interviews I also spent time observing, talking and thinking with her about her changing practices and how she wants to go about doing things and expects to do things in the coming years. Our ethnographically grounded interview provided me a means to share with my tentative findings and for our conversation together to support, refute or complicate my analysis.
The specificities of these methods of data collection will be explained in the next subsections.

**Video Samples of Reading Events**

I collected specific sets of field notes and videotaped a typical case sampling of non-dramatic and dramatic reading events informed by my prior analysis and similar to what was done earlier in the school year. The reading event samples collected were then categorized into specific segments related to specific reading instructional goals that I had identified as moving across both non-dramatic and dramatic reading events. Therefore samples were specific to *incidental exposure to vocabulary in context* and *explicit vocabulary instruction*, *prior knowledge questions or building shared background knowledge segments*, *specific story comprehension tasks* and *re-reading for fluency tasks*.

**Shakespeare stories & word association assessment: member check**

Especially in Phase 5 when the students worked on dramatic inquiry with their fourth and final Shakespeare play-Hamlet and worked on non-fiction essays comparing and contrasting two Shakespeare plays, I more extensively documented an entirely different classroom culture of reading had seemed to take over the classroom as a whole. I continued to collect informal reflections and artifacts from the students during this period as part of supporting and refuting my initial analysis of the various reading event performances occurring in this classroom. I also used this information in addition to the data and emerging patterns from the other phases to inform an ethnographically grounded member check with the focal students.

I had developed an emerging understanding about the co-occurrences of embodiment and transmediation, long-term inquiry and intertextuality which seemed to contribute to ELLs appropriation of vocabulary, in-depth fascination and knowledge and performances of multimodal literacy understandings of the Shakespeare stories the focal students. In
order to create a version of a member check of these emerging patterns, I returned to our whole year’s worth of the dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare work together and I created an assessment of the student’s appropriation of vocabulary and in-depth story comprehension of all four stories. I made a list of the vocabulary, phrases, character relationships, inquiry questions and other important events from all four plays that had been specifically focused on through embodiment and other dramatic inquiry strategies by the whole group and that in some cases had been returned to many times or had only been considered once or twice. I then created a word association and story comprehension assessment. The word association portion was intended to support other evidence I had collected on the ELLs depth of word knowledge with the words and phrases in the assessment. The word association tasks were similar to those created in previous ELL vocabulary acquisition research by (Carlo et al., 2004). This part of the assessment was designed to tap into children’s knowledge of not only the ‘targeted’ word but analogous words and phrases they had encountered in various ways throughout their work on the Shakespeare texts. I asked the students to “draw a line from the big word in the middle to the three words to the three words that always go with the meaning of that word in the middle because they mean almost the same thing”. The students often made Shakespeare story-specific comments and related vocabulary to specific events that they had embodied. I videotaped our conversations as the students and I went through these individually and I wrote notes beside the words as they talked. I also noted appropriation of vocabulary across stories instead of only using the vocabulary within the specific set of events in which the first were exposed to the word or phrase. Table 3.5 is an example of two out of the nine word association assessment boxes completed by Dasjah followed by excerpts from the video transcript corresponding to her answering of those questions.
Table 3.5: Dasjah’s First Two Word Associations

After the initial word assessments as seen in Table 3.5. The students answered three questions asking them to make inferences about certain Shakespeare lines. An example of a question was:

*Why do you think Hamlet says this when Claudius calls him “my son”?*

*Hamlet: A little more kin and less than kind.*

I then gave students a list of quotes from all four plays on the left hand side of a sheet and the names of the four plays on the right hand side. I asked the students to choose a different colored highlighter to represent the plays and they gave me reasons for their color choices. Then they color coded each quote to match the corresponding play. For the majority of the lines all three focal students also spontaneously told me who said the line and to whom the character was speaking at the time. Dasjah’s entire Shakespeare word association assessment can be seen in Appendix D.

**Final Interview: Member Check with Teacher**
To determine the teacher’s perception of reading, and reading instruction and her interpretations of the changes in the focal students’ performances of reading, I worked with the teacher on an ethnographically grounded interview. We looked at transcript samples from reading events, photographs and student generated artifacts. The researcher asked the teacher to informally discuss students’ progress throughout the year as well as comment on the tentative themes and patterns that I had been developing in my analysis and how these may or may not support the progress she had noticed. This final interview offered me a member check of the overall yearlong analysis but it also gave Ms. G an analytical lens with which to reflect on her own teaching. As part of her work with the larger SUFSA project, I asked her to do written reflections on specific pieces of information we were sharing in the conversation. Her written reflections then and throughout the year as part of her own requirements for the SUFSA project also became part of my data corpus.

**Constant Comparative Analysis:**

Particularly in Phase 5, is where Ms. G and I noticed the overtaking of the other classroom culture of reading which was not present earlier in the year when the students only had limited involvement with dramatic inquiry and Shakespeare. Constant comparative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Scott & Howell, 2008) was used again across the large corpus of data in order to retrace the divergence of student and teacher performances across the two sets of reading events. Overall, I spent considerable amount of time during and after Phases 4 and 5, explicitly seeking holes in my patterns and grounded theory. I also returned to my reflexive journal to try to follow certain lines of inquiry in order to clear up some of the questions and concerns I had. Therefore, the final two research phases were an attempt to disconfirm my own evidence by searching for outliers to my categories and doing negative case analysis in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the entire research endeavor. I also found though that because I was looking at two overlapping cultures and the teacher changes, disconfirming evidence in one area helped provide confirming evidence in another. This further
supported my creation of my grounded theory of the performance of two cultures of reading and the changing nature of focal students interactions around texts that occur with the addition of the dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare.

**Teacher Turns at Talk Analysis**

While I had first noticed the patterns in my coding schemes, or the striking lack of certain codes in my analysis across the teacher’s performances in non-dramatic and dramatic events, I determined I need a more definitive understanding and clarification of the relationship between certain performances of a reading teacher (both in the talk in the moment and in the ways reading practices were consistently structured across time) with certain patterns of student performances during reading events. To do this, I decided to do use constant comparative analysis of teacher talk across the entire data corpus to determine typical case samples of reading events. Table 3.6 lists the final decision on the typical case samples

*Disconfirming Case Analysis added to Confirming Case Analysis of other patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples of Non-Dramatic Reading Events</th>
<th>Samples of Segments of Dramatic Reading Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Comprehension</strong> (including Fluency &amp; Incidental Exposure to Vocabulary)</td>
<td><strong>Reading Comprehension</strong> (including Background Knowledge &amp; Higher Order Thinking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5/10 Low Reading Group-fiction</td>
<td>11/4/10 Vote w Feet &amp; Question Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/7/10 Low Reading Group-non-fiction</td>
<td>11/30/10 Group Sculpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/11 Low Reading Group-fiction*</td>
<td>12/1/10 Aftermath of War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/7/10 Middle Reading Group-non-fiction</td>
<td>12/3/10 Thought Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/26/11 Middle Reading Group-fiction</td>
<td>12/21/10 Macbeth Themes Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/8/10 High Reading Group-fiction*</td>
<td>5/13/11 Advising Polonius &amp; Hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/24/11 High Reading Group-fiction</td>
<td>12/3/10 Weird Sisters-Interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/8/11 High Reading Group-non-fiction</td>
<td>12/6/10 Weird Sisters#2-Interpretations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6: Typical Case Samples of Reading Events
Table 3.6 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples of Non-Dramatic Reading Events</th>
<th>Samples of Segments of Dramatic Reading Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>VOCAB-Incidental &amp; Explicit Instruction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14/11 Yusef-Fluency Program</td>
<td>10/26/10 Romeo’s Garden Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11/11 Read Aloud*</td>
<td>12/1/10 Brave Macbeth Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/3/10 Art thou afeared*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VOCAB-Explicit Instruction</strong></td>
<td>12/20/10 Macbeth Vocabulary Review*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/3/10 Prefixes</td>
<td>1/26/11 Intro Egeus Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/10 Spelling &amp; Compound Words</td>
<td>5/13/11 Stopping Hamlet &amp; Ophelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/8/11 Word Explorer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/27/11 Suffixes-SMARTboard</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In order to use constant comparative analysis across the data corpus of teacher-mediated reading events, I re-read the field notes, video coded field notes, audio and video transcriptions data were coded and compared across what I deemed specific instructional segments throughout the reading events. I specifically noted frequently occurring interactional patterns and if they seemed to co-occur with specific instructional purposes or recurrent patterns of student actions or talk. Throughout this process, I created and edited a codebook of teacher turns at talk and the most recent version I made can be seen in Appendix E. Because the non-dramatic reading events were already neatly categorized into teacher’s instructional purposes, I began with coding those events first. Because I coded and re-coded the reading groups and vocabulary instructional samples first, I reworked them until I felt really solid in my coding categories. But then I started trying to code the Dramatic Inquiry samples that represented similar instructional purposes. I found that there were key codes that kept popping up that seemed to be specific to the dramatic inquiry of Shakespeare’s texts in this classroom. The following Table 3.7 shows example of a few of these codes I consistently used during dramatic reading events and thus had to be added to my codebook when I have been working on dramatic inquiry approaches to reading Shakespeare. The entire codebook with the dramatic reading event codes is included in Appendix E.
**COLLAB-INOQ:** Teacher explicitly leaves “answer” open-ended with no finalized answer such as... “We don’t know. There’s not one answer...We’re going to find out...” Then usually provides verbal, dramatic and/or social support for students to actively inquiry around words or at character interaction level

*VOCAB-SKSP/INOQ:* Teacher offers prompts towards students constructing collaborative understandings of Shakespeare’s words (What word do you see within that word that you know? What words are like that?) builds from a dramatic inquiry stance towards collab on meaning to doing something with the word
- *verbal inquiry:* morphological analysis to frontload scene, connect new to known, review words on wall, multiple word associations, replay of word in new context
- *embodied inquiry:* negotiate gestures to show words, sculpt others, stop characters, spontaneous replay of bodily text + word in new context

Table 3.7: Examples of Added Codes for Teacher Turns at Talk

Furthermore, I noted the existence of certain interactional patterns going back and forth between teachers and students and then what happened or didn’t happen following that interactional pattern mattered as to how I coded this as a performance. So I ended up doing both teacher turn analysis for some samples but found other samples did not lend themselves easily to single codes of the teacher’s turn. I felt the cyclical nature of the samples, required that I put the teacher’s turns at talk into relationship with what happened after the teacher’s turn and even what happened or didn’t happen with the shared information later in the lesson. For example, across reading events (non-dramatic and dramatic), a typical teacher turn involved the teacher. Initiating a certain question which is then followed by the student Response and the teacher Evaluates (I-R-E) pattern (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979). During the non-dramatic reading events, this I-R-E pattern was noted as a typical way for Ms. G to signal the beginning of a group’s reading of another chapter of their fictional novel and this interactional pattern co-occurred with the students displaying a general recall of the plot events from the prior chapter, and this pattern was noted across the data corpus on non-dramatic reading events. Immediately following the I-R-E pattern typical of the non-dramatic reading group events, was an
entirely unrelated I-R-E pattern and then the information shared was not returned to either later in that event nor was it returned to making meaning in subsequent events.

Even when this I-R-E interaction was present in some dramatic reading events, I could not code this as a similar performance by the teachers and students because immediately afterwards, later in the event or students did use the shared information and story comprehension to make deeper meaning about the story, create new predictions, ask questions of the characters, etc. This may have been a limitation in this the sense that I could not create a one-to-one comparison of reading events. However, seeking to delineate the specific codes and categories which were present in the teacher’s performances during dramatic reading events but not in reading events (e.g. embodied inquiry by teacher, collaborative inquiry talk) either in the moment or across time or in the opposite direction became significant to my evidence of the construction of one classroom culture of reading as distinct from another. Disconfirming case analysis was sought understand at what points certain performances seemed to be different than other recurrent patterns in performances of the same reading event or how a certain teacher or student performance seemed to disrupt the students’ active engagement in task.

I used the codebook created from the constant comparative to do a close analysis of teacher turns at talk using full transcriptions of the typical case samples of reading events identified. Using these samples I was able to more closely analyze the specific ways the teacher talked to the students and if or how this related to the overall cultures of reading being co-constructed. The data was displayed in charts and graphs which was compared with similar graphs from other samples. This ongoing and iterative process contributed to me being able to move towards an even more solidified (though as all research, still partial and unfinished) grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Scott & Howell, 2008)

**Multiple Modalities, Vocabulary Appropriation, Intertextuality**

Data from video, audio and field notes were coded to determine how focal students are accessing vocabulary and word learning strategies. I also used iterative and comparative analysis across the data corpus on the focal students to develop an emerging set of
categories, relationships and processes building from ethnographic perspectives into grounded theory. My analysis questions were: What representation forms are on offer explicitly for the focal students during reading performances? Are some privileged over others by the three students over time? What are the co-occurrences of “transmediations” as explained by Siegel (2006) (e.g. moving back and forth from embodiment, to speaking, to drawing, to moving, to writing) with appropriation of language and visible higher order thinking? When and how are these multiple modalities used or the results of the transmediation used as a resource by focal students spontaneously in conjunction to their explanations of the story? What consequences show up in students’ emotional affiliation or investment with ____ (e.g. characters, story events time period)?

Beginning with open-coding in the early phases of research and moving into axial coding, I began by making a conditional relationship map specific to the focal students as well as a map of the specific instructional segments already determined during dramatic reading events (background knowledge, story comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, higher order thinking) and how and when these specifically co-occurred with students multimodal engagement with the task. Then I mapped out specific vocabulary and phrases that were embodied in dramatic inquiry but also were returned to often by the whole class but also by the focal students spontaneously (e.g. not specifically mediated in the moment by adults). Using these lists I created the word association and story comprehension assessments. For the most part, the students confirmed in these assessments much of what I had uncovered in my data patterns. However, a few of the negative cases actually provided me another possible avenue from which to better explore the limitations and affordances offered by these practices.

**Researcher Positionality: Reciprocity & Reflexivity**

Whether the researcher explicitly states it or not, research is never neutral as it is influenced by the preconceptions and prior commitments with which the researcher brings to the work (Lather, 1986). Even though first and foremost I see myself a
teacher, in this project my role as teacher was secondary to Ms. G, who was the regular classroom teacher in the focal classroom of this study. Instead my primary role was the researcher, I was also a key member of her support team as she attempted to use dramatic inquiry extensively over the whole school year. The latter role as a member of her support team was just as important to me as being a researcher for I am a firm believer in praxis-oriented research, where the researcher is not just doing research on people but consciously using the research to “help people understand and change their situations”. (Lather, 1986, p.263)

Reciprocity

Because of the reciprocal relationship between Ms. G and me, the data collection and analysis was highly collaborative in the sense that she shared her questions and concerns about the pedagogical practices and I shared my questions, concerns about these practices in the moment and I linked them to tentative themes and patterns that I was uncovering in my research. Often times these ideas were used by her to extend or transform a certain instructional practice or way of thinking and thus this research could be said to have built up “catalytic validity” (Lather, 1986). Often the surprises and questions that we constructed through our many conversations became rich data points (Agar, 1996) as well because I could use them either as a starting point for more extensive recursive analysis or a point that provided further evidence or complicated and pushed my reconsideration of emerging patterns and tentative themes that I had already began to uncover.

In my study, I sought documentation of the both the ELL students' consistency and variations in performances of reading and the teacher’s performances as reading teacher. I sought their emic perspective on the reading practices which contributed to those performances. Yet the collaborative teacher action research component gave an even deeper look at some of the imposed curricular expectations, assumptions and decisions behind the teacher’s performances. By observing her performances, and listening to and analyzing how she interpreted her students performances as readers it gave me a clearer understanding of the decisions behind her choices to perform a certain kind of reading
teacher in a given moment. Ms. G’s emic perspectives helped me triangulate what I had imagined were her underlying purposes for her performances as reading teacher such as specific ways of structuring those reading events. Without the ongoing reciprocity built up between us, neither of us would have reached the insights we were able to reach together.

**Reflexivity**

According to Glesne (2006) subjectivity for qualitative researchers does not necessarily have to be seen as negative or an obstacle for establishing trustworthiness of research. Instead as Glesne argues, “subjectivity, once recognized, can be monitored for more trustworthy research and subjectivity, in itself, can contribute to research (p.119)”.

Throughout my research, I kept a reflexive journal intended to make me more aware of my values, attitudes and beliefs and how they may be skewing my interpretations in certain ways. I maintained reflexivity, though, by looking back into my journals, paying attention to and questioning my significant emotional responses to events. Then instead of seeing my feelings as obstacles, I saw them as starting points to inquire into new lines of questioning and understanding that contributed to more nuanced, self-critical and trustworthy research as well as continuing to build more rapport with Ms. G and her students.

For example, because I had studied the active, embodied ways of using dramatic inquiry for four years as doctoral student, I found places in my journal where I felt frustrated with Ms. G’s drama facilitation, such as when the students doing dramatic inquiry work seemed to be sitting “too long” in my opinion. However, upon forcing myself to closer introspection into my significant emotional reactions, I noticed a pattern that in those same events, students would be sitting and inquiring together about new vocabulary in order to move into the active, interpretations of texts and performances that they loved. Over time, this became a larger emerging pattern— the students had learned that the inquiry helped them get ready for the active, dramatic inquiry that was coming next so
the fact that they were sitting for what I had seen as “too long” was actually making visible their deep engagement in the stories and the long-term dramatic inquiry. The students actually told me they liked dramatic inquiry because it “helped them learn new words” but I am not sure if that would have been the case, if there were not explicit scaffolding of vocabulary and opportunities for the students to ask questions about language which had occurred during that moment of sitting as a whole group.

Because I held back on my initial reaction, I was able to later share these patterns with Ms. G in a way where I did not directly confront her with what might have seemed a personal attack on her teaching. Instead, we began collaboratively considering how this vocabulary inquiry that was much needed by the students, could also happen through high activity tasks as well. Thus, monitoring my subjectivity helped me to begin to notice my biases and begin look in new directions. Throughout my research and writing I have continued to monitor the biases and preconceptions created by my multiple subjectivities as co-participant in dramatic inquiry teacher training, co-researcher, co-facilitator of drama, and now a friend with Ms. G and her students, but I have also found this careful monitoring has influenced my ongoing establishment of rapport. The insights created as a result of this ongoing collaborative inquiry have been invaluable.

In the following subsections, I further explain my ongoing attempts to be reflexive about my subjectivities, limitations and issues of trustworthiness and ethics around the study.

**Limitations**

I recognize that there were limitations to this study such as I didn’t have an opportunity to observe the focal students in other instructional settings in the school (e.g. Yusef in ESL or literacy) nor at home. Secondly, due to other professional commitments, I was also not able to observe Ms. G class significantly during some of the non-dramatic reading events that were most collaborative such as the folktales puppets project and the medieval castles unit—which may have provided even more disconfirming evidence for the patterns that I found across other non-dramatic reading events. However, as is often a
limitation of much qualitative research, the frequently occurring events are often understood better than the rare events (Erickson, 1986) even though the students in this classroom lived through and experienced both. I also feel that these patterns with the reading groups for example, may have fell out in similar ways if I had been doing the research on my own classroom when I was teaching a similar grade level.

Establishing Trustworthiness

As I was seeking to do collaborative and critical action oriented research, then I position myself within a process which may never be complete, but an attempt to establish trustworthiness of the data will occur through systematic reflexivity made apparent in the following techniques and procedures outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (d) confirmability, and (e) reflexive data as well as in providing (f) catalytic validity or what Patti Lather (1986) calls the degree to which the entire research process “reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it.”

Credibility

I increased the credibility of my study through extensive participant observation and triangulating multiple methods with sensitizing concepts from prior bodies of literature and through systematically building a grounded theory. I ensure integrity, validity and accuracy (Patton 1990) through using prolonged engagement over long periods of time, persistent observation, triangulation of multiple methods and sources, peer debriefing with my co-investigators and other graduate students and researchers unrelated to the project especially over the coding of interactive and multimodal data. My entire research design intentionally sought negative case analysis and multiple member checks including the ethnographically grounded reading interviews, focus group and Shakespeare talk show and the students’ final word association assessment of vocabulary and comprehension over all four plays. I also had the opportunity to share my tentative findings with a focus group of teachers in similar positions as Ms. G who were also part
of the larger project with SUFSA. Through an informal discussion using the charts I had created from my comparative analysis of Ms. G work, this focus group of six teachers had further confirmation of the credibility of my analysis at least of the dramatic reading events and practices.

**Transferability**

Generalizability need not be the aim for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, like other naturalistic qualitative researchers I worked towards the aim of transferability. Through using a clear and “thick” description ((Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of specific methodological decisions and data selection both from close analysis of detailed data and in constant comparative analysis of events across time, I offered a comprehensive description of the context. This allows the readers who may be interested in transferring the information, to conclude from my thick descriptions the likely possibility for adapting the findings within their context, setting or purpose.

**Confirmability**

I ensured my data is confirmable, by grounding it in specific events and across triangulations of multiple methods “rather than the inquirer’s personal conceptions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 324). The confirmability of the study was strengthened through the intentional collection of and analytical dialogue between the emic and etic perspectives. I kept the data and all related documentation in a systematic organized manner so as to create an easily traceable audit trail. This audit trail made clear the multiple sources of data of which I draw my warrants for the assertions I made in my report on the findings from this study (Erickson, 1986). Part of the confirmability was my attempt to search for disconfirming data and negative case analysis throughout the study. I found that putting this into tension with other data helped me revise and clarify many of my emerging understandings that I described above.
Reflexive Data Collection

During the collection of field notes, I kept a side column where I wrote questions, concerns and other researcher’s interpretations as to ensure my field notes were describing what was happening and not what my interpretations were of what was happening. Through the data analysis process I kept a handwritten reflective journal in order to be conscious of my biases, values, and experiences that are brought to this study and to attempt to separate these from the perspectives of the teachers and the students as best I can. Furthermore, I continued doing ongoing member checks with the classroom teacher throughout the year to ensure that I was being fair as possible in my analysis.

Catalytic Validity and Authenticity

Because this project served as a collaborative and critical action research with the teacher and students, then I will not be able to obtain the traditional positivist demands for clear researcher neutrality (Lather 1986). Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggest this is not aim of the naturalistic inquiry and they add that developing authenticity is necessary for establishing trustworthiness from this research paradigm. To ensure fairness of the research I sought ways to reflexively represent a range of different constructed realities while reflexively admitting my own limitations and that some voices are still silenced. Guba & Lincoln’s (1994) notions of authenticity can be established through helping the members or participants in the research understand the phenomena being studied (ontological authenticity), help members understand multiple viewpoints on the same issue (educative authenticity) and initiate some form or action (catalytic) and empower members to act (tactical authenticity) (Seale 1999). Therefore, throughout my research process, I ensured opportunities for facilitation of participants’ own growth in awareness of their abilities to act and transform their own realities. Methods such as self assessment, video-cued reflections, focus groups and member checking also become means for this type of growth both for the students and teachers (including me).
For example, within my shared constructions of reflection with the teacher I shared my questions and summarize key points from related research I had been reviewing related to the concept we were discussing. This typically led to more collaborative reflection and at times we both reconsidered how we thought about a topic or shifted a practice slightly in light of co-constructed understandings. This provided more validity or in naturalistic inquiry terms ‘trustworthiness’ through creating *ontological and educative authenticity* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) as the teacher became more aware of viewpoints of others in the larger field and began to develop a meaningful but sophisticated analytical scheme from which to reflect more deeply on practice (Seale, 1999). In doing so I increased the trustworthiness of the need for this research by establishing authenticity or what Lather broadly terms *catalytic validity* where teacher and students are reoriented, focused and energized towards transformation, or a “deeper self-understanding and self-determination through research participation (p.272)”

Aligning with Carol Frank’s quote at the opening of this chapter—there is not only one singular view of the realities and literacy learning conditions faced by ELLs in any moment, in any classroom. My research though was designed to try to support new pedagogical and interpretive frames in the classroom. Through the use of performance in education methodologies, I intended to bring into dialogue multiple perspectives on the performances of reading in one classroom. But in the end, I accept that it is still only one partial and unfinished view.
Chapter 4: Non-Dramatic Reading Practices

This chapter presents an analysis of reading-specific instructional practices as they were constructed by one group of third-grade students and their teachers. My first research question was: What are the literacy practices of this classroom? Therefore, in the dual roles as both participant observer and at times co-facilitator, I collected and analyzed data on the nature of the literacy practices occurring in this classroom from a critical, sociocultural framework (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje 2007). The students and teachers also began to show patterns over time in how they performed their social roles within these reading events. These recurrent performances of reading events helped me to understand the classroom culture of reading that was being co-authored by these social performances. The non-dramatic reading practices seemed to be contributing to one classroom culture of reading—a comparison of reading skills. The majority of my findings in this chapter translate some of the themes and patterns which seemed to create and sustain this particular classroom culture of reading.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the English Language Learners in the study and the complex demands of reading comprehension they face in reading as ELLs. Next I explain the focus on reading instruction with fictional texts seen in this study. I then offer an overview of my analysis of the kinds of interactions and ways of structuring non-dramatic reading events. While the other overlapping set of dramatic inquiry reading practices will be explored in Chapter 5, in this chapter, I detail the non-dramatic events and how the interactions of people in this classroom during non-dramatic reading events became a common cultural practice which shaped and were shaped by an overarching classroom culture of reading. These non-dramatic reading events I have included in my analysis are: Small Reading Groups, Incidental Vocabulary Exposure, Oral Reading Fluency Program, Independent Reading, and Explicit Vocabulary Instruction. Small Reading Groups constituted a significant portion of the reading instructional time and
therefore I spent a large portion of analysis on the practices observed during reading groups across time. The cultural values and ways of “performing” in order to gain social status as a good reader first appeared through my analysis during reading group. Yet they also became evident through the analysis of other reading events highly related to the “reading groups”. What constitutes “good readers” was made visible by the classroom practices influencing and influenced by the teacher’s and student’s variable performances over time in these reading groups but also in some of the ways those performances spilled into and were re-created during other literacy events—such as independent reading.

Most importantly, within these non-dramatic reading events I focused on English Language Learners access or lack of access to perform multimodal literacy understandings. By describing the support or lack of social and multimodal supports to purposefully engage in authentic reading comprehension tasks, I developed a rich analytical lens from which to document the affordances and limitations for academic language and literacy learning gained by English Language Learners from the non-dramatic reading events and the overarching culture of comparing reading skills. In the next section, I will briefly introduce the three ELLs in the ways they were positioned by the school, teacher and students in the class as well as some of the stories they told me about themselves towards the beginning of the school year. Then throughout this chapter there ways of socially interacting will be more fully explored.

**ELLs in the beginning...Yusef, Dasjah, and Ino**

A wide variety of unique learners populated Ms. G’s roster in the 2010-2011 year. I could write at least 23 vivid, but entirely different reports on this same classroom if I was to write it from the perspective of each the children in Ms. G’s class. However, as the focus of this entire research enterprise was based on three English Language Learners, Yusef, Dasjah and Ino, I thought it was necessary to give a specific space to describe them.

**Yusef: “a squirrely boy”**
Yusef was born in the United States though his family had emigrated in various stages from Ethiopia. He lived at the time with his aunt and grandmother and multiple cousins and siblings. His parents appear to be separated with his dad emigrating to Canada and his mom having returned to their homeland of Ethiopia. While I recognize people in Ethiopia speak hundreds of different languages and dialects of languages, I was never clear on which dialect he spoke at home. His guardian had written Ethiopian on his form but I found out from an ESL teacher in the district that was typical for their Ethiopian families to not specify their particular language used.

As I tried to find out his background from him and from Ms. G’s files on him, it seems that he possibly had already spent two years in US school system. He seemed to have spent first and second grade in a nearby district but his kindergarten records were missing. As Ms. G reflected in December, “his impulsiveness makes him hard to handle...He just doesn’t have a clue of what’s going in school. He just doesn’t know how to do school.”

Yusef was considered to have intermediate proficiency in English as measured by the statewide OTELA test. His reading assessment scores were at the limited level in all areas and his fluency was in the “some risk” range. From his test scores he was not considered a good or fluent reader. Ms. G told me she really “struggled with him” at first. He demanded a lot of her attention “because he can’t do anything without my help” and he wanted “constant validation that he’s doing it right.” Ms. G also labeled him consistently as one of the “squirrely boys” in which she grouped him with the other five boys in his reading group.

The fact the he was often reprimanded for his movement around the room and his highly visible need for help from the teacher and others did not go unnoticed some of the other students. Towards the first few months of school, Yusef was positioned by the other people in the room as “not very smart” (Ino Interview 12.14). I observed that a majority of the students in the classroom, didn’t want to work with him early on in the year, which
Ms. G also corroborated. Even still Yusef seemed to enthusiastically face learning tasks. When I asked him what he liked to do at home—he responded:

“I like to... I like to read books. Read books and stuff.”

(Yusef-Interview 12/16/10)

This was Yusef’s response even though Ms. G was fairly certain (especially towards the first half of the year) that he wasn’t really reading the books that he picked from the library. Ms. G shared with me throughout the year, he “just can’t sit still” (9/23/10). Ms. G struggled to keep Yusef focused on academic task as she said he was the “most impulsive student she’s had. His brain is going in many different directions. And I can rarely get him to focus.” As is described later in this chapter Yusef was pulled out for so many different programs (e.g. ESL, literacy, math) outside of the classroom there was little time for me to even observe him doing independent work.

Dasjah: the quiet, good student

Dasjah was born in the United States though her family had emigrated from Ghana. She lived with both her parents and she had older siblings that were born in Ghana and one had returned to Ghana. It seems that Dasjah speaks mostly English at home but other people whom are older than her and her parents speak some English to Dasjah but mostly Ewe to each other and her other siblings. Her records seemed to indicate she had been in US schools for two years. Dasjah was considered to have advanced English language proficiency though her reading comprehension scores were below proficient—though she had near proficiency in reading processes, she was below proficient in vocabulary, informational and literary texts. She was seen as low risk in fluency at least at the beginning of the year, though she continued in the school-wide program to increase fluency. Dasjah did not receive any extra support from the school in the form of ESL or literacy intervention and because she was below proficient in her reading tests—Ms. G was concerned with Dasjah’s lack of extra academic support.
Dasjah worked diligently with independent work and only was observed speaking and working quietly with two other ‘shy’ students—Heather and Nicole P. Ms. G observed “Dasjah was very shy but a good observer.” In December, Ms. G described Dasjah as “shy, quiet... but a good listener who was always attending to the teacher. Because she is such a good listener, you can count on her to always be ready with the answer you were expecting.” Ms G also explained Dasjah displayed herself as a good student because she “didn’t speak much” but was able to offer the “right answer.” Or in other words, Dasjah was good at being a student because she correctly ventriloquated the teacher’s language to display her knowing of a specific reading strategy or procedure (Field Notes 11/30, 2/18)

Dasjah shared with me that she knew how to speak Ewe and she was excited when we had created a small booklet for her to begin creating a bilingual dictionary. This seemed to link to other evidence from my data, that Dasjah was highly interested in learning as many new words as she can. When I asked her why she liked doing the drama work with Shakespeare, she responded:

“Because, it’s like, we get to learn new words and um, it can help with our vocabulary skills.” (Dasjah, Interview, 12/15/10)

In our reading interview, I found out Dasjah particularly liked both read aloud and dramatic inquiry because they both gave her time to think. In later work with the dramatic reading events, Ms G and I both noted that Dasjah also really enjoyed creating predictions and intertextual connections. However, Dasjah rarely spoke in the non-dramatic reading events and if she did speak it was typically to imitate a form of teacher given information (e.g. metacognitive strategy). Unfortunately, as will be describe later in this chapter, other issues within the non-dramatic reading practices may have impeded Dasjah from getting to reach this desire to learn new complex words and space to “deeply think” as she had done in Shakespeare.
Ino: the good reader

Ino was born in the United States but her parents seem to be transnational as they moved back and forth between the Dominican Republic and the US. Her parents appear to be bilingual but speak with her mostly in Spanish at home. She told me that she moved to the Dominican Republic when she was three but then returned when she was five and she went to kindergarten in New York City. Even though she had received ESL services the year before and her second grade teacher had shared with Ms. G that Ino had struggled with reading the previous year. Ms. G told me she was surprised to hear this considering what that Ino is “such a good reader.” In her test scores, Ino was considered to have advanced English language proficiency, low risk in fluency and showed accelerated proficiency on her reading comprehension assessment at the beginning of the year. Ino scored above proficient in reading processes and literary texts but she scored below proficient on vocabulary.

When I did my recursive analysis focused across all my data corpus related to Ino, I began to notice a pattern in her talk and actions, that Ino highly prided herself for being “smart.” This performance of herself as smart and very good reader also seemed associated with her willingness to work with other people she perceived to be very good readers. For example, in the beginning of the year, Ino often only associated and played with two people, Kiley and Nick who were also positioned as good readers. Conversely, Ino seemed to choose intentionally not to work with people she did not perceive to be as “smart or as creative as me”. Especially in the beginning of the year, Ino preferred her own ideas and as Ms. G pointed out she often “did not want to play anyone else’s games.” Ino wanted to be seen as always being a good student. Ms. G corroborated my observations about Ino saying:

“You’re right she [Ino] does perform the good student well because she is a good follower of directions. While she is very social and wants special attention from the teacher, she is also sometimes resistant to the suggestions that I give her for books or in
letting go of her ideas to work with other people. I think it’s because she really thinks her ideas are best.” (Interview, 6/11/11)

On 12/6/11, Ino actually refused to work in a small group doing dramatic inquiry. The task was one that Ino and all of the students typically loved to do—embodied interpretation where they got to work in teacher-less space. Through tears she explained to me: “I don’t want to work with Yusef” Later when I discussed this with her she told me:

”It’s not that I don’t like Yusef, but he, he just can’t read the words right.” (Ino, 12/6/10)

As our conversation continued about the incident of her not working with Yusef the following interaction occurred:

Camille: Don’t you remember what that was like last year or when you were 5, when you went to ESL and you sometimes might have had a hard time with words.
Ino: No because I know all of the words.

As Ms. G reflected “Ino constantly sought the attention of adults”, even so much so as to be resistant to the adults suggestions possibly because this practice allowed her more attention as it led to more conversations with them. Furthermore, she seemed to highly valued getting the “correct” answer which as will be described later in this chapter. This practice actually seemed to prevent her in some cases from taking risks to ask questions about language or to make a hypothesis about meanings—for if she did she might have been seen as wrong.
A focus on reading instruction

After my first two phases of data collection and analysis I recognized a set of reading specific instructional goals as the primary purpose among other secondary purposes (e.g. building a general sense of a collaborative learning ensemble in the classroom, writing practice) of every dramatic inquiry literacy event and Ms. G corroborated these purposes during our frequent member checks. Therefore, in my recursive data collection phase I focused my comparative analysis only on those practices, which cut across both dramatic and non-dramatic events which intended to fulfill similar primary instructional purposes of reading. These primary instructional purposes observed across both types of literacy events specific to reading instruction were labeled as Story Comprehension, Fluency and Vocabulary. However, as I will describe more fully in the detailed analysis of drama in Chapter 5 three more categories which did not show up or showed up in relatively limited ways during non-dramatic reading events. Those additional categories not made visible in the non-dramatic reading events were: 1) Building Shared Context & Embodied Background Knowledge; 2) Long Term & Collaborative Inquiry 3) Embodied Higher Order Thinking & Authentic Reading Comprehension Tasks. Furthermore, embodied interpretation, embodied inquiry and re-reading for meaning were particular codes seen often during the comprehension, fluency and vocabulary portions of dramatic inquiry reading events but that did not occur or happened insignificantly during the non-dramatic reading events.

I recognize there are many other forms of literacy instruction and ways of using literacy that I have “silenced” by only focusing on reading specific instructional practices. I developed this focus on reading-specific instruction based on my desire to maintain a reciprocal relationship with the classroom teacher. Since Ms. G’s purposes for using dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare linked directly to teaching reading instructional goals set by the school and school district—then I felt it was most relevant to focus my research on the reading specific instructional practices. Lorraine summarized her purposes in her own mid-year reflection (March 2011).
My overall 2010-2011 plan for teaching Shakespeare was to explore as many Shakespeare texts as possible, and develop more lessons that specifically address the state standards and grade level indicators for reading while using these complex texts. I wanted to build and strengthen my students’ love of Shakespeare using dramatic inquiry techniques while adding an additional layer of academic skills.

Why fiction (again)?

A real problem faced by students transitioning into the academically complex language demands of the upper grades of elementary school is that reading instruction in the primary grades has tended to be focused on fictional stories instead of non-fiction or expository texts (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). The reading-instructional practices focused on in my data collection and analysis relate primarily to fiction again. This decision though was based in the classroom teacher’s choices of texts. Of the printed texts made available and used for the majority of reading comprehension instruction in this classroom, I observed approximately 75% were fiction. The other 25% of printed texts used for instruction were passages intended to teach reading skills and test prep worksheets which were most often expository. Though there was a 3 week portion of time in March, which Ms. G called “drill and kill,” the students did spend significantly more time on these non-fiction reading passages and following up with reading comprehension questions. One other exception to this reversal of the proportion of fiction to non-fiction was observed during a 3 week castles unit in November, where a wide variety of non-fiction texts on medieval castles and related information were the most readily available text used for reading instruction and related activities. In a section in the following chapter, I will briefly outline this non-fiction castles unit as it proved to be helpful with building shared context for two of the Shakespeare plays—Macbeth and Hamlet. Other than those two exceptions, fiction was the primary textual source.
In this study, I too have recognized the concern of researchers such as (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009) that this overemphasis on fictional stories, especially those deemed appropriate for “transitional readers” and in this case third graders may not give students opportunities to build up their knowledge base, complex vocabulary and abstract concepts. Many fictional texts geared towards classrooms and readers of the “transitional” age group of students are collected in serial sets of short chapter books such as the Adventures of the Bailey School Kids, Geronimo Stilton and the Polk Street School Kids. Ms. G often used these familiar series books for reading groups especially for the low and middle reading groups. The following table offers a list of books Ms. G used related to reading instruction.

**Words Highlighted in Blue** signifies a book from a series intended for transitional readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Reading Group</th>
<th>Middle Reading Group</th>
<th>High Reading Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polk Street School Kids-Candy Corn Contest</strong></td>
<td>Stone Fox</td>
<td><strong>BFG</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Reilly Giff</td>
<td>John Reynolds Gardiner</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Homework Lesson</strong></td>
<td>The Race Across America: Geronimo Stilton #64</td>
<td>Sideways Stories from Wayside School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading A-Z book</td>
<td>By Geronimo Stilton (specifically Multimodal)</td>
<td>Louis Sachar and Julie Brinckloe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kids: Snowmen don’t drink hot chocolate</strong></td>
<td>Key to the Treasure (Liza, Bill and Jed Mysteries)</td>
<td>Flat Stanley’s Wordwide Adventure #6: The African Safari Discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Thornton Jones and Debbie Dadey</td>
<td>Peggy Parish</td>
<td>Jeff Brown and Macky Pamintuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The New Polk Street School</strong></td>
<td>Magic Finger</td>
<td>George’s Marvelous Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Reilly Giff</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo Before Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>Chocolate Touch</td>
<td>Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Magic Treehouse #18) Mary Pope Osborne &amp; Sal Murdocca</td>
<td>Patrick Skene Catling</td>
<td>by Eleanor Coerr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cam Jansen and the Green School Mystery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ragweed by Avi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Adler</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tale of Desperaux by Kate DiCamillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encyclopedia Brown Super Sleuth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encyclopedia Brown Super Sleuth by Donald Sobol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Igraine the Brave</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Igraine the Brave by Cornelia Funke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Books Used in Ms. G’s Class

Continued
Table 4.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fictional Novels (Used in Whole Class Read Aloud)</th>
<th>Folktales</th>
<th>Castles (non-fiction and fiction)</th>
<th>Extracts of Plays by William Shakespeare &amp; Adapted Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Stage Fright on a Summer Night</em> (Magic Treehouse #25) Mary Pope Osborne &amp; Sal Murdocca</td>
<td><em>Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters</em> Adapted by John Steptoe</td>
<td><em>DK Experience Castles,</em> by Richard Platt 2007</td>
<td>Romeo &amp; Juliet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Dog Called Kitty</em> Bill Wallace</td>
<td><em>The Woman Who Outshone the Sun</em> Adapted by Alejandro Cruz Martinez</td>
<td><em>Manners and Customs in the Middle Ages,</em> by Marsha Groves 2006</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shiloh</em> Phyllis Reynolds Naylor</td>
<td><em>Why Mosquitos Buzz in People’s Ears</em> By Verna Aardema</td>
<td><em>Ms. Frizzle’s Adventures Medieval Castle,</em> by Joanna Cole 2003</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Beryl: A Pig’s Tale</em> Jane Simmons</td>
<td><em>Castles of Scotland</em> by Cristina Gambaro 1999</td>
<td><em>Bruce Colville &amp; Lois Burdette’s Adapted Versions for Children</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>My Father’s Dragon</em> Ruth Stiles Gannett</td>
<td><em>The Knights of the Round Table</em> by L.A. Bortolussi 1991</td>
<td><strong>Modern English Translations and graphic novels by No Fear Shakespeare</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Strider</em> Beverly Cleary</td>
<td><em>Young Arthur</em> by Robert D. San Souci 1997</td>
<td><em>I Wonder Why Castles Had Moats</em> by Philip Steele 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Fantastic Mr. Fox</em> Roald Dahl</td>
<td><em>The Best Book of Knights and Castles</em> by Deborah Murrell 2005</td>
<td><em>Castle by David Macaulay 1977</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The books highlighted in Table 4.1 blue are from a series of short chapter books intended for transitional readers. These books follow a pattern where the same set of characters works through a similar narrative plot while facing a few new obstacles but always ending in a similar fashion. Typically the content is related to experiences of children in or around schools and to have more familiarity if they are used to the pattern. Thus, transitional readers are expected to have more interest and prior knowledge if they are reading about topics that are familiar to them and their everyday uses of language. All of these factors are expected to lead them to more success and thus more reading. This might make sense for promoting independent reading, and in Ms. G’s class these various sets of series books were the most readily available books students could use in Ms. G’s class for independent reading. A large majority of the students in this class, particularly those who were already avid and highly fluent readers, engaged with significant amount of reading of these series books. However, instruction appropriate for less-than fluent readers and culturally and linguistically diverse learners facing the possibility of the fourth grade slump in oral academic language, vocabulary and comprehension of texts, though need not only to gain practice of fluency with transitional readers but they need explicit mediation of higher order comprehension processes and vocabulary instruction that can push them beyond their everyday experiences and conversational vocabulary through access to more complex texts and authentic uses of language in context as an integral part of also becoming more fluent readers and comprehenders (Goldenberg, 2008).

In contrast, the nature of dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare intentionally brings the students into deeply engaged reading of highly, complex stories (though still fictional) where they collaboratively comprehend and interpret pieces of dramatic text written in early modern English often using iambic pentameter. A key finding of my work described in the background knowledge and vocabulary sections in Chapter 5 relates to the fact that to read for understanding of the original texts of Shakespeare’s plays involved building the students specific and in-depth knowledge of social and cultural information relevant to the historical setting of each play as well as in dealing with
complex language structures and word meanings. Many of the series books do little to challenge the students appropriation of complex vocabulary and word learning strategies because the focus in the instruction around these books at least in Ms. G’s class tended to be more on fluency and literal recalling of characters and events. As Ms. G and I discussed in her final interview while some books such as the *Polk Street School Kids* Series tend towards giving reading support through highly familiar, school-based content, there are other series like the *Magic Treehouse Books* which actually give a mix of non-fiction background set within a fictional story about two characters, Jack and Annie who can travel across time and space. Shakespeare’s texts go much further in challenging students to appropriate complex vocabulary and other imaginative, richly descriptive and figurative language and it engages them in dynamic and intriguing stories.

Furthermore, as I documented in Chapter 5, if the students are highly engaged in living through the story of a fictional text and they are sufficiently supported through the appropriate multimodal and social supports, students can and will sustain a desire to explore highly complex texts even the texts of Shakespeare that seem complex and difficult even to many adults (including me before my involvement in this teacher development project!). Instead of merely remaining in a verbal discussion mode about the books, dramatic play and performance aspects of the dramatic inquiry events with Shakespeare focused and scaffolded 8 and 9 year old students in multimodal ways that helped them to build a passionate relationship with the language within these fictional texts. The combination then of the complexity of the texts and the scaffolding through social and multimodal tools of dramatic inquiry of text extracts from Shakespeare’s original early modern English, pushed students far beyond their everyday conversational language and experiences.

Taking all of this into account, the majority of my field notes and video coded samples of teacher and student talk during literacy events revolved around fictional texts. Since the dramatic inquiry texts were all fiction and in order to best compare the limitations and affordances of both dramatic and non-dramatic reading events, I felt I needed to spend
the majority of my analysis on fictional reading specific instructional events. I did though make a concerted effort to ensure my field notes and samples of teacher talk used for comparative analysis from the non-dramatic inquiry events included as close as possible to a 25% proportion of events built around non-fiction printed texts (e.g. reading group work on a text comparing and contrasting) because non-fiction reading instruction is still a part of the students’ overall experience of reading instruction.

**Classroom Culture of Comparing Reading Skills**

In this classroom, teachers and students had specific patterns of interaction during reading-specific literacy events. I had the unique opportunity to observe two quite different ways of structuring reading events, including both more traditional or normalized ways of doing reading group and other reading events as well as the distinctly alternative ways of constructing reading events that occurred through dramatic inquiry. It was through this overlap of two entirely different reading practices from which I was able to more fully recognize and document some of the “normalized” practices that seemed to most often get constructed in relationship to the larger dominant discourses surrounding “school-based literacy.” These practices seemed to define and be defined by a classroom culture of reading.

Because the values that collectively define a culture are not entirely pre-determined nor entirely given over to the desires and interests of individuals (Holland et al., 2001), then I found that the people in this classroom were indeed influenced by the specific cultural and social ways of doing reading at school already in place. Yet, people’s own social desires, ongoing attempts to build relationships and social status seemed to influence the ways they acted and interacted and thus improvised on their “social positioning” in the moment. Over time what the group collectively valued was transformed but also was influenced by the imposed structures, assumptions and ways of thinking that were already in place around reading, prior to this particular set of students walking into the room.
Because I too am a teacher of similar age groups of students, I was highly familiar with the “normalized” ways of structuring reading groups and other related reading events. It was only after the students and their teachers (which included me) started to create a quite different classroom culture of reading (See Ch. 5 for findings on the culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking) and through my own analysis of teacher turns at talk and the students resulting performances was I able to make the familiar strange and began to see just how ingrained some of these practices are in the collective conscience of a classroom. By paying attention to the dissonance and overlaps between the two cultures where I began to develop a much clearer pictures of two competing cultures of reading. This chapter will describe the first classroom culture of reading I experienced, participated in and documented.

In trying to describe some of the underlying norms and values of this classroom culture of reading, I began to locate patterns characterized by a constant comparing of students displays of isolated reading skills and specifically, I noted the highest social value was granted upon oral reading fluency as well as on the related displays of knowing which seemed to be linked to an assumption that good displays of knowing during reading instruction are synonymous with being seen as good readers and good students. These practices deeply influenced and were influenced by the ongoing social positioning of students in this third grade classroom. This was what I began to call a culture of comparing reading skills.

Especially in the first half of the year, the classroom culture of reading in this classroom seemed to be characterized much more by explicit and implicit comparisons of displays of reading fluency and displays of knowing with much less social significance afforded to reading to make meaning for a purposeful task nor for reading for understanding. As part of performing the displays of “good” teachers and students, their interactions together seemed to sustain a social valuing of the “good readers club” where certain kinds of students’ because of their public displays of fluent reading “skills” and their ability to “know” (or recall) information were assumed to be linked to “good reading” regardless if
the good readers were actually purposefully engaged in reading for meaning. Assumptions and instructional decisions seemed to be made based in large part on these displays of oral reading fluency and performances of knowing.

From my theoretical frame, purposefully reading for meaning involves students not in just practicing and displaying isolated skills for the sake of the getting through the procedural display itself, but instead purposeful engagement in reading is always doing something meaningful with text for an authentic purpose. Instead though of creating collaborative and multimodal supports for students’ performances of multimodal literacy understanding such as deeply engaging in critical and creative thinking around texts and authentic understanding of stories, and appropriating language and concepts for their own purposes, in this culture of displaying and comparing reading “skills” social status was gained at least in part by being seen just as or more competent than their peers in performing themselves as in or moving towards the good readers club. Because these young students are like every other human beings seeking out social belonging, they found out that to belonging to a culture of comparison of reading skills gaining social status was intricately connected to public performances of a good reader through displays of oral reading fluency and knowing.

I argue though that through the introduction of the dramatic inquiry with four Shakespeare texts an entirely different classroom culture of reading focused more on wonder and inquiry began to overlap and by the end of the year overtake the other classroom culture of reading. This second overlapping (and overtaking) culture began to be characterized by consistent performances of multimodal literacy understanding where deep thinking, appropriation of language and the high levels of intertextual connections were supported by collaboration and transmediation between linguistic and non-linguistic systems of communication. Reading for authentic and purposeful meaning pushed the students into more complex thinking. Ms. G validated my overall analysis of this in our final interview:
“...I could see over the year how far those kids have progressed... from the very beginning when we were first starting Romeo and Juliet to the end of Hamlet. The tasks we were giving them to do became much more challenging and much more complex....and they did it, and they did it well and they loved it. Towards the end, by the time we were doing Hamlet in May, the atmosphere had changed entirely... “

(Final Interview 6/11/11)

Thus, in this chapter I describe the first culture that focused the idea of reading significantly around displays of fluency, knowing and just getting through the text. Later, in Chapter 5, I describe a culture where these practices were disrupted and almost entirely replaced by excitement and authentic wonder about language and stories and by purposeful and meaningful reading engagement characterized by authentic inquiry, focused especially with their reading of some of the challenging texts Shakespeare. At the intersection of this overlap, I began to have a nuanced understanding of some of the limitations and affordances these practices create for English Language Learners in appropriating academic language and literacies and growing in their ability to successfully participate in the literate practices of the third grade.

**Small Reading Groups: Performances of knowing and getting through the Text**

Reading group was a literacy event, which involved specific ways of dealing with and talking about a section of a printed text (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) in this classroom. Teacher guiding small “Reading groups” has become much more of an expected event in many elementary classrooms and a required practice in Ms. G’s district. The people populating the reading groups in this classroom were selected for one of three ability-based groups by Ms. G at the beginning of the year by “using their test scores and her observations” (Teacher Reflection-September, 3rd, 2010). This selection process and the resulting ways of comparing students skills to each other affected the teachers’ methods of interacting and talking with students but also influenced how the students responded to the teacher and to each other. The overarching patterns I documented among these interactions were labeled Procedural displays & getting through the text, displays of
knowing, displays of oral reading fluency and incidental vocabulary exposure. Cross comparative analysis of the three reading groups provided a rich lens for me to begin to understand these patterns and the following sections I will outline the findings.

**Set-up of Small Reading Group**

The composition of the groups are shown in Table 4.2. (Beside the *asterisks are alternative names for these groupings I collected across my data corpus as Ms. G and I collectively reflected on the consistent practices of these groups.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Groups</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity/Nationality &amp; Gender</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>“Low Group”</em></td>
<td>(6 males)</td>
<td>Yusef (*ELL focal student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* “squirrely boys”</td>
<td>Demetrius, Deshaun, Marquell R, Marquell W, William</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* “low readers”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* “boys club”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 US-born, Ethiopian male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 African-American males</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*“Middle Group”</td>
<td>(7 females, 3 males)</td>
<td>Dasjah (*ELL focal student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*“average readers”</td>
<td>Nicole W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*”middle readers”</td>
<td>Bayley, Heather, Rose-Davis, Tori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 US-born, Ghanian female</td>
<td>Fredia*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 African-American female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 European-American females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Mixed Heritage- African &amp; European-American Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 US-born Puerto-Rican male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 US-born Thai male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Urban Appalachian-American Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*“High Group”</td>
<td>5 females, 3 males</td>
<td>Ino (*ELL focal student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* “High Fliers”</td>
<td>Nicole P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* “Highest Readers”</td>
<td>Brooke, Megan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* “Good Readers Club”</td>
<td>Kiley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 US-born, Dominican- Republican female</td>
<td>Paarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 African-American female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 European-American females</td>
<td>Camron, Jason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Mixed Heritage- African &amp; European-American Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 US-born Asian-Indian male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 European-American Males</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Towards the end of 2010-2011 school year, Fredia left the school but was replaced by Nelle, an African-American female student.

**Table 4.2: Composition of Reading Groups**

Students in each of these group were asked by the teacher to come back to the yellow kidney-shaped table. Each student had their own copy of the same text and sat around reading or talking about that text for 20-30 minutes while seated in a semi-circle around the table with Ms. G in the center. Though she did not use these terms when speaking with the children—in private conversation with me Ms. G called these groups the “low, middle and high reading groups.” This grouping seemed to be based on a relative comparison of students reading competencies. The following factors seemed to be key for making decisions about how to best instruct students. The factors are listed in decreasing order of importance according to what seemed most valued by the school and teachers in regards to reading: 1) oral fluency scores on schoolwide assessment (DIEBELS); 2) scores on state standardized reading comprehension assessments; and 3) teacher observation. Importantly for this study of the classroom culture of reading being co-constructed, the fluency scores seemed to take the highest priority in the grouping decisions whereas reading comprehension seemed an afterthought as described in the Displays of Oral Reading Fluency Section.

**Scoring Displays of Fluency over Reading for Meaning:**

The “High Reading group” or what Ms. G and I began to call later called the “Good Readers Club” was made up of the eight students whom at the beginning of the year sat at the top of a comparative list of the oral reading fluency scores. The fact that these same eight students remained all year in the high reading group seemed to be linked to their “high flying” behavior (Informal Teacher Reflection 9/23/10) or in other words their scores on oral reading fluency in relative comparison to other students in the class. The consistency of the grouping throughout the year actually helped make visible the high value the school and the teacher put on displays of oral reading fluency.

As a result of this focus given to “scores” on students displays of fluency over vocabulary and higher order thinking and comprehension strategies, I noted that certain students such as Nick actually showed lower fluency scores at the beginning of the year and throughout the year than the eight students in the high readers group and as a result Nick remained
all year with the middle reading group. This occurred even though Nick consistently scored equally or higher than Ino and several other students on the district’s quarterly reading comprehension assessment. Even still Ino remained all year in the high reading group. Nick was actually someone who may have needed less direct support with overall reading comprehension and vocabulary—in relative comparison to someone like Ino. As an example Ino though she scored well above proficient overall on the statewide reading comprehension assessment in the fall—she showed below proficient in vocabulary. Even though Ino was particularly adept at displaying oral reading fluency—the question then became for me as a researcher to try understand what is the influence on ELLs of this high social value placed on displays of oral reading fluency. I will return to this overall analysis of the possible explanations and results of this practice after I discuss the typical interactions of small reading group

School’s High Value of Fluency Helps Sustain the Groupings

Ms. G told me her sustaining of the groupings ensures she meets with the students whom have been determined by testing to need the most direct reading instruction the highest amount of time. She explained that this practice “ensures the students are getting the foundational competencies” most specific to needs of their identified reading levels but that were also aligning with the district’s reading goals (Interviews 12/20/10 & 6/11/11). The reasons these groupings may have stayed the same though all year is more complicated than a single teacher’s decision. In her final reflection, Ms. G recognized the issues and stated that:

“I know if I was a little bit better reading teacher, I might have changed it [the static groups] up more. I know a lot of reading books are saying we should be doing that our classrooms. ” (Final Teacher Interview 6/11/11).

However, Ms. G also did the best she could with the resources available and working within the “norms” of third grade reading instruction passed on by years of unexamined assumptions and practices and an ongoing discourse about this is “how we do reading
groups.” As seen in other findings (See Chapter 5), I assured her that across the entire 2010-2011 school year, she had given her students a deeply rich experience with reading and language—one which contributed to the majority of her students to fall in love with the reading and exploring of Shakespeare texts. I also pointed out that as a result of working through the addition of the dramatic inquiry reading events, she did consistently “un”-group the students. As a result the focal students collaborated with a wide range of students and had many consistent opportunities of authentically engaging in the very practices reading research has pointed to are important for developing extensive reading comprehension—building background knowledge, re-reading for meaning along with developing fluency, explicit instruction and appropriation of vocabulary in context, actively engaging in reading comprehension strategies such as visualizing, questioning, inferring and synthesizing. Furthermore, I shared that I had in the past created similar static reading groups in my classrooms of the past. Thereby, I argued that this practice was not specific to her classroom, but instead may have been inadvertently shaped and perpetuated by her school’s way of valuing fluency over reading for meaning and authentic understanding more broadly.

My other qualitative data pointed to the school’s valuing of fluency as a plausible explanation for sustaining this practice where a display of oral reading fluency was held up as the gold standard for being seen as a good reader. This ongoing discourse made visible in the culture of comparison of reading skills which became apparent in Ms. G’s classroom was at least in part influenced by school-based evaluations of students in order to determine eligibility for literacy intervention and other academic support services (and these practices could be linked to district, community and broader social factors though I did not complete specific data collection and analysis on this issue). Ms. G pointed this out to me in the very beginning of the year when she explained the school’s practice (completed mostly by the literacy teachers) in which all students in the school get tested on reading at the beginning of the year by someone other than their classroom teacher (Field Notes, 8/23/10).
While Ms. G also completed another direct reading assessment that measures both fluency and comprehension of all of her students, what the school largely seemed to consistently care about was the students fluency scores. Ms. G shared with me the sheets that were supplied to her by the school’s literacy teacher throughout the school year after each benchmark date for testing. The labels on the sheet, Ms. G explained were based on “whether the student met the benchmark for fall, winter and spring on the oral reading fluency portion of DIEBELS tests”. The labels were in three categories, which seemingly correlated with Ms. G’s categories of low, middle and high readers. These labels were, Some Risk, or Low Risk. (and I color coded them here in the way the students names were always color-coded on sheets supplied to Ms. G by the school’s literacy intervention team.) If the students were already at “low risk” of not reaching the fluency benchmark they were only tested at the beginning, middle and end of the year. The students who fell well below he benchmarks were given daily reading intervention by being pulled out of the classroom by the literacy teacher for forty-five minutes per day. These students who were considered to be “at-risk” were tested every two weeks and they only scores on the sheets received by Ms. G were these oral reading fluency scores. There was no mention of reading comprehension. As Ms. G explained:

“I am kind of surprised because at this school, they only look fluency scores in order to rank and put labels on students. The kids only have to read a passage out loud and the literacy teacher marks their word call errors during the set amount of time. Though there are measures of story recall they could use, the students are not given that part. This is how the students get ranked on this sheet...” (Field Notes, 8/23/10)

Ms. G and I collectively decided that a possible explanation for the schools reliance on fluency scores was that it is in fact has been determined by widely published research and classroom observation to be an extremely important component of reading achievement (Field Notes, 8/23/10). This notion has been explored extensively by researchers (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; C. Snow, 2002) who have shown students who are not fluent readers beyond third grade continue to significantly struggle with reading and
consistently fall further and further behind their peers in reading achievement. Ms. G and I also considered together that a skills-based teaching model of reading demands significant accountability of the time students spend practicing foundational reading competencies as separate skills. Fluency is the most easily identifiable skill relevant to third graders that can be easily isolated, “fairly quickly and efficiently assessed and kept track of over time” (Field Notes, 8/23/10 & Teacher Interview 6/10/10 and 12/20/11) whereas specific reading comprehension skills are less easily identifiable and quantifiable. Thus, from a school-based literacy framework and comparative accountability measures, it would make sense that displays of oral reading fluency “skill” are so highly valued.

I also observed further complicating factors created by the school that may have been contributing to the stasis of Ms. G’s groupings. This also related to the school’s labeling and creating pull-out programs to provide additional instructional support with “at-risk” students. The interventions given to low reading boys club including Yusef, of forty-five minutes of daily instructional support outside of their classroom granted them access to more extensive, direct instructional time. Yet, it also left Ms. G with very little flexibility in her already overbooked schedule to consistently include this boys in different grouping patterns (such as students with varied reading competencies working on a joint productive task or because of a similar interest in the same book). For if she did this, then she wouldn’t have been able to personally meet with and feel she performed the “reading instruction” procedures for the members of the “boys club” each day as she was forced to juggle so many other competing demands put on her and her students time throughout the school day.

Yusef had to leave the room multiple times so in some ways that limited his opportunities for consistent uses of language and literacy. He had so little time to spend on independently reading or even working collaboratively as other students often did during the literacy work time, while Ms. G taught small groups. During my video coding, I often would go back through a clip to try figure out Yusef’s way of participating only to
find he had missed part of it because he had to leave for one of his interventions (literacy pull-out everyday x 45 minutes, math pullout everyday x 30 minutes, ESL four times a week x 30 minutes). Thus, Yusef often missed out on richly contextualized discussions that occurred spontaneously in this classroom for he pulled out so often for intervention. While I had observed that Ms. G was particularly skilled at being flexible to allow for more authentic learning experiences and “teachable moments” there just didn’t seem to be enough time in the day for her to be able to more fully disrupt the ongoing discourses that she inherited, which tended to value displays of oral reading fluency significantly more than authentic meaning-making and deep engagement with stories and language. This was until Ms. began to contribute to the co-construction of an entirely different classroom culture of reading in her classroom. In Chapter 5, I will offer a description of this other classroom culture of reading.

**Texts Used for Small Reading Groups**

Each person in a reading group was given an individual copy of the fictional chapter book to be studied (see Table 4.1 above). Texts for reading groups were selected that appeared to be at a complexity level assumed to be appropriate for the reading level of each group. Therefore, each of the three groups of students read different texts when working with Ms. G at the table. The low and middle reading groups tended to read the series books for transitional readers that were “familiar and follow a well-known pattern” so as to be appropriate for their assumed level of reading fluency and thus that would be expected to cause them the “least amount of frustration” (Teacher Interview-June 11th, 2011). The high reading group for the most part read a wide variety of quality children’s literature novels (e.g. BFG, George’s Marvelous Medicine) though the high group did read a few series books. Ms. G explained though that the high readers only did this because she “was in a hurry” and in one case she just “grabbed the Flat Stanley book” even though she knew “it really is probably too easy for them but they liked it.” Ms. G also made decisions on which kinds of reading skills to teach based on the assumptions
about the students as readers based on their fluency scores and the district’s “grade level indicators.”

Some times as in her folktales and her medieval castles unit, Ms. G used children’s literature picture books with all the students to work on together and at times she used computer generated books labeled by reading level from a school subscription to the website, Reading A-Z.com (See Table 4.1 for full text list). While in the middle of a Shakespeare play unit, Ms. G would also work with all three groups at various times with a class set of children’s picture books versions of Shakespeare by Bruce Colville that retold in what is assumed to be child-friendly, modern English the current play under study. Though were also times when Ms. G’s instruction asked that the students focus on specific reading skills (e.g. using a specific expository text reading feature such as sequence or comparing and contrasting) or practice using comprehension strategies (e.g. visualizing, inferencing). The texts used for non-fiction reading comprehension were typically non-fiction passages followed by multiple choice questions and answers concerning the passage just read. Ms. G, describe the whole month of March being involved in this kind of “drill and kill” practice to prepare them for the upcoming Ohio Achievement Assessments.

“Getting Through Text” : Procedural Displays in Small Reading Groups

As with any literacy event (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) the ways of talking and using texts in each small reading group were variable as they were constituted by particular relationships among people and their desires, moods and anticipated interactions in each reading group event. As I cross-compared field notes and video transcriptions of the interactions within these groupings over time, I did document some similar patterns in the practices and yet I also showed some striking differences across the three reading groups. The cultural practices so ingrained in the structures and interactional patterns in these reading groups also became more visible by the introduction and comparative analysis of
the overlapping of another quite different classroom culture of reading which I will
describe in Chapter 5.

A particularly powerful practice that sustained this culture of getting through the texts
and the “reading group” event related to the official and unofficial ways students
performed themselves as readers, which seemed to be based in a large part on the norms
and values associated with getting through the procedures of a reading group, or in others
what we do (or don’t do) as a group with texts.

Across my data corpus there were some similar patterns among students and teacher
interactions during the small reading groups. The pressures for Ms. G to perform as the
good reading teacher and for the students to perform as good readers (which in this room
seemed to be for the most part equated with the good students) involved a certain amount
of pressure for both the teacher and students display to each other and accomplish the
procedures of a reading group event in order to just “get through” texts and the lesson
even if the students have had little opportunity to use reading for an authentic tasks. As I
began to find evidence of such patterns in my exploratory research phase, the concept of
procedural display offered by (D. Bloome et al., 1989, p. 272) became helpful to making
sense of what I had observed and recognized in my recursive analysis. Bloome et. al
(1989, p. 272) wrote that procedural displays in classrooms are:

(a) the display by teacher and students, to each other, of a set of academic and
interactional procedures that themselves count as the accomplishment of a lesson,

(b) the enactment of the lesson is not necessarily related to the acquisition of intended
academic or nonacademic content or skills

“Reading Group” in this classroom seemed particularly susceptible to a procedural
display of “knowing” that was implicitly sustained by both the students in the groups and
by the teacher. Students and teachers alike for the most part did what they were “told” to
get through the piece of text which was the focus of that day’s reading group event. I
actually am using Ms’ G’s words “to get through” directly from my Field Notes when she was working with her high reading group. Ms. G handed out the books and said to the group:

“I just had this [Flat Stanley chapter book] and thought it would be easy to get through. We’ll be done in three days.” (Field Notes, High Reading Group, 3/14/11)

This need to just go through the motions of reading group to “get through the text” was particularly evident in regards to the way the teachers and students interacted. Generally, the pattern observed was that the teacher initiated, an individual student responded with a display of knowledge or reading skill and the teacher evaluated the display of the reading skill or the knowledge assumed to be acquired by good reading. The students responded with the appropriate display which was either the answer the teacher expected or to sit and observe while the speaking student displayed their knowing. For Ms. G it seemed that the accomplishment of the “lesson” then was if she was able to give the appropriate time to each group to “ensure they were getting the foundational competencies” (Teacher Interview June 6th, 2011). The accomplishment for the focal students of reading group seemed to be in competing for the attention of the teacher by certain signals such as “raising your hand and the teacher calls on you,” avoiding reprimands for “messing around” and not meeting the procedures. (Reading Interviews-Dasjah 12/16/10 & Ino 12/14/10).

As a non-dramatic reading event, I identified the intended instructional purpose of reading groups was to build story comprehension and activate background knowledge and reading comprehension strategies (e.g. infer meanings from context clues) or to explicitly help students notice and learn meanings of unknown vocabulary during reading. In the following sections, I will more specifically illustrate the patterns I documented across these instructional purposes. Secondly, I will outline the students and teachers’ co-construction and maintenance of procedural displays of reading group and how this at times offered a few key affordances but most often created severe limits on
English Language Learners access to the instructional practices that have been shown to be effective for developing language and literacy.

**Displaying Recall of Specific Story Comprehension (I-R-E)**

Typically, at the beginning of a reading group, students and teachers were involved a version of the Initiate, Respond and Evaluate (I-R-E) pattern documented by a rich body of educational scholarship (Cazden, 1988; Goodlad, 2004; Mehan, 1985). During the reading comprehension portion of reading group, this interactional procedure typically occurred where Ms. G asked recall questions (Initiate), and the students displayed their knowing to Ms. G and each other (Respond). The teacher evaluated the answer (Evaluate) by repeating it, elaborating on it or restating the question if it wasn’t the answer she expected. The teacher evaluated the answer either positively by repeating it, elaborating on it or negatively by ignoring the response and restating the question or offering another example, if the original response wasn’t the answer she expected. Immediately following each I-R-E the group moved onto the next step of the lesson never to return to the shared information or the specific vocabulary noticed as a way to make meaning.

To illustrate this I-R-E pattern of reading groups observed across my field notes and samples of video transcriptions, I will use transcript extracts from a representative sample of video data collected January 26th, 2011. Table 4.3 illustrates a sample of my analysis of teacher turns at talk followed by the responses of the students. In the transcript excerpt seen in Table 4.3, Ms. G and her “middle reading group” were looking at a chapter in the middle of a book from an ongoing transitional reader series—*Geronimo Stilton #37: The Race Across America*. 

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<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Middle Reading Group**  
**Transcript Excerpt- Jan 26, 2010- 0:00-0:58s** | **lower order question (LOT)-recall plot** |   |   |
| **01 Ms G**  
*Rose-Davey displays “Geronimo Stilton” book high in the air*  
Tell me what this was about |   |   |   |
| **02 Rose-Davey**  
It was about, It was about like where they started to race | Display knowing |   |   |
| **03 Ms G**  
They started the race already? | Evaluate-Repeat w exaggerated surprise |   |   |
| **04 Rose-Davey + Nicole W**  
Yeah *TW shows the picture of a map in the book towards Ms. G*  
Oh-yeah. | Display knowing |   |   |
| **05 Rose-Davey**  
Yeah and You can see in the picture of Geronimo is right there and he ## | Display knowing |   |   |
| **06 Ms G**  
And where did the race start? | LOT-recall setting |   |   |
| **07 Bayley**  
Arizona | Display Knowing |   |   |
| **08 Fredia**  
no California  
*Bayley begins to look through her book* | Display Knowing  
+ correct other student |   |   |
| **09 Ms G**  
Oh it started in California, right by the ocean, right? *looking at Fredia* Isn’t he going from coast / to coast. | Evaluate-Elaborate |   |   |
| **10 Dasjah**  
(holds up book to show picture) there’s a guy named Mickey | Display knowing |   |   |
| **11 student**  
No Mikey | Display knowing  
+ correct other student |   |   |
| **12 Ms. G**  
There’s a guy named Mickey. Oh? | LOT-recall characters |   |   |
| **13 Rose Davey**  
##my name is Mickey Mouse. | Extra-textual Connection |   |   |
| **14 Ms. G**  

**Table 4. 3: Displaying Ability to Recall in Reading Group**
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dasjah</td>
<td>I think he’s the guy who/ says ready, set, go/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bayley</td>
<td>(overlaps Dasjah) Chicago,/ I think he left from Chicago/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>Oop (looks at Bayley’s book beside her) San DIEGO it started in San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>So they started the race and how far did they get?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nicole W</td>
<td>They went to Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>Arizona. They made it to Arizona</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A typical practice at the beginning of reading a chapter of a fictional book in reading group is seen in lines 01, 6, 13 and 17 where Ms. G asks a lower order thinking question such as “what is happening in the story?” (LOT-recall plot). Each time an individual responded directly to Ms G and Ms. G evaluated the response in some form in a typical Initiate, Respond and Evaluate (I-R-E) pattern (01-03, 06-09, 13-16, 17-19) which then was usually followed by another I-R-E pattern. In reading groups, students seemed to be accustomed to this process of displaying their knowing or passively letting others display their knowing in order to get through this part of the reading group event. One student would be called on and respond directly to the teacher with a display or knowing.

Due the norms of the I-R-E interactions as part of “getting through” reading group procedure, the other non-speaking students in the group weren’t asked or implicitly expected to further add on, offer justification from the text, nor extend or deepen meaning-making such as connecting to the speaking students statement or in making a prediction about the new text. The non-speakers were not afforded any opportunities create any expressive output or visible signs of thinking or meaning-making. Non-speaking students eye gaze suggested they passively listened while others often engaged in actions which seemed to suggest they weren’t engaging fully what the student was
saying (e.g. looking in the book or away from the teacher and speaking student or making unrelated comments immediately following the students statement).

Thus the talk seemed to serve little authentic reading instructional purpose for the students, other than possibly to assess the speaking students ability to recall and display a general knowing of what happened last. The IRE was only followed up by an IRE of a different content as if the students and teacher had agreed to do this just to get through the compulsory motions of the procedure of starting a reading group. The speaking or non-speaking students were not explicitly asked to do anything purposeful towards deepening their understanding of the text at hand using the teacher or student talk neither in the moment or later to return to the talk in order to better understand the text. I began to code this pattern of talk as a “display knowing”.

I also found these displays of knowing co-occurred with another practice that is expected of any “good reading teacher” which is activating student’s prior knowledge (Teacher Interview 6/11/11). The next sub-section will describe this quite similar pattern that seemed to also occur as a result of the I-R-E interactional pattern of small reading groups—individual student displays of prior knowledge.

**Individual Displays of Prior Knowledge**

Similar to the way I and many others teachers responsible for reading instruction have been trained, Ms. G sought interactions that could “activate student’s prior knowledge” because it has been identified as a key component for high quality reading comprehension instruction (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). However, I often observed that the practices in reading groups that were intended to build this background knowledge seemed to focus much more on leading students to get through the reading group event than about meaning-making and using the power of collaborative thinking as a learning resource.
In order to take part in the requisite procedural display of activating prior knowledge, the teacher typically asked some kind of question such as *who’s ever had an experience like this* [that might tangentially relate to the setting or context of the event under study]? Then the teacher would evaluate in a way that created a very brief conversation (though somewhat stilted and inauthentic) with an individual students about their own personal experience, while the rest of the non-speaking students passively sat and listened (if they truly heard or made sense of what the speaking student was saying was usually not visible and thus often unclear). After the teacher evaluated and sometimes repeated or elaborated on the statement, then the reading group immediately moved onto the next I-R-E portion of the lesson or displays of oral reading fluency (e.g. students taking turns reading aloud while the rest of the students sat and were expected to be still and quiet.)

The “required” activation of prior knowledge created individual procedural displays of knowing that are based on one student’s personal experiences. I labeled these practices *individual displays of prior knowledge* precisely because such practices most often proved to bear little relationship on students collaboratively constructing a deepened understanding of the intended academic content and skills of the lesson. Precisely, because such *individual displays of knowing* continued to be structured and sustained, the other non-speaking students (and often the speaking student) didn’t appear to be able to use the “overheard” conversation (between speaker and teacher) to actively participate in making sense of the specific text, this practice was deemed a procedural display. The next portion of transcript from January 26th shown in Table 4.4 helps illustrates my analysis of such individual displays of prior knowing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>Arizona. They made it to Arizona</td>
<td>Evaluate-Repeat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ms G</td>
<td>What kind of climate in Arizona? Does anybody know? Has anybody ever been to Arizona? Can you tell us about Arizona?</td>
<td>LOT-recall info from personal experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bayley</td>
<td>Um. There’s actually a lot of mountains. There… And it’s pretty much mostly just the desert.</td>
<td>Display knowing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>yes, a big desert area. Yeah, rocky. (continues to talk to Bayley)</td>
<td>Evaluate-Elaborate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bayley</td>
<td>yeah that’s what I was going to say.</td>
<td>Social positioning w teacher as good knower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>Rocky, cactus. cause that’s where you were/</td>
<td>Evaluate-Repeat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Bayley</td>
<td>/yeah/</td>
<td>Social Positioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>not too long ago? OK that’s right.</td>
<td>Social Connection &amp; Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Dasjah</td>
<td>(points to picture and shows it to other student and then Ms. G) Look. Geronimo is already tired.</td>
<td>Spontaneous Interest/Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>Let’s read together. Um. Did you get a book Tyler? 1, 2, 3 (counts books) Can you share with Tyler? We ran out of books. / We’re going to do. This is going to be tricky. We are going to read sentence by sentence.</td>
<td>Manage-materials and procedures for reading aloud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dasjah</td>
<td>Are we going this way or that way (pointing around the circle)?</td>
<td>Clarify Directions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ms. G</td>
<td>LG: Which way would you like to go? This way or that way?</td>
<td>Manage-give student a choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.4: An Individual Display of Prior Knowing**

In line 21, Ms. G asked a lower order thinking question specifically intended to elicit prior knowledge and experiences of one student about Arizona’s climate. I determined from other data and from my analysis of the rest of the transcript that the intention of Ms.
G’s question (21) may have been to elicit one students response in order to give all of the students a chance to visualize or “get a picture in their minds” of the setting of the Arizona desert because they would be reading about an event set within that geographical context. In the following turn (22), Bayley raised her hand and Ms. G looked at her as a signal to speak. The two have what would seem (in any most other settings) to resemble a one-on-one conversation even though nine other people are sitting around them and attending to this interaction. The expectation of this and other reading groups seemed to be that all of the non-speaking students were to attend to and take away some kind of reading instruction from these conversations even if the non-speakers aren’t necessarily included as active, conversational partners. In Figure 4.4, I offer a still photograph digitally extracted from the video of the middle reading group at the very moment in time depicted by line 21 of the transcript.

![Figure 4.1: Bayley displays prior knowledge of Arizona](image)

Bayley is located in the far left side of the picture (leopard shirt, closest to Ms. G) and Ms. G is looking directly at her as Bayley speaks to and looks back at Ms. G. It’s important to note that there are actually ten students sitting around the yellow teaching table including the focal student Dasjah (upper right corner, pink shirt). However, Ms. G is only focused on having a one-on-one conversation with Bayley. Based on my field
notes taken also at this moment, as Ms. G and Bayley seemed to only be speaking to each other, Dasjah did seem to display her attention to the conversation though two students looked intently in their books at the time, two other students held their heads in their hands and seemed to gaze off into space and one student whispered an unrelated comment to the person beside her. These non-speaking students made visible the highly variant levels of engagement that I often observed among the non-participatory conversational partners during the prior displays of knowing in reading group.

Dasjah’s lack of access to authentic uses of language for making meaning of text

Across my data corpus on her involvement in reading groups, Dasjah rarely spoke during these display of prior knowing conversations. Across the data Dasjah actually rarely spoke at all during any reading group event except if it was her turn to read orally aloud. The few times when she did speak she did so to display a knowing of a procedure or the “known answer” the teacher was looking for (e.g. look at context clues around the word). Dasjah was only observed 2-3 times spontaneously and authentically verbally expressing an interest in or had a question about something happening in the book during reading group. An example of this active speaking turn by Dasjah is seen in line 28 above where she showed interest in the how tired Geronimo seemed in the illustration. This is an example that could have been picked up by the teacher as a way to model or make a an explicit connection to the prior knowing about Arizona’s climate in helping the students make meaning of the text.

When Dasjah and I discussed what happens in reading group, it seemed to point to the highly formalized nature of the “reading group” as compared to a more authentic conversation. Dasjah explained that in reading group you only “knew it was your turn to talk if you raise your hand and Ms. G calls on you.” Then I asked:

Camille: Do you ever just have a normal conversation [during reading group]?
Dasjah: yeah, sometimes. Like, she [Ms. G], like if she says when has your dog, um, gone to the park? Sometimes we just talk about that for a while.

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The fact that Dasjah used the pronoun “we” shows that she has implicitly accepted the fact that even though she may not actually be the person talking, she is still expected to be a participant in the overheard conversation. Secondly, while she may be trying to generalize, her example of Ms. G’s prior knowledge line of questioning -actually corroborated the kinds of “activating prior knowledge questions” which I observed broadly during other reading groups. This type of prior knowledge question seemed intended to help students relate to the setting or events of the text. However, in actual practice I observed that typically only one student got the floor and it quickly moved away from making meaning with the text at hand into the student and teacher in a personal conversation which wasn’t explicitly used to model a comprehension strategy or returned to later to help guide students in making meaning of the text.

Of course, being able to have a one-on-one conversation between teacher and student is important as having a strong relationship with a teacher has been shown to be a influential factor in student learning outcomes. Ms. G often told me how important it was to her to get a chance to talk to and know her children personally. However, during the reading group these conversations were happening in front of the other students who are expected to learn how to be better readers from this experience. Instead of finding out how to use the information just given to understand the text, the other students only were passive observers of a inconsequential discussion about one student’s prior experience. The individual display is more about “showing off” just how many experiences they have had or just how much they know or at least if they can accurately guess the response the teacher is expecting to have displayed (also called in classroom scholarship as the successfully guessing the “known answer”). When students responses to the “activating prior knowledge” questions did not seemed to be used for instruction such as in modeling comprehension strategies or using it later to explicitly understand and make sense of the text, I labeled this as a display of prior knowing.
Secondly, once this culture of displays of knowing was established, it often became a competition to gain the “speaking floor.” For students like Dasjah, Ino and Yusef another limitation of this competitive culture that promoted displays of knowing was that they had less access to expressive output. For in each group, certain students were more often prone to being more successful at gaining the teacher’s attention and therefore got the opportunity to be the displayers of knowing much more often than the focal students. Across the reading groups, certain students already held high status as good knowers, or they were physically louder or better at getting Ms. G’s attention. These students tended to dominate and gain access the few opportunities students did have to gain the floor with these displays of knowing. The fact that Bayley, Rose Davey and Nicole W spoke a significant portion of the student turns at talk during the middle reading groups is not an anomaly specific to this particular set of interactions seen in the transcripts throughout this chapter but instead this provides an illustration of a pattern that I saw consistently occur across this all three reading group as a non-dramatic reading event. These three particular girls often chose to visibly display their knowing (or at least felt they could because they had the requisite experience, social capital, etc) which was often at the detriment of other students gaining access to the speaking floor. Furthermore, their displays of information though they took up significant portions of the student talk, these were not typically used to further understanding of the text or to model transferrable reading comprehension strategies.

Across the reading groups, the students seemed accustomed to the underlying idea that reading groups are a place where they perform themselves as good readers in relationship to what seems to be the norms and values co-constructed by the cultural practices of reading. During the ongoing cultural reading practices during non-dramatic reading event students ability to display the expected knowledge on demand was assumed to be connected to learning, even when the speaking student was only repeating something already known. While I recognize not everyone makes their thinking visible through public, verbal responses, the non-speaking student had no active task in this process except possibly to passively hear a general review of what was read.
The implicit assumption then was those who can’t (or don’t choose to) perform the
display of knowing will incidentally learn to read better, merely by sitting and listening to
others perform their displays of knowing by talking to the teacher or telling about their
personal experience, regardless if it is helping the other students make meaning about the
text.

Thus, the practice of reading groups actually seemed to limit the access English
Language Learners had to collaborative forms of activity and purposeful reading
comprehension tasks. While the intention of the reading group may have been to
increase reading comprehension, the ways of talking around and getting through reading
group events and texts limited ELLs opportunities to have high quality, modeled
instruction and scaffolding of reading comprehension strategies in context. It limited their
opportunities to create expressive output and to successfully appropriate academic
language and critically literate ways of talking about texts.

“Activating Prior Knowledge” questions & lack of authentic understanding

In summary, across my data corpus related to this activating individual prior knowledge
seemed to me to be less about textual meaning-making and more about the speaking
student’s (e.g. Bayley’s ) own social positioning in alignment with the teacher. Thus, the
culture of getting through the reading group in this classroom seemed to necessitate the
teacher’s asking of the prescribed question which was supposed to activate the
individual’s prior knowledge and be followed by the appropriate student supplied
response. Implicitly, the prior knowledge I-R-E segment of the reading group event was
assumed by the participants to have been “accomplished” because teachers and students
all had followed the reading instruction procedural display of “activating prior
knowledge,” regardless if the practice actually supported any of the students towards a
dep深ened understanding of the meaning of the actual text in front of them or in acquiring
an understanding of the use of this particular comprehension strategy across other texts.
I recognize that the reading comprehension strategy of connection in of itself, is imperative for supporting reading comprehension of students. For example, in a summary of the National Reading Panel report, “the data suggest that text comprehension is enhanced when readers actively relate the ideas represented in print to their own knowledge and experience and construct mental representations in memory” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 14). However, my analysis helped clarify how the reading comprehension instruction of making prior connections was put into actual practice by teachers and students in one classroom. A teacher asking and one individual student getting to answer the prior knowledge question with little explicit relationship to the rest of the students using this knowledge or strategy for deepening understanding and becoming better overall meaning makers with texts seemed to leave such a practice in the category of a procedural display of knowing. The entire interaction seemed to be another implicit agreement between students and teacher to sustain a procedural display, to get through the piece of text and to accomplish the lesson without actually helping students better understand the text nor did they seem to acquire new language or comprehension strategies.

This analysis seems to align with the warning offered to reading teachers by Harvey & Goudvis (2000) about the danger of only creating procedural displays of connecting to prior knowledge to get through that portion of the lesson. Harvey and Goudvis wrote that “as we focus on the strategy of making connections, we can't forget that increasing understanding, not a plethora of tangential or inconsequential connections, is the goal of activating background knowledge and prior experience to make connections. (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, p. 80)

The last two sections helped illustrate my documentation of the co-construction of classroom culture of comparing reading skills. One underlying outcome of this culture was that it seemed to value displays of knowing over collaborative inquiry and performing authentic understanding of texts. Because these displays of knowing had become so highly valued and ingrained many students began to implement these displays
of knowing as social positioning strategies in order to be seen as good knower and by extension as a means to (if only momentarily) to maintain or gain higher social status by aligning with the skills and related displays of knowing associated with the teacher and the “good readers club” as Ms. G and I would later call it. Purposeful and engaged reading for authentic understanding once again was long forgotten. The following section highlights a few of these social positioning strategies.

**Social Positioning Strategies (instead of reading strategies?)**

Since reading groups and other non-dramatic reading events had implicitly become places where displays of knowing were often used to reposition yourself in higher relative status to other students, then reading groups also became a site for a wide range of strategies of gaining the teacher’s attention so that you could publically perform and display your knowing. As part of getting through the text and displaying knowing in this classroom involved strategies around gaining the “speaking floor”, students correcting other students and “saving face” when a student had been corrected.

**Gaining the “Speaking Floor”**

In this culture, responding successfully within the I-R-E interaction with the teacher involved students who could display the expected “knowing.” The student would speak an approximation of the words that the teacher was expecting and thus she would evaluate them positively and then they all could continue moving on and getting through the text. A practice that I documented as co-occurring along with the high social value put on displays of knowing was this competition to gain “the speaking floor” or in other words get and keep the attention of the teacher as well as the other students where they could actually have the opportunity to display their knowing or reading skill while everyone had to stop and listen or watch to them “perform” their knowing. Because gaining the speaking floor was such a sought after position students often used a variety of physical and verbal strategies to gain the teacher’s attention. Sometimes the pressure
to “enter” the competition for the speaking floor preceded the students comprehending the question and authentically considering what an appropriate response might be.

**Yusef and gaining the speaking floor**

The normalizing of the intense competition for “gaining the speaking floor” was especially visible by Yusef. Unlike Ino and Dasjah whom most often offered only confidently spoke those responses to which they knew they would be right through “ventriloquating” the teacher’s voice, Yusef seemed to be more of a risk taker. Yusef didn’t seem to care if he didn’t actually know the answer or if he repeated someone else’s’ answer, he just wanted to join in with others in the often physical strategies used in order to “win” the competition for the speaking floor. Within the non-dramatic reading events, I saw this both as a relative affordance and a limitation for his access to the appropriation of academic language and literacies for different reasons.

All of the students at different times took part in physical movements (e.g. jumping up and down, stretching arm as high as possible, leaning forward), or lengthy signaling (e.g. holding arm up far beyond the I-R-E patter) and verbal statements (oooo, I know, I got it) to try to gain Ms. G’s attention. Yusef seemed to pick up immediately from observation of other students that he should be “doing” these actions too in order to be doing the right student thing. For Yusef, the fact that this culture promoted this pressure to take the floor, also seemed to push him a few times to publicly appropriate newly considered language. A brief example of gaining the floor strategies that allowed Yusef space to re-use a newly acquired word is seen in the transcript excerpt below:

562  Ms. G:  What does dye mean? What does that mean?
563  St:  *(lots of overlapping oos, Marquell jumps up and down, other students moving in seats, including Yusef who raises and waves his hand as high as he can while being able to still stay in his seat)*
564  Demetrius:  they colored it
565  Ms. G:  Oh! They colored it.
Demetrius: yeah like green dye and stuff like that.  

(Yusef continues to hold his hand high through this whole interaction)

Ms. G: you can have green color or you can have purple or whatever/

Yusef: or even blue dye/

(Silk & Wool-Nonfiction Passage, Low Reading Group, 12/7/10)

Though it was after the public display of knowing by Demetrius had been evaluated and passed and not all of the boys in the group may have heard him, Yusef in line XXX, took the speaking floor and was able to re-use the new word, dye, in the appropriate context. Prior to this moment, Yusef didn’t really seem to be sure of his “knowing” of this word because during his reading of the word dye he looked up to Ms. G to validate that he was even reading and saying the word correctly. (Field Notes 12/7/10)

Also during non-dramatic reading events, Yusef seemed to consistently to join in the “gaining of the floor” strategies in order to get the chance to perform his knowing, only many times after quickly jumping into the competition for the speaking floor, and where he did “win” the speaking floor, he didn’t actually have a relevant or appropriate response. As in the following transcript excerpt from the same reading event:

Ms. G: Ok so you can make material or fabric out of wool too.

Ms. G: Do you know where wool comes from?

Marquis W: ooo (Yusef, William and Demetrius hold up hands emphatically too)

Ms. G: Marquell R?

Marquell R: (very quietly) animals

Yusef: (repeats louder) animals

Ms. G: Do you know what animal? (looking at Yusef as signal he has the floor)

St: (lots of oooo, I know, hand waving, Yusef immediately outstretches his hand up and slightly towards Ms. G)
This transcript excerpt illustrates two typical ways Yusef fought for the speaking floor—repeating someone else’s answer in hopes of being the one seen as the public display of knowing (39) and immediate joining into the competition without fully comprehending the question being asked (41, 43). Yusef response in line 42 where he doesn’t seem to “know” the answer, even though he acted as if he did is a clear example of Yusef’s typical action within this competition for the speaking floor. Whenever Ms. G asked a question and the other boys signaled their “knowing” Yusef immediately threw up his hand and signaled to Ms G that he could display the correct response and information she was expecting. Though as was the case in line 42, when she did call on him Yusef actually didn’t seem to have a clear comprehension of the question. Even after he couldn’t remember the animal, and Ms. G asked the rest of the students for the correct answer, Yusef still immediately put up his hand to signal his knowing publically (43). It seems that Yusef learned that to belong in the crowd he needed to perform displays of “knowing” as the other students, thus he needed to join in the competition for the speaking floor. His immediate joining into the competition (36, 39, 41, 43) did not give Yusef time to register the original question, nor did it give him enough time to think or fully figure out what he was truly saying or wanted to say.

Correcting Other Students

Within the I-R-E interactional procedures of reading group, the students responded to Ms. G’s question directly as if they were having a one-on-one conversation. Thus, it might be assumed the “official” permission to evaluate always flowed to the teacher. While in
most cases the teacher was the sole authority and evaluator, students also developed what I called “correcting” as a set of social positioning strategies where students use their turns at talk to correct (or attempt to correct) information offered by the students in prior turns (in Figure 4.2 above, students are seen correcting each other in lines 8 and 11). In the following transcript excerpt from the low reading groups work with a fictional chapter book, Demetrius can be seen correcting Yusef’s display of knowing in response to Ms. G’s literal comprehension question.

95  Ms. G:    Oh, so what is Emily talking about?
96  Yusef:    She’s talking about br, um, about bread dancing.
97  Demetrius: (looks over to FMS) Bride dancing
98  Yusef:    Bride dancing
99  Ms. G:    So what’s a bride?
100 3 boys:  (Deshaun, Marquell R and Marquell W raise hands)
100  Yusef:   dancing/
101 Demetrius: Bread can’t dance.
102 Ms. G:    Ok, I am going to ask you to raise your hands. So what’s a bride?  
(The Polk Street Kids: Candy Corn Contest, Boys Reading Group, 11/5/10)

In line 95, Ms. G initiated a recall question based on what Yusef was reading aloud in the chapter. Demetrius implemented two different correction strategies (97, 101) to Yusef’s two attempts at responses to Ms. G’s questions (96, 100). The correcting students like Demetrius unofficially offered a display of knowing that seemed to allow them a space to socially reposition themselves, as the good knower (and by extension the good reader), even if only momentarily. Because the teacher is seen as the ultimate knower, these moves tend to align the correcting students more in line with a higher status “teacher” or helper role. In doing so, then the students are also able to “help” move the lesson along by getting as fast as possible to correct answers that are expected by the teachers, regardless of whether students were able to make meaning about the text or to observe quality models of appropriate reading strategies. I observed that at the beginning of the
year, Yusef was particularly susceptible to this kind of constant correction by the many of the other students in the class, particularly a few of the other boys in his reading group were constantly “helping” him (as a few boys called what they did for Yusef.)

Though at times, Ms. G would attempt to disrupt the correcting process, (See Line 102 above) I noticed a this type of interaction was being sustained by enough of the students that it also seemed to become a common social repositioning practice. Students not only displayed what they knew about the plot but they displayed their knowing through the oral reading help and correction of “not very smart” readers (Ino Interview 12/14/10), possibly as a means to jockey for a position in the “good readers club”. The attention and evaluations from not only the teacher but also fellow students were particularly prone to creating these displays of knowing. Across my field notes and samples of this all three reading groups I noticed ongoing social positioning work seemed to lie just under the surface of the “getting through” the reading lesson and particular students tended to use correcting as a means to display knowing during certain settings.

**Saving Face**

I was also surprised when I begin to note across my data corpus on reading groups, that some of the students who had been corrected by others would even attempt to “save face” by coming back to the group with a justification for their initial answer or attempt to one-up that person who just corrected them with a display of more extended or new information, often at the detriment of engaging in the ongoing discussion. In line 7 from the transcript excerpt in Figure 4.2 above, Bayley offered an answer (07) about where the race started but was corrected by Fredia (08.) In watching the video clip and re-reading the transcript from 1/26/11 multiple times, I observed that after Bayley was corrected by another student in line 08 and up until line 16, Bayley no longer engaged in the “reading group” or in the actions and talk of other students and Ms. G and instead she looked steadily through the pages of her book. In line 14, Ms. G poses a recall question: Who is Mickey? which Dasjah attempts to answer (15). But in line 16, Bayley overlaps and overtakes Dasjah’s response by loudly commenting “Chicago, I think he left from
Chicago” which seemed a bit unrelated to the I-R-E sequence. Even though she seemed to pose an unrelated response to Ms. G’s question, Bayley actually made visible all that work she had done by looking through her book. It seemed that Bayley had set out to re-position herself as a knower—by making an attempt to offer a more definitive answer to the earlier question—about where the race started (and to which her earlier response had been corrected). Even though in the end, Ms. G looked over Bayley’s shoulder and told the whole group that it in fact the race was started San Diego (which again corrected Bayley’s newly found information).

The students in these examples displayed their knowing by correcting someone else and in doing so they may have momentarily re-positioned themselves as “good readers” according to what is socially and culturally valued as good reading in this reading event—being able to recall “correct” plot information. As students sought strategies to re-establish their social standing in the moment, the cycle of social positioning continued. Thus, even if the teachers and students weren’t entirely aware of it, social positioning in relationship to who was and wasn’t a good knower and by extension a good reader seemed to underwrite many of the ways students interacted within the practices of the reading groups.

**Displays of Oral Reading Fluency**

Each reading group typically lasted approximately 30 minutes. A large portion of that time (>20 min) especially when working through fictional texts was spent with students orally reading aloud while Ms. G listened, evaluated and corrected or coached their reading. Ms. G’s type of coaching seemed to depend on the instructional purpose of the task (comparing and contrasting skill vs. getting through the chapter in a book) and the specific group of students. Overall, though across all of my field notes and my samples of transcribed reading groups she spent significant more time managing and evaluating students as part of their individual display of oral fluency. By comparing the teacher’s instructional times spent on oral reading fluency to time spent on reading comprehension
strategy development during fictional reading, then this evidence supports the argument that oral reading fluency in this classroom holds implicitly more value

To illustrate how the displays of oral reading fluency occurred, I will return to the 1/26/11 Middle Group Transcript. The displays of oral reading fluency portions of this reading group occurred directly after the interactions in the excerpts from the same event seen above. Whereas the initial 2 minute interaction seen above focused students on the recall of the last chapters and prior knowledge about the climate in Arizona, the majority of the rest of lesson (22 minutes) seemed intended to give students guided practice with oral reading fluency and in using context clues to solve unknown words. To participate in what I called displays of oral reading fluency, each person in the group including Ms. G read aloud round-robin style, where everyone took a turn to read. In this case the group read sentence by sentence, though other groups read paragraphs or pages with each student turn. Therefore, Ms. G’s turns during the oral reading portion of reading group were often about managing student’s turns to read or evaluating and giving pronunciations which could partially explain the high proportion of management and evaluation teacher turns taken during the reading group events.

**Telling the Correct Pronunciation**

The oral reading procedure involved a modified version of the I-R-E where at each turn would be the initiation for the next student to read a sentence. Ms. G used several strategies of evaluation while students were reading. Though Ms G spent some limited time coaching decoding strategies, this practice occurred most significantly during low reading group. Otherwise in the middle and high reading groups, Ms. G directly told the correct pronunciation as to not interrupt too much the procedure and flow of reading and possibly to maintain to focus more on making sense of the story. The following is representative of a typical practice from both the low and middle reading groups where the pronunciation is directly supplied by the teacher, though other students offer corrections (line 36, 101) as well. This transcript excerpt starts while Tori is taking her oral reading turn of reading one sentence.
(reading) I had just started pedaling when the rest of the c/

(several students overlap Tori) /con… cont/

/contestants

/ the contestants passed me in a flash.

...more students read aloud sentences

Ms. G: Let’s read about Route 66. Who’s turn is it? Go TW. Go.
Nicole W: Route 66 is the most famous highway in the United States.
Dasjah: It was abolished/
Nick: established
Ms.G: ok. Estab-/
Ms. G+Dasjah: established
Dasjah: in 1926 and.. its nickname is…the mother of roads.
Heather: It begins in Chicago and ends in Washington.

(Geronimo Stilton #37-The Race Across America  Middle Reading Group 1/26/11)

Then the group would continue reading in the rotation until they all got through the reading aloud the rest of the chapter. Ms. G reflected that one reason she had them take turns reading a loud like this in reading group was because she “wanted a chance to hear each of the students growth in fluently reading the words.” (Reflection 12/7/10). I also determined this gave Ms. G the opportunity to offer the individual student reading immediate feedback on word recognition and pronunciation and at times she coached them on reading strategies. However, the other students are expected only to passively follow along. The students not reading also displayed their own knowing by correcting students as seen above (36, 101) at times prior to or concurrently with Ms. G’s giving of pronunciations.
In the low reading group, Ms. G tended to spend even more time providing correct pronunciations and coaching on word decoding strategies which again was at the expense of students become active agents in using reading comprehension strategies for authentic tasks. The following is an example of the amount of pronunciations that are told to Yusef by others.

161  Yusef:  Insests call sick worm/
162  Ms. G:  silk/
163  Yusef:  silk worms are raiseD on silk f-arms. The silk worms per-/
164  Ms. G:  produce/
165: St:  (says words just ahead of Yusef) produce silk/
166  Yusef:  produce silk thr-thread. Workers ca-/  
167  St:  (says words just ahead of Yusef) collect/  
166  Yusef:  threads from the sick/  
167 St+Yusef:  silk/
168  Yusef:  worms. Then workers in the factory/
169  St:  Clean/
170 Yusef:  clean twist and die? (looks up at Ms. G with eyebrow cocked)  
171 Ms. G:  die (nods head affirming)  
172 Yusef:  the threads. This/  
173: Ms. G:  Raw, that words missing/  
174 Ms. G+Yusef:  This raw silk  
175 Yusef:  is sh, shap-ed/ to  
176 Ms. G:  shipped  
177 St:  shipped  
178  Yusef:  to a mill. There the silk threads are wurven/  
179  St:  woven/  
180: Yusef:  woven on the mint/  
181  Ms. G:  machines  
182  Yusef:  machines called power, pal looms.
Ms. G: so Silk comes from silk worms and they make this thread and they collect thread and they put them on the big machine and they make fabric out of it.

Demetrius: Worms make silk?

Ms. G: Demetrius would you like to read the next one?

(Silk & Wool-Nonfiction Passage, Low Reading Group, 12/7/10)

As was typical of any non-dramatic reading event that involved a text that needed to be read and comprehended by students (e.g. Word Explorer, Word Study) the students in this excerpt were also asked to take turns reading aloud. When Yusef read the amount of correcting seemed to be focused on helping him and the group as a whole just “get through” the fluent reading of text. The above transcript excerpt lasts only one minute. Yet during that time, while Yusef is reading that portion of the passage and 9 out of 12 total turns at talk are directly giving Yusef pronunciations. These pronunciations are given either by the teacher (162, 164, 178, 183) or they are directly given by self-appointing helpers or in other words “correcting students” displaying their own supposedly “superior” knowing (165, 167, 171, 173, 181).

The primary instructional purpose of the task to which this transcript excerpt is part was focused on teaching the reading skill of comparing and contrasting using cues in a non-fiction text. Therefore, the teacher seems to intend to spend less time on decoding strategies (as she often did in reading fictional texts with this low reading group) and she thus gave many pronunciations. However, because the students are involved in all of the social positioning around reading out loud (e.g. trying to correct each other), there also seems to be a loss of focus on the actual meaning of the words read as a whole. This may have lead Ms. G in line 183 above to feel like she needed to summarize the meaning of what Yusef just read loud for the group. While the final product was to be able to draw meaning from the words and from the larger text but having to perform may have limited Yusef in being able to focus on comprehension, comprehension strategies or to
begin to appropriate this language for himself. The significant amount of correction was also done for the other boys too which may have also hampered the overall meaning-making. After the oral reading portion, the boys were asked with the guidance of Ms. G to complete a few multiple choice questions. The boys’ group had a particularly difficult time collaboratively working through these reading comprehension questions in relative comparison to the middle group whom I also video taped doing the exact same task with the same passage on that day. Whereas the middle group by contrast spent much less time dealing with displays of fluency and the correcting behaviors around fluency. They seemed more willing as a whole to return to the text to answer the questions (as opposed to randomly guessing) and thereby this group overall seemed to be able to focus more on the overall meaning of the ideas and finished the task in half the time of the low reading group.

The Risks of Reading Aloud

For already fluent readers like Ino reading aloud in reading group was a great opportunity to “show off” and Ino never missed an opportunity for being in the reading group because this was a place to do such displays of oral reading fluency (Field Notes 12/7/10) Conversely, many less than fluent readers may have found this practice of reading aloud particularly intimidating. In Dasjah’s reading interview on December 16th, 2010 she showed her explicit awareness of reading group as a risky place for a less than fluent reader.

Camille Why are you least interested when you read out loud [in reading group]?
Dasjah Because I usually mess up and, um...
Camille Does it make you embarrassed?
Dasjah Yeah, sometimes it makes me feel embarrassed. Sometimes I read really fast ’cause I, I’m really scared of what’ll happen.
Camille So it’s taking a big risk huh? It’s like that sometimes for me too.
Yusef who was also considered a less than fluent oral reader, took a different approach to oral reading and often was observed asking Ms. G, “Can I read, first?” He continued to approach the public performance of orally reading aloud in reading group with great enthusiasm despite the fact that his reading group especially in the first half of the year seemed very harsh to him. The boys in his group for example, often snickered at his many decoding and language mistakes or corrected him relatively much more than other boys in the group. For example, I noticed in the comparative analysis of my early field notes and samples (prior to January) that the other boys in his group often spent much more time correcting him than they did to boys such as Marquise R and DeShaun who seemed to make just as many decoding mistakes (Field Notes 9/23/10-12/20/10)

**Teacher Turns at Talk during Reading Groups**

By structuring reading groups that elicited student displays of knowing to each other and the teacher it seemed to severely limited the substance of the instructional talk and questioning strategies used by the teacher with the ELLs and the rest of their classmates. What I began to notice during my exploratory research phase, was a notion that the teacher in reading group seemed to be spending an disproportionate amount of time managing and evaluating the following of the procedures which often included sustaining the I-R-E pattern and thereby, the displays of knowing by the students and little attention was paid to higher order questions or developing collaborative inquiry and authentic reading comprehension tasks. Using comparative analysis of my field notes from this phase, I began to create an ongoing codebook of teacher turns at talk related to reading groups. (See Appendix E for my detailed codebook). I also used my constant comparative analysis across the reading practices to determined video samples of practices that seemed to be rich representative samples of the interactional patterns across all of my field and video coded notes.

In my recursive analysis of teacher turns across five samples of transcribed reading group event samples in this classroom, the teachers talk was overwhelmingly focused on either
management, evaluation or telling students information. The top-down, transmission model of teaching seemed firmly in place as she spent much less instructional time focused on the students collaborative and active, meaning-making process with texts. Even when the specific interaction was focused on teaching specific content or a skill, the teachers turns at talk tended to be much more in the telling mode than the questioning or mediating the students to collaborate mode of speaking. Importantly, within comparing teacher’s telling to the general category of questioning, I even made the choice to include the teachers lower order thinking questions (Recall of plot, setting, etc.) as questioning. Lower order questions could have fallen more under telling because basically the teacher when asking a literal recall question, while technically asking a question seemed to actually be having the student tell again to the whole group what the teacher really could have or wanted to say anyways. Table 4.5 shows a graph which illustrates the combined results of my analysis of teacher turns at talk during all three small reading groups.

![Graph showing the percentage of total teacher turns at talk: Small Reading Group Samples]

**Table 4.5: Turns of Teacher Talk in Reading Group**
To create this graph I used six samples of transcribed video clips of reading groups using fictional texts (2 samples from each of the three reading groups) and two samples of reading groups with non-fiction texts (1 samples from each of the low and middle reading groups). Thirty-nine percent of the teacher’s turns at talk were spent in management (23%) and evaluation (16%) modes. In regards to the content and skills, she also spent thirty-four percent (32%) of her time directly telling students information. Therefore, the majority of the teacher’s turns at talk (71%) were involved in regulating the procedural displays of knowing either through management of the procedure, evaluating the students involvement in the procedure or telling information to get through the event. I also felt that I was giving a conservative estimate on the amount of telling because I did not include evaluating as part of telling even though for the most part, when the teacher was evaluating she was telling whether or not information offered by students is the correct information she was expecting. Therefore, if evaluating had been a part of Telling category—Telling would have made up nearly half (49%) of all of the teacher’s turns at talk but even still Telling as is at 32% is much higher than either mediating for collaboration or questioning students. Only ten percent of her talk was spent on mediating students to collaborate and only eight percent was focused on any kind of questioning around reading comprehension. Importantly, seven percent of the questions required lower-order thinking while less than one percent were higher order questions. Therefore, when the teacher did use questioning as a reading instructional strategy they were typically literal, recall questions.

**Disconfirming Evidence Reveals Need for Authentic Comprehension Tasks**

I also observed that a significant portion of the teacher turns in talk spent in reading groups with the low and middle groups was around Ms. G managing and evaluating individual displays of knowing (e.g. recalling what happened or prior experiences with the setting) and managing and evaluating individual displays of oral reading fluency. These displays occurred while the other students sat and passively observe and listen to
the student display the reading one time in front of the group with little opportunity to do something purposeful to help their own reading—such as to solve unknown words, use new information as a meaning-making resource or even explicitly have it be constructed as a “model” of appropriate reading comprehension strategy use in context. However, data that seemed to disconfirm this pattern later in the year, actually helped support other patterns in the data and deepened my understanding that displays of fluency as created in a culture of comparing reading skills denied ELLs and the majority of other students the opportunities to purposefully engage in reading comprehension tasks such as to perform higher order thinking and authentic literacy understandings.

Across my data corpus on reading groups I collected evidence that disconfirmed the insistence on fluency practice during reading groups. On 2/7/11 with the low reading group and 2/10/11 with the middle and high reading groups, Ms. G reversed this trend often observed earlier in the year. In the data corpus on the low reading group prior to this date, Ms. G asked many more literal recall questions and relatively few higher order questions. Yusef and the other boys enacted social positioning strategies and other attempts to display or show off their knowing, and fluency skills to Ms. G and each other as part of getting through the text. In facing comprehension questions in those reading groups, the boys often avoided the “strategy” repeated many times by Ms. G of “look back in your text” and instead made guesses without attending to “what it says right there [in the passage]” (Field Notes 11/5/10).

However, In the low reading group event (Best Friends, Low Reading Group, 2/7/11 ) a significant amount of time focused students on a joint collaborative task of using a piece of text to sort out multiple possible answers to a higher order inquiry question (e.g. What does Stacy feel about Annie?). The boys excitedly helped Ms. G fill in a large poster with facts from that they knew about the event, cues from the text, their connections to these clues from the text and their inferences about the inquiry question. The boys were highly engaged in re-reading the same text many times and investigating both the specific
language in the text and what clues that language pointed to about understanding the inquiry question and the chapter and the story as a whole.

In her informal reflections and final interview, her construction of this type of purposeful engagement in reading comprehension was linked by Ms. G to her involvement in the SUFSA professional development project which related dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare specifically to deepening higher order thinking processes in reading comprehension. As a result of our collective reflections and ongoing training, Ms. G seemed to recognize that creating purposeful reading comprehension tasks mean she had to entirely disrupt the normalized patterns of reading group. Both the reading group events seen above and the abundant data collected during dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare reading events, actually disconfirmed prior data patterns in support of Ms G beginning to create other ways of structuring reading groups. In these alternative structures, the focal students were able to successfully deeply engage in authentic and purposeful reading comprehension tasks and higher order thinking processes. The specific dramatic inquiry reading events challenged the focal students and all of her students to actively interpret complex texts of Shakespeare. With Shakespeare it seemed to have been assumed that all students needed significant scaffolding with background knowledge and with making sense of Shakespeare’s language, interactions and themes of the texts. I observed more flexible grouping patterns where Ms. G “un-grouped” the “reading groups.” and in these reading events I observed long term support for appropriating background knowledge and language for all students was observed in relative comparison to much of the other non-dramatic reading events such as reading group data.

Re-reading has been shown by research to be significant for improving fluency (C. Snow, 2002). When looking at the focal students active participation in other challenging and purposeful reading comprehension tasks another pattern emerged When they were expected to linguistically and non-linguistically gradually shape word meanings during process of authentically making-meaning then students often ended up authentically re-
reading the same piece of text many times. In the following section, I will illustrate a similar issue with another type of “fluency skills” practice which occurred outside of reading group events but yet was inextricably intertwined with the students’ comparative oral reading fluency scores. This practice was a schoolwide fluency practice program intended as another in-class intervention for “less-than” fluent readers.

**School-wide Fluency Program:” Engaging with technology…not language”**

Another school-wide practice required that Ms. G use the fluency program, called Read Naturally. However, according to Ms. G students that were deemed above proficient on their DIEBELS fluency scores did not have to participate in this practice. Both Yusef and Dasjah fell under this benchmark and thus needed to work with the program. The students were taught how to follow the procedures at the beginning of the school year and then they were supposed to work on it independently during the literacy work time if they weren’t in a reading group. Also, Ms. G often had parent volunteers work with students on this process by timing their reading or practicing the passage with them.

The students participating in the fluency program chose a short non-fiction passage from a set of pre-printed texts about unrelated topics (similar to passages on a standardized reading assessment). Then they were supposed to make a prediction about the passage and then they timed themselves for one minute while reading it “cold”(without having any practice). The students determined the quantity of words read per minutes from the numbered lines on the passage. Each student kept a folder with a graph where they kept track of their scores as they went along. The students first colored the number of words per minute as their initial cold score. Then they spent some days reading along with the story and listening to it on the headphones. Then the students were expected to practice reading the passage on their own several more times. Figure 4.2 shows an example of one of Yusef’s graph
After they had sufficiently listened to the passage on the tape recorder and they had practiced on their own, they timed themselves again and graphed their new number of words per minute on their graph. Finally, at the end of all of this work with the passage the students were to answer a few multiple choice questions on the back and retell the story in their own words in writing.

Both Dasjah and Yusef worked on reading, timing themselves and recording their cold and hot scores in this fluency program. Though Dasjah was fairly consistent in keeping up with the comprehension components of the program (e.g. making a prediction, answering comprehensions questions at the end) Yusef was far less consistent. Unless the students happened to get to work with the adult volunteer there was very little feedback or adult mediation on this reading. As a result, Yusef rarely filled out the prediction portion and rarely did the comprehension questions on the back. Figure 4.3 provides an example of one of Yusef’s completed passages from the program.
As seen in the picture, and as I noticed on most of Yusef’s passages, while he did complete the hot and cold scores (seen in red and blue) he did not fill out the prediction nor did he consistently answer the questions on the back as was the expectation and Ms. G corroborated Yusef’s actions over time (Field Notes, 3/14/11).

Their involvement in the fluency program as a non-dramatic reading event gave Yusef and Dasjah opportunity to hear and do repeat readings with the same piece of text. However, they had less access to gradually shaping meaning and appropriating vocabulary through collaborative feedback with more competent English speakers and their teacher. Since the passages were entirely isolated from each other there seemed no opportunity to have multiple intertextual exposures to similar content. Furthermore, without an adult’s mediation, Yusef in particular was not pushed towards understanding the meaning of the passage nor its vocabulary in context nor was he consistently practicing the use of comprehension strategies.

When Ms. G explained the isolated fluency practice program she called it a highly “solitary, meaning-making process” though she did seem to think that most of her students really did “like doing the program”. However she also explained that the students may have liked it more because they got to work, often independently with the
hand-held timers and the tape recorders. In a final reflection on what she thought about the fluency program Ms. G stated:

“The kids like it because of the technology. They are really just engaged with the technology and not engaged with the language.”

Thus her reflection substantiated my observation that this fluency work tended to also be accomplished as more of procedural display. It did afford the opportunity to practice repeated readings for the focal ELL students who did this program (Ino did not partake in this practice at least in non-dramatic events because she was considered a fluent reader already). While Yusef and Dasjah gained access to repeated exposure to the correct pronunciations (through hearing the passage on tape), there was in actual practice (especially for Yusef) very little focus on reading for meaning nor opportunities for acquiring and appropriating new academic language.

Secondly, I also had collected some data that disconfirmed Ms. G statement that students liked the program. This data showed that some of the students didn’t always want to engage in this tedious process in relative comparison to much more challenging and meaningful work that other students were doing in the classroom. In Table 4.6 is an excerpt taken from my field notes from March 14th, 2011. Prior to the start of this excerpt, I observed Ms. G as she interacted with a high reading group, and the rest of the students did seat work and independent reading while the six boys from the low reading group had been working with Ms. M in their literacy intervention class.
While Ms. G teaches Ino’s group the boys return from Ms. M in their typical way with lots of physical movement and excited chatter. Other students already in the classroom have been working together to solve the puzzle and answer question using the Scholastic newspaper Ms. G set on their desks. A couple of students are reading independently from their self-chosen chapter books. There seemed to be a rise in noise level as Demetrius, DeShaun and Yusef rush over to greet me.

Ms. G: (speaking from yellow table) Boys that just came in please do Read Naturally. Get your folders and do read naturally.

Three boys near me walk away pick up other materials from their desks and walk around looking at other desks but do not seem to head in the direction of fluency center.

Yusef: Can we read our book?

Ms. G: Read Naturally please.

Demetrius: Can we read Scholastic News?

Ms. G: Read Naturally, P-L-E-A-SE.

Table 4. 6: Excerpt from Field Notes 3/14/11

Yusef and Demetrius made visible a lack of interest in the fluency program in relative comparison to the work other students are doing around them. The other students were engaging in independent reading and working with a partner on an engaging reading comprehension task (e.g. Scholastic News). As already argued independent reading of chapter books and more opportunities to work on engaging tasks with partners epitomizes the membership in the “good reader’s club.” Thus, any task like this seemed for students to hold a much higher status within this particular classroom culture of reading possibly because they were so closely linked with the “good readers club.” Their claims seem to be attempts to find a way to avoid low status tasks (e.g. meaningless fluency program) in exchange for high status tasks such as independent reading, and working with partners on Scholastic News which these boys rarely get to do.

Though such data was disconfirming of Ms. G’s claim that students like the fluency program, it actually reinforced other patterns in my data corpus, where students granted
high status to activities most often associated with the “good readers club” such as being able to read independently from your chapter book or the freedom to work with a partner on an engaging reading task. Less than fluent readers more often participated in the isolated practice of “fluency” with little purposeful reading task which could authentically engaged students in re-reading the text many times in order to make meaning.

Displays of fluency over purposeful reading comprehension tasks

Over time I began to notice patterns in my analysis of the reading group where the selections of people in the static groupings based on an overall comparison of fluency levels actually disregarded what struggles, specific students might be having in comprehending the overall narrative elements and vocabulary and reading for understanding. In this classroom many of the non-dramatic reading events weren’t expecting students to engage in higher order thinking in reading comprehension or to purposefully work through a text multiple times and in the process authentically need to re-read many times for meaning. The reason I bring all of this up is not to argue that students shouldn’t practice fluency but instead to point out that the ways of practicing fluency most validated by a culture of comparing reading skills seemed to set-up and sustain students to concentrate on displaying their fluency as a skill in and of itself.

As a result of this culture stemming from isolated, skills-focused teaching models, assumptions were made about less-than fluent readers needing many more opportunities to display fluency, which often disregarded their access to increasing vocabulary and comprehension and comprehension strategies in authentic contexts of reading. Yet, English Language Learners especially can’t afford the time spent solely displaying fluency to each other while disregarding their need to actively participate in purposeful reading comprehension and authentic vocabulary enriching tasks and in those process build their fluency. As I observed fluency in the non-dramatic reading events was often just performed as an isolated skill to be practiced for the sake of ensuring accountability that the students are practicing the “skill” the required amount of time. In other words,
these patterns from across the data corpus which pointed towards this culture’s high value placed on displaying competent oral reading fluency often proved to put reading for understanding and deep engagement in purposeful reading comprehension tasks in the back seat. However, if we are attempting to see reading more comprehensively, then fluency practice actually would be an integrated part of students authentically reading for understanding.

In this culture of comparing reading skills, displays of reading fluency become the ultimate goal and students relative ability to display these at the “highest levels” grants or denies them a position in the “good readers club.” As seen in the next section, the ELLs participation or lack of participation in different practices related to this labeling of fluency levels actually brought less than optimal opportunities for authentic learning and performances of multimodal literacy understanding.

Power of the “Good Readers Club” spills into Independent Reading

The overall analysis of the interactions influencing and influenced by the culture of performing knowing and getting through the text made visible to me the lasting power of the implicit, “good readers club.” In order to compete for a perception of membership in this club, students positioned themselves and were positioned by others in relatively different relationships to being seen as fluent readers and good knowers (e.g. being able to gain the floor and giving Ms. G her expected answer, etc.). From my analysis of my focal students participation in the reading events, I developed this notion that they too implicitly recognized the high social value put on being seen as part of an implicit “good readers club.” Since the three focal students were in the three different reading groups (low, middle and high) they actually provided me a rich lens to consider the consequences of being in or wanting to be in the “good readers club.”
Ino’s freedom by being a high reader: “What do you think?”

In contrast to the complete insistence on displays of oral reading fluency seen above, the students in the “high reading group”, (Ino’s group all year) could all orally read aloud long passages of text with very few mistakes. As a result, Ms. G spent very little teacher talk time in the word decoding mode with this group and furthermore they spent less time altogether within the small reading groups. If they did meet as a reading group, students responses were characterized by displays of knowing to each other and Ms. G. Because they were all already considering completely fluent readers and comprehenders, the “high readers” sometimes had a relatively different set of expectations laid out for them in reading group. They typically had more freedom in books they were given my Ms. G, which importantly included many lengthier children’s literature novels (See Table 4.1 above) as opposed to as many books from series designed specifically for transitional readers. Sometimes they were asked to read different chapter books in order to have an authentic conversation and ask questions of each other in “reading group” rather than to spend their time orally reading the same text. For example, one reading group that I observed Ms. G expected Kiley, Brooke and Ino to independently read different children’s novel, and when they came together as a group they were to tell each other about what was happening and then respond to each other with questions about the different books each had read (Field Notes 12/7/10). Thus, high readers were consistently being asked more often to work together and to utilize higher order thinking. During their reading group events, Ms. G would use the I-R-E pattern but would interrupt it more often by asking several students in the high reading group to add on or offer another possibility than the one offered. Instead the typical teacher turn of immediately evaluating a response Ms. G would be more likely ask another students well, what do you think? All in all the high reading group was more consistently asked for their opinion during reading group events.
“Always reading” from your chapter book

Being able to have much more time for her highly desired practice of independent reading was another freedom granted to Ino because she was considered a highly fluent reader. Whereas the middle and low reading groups could expect to have reading group daily, the meeting of the high reading group with Ms. G mediating happened less frequently. As a result I documented Ino and the rest of these higher readers were able to spend a significant amount of time deeply engaged in independent reading even sometimes to the detriment of instructional time in other subject areas. This was because there seemed to be a certain desire for many of the high readers and even some from the middle reading group to be “always reading” from chapter books that they kept in their desks. From other data patterns, I then found this “always reading” from their self-selected chapter books to be one of those action that was most highly visible among the highest readers. Therefore, because “always reading” and reading chapter books became associated with being in the “good readers club” then publically engaging in or appearing to engage in this practice was highly valued by the teacher and all of the students.

At any moment possible or lull in the action students from the high reading groups such as Ino, Kiley, Brooke, Jason, Paarth and Camron or Febea and Nick from the middle group would always reach for their self-selected chapter book. This seemed to be a strong reason as to why Ms. G told me she wasn’t as concerned about meeting with the high group every day for as she said they “are always reading. With those high fliers like Jason and Paarth there is so much reading going on in my room.” (Reflection 3/14/11)

Clandestine Reading

This high valuing of the practice of “always reading” from chapter books became more visible to me as a researcher though when I began to notice a pattern of spontaneous independent reading of chapter books happened sometimes while the students were supposed to be engaged in another lesson. I began calling this “Clandestine Reading”
because the students had to try to do it in secret so Ms. G wouldn’t catch them. An example of such clandestine reading occurred as I videotaped a spelling lesson on 9/23/10, I specifically positioned the camera at five minute intervals as close as I could behind the head of the focal student. At that time of the year, Ino and Febea sat next to each other in a pod that was positioned towards the back of the room. Two times during this highly teacher-directed spelling lesson, the two students got out their books and started to read. Ino kept her book hidden in the lip of her desk while Febea had on his desk hidden behind a stack of other books and folders. Febea even attempted to show something to Ino in his book but quickly had to put it away because Ms. G seemed to notice. Ms. G corroborated my observations about the significant desire of her high group of students to always be doing independent reading. Ms. G reported,

“There was a lot of reading going in my room especially for my high readers well and really for my middle readers too.” (Final Interview 6/11/11)

When I asked Ms. G about this ongoing practice of clandestine reading, especially with many of her “high readers” that I had observed throughout the year, she responded:

“I know I was always calling on kids like Jason to put his book away. But it’s hard because how can wanting to read ever be bad.” (Final Interview 6/11/11)

Secondly, because Ms. G didn’t feel the need to spend as much time intervening in their reading process, Ino and the other high readers had more opportunities to work with partners during seat work time and to independently read the plethora of chapter books Ms. G kept on the shelves. They also had more time to complete independent “seat work” and the incentive of getting to read their highly valued chapter books when finished with their work and thus, the group as a whole diligently did their seat work, and then almost immediately moved into reading their chapter book.
“Fake” Reading: Social Status of looking like a good reader

Because there seemed to be a high social value associated with performing the reading tasks that resemble those of the “good reader’s club”—the independent reading of chapter books became a high status task. This was made more visible by the actions of both Dasjah and Yusef who seem to hope they would be publically seen as engaging in this performance of independently reading a chapter book, even if they weren’t actually making meaning from the text. Especially, in the beginning of the year, I observed Dasjah on a three separate occasions and Yusef on many occasions over time sitting at their desks with a chapter book in their hands in a performance of what appeared to be similar to independent reading of chapter books going on around them by other students. However, as I watched Dasjah more closely on September 3rd, 2010, what may have appeared to be her reading actually may have been her pretending that she was reading the chapter book. She seemed to read some of a page or a portion of a page and then flip around in the book, only to stop for a moment to look a while at another page. On September 19th, 2010 she did something similar but this time got up and got another book and preceded to do the same thing but she often went forwards and backwards to read disconnected pages in the book. Both Dasjah and Yusef spent more time at the library trying to find a different chapter book to read but this also seemed to be another attempt to be positioned publically as engaging in the good reader behaviors. Yusef, especially as Ms. G reported, “was always getting up to go to the library and trying to pick out a new book” even when they were working on something entirely different. Yusef went so often to the library Ms. G was often observed saying things like “the library is off-limits” when she saw Yusef returning to the library multiple times during the same hour. When I asked Ms. G about this: “She said he goes to the library and gets books and pretends to be reading them but he just looks through them. Then I would see him a little later back at the library again.” I labeled these actions as “fake reading” where students appeared to be engaging in the reading of chapter books but in reality may not have been making any meaning about the story.
Yusef and Fake Reading

Yusef had started school a week and a half later than the other students. The first day that I saw him in the classroom, Yusef looked up at me with a smile that went from ear to ear. “Do you want to see my book?” he had said to me. (as he held out his red Diary of the Wimpy Kid Book (Field Notes September 3rd, 2010). For months after that I continued to observe that he kept this same book often in his desk and if there was ever a moment for him to independently read, this was a book to which he would often turn. When I did our reading interview together, upon my request, he brought books he was currently reading over to the table where we were to work. Even though this interview occurred in December I still noticed he had the red Diary of the Wimpy Kid Book. “I like this one. It’s funny” was his stated reason for this choice.

During his reading interview, when I asked him why he thought the Diary of a Wimpy Kid was funny, he didn’t recall the event verbally or even name the characters of the story as the other focal students had with a similar question. He went straight to describing the pictures of individual events

Yusef: Yeah, uh I’ll show you. Where’s the...oooh, there’s the funny part. Whap, whap his face.
Ms G: Why did he whap his face?
Yusef: I do not know.
Ms G: What does that say there?
.... Yusef reads aloud from the graphic in the book...
Camille: So, you like to read books because they make you laugh?
Yusef: Yeah, I’m just lookin’ at these.

He pointed to what he called a “funny” picture and even was able to display his “decoding” of the words around the graphic, but upon Ms. G’s overall comprehension question: why did he whap his face, Yusef wasn’t really sure, even though he has had this book in his possession on and off for four months.
Upon my observations of him over time, I began to uncover a few things about Yusef—which might explain this. First, Yusef spent a significant portion of time outside of his classroom. He was part of what Ms. G called her “squirrely” boys, whom were all considered the “low readers” and received pull-out literacy intervention instruction in a separate classroom for 45 minutes everyday. Yusef was also the only ELL student in Ms. G’s class who actually received English-as-Second Language services from the school, for which he was pulled out of the classroom for 30 minutes a day for four times a week. Furthermore, he also was pulled out of the classroom for 30 minutes everyday for extra math instruction. Compared to other students who remained in the classroom throughout the day, he seemed to have little to no time where he could even have the opportunity to read this book or any other independent reading book. While I did observe Yusef a few times, sneaking this book out and “clandestine reading” while Ms. G was teaching another lesson, I characterized Yusef’s clandestine reading differently than the deeply engaged clandestine reading done by the “always readers” in the middle group like Nick and Febea and in the high group like Jason, Paarth and Ino. In the few chances I observed when Yusef had a chance for independent reading, he seemed much more focused on flipping through the page and occasionally looking at the many graphic pictures in his books (Diary of a Wimpy Kid is more akin to a graphic novel so that was a favorite) and less about making meaning. Thus, I observed that when supposedly reading chapter books that other students in the class were reading, Yusef seemed to be involved in “fake reading.”

Only later through his introduction to other graphic novels of the four Shakespeare plays did I begin to see his propensity towards the visual and multimodal meaning-making supports available from graphic novels. For during the time period where he did have access to the Shakespeare graphic novels, I observed Yusef sitting for long periods of time (20-30 minutes) deeply engaged in reading the words from the graphic novels, even though they contained original Shakespeare text. He would turn to others, Ms. G or me and showed and read different phrases and words that he knew or make attempts at trying
to read whole conversations and he also talked about the characters and interactions depicted on that page. Thus, Yusef’s changes from fake reading to more engaged reading within graphic novels helped me to look beyond only his seemingly fake reading, and focus more on locating what it was about the structures around reading—the kind of story, the collaborative inquiry and excitement about the stories, the ongoing social and multimodal supports—that were (or weren’t) made available to him which could help sustain this authentic desire to engage in and comprehend texts.

**Limitations of Ino’s position as a highly fluent reader**

In contrast to the stories of the labeling of Dasjah and Yusef as less-than fluent readers because Ino and her group were considered highly fluent readers, there were certain expectations and practices that may have limited the Ino’s further growth in reading comprehension. (*Ino only showed 5 points in total growth on her reading comprehension scale score for the whole year and the three highest students in fluency in the class actually showed negative overall growth.*) The practices of the reading groups and outside of the reading groups during independent reading and seat work continued to demonstrate the assumption about the highly fluent readers—that they are already able to read for deepening understanding during independent reading. Being able to read for deepened understanding would include independently using higher order thinking and extensive comprehension strategies and being able to infer and authentically appropriating new vocabulary from incidental exposure to words once or twice in reading (See Incidental Vocabulary Exposure section for a detailed analysis of the limitations for her vocabulary development in the next section)

Because of these assumptions Ino’s group spent significantly less time in reading group with Ms. G than the low and middle reading groups. They spent relatively more time doing independent or partner work and independent reading (which besides dramatic inquiry were the most engaging activities according to the focal students) which probably attributed to her being able to maintain the social status as a high reader and in continuing to gain more fluency. However, without immediate feedback and mediation of the
teacher Ino may not have been pushed to create a deepened understanding or multiple interpretations of the texts or she may not have been pushed in truly appropriating the complex vocabulary. Secondly, in the data collected when she did have face time with the teacher where the “good readers club” were all reading the same text together, Ino and her peers seemed to be involved in the process of maintaining the high reader status by continuously displaying her knowing and fluency skill both to Ms. G and the other “high readers. Rather than focusing on authentic inquiry questions or motivated towards deepening their understanding.

Another key component of comprehending a text is recognizing the meaning of words being read. During the displays of oral reading fluency and upon incidentally coming upon a word Ms. G thought might be difficult she asked the group what they thought a word meant. The Incidental Exposure to Vocabulary Section offers the related analysis about how students dealt with this question as this and other ways structuring talk around unknown vocabulary gave variable access to the focal students depending on their reading group membership.

**Small Reading Groups & Incidental Exposure to Vocabulary**

“What does that word mean?”

One of the other primary intentions of Ms. G’s reading groups involved incidental discussions of the meanings of less frequently read or heard vocabulary. Therefore, across my data and in all the transcribed samples of reading groups some version of a typical vocabulary question was asked by the teacher during the oral reading portions such as—what does that word mean? A student would respond and through Ms. G’s evaluation the individual would get immediate feedback on the meaning of the new words in context. There were some similarities in how this interaction took place across reading groups. The three most highly used strategies for making sense of new vocabulary seen in the context of reading were: 1) Ms. G gave the meaning directly 2) I-R-E pattern was constructed where another student guessed at the meaning from their
own experience (with no connection to text or shared discussion of context) and Ms. G evaluated and then gave the correct answer if she thought it was needed; or 3) she coached them in using context clues by “looking at the words around the word.” (Field Notes 12/7/10)

During reading groups, a direct focus on a specific vocabulary word occurred only incidentally at the moment of crossing over the word while a student was reading aloud. I labeled this incidental vocabulary exposure because the group of students were not explicitly asked to review or return to this new understanding of the vocabulary during the event, the next day or in the next weeks. Thus the ELL students were not typically exposed to the new word across multiple occasions nor did they have opportunities to re-use the word or words in other contexts and across time. Vocabulary researchers have shown that English Language Learners (and other students) are not likely to truly appropriate new vocabulary by only being exposed to it incidentally in reading with no chance to return to it in other forms of performing understanding or using it in context (Carlo et al., 2004; Folse, 2004; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). The following subsections outline and illustrate some of the focal students access to or avoidance of these practices intended to help them gain vocabulary through incidental vocabulary exposure.

**High Readers & Vocabulary: What do you think?**

From the comparative analysis of the few samples I had been able to collect, when the high readers actually all focused on and read aloud portions of one text together, I noticed there was little direct instruction on vocabulary and word learning strategies. Ms. G did take time to point out unknown words from the text, and ask the typical vocabulary question: “What does that mean?” Typically, students in the high group responded with a display of their knowing of the word from memory (without explicitly using the text). With this group in particular, Ms. G would often make no evaluation or never fully disagree but would turn to another student and ask well what do you think [it means]? The other student or (students) would offer other possible descriptions of the word meaning. Thus, the typical I-R-E at least around vocabulary practiced seemed less
enforced during these high reading groups. The typical practice around unknown words is illustrated in the following two transcript excerpts from the same reading event on 1/24/11. At the start of this segment of reading group students in the high reading group were reading aloud page by page from the BFG by Roald Dahl. Where this transcript excerpt starts Ino was in the middle of reading her assigned page. It’s important to note Ino does not answer or seem to attend to the vocabulary questions. This happened even in the first segment when Ino originally had the speaking floor because she was the “reader” at the time.

47 Ino: He closed the lid picked up the suitcase in one hand, took the pole with the net on the end in the other hand and marched towards the entrance of the cave. As soon as he was outside the BFG set off across the great hot yellow wasteland where the blue rock lay and the dead trees stood and where, where all of the other giants were skul/

48 Ms. G: /skulking/

49 Ino: ...(reading aloud) skulking around.

50 Ms. G: What’s skulking about? Skulking?

51 Paarth: Walking around?

52 Ms. G: Well it might be walking but...(looks at Jason)

53 Jason: pacing

54 Ms. G: pacing.

55 Ino: (continues reading) Sophie squatting…

... (Ino continued until the end of the page. Other students read aloud by taking turns page by page. Brooke then read but was interrupted by Ms. G to ask the following incidental vocabulary question.)

103 Ms. G: I have a question for you the word menace here. There was an air of menace about them. What do you think menace means?

104 St: (Megan, Brooke immediately raise hands. Once Ino notice
the other girls’ gaining the floor signal, Ino quickly raises her hand.)

105 Ms. G: Do you have a prediction of what menace means? Brooke?

106 Ms. G: Menace. There’s an air of menace about the giants.

107 Brooke: (shows her idea with her face a downward glance meant to be a “menacing” look)

108 Ms. G: ooo.

109 Ino: (looking through book) There’s 66 pages.

110 Ms. G: What do you think?

111 Megan: Anger

112 Ms. G: Anger

113 Ms. G: What do you think? (looks first to TP who doesn’t respond)

114 Jason: trouble

115 LG: trouble, yeah, trouble/ So think about it. Have you ever seen a gang of people maybe in the movies, or maybe on the playground?/

(BFG by Roald Dahl, High Reading Group 1/24/11)

In both 50 and 103, Ms. G asks the question: “what do you think _____ means?” In response to the first question, Paarth (51) and Jason (53) both offer potential meanings for skulking. Then in the second segment, Brooke offers a non-linguistic meaning (107) and Megan and Jason verbally offer two other potential meanings (111, 114) for menace. At the end of both of these transcript excerpts, Jason, whom most was often positioned by Ms. G and by other students as “knowing everything” offers a display of knowing about both vocabulary words. Ms. G evaluates and accepts Jason’s answers both times as a good enough answer because she moves on to the next portion of the reading group. Secondly, as I had seen in other data on this reading group, Ms. G gives them no coaching on word learning strategies.

Ino Avoids Displays of “Not Knowing”
Ino did not offer any ideas for potential definitions of the words in the above sample nor did she throughout entire reading event. Within other data on Ino’s participation in reading group, this proved to be typical where Ino would almost seemed to be purposefully avoiding asking or answering questions about vocabulary and language. For example in line 109 above, Ino interrupts the discussion of vocabulary entirely which first makes publicly visible that she is not interested nor attending to the vocabulary discussion and only makes visible her interest in considering the length of the book. Therefore, she removed herself entirely from the vocabulary discussion and normally where she tends to desire a space to display her knowing, when the reading group procedure turned toward vocabulary she rarely participated verbally unlike other students such as Jason who often implemented his displays of vocabulary knowing successfully.

Across the data corpus, I noticed that Ino did not take risks to ask authentic questions or take guesses at words she didn’t already think she knew. She actually tended to avoid direct vocabulary conversations during reading events altogether and was rarely observed asking any kind of language or vocabulary questions during non-dramatic reading events. Ms. G confirmed this evidence in our final conversation.

**Ms. G:** I don’t think Ino ever asked for help on reading or a language assignments.

**Camille:** Hmm. Well that’s what I noticed too about her she never asked you any questions about anything [related to reading/language]

**Ms. G:** Except for how many pages to read and that kind of thing. There was one word ladder thing that she asked about but a lot of kids were asking for help with that. Her questions were about what she was ‘supposed to be doing.’ You’re right, she never asked questions about language.”

(Final Teacher Interview, 6/11/11)
After my initial exploratory ethnography, I began to wonder what it was about this classroom culture of reading that may have been holding her back from taking the risk to ask questions or hypothesize about language. Evidence from the dramatic reading events though disconfirmed this pattern about Ino. This issue of closing or opening for Ino to publically offer authentic inquiry about language became central to understanding the difference between the two cultures. Therefore, here I will offer some of my analysis that Ino’s positioning in the “good reader’s club” my have actually limited her access to more vocabulary and strategies for word learning in context. Her positioning seems to be influenced and perpetuated by the other practices and values implicitly present in a culture of comparison such as high values on displays of knowing and gaining the speaking floor. As a result Ino used related social positioning such as avoidance strategies and pretending to know even if you don’t which may explain her low growth over the course of the year.

Since I also had spent considerable time with Ino doing informal reflections and one-on-one interviews, I noticed that Ino seemed to be adept at “displaying knowing” when she felt assured that she could just ventriloquate the teacher talk or in other words, imitate something she had been taught by one of her teachers for that would most certainly ensure her a display of good knowing. For example when I was doing her reading interview, Ino recalled the events of a portion of the book Igraine the Brave to me. After explaining the book the following exchange occurred:

68 Camille:  *Do you like that book?*

69 Ino:  *not so much. It’s just about things I already know. It doesn’t teach any lessons.*

70 Camille:  *Is that why you read books?*

71 Ino:  *yeah probably to learn a lesson, or just to have fun, or to get information.*

72 Camille:  *so you have lots of reasons you read books.*
In lines 69 and 71 Ino seems to be “ventriloquating” teacher language when questioned about why she reads books. The way that she spoke she seemed to be repeating it as a list and in a similar tone and form that a teacher possibly had presented this information to her. When I asked Ms. G about this behavior using this example, Ms. G agreed and explained that the three reasons for reading that she states in line 71 are almost verbatim from the district’s list of reading goals which is supposed to be taught to students (Final Teacher Interview, 6/11/11). When the other focal students answered a similar question they did not answer in such a “teacher-like” display of knowing but instead they authentically answered the question. Yusef told me he chose to select and read one of his chapter book because he thought the dragon in that story might “be like the one from Shrek” and another book he had chosen because he thought it was “funny.” (Yusef Reading Interview 12/5/10)

As part of my recursive analysis, I returned again to my data corpus on Ino. When I began to re-watch this portion of the video clip shown in the transcript excerpt above, I attended to Ino’s and others body language, talk and actions. Returning to line 104, I noticed Ino’s seemingly tentative actions in response to Ms. G’s question about what menace means. She hesitantly raised her hand only after observing that the two other girls had made a much faster, more confident signal for the speaking floor. In the instance portrayed in line 104 above Ino seemed possibly to have “faked” her knowing by signaling she did indeed know the correct answer but she waited until she was certain others would be called on by Ms. G before she raised her hand and would thus be forced to verbalize her possible lack of knowing of the word, menace. Ino possibly sought another risk-free space where she can safely raise her hand and thereby still to appear to know by joining the competition to respond to Ms. G but she also had safety through realizing the two other girls will most likely be called on by Ms. G because they made the quickest signal for gaining the speaking floor.

Another way she used these social positioning strategies in reading group seemed to be by avoiding responding or attending to language question but still playing the “good
student” by comparing herself to the behaviors of others. Having spent extensive time with Ino, throughout the school year, I came to understand Ino as a student who definitely sought the special attention of the adults in the room and consequently desired opportunities to display her knowing and to display herself as the good student. She worked extra hard at implementing social positioning strategies that maintained this perception, often at the detriment of her authentically taking part in learning opportunities. In the following transcript excerpt Kiley is not following the correct procedures for sitting in reading group. Kiley seemed to be doing a abnormal set of movements where she crossed her legs in her chair and held her fingers out as if mediating. Because she was the only one in the group who had already read all of the pages in the chapter the group is reading together, Kiley seemed to want to make it publically known that she really ‘didn’t need to pay close attention’ like the other students. She seemed to be doing these behaviors to publically display that she herself as the best reader, even among the highest readers. Prior to the following excerpt, the other students and Ms. G had either not noticed or had been ignoring Kiley’s actions for most of the time but in this excerpt Ino points out this disruption of the reading group procedure in a highly public way, which forces Ms. G’s attention to Kiley’s behavior.

116  Kiley: holds hands up fingers together (a signal of a meditation pose)
117  Ino: this chapter is way too long/
118  Ms. G: Have you ever seen a gang of people that when you look at them you think they might be trouble?
119  Ino: (stage whispers and overtly looks under table at Kiley) What is SHE doing?
120  Ms. G: Have they ever looked menacing or mean?
121  Jason: Sometimes
121  Ino: (Ino continues to come up and look at Ms. G and then put her head entirely under the table while the rest of students except Kiley sit in the expected way looking at Ms. G)
122  Ms. G: Have you ever seen that?
Ms. G: (seems to notice Ino’s signaling of someone else’s incorrect behavior and then looks at Kiley) Kiley, we are not doing that at reading group. OK. We are discussing the BFG. OK./

In line 119 and again in line 121 Ino publically notices Kiley’s own disruption of the procedural display. Even though Ino technically disrupts the procedure herself, she seemed to try to use her own turn at talk to display this “disruption” of the norm by Kiley and thereby use it as another opportunity to reposition herself in a better comparative light than Kiley as well as to avoid the language questions about menacing.

For Ino, being able to perform herself as a full member of the “good readers club” may have been made to seem imperative by a culture where displays of knowing are highly valued by the teacher and other “good readers.” Her work in reading group was far from learning new words or increasing her reading comprehension strategies and instead Ino focused only on the things that she was certain she could most readily display with complete competence. Ino also seemed to created strategies to avoid performing actions which potentially could reveal any possible lack of knowing and thereby threaten her high social status in the good readers club. She also implement avoidance strategies that focused attention on other students in her group not doing the right thing.

Because Ino had already been performing as and positioned by others as “such a great reader” her actions and talk seemed to point to her need to maintain this high status. From Ino’s vantage point, to ask a language question and thereby admit she didn’t know would be a huge social risk for her. Ino figured out how to use social positioning strategies to continue to perform herself as and perpetuate her positioning as a good student through “always doing what she is told” and to help her maintain her status as a “good reader.”
High Readers Already “Know all the words” & Limitations on Ino’s Vocabulary

Ms. G described Ino as “one of my highest readers” and couldn’t it believe it when Ino’s second grade teacher had shared how much Ino had struggled with reading prior to third grade. During reading groups when Ino was asked to read aloud she could read whole pages of text fluently with little to no word decoding mistakes. Because she had positioned herself and others positioned her as a “good reader” she believed herself to “know all of the words” In an example from my field notes (12/6/10) she was highly upset when she had to work with Yusef. She refused to work with him even after much coaxing. Later, she explained to me why she didn’t want to work with him.

Ino: It’s not that I don’t like Yusef. It’s just, it’s just that he can’t read all the words right.

Camille: Don’t you remember before when you went to ESL and you were learning English and maybe sometimes you had a hard time remembering some words?

Ino: No, because I know all of the words.

Potentially because she had come so far to stake her claim as a competent reader, writer, listener and speaker of English, it seemed that many of her actions within this culture made visible her need to be absolutely sure that she won’t fail at a display of knowing before she makes a completely confident claim or takes a risk in admitting that she doesn’t know a word.

Ino’s Vocabulary & the Limiting Power of the Good Readers’ Club

Because Ino seems to be overly concerned with maintaining her status as a good reader she is a particularly interesting case for considering this issue of advanced ELLs access to appropriating new vocabulary. Even though I knew Ino was classified as a “very skilled reader” and an advanced-level English Language Learner, research has shown that many ELLs who have done relatively well on reading assessments compared with their non-
ELL peers up through third grade, tend to be tripped up by the complex demands of vocabulary and academic English needed for continued reading success in the upper elementary grades and beyond (Gandara et al., 2003). On the state’s standardized reading assessment at the beginning of the year, Ino scored overall in the Accelerated range with 7th highest composite score in the class. She showed her reading processes and literary texts areas were above proficient and her informational text scores were at proficiency. The only area where she received a below proficient score was in vocabulary. Yet, Ino’s participation in these reading groups seems to limit her opportunities to gradually shape the meanings of words and to appropriate word learning strategies that she could use in her own independent reading. Instead she seemed to be consumed in social positioning strategies and avoidance of being seen as “not knowing” which might happen if she took a risk to ask an authentic question or make a hypothesis about the possible meaning of word without complete certainty of its correctness and other social positioning strategies.

Folse in his (2004) review of literature on vocabulary development for second language learners pointed to the necessity that ELLs must be active in inferring the meaning of words in their second language, in order to authentically appropriate those words. Folse cited language researchers such as Hulstijn (as cited in Folse, 2004) who showed experimentally that when second language learners are reading and trying to comprehend a text, “they are more likely to remember the form and meaning of a word when they have inferred its meaning by themselves than when the meaning is given to them (p.74)” Unfortunately, the culture of comparing reading skills has caused at least in some part, Ino to take herself completely out of such a possibility of gradually shaping meaning of new words in her own way. By avoiding the attempts at drawing inferences and taking risks with making sense of new words, she may not be getting an opportunity to build up her complex vocabulary repertoire.

Hulstijn (as cited in Folse, 2004) made a key caveat to this notion that second language learners need to actively and gradually shape meanings on their own. Hulstijn pointed out
that when doing this active inferring within a reading context, second language learners also lack the extensive vocabulary and in-depth word knowledge and so they are just as likely to infer an incorrect meaning of an unknown vocabulary word when no cue or feedback about its meaning has been given.

In other words, it could be considered an affordance for ELLs to learn vocabulary in context within the small reading group events I observed because the teacher was there to give immediate feedback on meanings. However, this leads into the second pattern of limitations that I noted in regards to the focal students opportunities to learn and appropriate new academic vocabulary. In the instructional intention of creating incidental vocabulary exposure as observed in this classroom, the teacher often gave one person immediate feedback. Yet, the other students did not have to actively do anything with the word or word meaning in the moment nor did the group ever return to use the new words to better understand the text or even just to create a review of newly learned vocabulary. This type of incidental word exposure that occurs asks students to notice the form and meaning of word at least once or twice in the moment but it does not explicit ask Ino or other students to retrieve and re-use the word form and meaning in other instances. In the reading group events, the incidental word exposure never goes beyond the individual’s display or guess that occurred in the initial I-R-E pattern. Greater appropriation and depth of word knowledge could be constructed if the focal students had been expected to directly practice, review and reuse the new words just encountered in the reading group at other times either before, during and after the reading group besides the moment of incidental exposure to the new word and by asking them to review and retrieve them on other days and opportunities to creatively use them in new contexts.

In the next sub-section, I discuss how the low and middle reading groups spent much more time than the Ino’s high reading group, negotiating unknown word meanings together. In the low and middle reading groups, Ms. G did give many definitions of words she also offered at times explicit modeling and students were asked to use context clues as the key word learning strategy. Yet, using local context clues was the only word
learning strategy taught. In other words, it seemed that the high reading group was
assumed to gain new vocabulary from single exposure to words. Secondly, the high
readers were assumed to have acquired appropriate word learning strategies
independently so there was very little push for them to continue to have access to
modeling or guided practice with a wide variety of strategies for attacking new words in
context. The low and middle reading groups were assumed to need more help with
knowing words and the best strategy for them to acquire new words during reading was
for them to guess from the context immediately surrounding the words.

**Middle & Low Groups: Using Local Context Clues as only Word Learning Strategy**

The interactions around new vocabulary during the low and middle reading groups
seemed to focus the students on guessing and thus displaying prior knowledge of word
meanings or getting meanings of words from others. During this practice intended to
offer incidental vocabulary exposure, the interactional pattern between teachers and
students followed the typical I-R-E. Ms. G turns during these interactions most often
revolved around giving meanings or evaluating an individual’s guess at a meaning, at
times and students implemented strategies for gaining the floor and displays of knowing
as a result. However, at times and only with the low and middle reading groups, Ms. G
would also coach the students in using and metacognitive awareness of one word learning
strategy which was using context clues.

The earlier transcript excerpts from 1/26/11 helped set up an illustration of this pattern in
the middle group. The middle reading group used Geronimo Stilton #37 book from the
series on 1/26/11. The series of Geronimo Stilton books was supposedly written and
narrated in the first person by Geronimo Stilton himself. This particular text portrayed
Geronimo talking after he had passed out during an all-day bicycle race through the
Arizona desert. The character at one point talks about having parched lips and being
dehydrated. During this reading event, the following vocabulary discussion occurred
around the words *dehydrated* and *parched*. Ms. G starts of this transcript excerpt from
1/26/11 by reading aloud the next sentence in the reading aloud rotation. Ms. G follows this turn with another turn initiating a typical I-R-E interactional pattern around new or less frequently used vocabulary.

166 Ms. G: My lips were parched. I was completely dehydrated and I had a high fever.

167 Ms. G: What does parched mean?/

168 St: *(Nicole W hand up high, Febea and Rose-Davey hand halfway up)*

169 Ms. G: Or dehydrated?

170 st: *(6 students hands held all of the way up and Lots of ooos)*

170 Nicole W: *(whispers to Ms. G)* I know what dehydrated is.

171 Ms. G: Do you know what dehydrated is?

172 Nicole W: Its when you don’t have enough water and your body um… just gives up because of that.


174 Rose-Davey: That means that you are worn out and you just want to give up.

175 Ms. G: *(looks away with head down) MMmm. I am kind of parched right now actually)*

176 Nicole W: *(hand held high again, Ms. G looks at her)* she’s kind of thirsty

177 Febea: Your thirsty. And you.

178 Rose-Davey: There’s a water fountain (motions).

179 Ms. G: If my lips are parched, then they’re dry.

180 Bayley: My lips are always dry.

181 Ms. G: That’s parched. OK. *(looks at Tori to signal her turn to read)*

182 Tori: Cheese slices

183 Ms. G: Rose-Davey

184 Rose-Davey: Oh/ I felt really sick.

185 Ms. G: Can you read that cursive? (to Nicole W)

186 Nicole W: yeah and must/ I must.. I must not have had enough water to
Ms. G: Ok stop right there for a second. If we didn’t know what the word dehydrated meant what words in there-can we use as context clues to help us know what dehydrated means.

St: (Rose Davey, Nicole W and Tori hold hands up high) Ooh/

Ms. G: Everybody should look in their book and find the word that tells us what dehydrated means. Or words that mean/tell us what dehydrated might mean. There’s a sentence or a group of words that would tell us what dehydrated means.

(Ithe three girls continue to hold hands up but now Febea, Dasjah and Fredia hold their hands up)

Ms. G: That’s called using context clues.

Ms. G: What words would it be?

KM: Uh, the ones ### blue

Ms. G: Yeah the ones in blue. [**]

chorus: (Ms. G starts but all join chorally) I must not have had enough to drink.

Ms. G: I must not have had enough water to drink. I hadn’t had enough water to drink that would be dehydrated. /Very good!

Ms. G: Let’s look-who’s turn was it [to read aloud next]? Dasjah?

(Geronimo Stilton #37-The Race Across America  Middle Reading Group 1/26/11)

**In this series of books, some words were given special coloration or rebus like pattern to help students comprehend the word meanings]

An individual student Nicole W. displayed her knowledge of the word dehydrated (170, 172) but the word parched seemed to be unknown at first by the majority of students (168). Ms. G took a guess from one of the typical guessers and consistent displayers of knowing in this group, Rose-Davey (174). In line 175, Ms. G evaluated Rose-Davey negatively by not responding explicitly to the comment and instead offering another
contextualized but verbal example “My lips are kind of parched right now” from which the group was expected to better infer the meaning of parched. In the following line 176, Nicole W. again displayed her knowing by offering another set of words associated with parched—“She’s kind of thirsty.” After a few more turns of negotiation with only 4 out of 10 students verbally participating, Ms. G coached all of the students to find the context clues that could have helped them solve the unknown word (189). Ms. G followed her turn by making the students metacognitively aware of the strategy that they are using context clues to solve meaning (190). Bayley’s response unclear response showed she did use the context clues from the book when she noticed the words written in blue. (*This particular series of books creates iconic shapes and colors in order to offer visual cues to the reader of the meaning of vocabulary). Ms. G evaluated Bayley’s response positively by repeating it: “Yeah, the one’s in blue” (193). Finally after all of this, the students seemed to become completely confident in their answer to Ms. G’s question about finding the relevant context clues for solving the meaning of the unknown word and they chorally responded by reading the only words written in blue “I must not have had enough to drink.” (193)

Across both the middle and low reading groups, I noticed similar patterns of a few students engaging in the “guessing of vocabulary words” and thereby again displaying their knowing as Nicole and Bayley did. On the other hand, Dajsah was not observed participating in these displays of knowing words or displays of prior experiences that could help with negotiating the meaning of the unknown word.

Secondly, if the teacher’s intention of this practice is to model methods to gain word knowledge from other texts, the only word learning strategy taught was about making sense of new words from local context clues with little return to the larger understanding of the story. I am not arguing that using local context clues (e.g. words immediately around the text) should not be taught. Pedagogically, using context clues is more of a reading comprehension strategy that works particularly well in the moment for learners who already have a large set of prior knowledge and related cultural experiences and a
large vocabulary already from which to guess these words (Folse, 2004). This may have been the case of most of the higher readers in this classroom (though Ino’s vocabulary knowledge was questionable.)

The pattern observed of teaching local context clues as the only word learning strategy is particularly an issue when considering English Language Learners because research has shown that is precisely because they lack vocabulary knowledge that makes it hard for them to make full use of context clues to understand other unknown words (Carlo et al., 2004; Folse, 2004). In fact, as vocabulary expert Keith Folse (2004) points out guessing from context actually requires a vast vocabulary and “because the learning task is so great, it is unlikely the size of vocabulary needed to read efficiently in English can be acquired by word attack skills or context clues (p.81)”. Thus, it’s another example of the “Matthew Effect” where when it comes to the link between vocabulary and gaining in reading comprehension the rich get richer and the poor get poorer because “those students who know more words are more likely to be able to use those known words successfully to learn even more words from context” (Folse, 2004, p.82)

**Across Reading Groups: Little return to understanding**

A related issue is that the culture of comparison of reading skills and displays of knowing seems to rarely focus students on authentically returning to understanding nor on more in-depth word knowledge. It also limits their access to consistent modeling, guided and independent practice of a variety of word learning strategies. Since I was trying to answer the question what are the affordances and limitations for ELLS participation in these reading events, I created a codebook about teacher turns at talk and the related student responses, where I included all student responses in the reading events because the ELLs were observers of those responses. Using my initial hunches from my analysis of field notes, I coded responses to the teacher around whether or not the students response was used at the time or returned to later by the teachers and students in order to deepen their understanding or model comprehension strategies. Therefore my analytically coding of “displays of knowing” responses were coded as such only if the shared information was
never returned to for better understanding and textual meaning-making purposes either through the next turns, later in the reading event or in future reading events.

Therefore, in my recursive analysis across my entire data corpus on reading groups, I documented that very little to no time was spent during all three reading groups creating a shared context and/or predicting the kinds of vocabulary, language and issues that could come up in their reading. The displays of recall and prior knowledge were never used as resources for returning to and deepening understanding later in the reading event. From the 1/26/11 example, more global context clues and the larger meanings of the setting and events story could also have been used as an additional strategy for understanding unknown words. Returning to the transcript excerpt (XXX) from the same reading event and prior to the above discussion around Geronimo’s dehydration there is actually a brief discussion between Ms. G and Bayley of the dry, desert climate of Arizona which could have been used to return students to a deepened understanding of the two unknown vocabulary words—

dehydration and parched. The global contextual information surrounding the event in the story and first noted in the display of knowing by Bayley could have provided the students a shared context. By mediating the students to return to the shared context they may have needed less support from Ms. G and from the book’s special font, as they could have considered the prior knowledge of Arizona’s climate in understanding dehydration and parched as well as deepening conceptual understanding of what had happened to Geronimo Stilton in his bike race across the desert.

Beyond Bayley’s display of prior knowing, there is little way to know if the other nine students already knew about the Arizona desert prior to them overhearing Bayley and Ms. G’s conversation or if her response did indeed create the desired outcome. However, if they did or didn’t “know” isn’t the issue, using this information later to help make meaning of the text is what mattered in my analysis of the result of these cultural displays of knowing. As seen in the 1/26/11 example, during reading groups, there were often procedural displays which allowed the lesson to seem like it was accomplishing
something beneficial (e.g. activating prior knowledge), but there seemed to be no actual return to understanding.

Upon first considering the teacher’s instructional purpose in the I-R-E sequence between Ms. G and Bayley (21-24), I determined that soliciting prior experiences about Arizona may have been helpful in activating Bayley’s (and other students’) prior knowledge if this information was returned to in the service of understanding the meaning of the text later. However, in my analysis of the rest of the lesson there was no attempt to use this information to return to understanding. The information about Arizona’s climate was not returned to in order to help students better understand what they were reading (or would be reading). Instead the information shared by Bayley (23) was “put away and never returned to again” as Ms. G had reflected on the majority of her non-dramatic vocabulary instruction. The focal students could have been mediated towards more independent word learning with access to semiotic resources such as physically active and or visual ways to also interact with this information so that later when they were faced with making sense of a person riding for hundreds of miles through the Arizona desert and words such as dehydrated and parched, they could use their shared understanding of the climatic information about Arizona to return to a deeper understanding of the unknown words and the chapter in the story. At the same time, it would also give Ms. G a way to authentically model another kind of contextualized, word learning strategy of using prior knowledge, global contextual clues and synonyms to make sense of new unknown words.

One thing that Ms. G and I began to recognize together (Teacher Interview 6/6/11) was that continuous IRE patterns perpetuate this notion that “good reading” is almost equivalent with displays of oral reading fluency and good knowing. Yet, displays of knowing do not actually seem to help the speaking the rest of students to understand the text any better or give more access to shared background knowledge and language nor overall comprehension strategies that they can use in their own independent reading. An alternative practice Ms. G began to develop from her work with reading
comprehension through the dramatic reading instruction specific events was in finding ways prior to reading the texts for all of the students to actively participate in building and embodying a shared background knowledge of the setting and characters. While reading students became active participants in inquiring about possible unknown vocabulary and the authentic comprehension tasks ask students to use that prior knowledge many times to return to understanding the text throughout their meaning-making process and over time. An example of this that possibly could have happened with activating the prior knowledge in the event seen above is for students to stand up and make an embodied representation (frozen still image) of bicycle riders in the Arizona desert.

**Incidental Vocabulary & Limits on Opportunities to Appropriate Language**

Overall, the practice of incidental vocabulary exposure when compared with the literature on vocabulary development for ELLs seemed to actually have limited all of the focal students’ opportunities to truly appropriate the vocabulary and be able to recall the relevant meanings in other contexts and use them for their own purposes later. Across all of the reading groups students had many incidental opportunities to face unknown words in the context of reading but the high reading group received no direct instruction on word learning strategies and the low and middle groups received some coaching on how to attack unknown words while reading but they were explicitly taught only one (possibly less than effective) word learning strategy --using local context clues.

The high reading group was given far greater access to rich literary and imaginative language and vocabulary because they read significantly more high quality children’s literature novels during reading group (e.g. *BFG* by Roald Dahl and *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, by Eleanor Coerr) and through teacher selected books offered to them for independent reading. The complexity of language and content of these children’s novels were quite different from the series books written for transitional readers as it pushed students to imagine situations and events far from their everyday
experience and expected them to make sense of more complex vocabulary and literary devices.

The concern for Dasjah and Yusef is that the books they were reading may have not exposed them to more complex vocabulary and content beyond their everyday experience. The concern for Ino though is that while she had far greater access to more complex language the lack of teacher mediation in returning to review challenging words from reading and little exposure to a variety of word learning strategies, may have given her little access to appropriate even more complex vocabulary later from all of the independent reading she was doing. In addition, there was no expectation that any of the students would return to understanding, review or re-use the new words from reading in creative ways and across other contexts.

As Carlo et al. (2004) pointed out this kind of “incidental vocabulary learning is not a reliable procedure for promoting vocabulary growth” as the learning of a new word from context could only happen if the word was “encountered eight times to be learned with high probability” (p.191). In stark contrast (Carlo et al., 2004) found that vocabulary knowledge for ELLs and their ability to solve unknown words in context could be increased when the following strategies are implemented; novel words are introduced through challenging texts, and through long-term engagement and review of words within the same curricular content and set of texts. Furthermore, the ELLs in the vocabulary intervention created by Carlo et. al (2004) were explicitly taught a wide variety of word learning strategies that were consistently used to infer the meanings of unknown words across the set of readings about a singular content topic without solely depending on local context clues. These strategies included morphological analysis (e.g. using word roots, affixes and suffixes); cross-linguistic comparison (e.g. using cognates from first language); and the possibility of polysemic meanings depending on different contexts in addition to strategies for inferring word meanings from context. (Carlo et al., 2004, p. 203).
In my present study, though. ELLs were often only exposed to the noticing of a new word once with no return to understanding or later reviews or varied uses of the vocabulary in other related or dissimilar contexts and they had little explicit instruction on a variety of word learning strategies. This contributed to limiting conditions for ELLs and other linguistically and culturally diverse learners to actively improve appropriate new vocabulary specific to the text. It limited their access to increasing their depth of word knowledge through reading, as well as may have limited their overall ability to comprehend the text at hand and other texts broadly.

**Word Study: Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**

As a result of the issues outlined in the last section about incidental vocabulary exposure, second language researchers strongly make the claim for explicitly teaching academic and literary vocabulary to English Language Learners. Therefore, during the exploratory phase of my research, I identified a reading event that seemed to be specifically intended to explicitly teach new vocabulary to all of Ms. G’s students. Two to three times a month Ms. G would create a Word Study lesson which would relate to a specific vocabulary acquisition goal with the intention of helping improve overall reading comprehension. The two reading events within Word Study were Word Study worksheets or workbooks and using the SMARTboard to review the lessons learned.

**“Getting Through” Vocabulary Lessons**

Vocabulary Lessons were done with the whole group sitting at their desks. Ms. G handed out pre-printed mini-books from an online source (Reading A-Z.com) or the students worked in the “Word Explorer” Workbook supplied by the district and aligned with the state reading achievement test. The second half of the year when the class had moved into a newly renovated classroom, they then had access to the digital SMART board where Ms. G structured various interactive morphological analysis activities by displaying models of word forms and students interactively dealt with lists of words containing the target feature (e.g. homophones, prefixes and suffixes.) The following
outlines the patterns of affordances and limitations for ELLs appropriating academic language and literacies as observed in these non-dramatic reading events specific to explicit vocabulary instruction.

**Modeling Targeted Form**

The Word Study lessons were highly teacher mediated and began with Ms. G asking students to review what they can recall using an I-R-E from past lessons on similar topics. Individual students were asked to read aloud from the pre-printed lesson from the workbook or the preprinted lesson page on the SMARTboard. The other students followed along. The content of the beginning of the lesson typically modeled the correct use of the “skill” in morphological analysis being studied. The following is an example of the beginning of this type of Word Study lesson. The following transcript excerpt is an example of that I-R-E pattern during a SMARTboard lesson on suffixes:

1  Ms. G:  Today we’re going to continue some work we did on prefixes and suffixes we started in Word Explorer a couple of weeks ago. Remember we were doing a prefix.
2  Ms. G:  What’s a prefix? Let’s do the review.
3  st:  ###
4  Ms. G:  Right. Something added at the beginning of the word that changes the meaning of the word
5  Ms. G:  What’s a suffix, Dasjah?
6  Dasjah:  Part of a word that is behind the word that changes the word.
7  Ms. G:  Yep, it changes the word
8  Ms. G:  The suffix we are going to look at briefly today is the suffix –ly an –y (points to the SMARTboard –y and –ly) and then we’re going to look in our word explorer book as well
9  Ms. G:  Read that first sentence for us please, Megan.
10 Megan:  (*reads aloud from SMARTboard and the –ly is bolded in red*) Grandfather like the California’s lonely coast.
11 Ms. G: lonely seacoast.
12 Ms. G: lone, the word lone is the base with the suffix added to it.

(*Suffixes Lesson -y and –ly, Whole Group, 4.27.11*)

Following this Ms. G initiated and sustained a series of I-R-E interactions related to the targeted form of the word study. The students then wrote in answers if needed on their own papers or if using the SMARTboard the speaking student walked up to the SMARTboard and wrote in their answer. The following transcript excerpt is an example of that I-R-E pattern during the SMARTboard lesson on suffixes:

13 Ms. G: What’s the suffix of this word? (*points at Bayley*)
12 Bayley: -ly
13 Ms. G: -ly that’s right.
15 Ms. G: the suffix -ly means like, in the manner of
16 Ms. G: Who can think of another word that has a suffix –ly? Rose-Davey, what word are you going to write?
17 Rose-Davey: happily
18 Ms. G: happily, good choice.
19 st: like happily ever after
20 Ms. G: like happily ever after, yeah!
21 Rose-Davey: (*Rose Davey comes to the SMARTboard and writes the word happily*)
22 Ms. G: Let’s see if she can spell it right. Oops we got happy. We forgot the –i- in happily (*and adds the –i- appropriately*). We’re going to stick that –i- in there, in happily.
23 Ms. G: Can you think of another word?
24 st: (ooooh, Yusef and others hands highly outstretched)
25 Ms. G: Yusef?
26 Yusef: Friendly
27 Ms. G: Friendly is a great one.
28 Ms. G: Can you come up here and write that one. Nice Job
29 Yusef: (Yusef walks up to the board and writes friendly)
30 Ms. G: Do you know how to spell friend?
31 Yusef: (Yusef doesn’t verbally respond and just continues to write on SMARTboard)
32 Yusef: (when finished writing he turns around and says to students nearby) Is this right?
33 Ms. G: Nice job.
34 Ms. G: Um we need one more?

(Suffixes Lesson -y and –ly, Whole Group, 4.27.11 )

Other students then tried the same use of the targeted word part with other words while Ms. G gave immediate feedback on the semantic meaning. If possible the correct spelling of the word was given as in line 22 when Rose-Davey did not write the correct spelling of happily. However, during the students work on the workbooks this immediate feedback was less possible from the teacher unless the teacher and student talked about the question directly in a private conversation or she called on someone to read and respond to the question aloud.

Affordances of Guided Practice in Vocabulary

The majority of the time spent within the word study lessons seemed to be in interacting with instructional models and actively participating in guided practice with vocabulary and word study exercises. After the modeling of the word form and procedures, students continued to work through the workbook, mini-book or SMARTboard activity pages with Ms. G’s mediation. The following transcript excerpt also from 4/27/11 illustrates the pattern I observed where Ms. G was able to quickly give the appropriate feedback to students’ misunderstandings about word meanings or ways of spelling words using the targeted word form. Prior to this transcript, the group has been considering the addition
of –ly to the base word, chill. Demetrius was up at the board writing his response—chilly.

60 Marquell W: You know when it’s winter and you need something to warm you up, like my mom be making chili.
61 Ms. G: Oh, that’s a different kind of chili. Isn’t it?
62 Marquell W: Yeah
63 Ms. G: like with beans in it. This word is: cold and chilly outside.
64 Ms. G: (looks at next word final____) Look at the next word. Tell us what it would be when you add your suffix on the end. Ino?
65 Ino: -ly
66 Ms. G: (shakes head up and down) ok. What’s that word going to be?
67 Ino: finally
69 Ino: (Ino comes to SMARTboard writes finally on the board)/
70 st: I thought it was ###
71 Ms. G This one you do add –ly onto it.

In line 67 Ino gives a verbal response about the correct word and Ms. G evaluates. One unidentified student seems unclear about the spelling of finally (70) but Ms. G’s response (71) clears up the confusion over the correct spelling. This structure sets up students to get immediate feedback both on the targeted word form and spelling but also on word meanings as seen in the exchange (60-63) between Ms. G and Marquell W—where Marquell originally confused the homophone chili with the targeted word chilly. Such word meaning feedback though happens only if a student is willing to take a risk at offering such spontaneous suggestions and extratextual and intertextual connections as Marquell W did in line 60.

The novelty of the Word Study work with the SMARTboard instigated and sustained high levels of engagement by the students. Ms. G shared with me:
“The kids like doing the SMARTboard because they like the novelty of coming up and getting to write on it.” (Informal Reflection 2/7/11)

Secondly, the students were not only highly engaged by the technology but the repetitive patterns of the activities made it a relatively risk-free environment to try out a display of knowing. As seen in Figure 4.4 below, Ino gets to not only speak but visually display her knowing to the teacher and others in a very safe setting.

![Figure 4.4: Ino adds a suffix to the SmartBoard](image)

In the interaction seen in Figure 4.4, its safe for Ino to engage in language “questions” because all of the “fill-in-the-blank” response were accomplished in highly similar ways only using different words and either adding an –i- or two –lls or only one –l- Thus, she could be almost certain of her public display of competence by merely imitating the procedure of other students.

**Independent Practice**

Finally after working through the modeled and guided practice portions there often was some time for independent practice of the skill such in using the targeted word form such as creating appropriate homophones or compound words from the same base word (e.g. some ➔ something, someone, etc.) or time for completing the rest of the vocabulary exercises in their workbook related to the focused skill (e.g. adding a specific suffix, 252
using context clues to infer word meaning.)  Sometimes students could work on these
with a partner but often they were done individually.  Figure 4.5 illustrates students
working independently in their Word Study workbooks.

Figure 4.5: “Word Explorer” Student Workbooks

**Teacher Turns at Talk**

Using the sample of vocabulary instruction from 4/27/11 and 3/18/11, I did an analysis of
the teacher turns at talk.  In that analysis I coded *Vocabulary Specific Talk* as any teacher
turns at talk that specifically referenced the meaning of vocabulary or asked students
questions about the meaning of a word, or focused specifically on a word part.  I coded
her turns at talk as *Vocabulary Spelling Talk* that related to gaining the correct spelling of
the vocabulary (e.g. “We forgot the –i- in happily” from line 22 above).  I coded all of
her turns at talk around procedures and evaluation that did NOT give students any more
information about recognizing words parts, spelling of vocabulary, or vocabulary
meanings as *Non-Vocabulary Talk*.  The graph in Table 4.5 visually illustrates the
proportional difference between *Vocabulary Specific Talk* and *Non-Vocabulary Talk*. 

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Table 4.6: Explicit Vocabulary Instruction—Teacher Turns at Talk

Significantly, more time was focused on non-vocabulary based talk such as in managing the students turns at talk or in evaluating a student’s answer than on vocabulary specific talk. While vocabulary is the obvious primary instructional purpose of explicit vocabulary instruction, the teacher spent a significant amount of her turns at talk managing the procedure. The procedure typically involved an I-R-E pattern between teacher and student as they filled in the appropriate boxes and thus there was little collaborative talk, where students worked out meanings with each other which also may have limited the active participation on the part of the focal students in regards to inferring meanings on their own and productive verbal output.

Limitations: Isolated and Random Vocabulary

The fact that students were getting explicit instruction and immediate feedback intended to promote vocabulary and word learning strategies was coded as a definite affordance for English Language Learners to participate in this type of explicit vocabulary instruction. However, as Ms. G and I discussed the relative affordances and limitations
of this Word Study as a practice, she noted that in order to focus on one particular word form (homophones, suffixes, etc.) the words used were in a “random list” and entirely isolated from any other language work they were doing. The students noticed and reviewed the vocabulary on the day of the lesson but they never returned to it. Ms. G explained that the new vocabulary was written onto “a random piece of paper that we just put away or we got it out once or twice but never again.” (Teacher Interview 6/11/11)

Word Study indeed gave ELLs much needed access to noticing word forms and explicit models and guided practice with word learning strategies. However, what it did not do was give the students a shared context nor many opportunities to gradually shape meanings in non-linguistic ways beyond verbal discussions. It did not give them a purposeful or authentic reason where the wanted and needed to return to many of these words in order to understand or make sense of other pieces of text or to re-use the words in new contexts and creative ways. The list of isolated vocabulary were used to teach and display a reading “skill” in the moment but the actually vocabulary was never returned to be used for understanding again.

In contrast, as Ms. G explained in her final interview the long-term fascination with Shakespeare’s words and the students constant use of the Word on the Wall during dramatic inquiry reading events became such a “powerful resource” over time as it pushed the students to make numerous intertextual connections and deeply insightful predictions and possibilities of interpretations. Instead of only seeing the vocabulary once or twice, they returned to it many times. Ms G reflected that the vocabulary “…was always there and with that vocabulary they were making statues with those words. It wasn’t just something that they looked at once, put away and never returned to again.”

Through the vocabulary lessons as individual skills-based reading events, ELLs were exposed to new words and noticing their forms but they were limited in their
opportunities to truly learn these words and maintain this word knowledge over time. Because the ELLs had limited access to what research as shown as necessary for long-term vocabulary acquisition--repeated exposures to new words, active negotiations and inferring of their meanings within a shared context and authentic conversation, opportunities for long-term retrieval and review, and explicit opportunities to appropriate and apply the newly learned words in other contexts, it is less likely that the words explicitly studied would be maintained in the ELLs long-term vocabulary repertoire.

Actually my negative case analysis from the dramatic reading events helped me to more clearly understand this issue. I was surprised by a few words in Yusef’s final Shakespeare word association assessment which he didn’t seem to be maintained in his vocabulary knowledge over the long term. When I did a closer analysis of the varied embodied experiences and amount of opportunities he had to return to those words, it seemed that he had less recall of some of the word meanings (e.g. traitor) that he had only seen or discussed once or twice even if he had used that target word appropriately once or twice in multimodal embodiments. For example in December he learned and embodied inquiry about traitors on 12/3 and 12/8 and on 12/10 he spontaneously re-used the new word traitor when asking a teacher-in-role as Macbeth—“Do you want to be a traitor?” However, I did not find any other instances of the class or Yusef returning to hear, see or re-use traitor in other contexts after December. During his word association, traitor was one of the few words he could not choose any relevant associations without any prompting from me. Yet on words that had been returned to many times either as mediated by the teacher, dramatic inquiry strategies or used again in other Shakespeare stories (e.g. victorious, valiant) or when he used a newly acquired vocabulary word as part of a spontaneous intertextual connection during other dramatic inquiries (e.g. vexation, false face, plague), he immediately responded to the word association tasks with high degrees of success on matching to all three associated words.

The limitations due to isolating the language from ongoing and long term inquiry, became particularly apparent when studying the contrasts between the non-dramatic and
dramatic reading practices. My findings about these striking differences between practices will be described in detail in Chapter 5.

**Culture of Performing Knowing & Getting Through the Text**

The culture of performing knowing and getting through the text was con-structed both by the existing structures and discourse around the way we “have always done reading” and by the students and teachers variable ways of socially positioning each other as readers both within the reading group and across the school day. The ways they went about the business of reading in the classroom seemed to relate to some of these differences and the social power related to performing as and being seen as a “good reader.” How they were able to perform themselves was not independent of the cultural and social expectations and assumptions about them based on their assumed fluency reading level.

The key affordances of the non-dramatic reading events, more face time with teacher (only in small reading groups), immediate feedback, and explicit metacognitive awareness and coaching of reading strategies, particularly using local contextual clues (at least for low and middle group).

Looking only at reading group as a non-dramatic reading event, any small group offers relatively more face to face time for students with their teachers, and this can be beneficial in many ways (e.g. immediate pronunciation feedback and coaching on reading strategies). However, I documented patterns which showed that students involved in reading groups were not spending significant time effectively engaging in purposeful and authentic reasons for comprehending text nor were they living through and engaging with the fictional stories and receiving instructional coaching as they worked through these processes. They had little access to ways to socially support each other in performing new multimodal literacy understandings. Instead they were more often competing for social positioning themselves. Even the students who remained silent helped to “get
through the procedural display of accomplishing the lesson. Over time, I began to realize, that in many ways structures of this classroom and in the larger school and community being seen as a good reader brought certain socially desirable outcomes which also simultaneously opened up students’ access to more academic challenge and growth while at the same time closed it down. Secondly, the social hierarchy and positioning led to often inauthentic conversations and restrained students authentic engagement with texts.

The procedural displays to get through the reading event, the social positioning work done through displays of knowing and the sustaining of an implicit “good readers club”, the lack of integration of texts over times and the isolating reading skills into separate sections of time helped to perpetuate the culture of comparing reading skills. This culture was characterized by reading events that pushed everyone more towards getting through the text and towards being able to display your knowing and membership as a “good reader.”

Using analysis that went across the majority of these non-dramatic reading events, I summarize below my documentation of the following patterns of limitations for the academic language and literacies development of English Language Learners. The following issues seemed to be created and sustained by the ongoing performance of a culture of comparing reading skills:

1) students spent a significant amount of time displaying knowing and implementing social positioning strategies with little relationship to meaning-making with texts, nor appropriating language and comprehension strategies to be use for their own purposes and academic success

2) maintenance of top-down transmission models of telling information and the use of lower order questioning, which further sustained displays of knowing
3) limited opportunity for ELLs access complex texts, vocabulary and literary language while preventing others from asking authentic questions

4) limited build up of a shared context of language and background knowledge about the setting, possible interactions and concepts before, during and after reading texts so as to increase the possibility of making intertextual connections

5) limited opportunities for ELLs to gradually shape word meanings non-linguistically and linguistically through multiple and repeated exposure to and re-use and creative application of unknown words

6) limited opportunities for ELLs to negotiate meanings and productive expressive output in substantive and authentic conversations using academic content language and through joint productive activity with peers on highly, challenging and purposeful reading comprehension tasks

7) limited opportunities for ELLs to authentically re-read for meaning and appropriate new academic language and word learning strategies across the curriculum and over the long-term

8) limited opportunities for ELLs to embody understandings and make higher order thinking visible through performing multimodal literacy understandings

In our unexamined ways of labeling and making assumptions about students in order to create the most effective reading instruction, we also have inadvertently helped to normalize and perpetuate certain skills-focused practices of reading which actually I documented in this study may have in many ways limited the access three English Language Learners needed to help them grow in their participation as critical and creative readers. The results of this mix between the imposed structures and ways of doing reading and the resulting improvisations’ of students and teachers and ways of gaining social status helped sustain one classroom culture of reading throughout most of the year.
Within this culture of comparing reading skills, interactions were marked by students competing to display themselves as fluent readers and good knowers (which was connected back to being good readers). And lastly, because they wanted to do nothing more but please their teacher who they so deeply respected and loved—they wanted to help her “get through” whatever reading lesson she had planned for them.
Chapter 5: Dramatic Inquiry Reading Events

In Chapter 4, I described the findings from my comparative analysis of some of the social and cultural practices made visible by the performances created during non-dramatic reading events. In this chapter I delineate my findings from comparative analysis of the social and cultural practices constituting and constituted by people’s performances during dramatic inquiry reading events. I also offer analyzed data that shows evidence of a shift in the students and teacher’s focus in classroom reading practices, especially by the end of the year.

Over time it became clear that the patterns of performances during reading events by both teachers and students co-constructed distinctly different kinds of reading practices related to dramatic inquiry than the kinds of reading practices associated with the non-dramatic tasks and reading events (e.g. reading groups, vocabulary workbooks, fluency program, independent reading). Consistently during dramatic reading events, the majority of students time was spent focused on active, purposeful and authentic reasons for engaging in reading and interpreting complex texts. The foundational reading competencies were never “practiced” as isolated, displays of skills in decontextualized texts, or with new language and random vocabulary which the students never returned to again. While I recognize that not all practices nor the overarching culture of comparing reading skills was entirely disrupted, by the end of the year, an altogether different classroom culture of reading had not only overlapped but seemed to move towards overtake the pre-existing classroom culture of reading. The students and teachers in the dramatic reading events playfully lived through the stories using dramatic inquiry tools and they collaboratively and performatively engaged in higher order thinking around the complex stories and texts of Shakespeare. This shared history of participation in dramatic inquiry reading practices
created an ensemble of learners whose repertoires of practice were highly characterized by a sense of collaborative, embodied inquiry and risk-taking.

In this chapter, I offer my overview of the dramatic reading events, followed by an outline of six additional categories that emerged through my analysis and seemed context specific to only the dramatic reading events. Then I will define the three overarching themes of my analysis of dramatic inquiry reading practices with an illustration of the cyclical and interrelated nature of multiple reading instructional practices created through the student’s participation in the dramatic inquiry reading events. Then I return to the six dramatic inquiry specific categories to delineate the social and multimodal supports made available for students to actively and purposefully live through the stories and interpret and inquire about the texts of Shakespeare’s plays.

**Play & Poetics Through Dramatic Inquiry**

Between 10:40-12:00 three to four days a week during the Shakespeare dramatic units, Ms. G implemented ensemble-based rehearsal room approaches and dramatic inquiry to read Shakespeare texts. During these dramatic inquiry reading events, adults and students alike used dramatic play to gain access to specific cultural background knowledge and to gain fluency as part of the playful meaning-making process. Though the teachers focus was not only on bringing dramatic play into the classroom reading events because its highly engaging for the students, the dramatic inquiry reading events focused on embodied inquiry which moved people outside of their everyday, familiar worlds and pushed all of the students to appropriate complex vocabulary and creative and higher order thinking processes. The typical dramatic reading practices were centered in dialogic inquiry instead of on reading skills. The ensemble was focused in their talk and movements together because they needed to collaboratively explore big inquiry questions and the interpretation of complex ideas of the plays. The entire ensemble actively and consistently used embodiment and other multimodal tools in order to sustain this ongoing inquiry.
The dramatic inquiry reading events seemed to be consistently positioning students in a complex process of reading for authentic understanding at the intersection of play and poetics. Returning to my adaptation of Conquergood’s (1989) framing, play is improvisation, self-reflection, deconstruction and reconstruction which can lead to innovation and new understandings of the world. The play used in dramatic inquiry used multimodal tools for making-meaning including but going beyond verbal ways of knowing (e.g. somatic, gestural, kinesthetic, aural, etc.). Through dramatic play students were able to build embodied experiences within their shared construction of the drama world (e.g. being in 8th century war between Norway and Scotland, or taking part in the coronation of a Scottish king) which lied both in the imagined-and-everyday space of the classroom at the same time. The play built and sustained high interest in the stories and provided a means for new concepts and language to be introduced, embodied and readily (and at times spontaneously) returned to over time by the students.

I determined the ensemble was not only involved in dramatically playing with and living through the stories and interpretations of text. Because of this work was characterized by inquiry around the interactions and themes in and across the plays of Shakespeare, students were pushed to represent their understandings and ways of making meaning across texts in creative ways (e.g. metaphorical sculpting the relationship between character using physical positioning and gesture, performing the thoughts of characters as if they are them, performing possible scenes or backstories). What I began to see as poetics in this ensemble was something that seemed much more than bringing more movement and dramatic play into the classroom (though that also had its own specific benefits). Conquergood’s (1989) performance category of poetics, suggests that poetics are the invented, socially constructed nature of human realities. An important component of the dramatic inquiry reading events was that students were in a constant state of poesis through their dialogic, embodied and creative interpretations within and across texts. They had consistent opportunities to dialogically bringing layers and layers of socially constructed texts, images, language and feelings into a public, socially recognized space.
Because the reading practices seemed to fall both at times in the realm of play (e.g. embodied experimentation, deconstruction, innovation) and in the realm of poetics (e.g. creation and recognition of social constructed nature of realities) the dramatic reading events were quite divergent from the typical ways of thinking about reading instruction. Over time the shift in reading practices not only shifted the performances of the reading events by teachers and students but it also contributed to a theoretical shift for Ms. G and me. My own thinking about texts and performances of reading shifted with this introduction of play and poetics over the course of the study. By the end of the year, similar shifts in thinking also were made visible in Ms. G’s new ways of talking about reading instruction.

**Additional Categories Specific to Dramatic inquiry**

Throughout my coding, I documented a pattern of overarching purposes for reading-specific instruction. Students were supported in three areas which fell across both non-dramatic and dramatic reading instructional practices: *Vocabulary, Fluency* and *Story Comprehension* but the ways these were experienced by students was highly divergent between the non-dramatic reading events and dramatic inquiry reading events. There were a few essential codes related to what teachers and students actually did and how they interacted which seemed to contribute to the overall cultural performances of wonder and inquiry. This set of codes were made readily visible across dramatic inquiry reading events but were very limited or not apparent at all during non-dramatic reading events.

These codes that emerged in the analysis of the dramatic inquiry events seemed to broadly expand the repertoire of instructional scaffolds that could be used by teachers and other adults. They also broadly expanded the multimodal and social meaning-making resources available to students and adults in the ensemble trying to make sense of Shakespeare’s plays together. I grouped these additional codes that became highly visible in dramatic reading events into five categories which are outlined in the following Table 5.1.
### Building Embodied Background Knowledge
Built in-depth social, cultural and historical background knowledge and shared embodied experiences with the settings and themes. Also used to generate intrigue and help students to invest in and connect to the characters and the drama world.

*(also seen in non-dramatic reading events but in relatively limited ways such as the teacher asking for individual displays of prior knowledge unrelated to the meaning-making process)*

### Embodied Story Comprehension
Shared embodied experiences and embodied interpretations of the story plot and characters with ability to talk back to and ask questions of the story.

### Authentic Oral Fluency & Re-Reading for Meaning
Explicit dramatic inquiry strategies used to support expressive and fluent reading and meaningful, re-readings as part of performances of specific text extracts.

### Appropriation of Vocabulary
Verbal and embodied inquiry supported students to gradually shape the meaning of words and phrases through repeated exposure and the students re-use of the words in linguistic and non-linguistic ways and in authentic contexts.

*(also seen in non-dramatic reading events but in relatively limited ways such as teacher asking for individual displays of prior knowledge and no repeated exposure to the words)*

### Embodied Higher Order Thinking & Comprehension Strategies
Explicit support for higher order thinking which specifically used embodiment as a means to incorporate reading comprehension strategies (e.g. making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, evaluating) and deepened understandings through transmediation across sign systems (e.g. movements → verbal reflection → comic)

### Long-Term Collaborative & Embodied Inquiry
Intentional construction of long-term atmosphere of ongoing collaborative inquiry and use of linguistic and non-linguistic resources and supported extensive intertextual connections and generation of multiple interpretations and possibilities

| Table 5.1: Additional Categories of Dramatic Inquiry |  |  |
The categories in Table 5.1 above outlined 6 interrelated phases of dramatic inquiry events which seemed to support the students towards a culture of wonder and authentic inquiry. The first five categories almost all occurred concurrently or subsequently during one 1.5-2 hour dramatic inquiry reading events and these included: Building Embodied Background Knowledge; Embodied Story Comprehension; Authentic Oral Fluency and Re-Reading for Meaning; Appropriation of Vocabulary; and Embodied Higher Order Thinking and Comprehension Strategies. The sixth added category was the intentional construction of Long-Term Collaborative & Embodied Inquiry, which became visible over time as the ensemble grew in its “Shakespearean understanding” (Teacher Interview 6/11/11) across dramatic inquiry events over time.

My comparative analysis across dramatic inquiry reading events and non-dramatic reading events helped me to delineate the specific multimodal supports made intentionally available for all students through the dramatic reading events. The consistent presence and combination of the practices contained in the above categories seemed to be crucial for all students to be supported towards performing deeper multimodal understandings in way that they felt a sense of authentic accomplishment. Concurrently, the students made visible a deep fascination with the language and stories of Shakespeare.

Most importantly for the learning of Yusef, Dasjah, and Ino, the three focal students in my study, the social and multimodal supports I delineated aligned well with prior research on literacy learning conditions most effective for English Language Learners. The presence of the following practices: building shared background knowledge and “frontloading” vocabulary, valuing multimodal and non-linguistic ways of making meaning, joint, purposeful reading comprehension tasks, authentic uses of language and complex and creative thinking during dramatic inquiry reading events became essential for growing an authentic sense of wonder and ongoing collaborative inquiry. Lastly, as an outcome of this overlapping classroom reading culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-
taking, the focal students gained access to co-authoring their own multimodal performances of literacy understanding during the dramatic inquiry events. On their way to these performances they showed growth in the foundational competencies of reading such as fluency, vocabulary, complex understandings of Shakespeare’s stories and made visible significant use of higher order thinking.

**Overview of Dramatic Inquiry Reading Events**

Dramatic inquiry events in this classroom were a collaborative meaning-making process and the ongoing construction of the classroom culture of reading and social relationships between people mattered. The interests of teachers and students, the social dynamics of the people populating this classroom and the access to learning resources and shared memories of past experiences and language influenced how the understanding of texts took shape. For example, like most teachers, Ms G had an entirely new group of students and in the school year prior to this study (2009-2010), she had also used dramatic inquiry to explore Macbeth with a group of third graders. During a reflection in December after exploring Macbeth with her present 2010-2011 class of third graders, Ms. G explained that: “I was surprised how my students dealt with Macbeth in such different ways between the two school years.” (Teacher Interview, 12/20/10)

As we grew together as an artistic ensemble students and teachers alike became more competent at using a wide range of active movement, drama games and tools of *dramatic inquiry* (Edmiston, 2010) and as they did so the ensemble also grew significantly over time in their ability and desire to engage in purposeful forms of reading of the texts of Shakespeare.

**Students focus in dramatic inquiry reading events**

The students talk and actions in dramatic inquiry reading events demanded their full active participation as they spent at least 75% of their time during the events “standing up” the text and actively moving or being an audience to people standing up embodied
interpretations or inquiries of the stories and texts. Yet, even if the students were observing and performing the role of the audience they still had extensive opportunities to actively interact with the characters and the storyline (e.g. offering interpretive choices for a scene, asking questions or giving advice to characters). Throughout their active involvement the students and teachers spent significant amounts of time using embodiment as a significant semiotic resource with various texts (Siegel, 2006).

Embodiment is the term I will use throughout this chapter to signal the multimodal use of an interrelated set of non-linguistic language systems such as somatic, gestural, and kinesthetic forms of understanding. During and after the process of embodiment, the ensemble also was involved in transmediation (Suhor, 1984) or the back and forth movement from the embodiment into oral and written linguistic language systems. They used embodiment to experience themselves as-if they were in certain settings and thinking and acting from the perspectives of various characters both presented in the text or implied by the text, and they used embodiment to create meaningful interpretations and to inquire about and talk back to the stories and texts (See cross-comparative analysis of Dramatic Inquiry Events)

Teacher’s Instructional Purposes in Dramatic Inquiry Reading Events

One category of the teacher’s purposes within dramatic inquiry reading events was labeled building embodied background knowledge. This reading practice typically occurred at the beginning of a single dramatic inquiry event and at the beginning of the first few days of dramatic inquiry work on a single play. Students physically embodied roles that constituted the social, cultural and historical context of the current Shakespeare play or text being presently studied. The teachers and students collaborative, dramatic work and discussions focused on building shared embodied experiences and knowledge of the social, cultural and historical setting, introduction to characters and overarching themes and new vocabulary so that it helped set up the next days and weeks of exploration. While all categories overlapped with and co-constructed the student’s story comprehension--throughout the segments certain practices specifically focus students on embodied and verbal tasks related to comprehending the plot and characters. In this
category, students and teachers interacted with each other as if people in the drama world and the ensemble worked together to determine various interpretations and embodied ways of talking and actions based on how they interpreted the character’s set of given circumstances set within the shared, imagined world.

Another overlapping category with story comprehension involved practices where students focused on authentic oral fluency & re-reading for meaning. This category meant students were up and moving while reading text extracts multiple times for an authentic and meaningful purpose such as to “play” with and embody multiple interpretations of the same interaction or to reconsider a sequential order of events or embody implications of actions. Appropriating vocabulary, was a label for another interrelated set of practices also integral to both the story comprehension and re-reading for meaning. In the preparation for an embodied interpretation and thus a public performance of the reading and acting out of a piece of text or in collaboratively sculpting a frozen picture or scene or other similar forms of dramatic inquiry, the students accessed the vocabulary needed for the scene through verbal and embodied inquiry. This vocabulary was first modeled and mediated by a teacher using embodied modeling or dramatic inquiry strategies (e.g. stopping a teacher-in-role as a character to ask what a word means), or at times students worked collaboratively with the whole group, partners or small group of students to verbally inquire and ask authentic questions about language always in the service of creating their active interpretations. By transmediating across non-linguistic and linguistic languages systems, students were able to gradually shape their own meanings of words and phrases and thus, appropriate words, idiomatic phrases and sociopragmatic functions of this vocabulary. In other words, they began to fill the language printed on the page into a three-dimensional life.

Since the phrases, quotes, new vocabulary words and brainstormed lists of word (e.g. character traits of a character or what they thought made a worthy king) were left up throughout the room, they were often returned to many times throughout the unit, either intentionally in the dramatic inquiry event or used spontaneously by the students in
creative ways or to more clearly explain their ideas (see Words on Wall section below). Thus, due to the long-term dramatic inquiry they were able to gradually shape their meanings of words through multiple exposure to words in authentic contexts. By observing closely the focal students ways of making sense of the story I saw these practices related to long-term exposure and repeated use of vocabulary in authentic contexts became crucial to appropriation of new vocabulary in meaningful ways (see Chapter 6 for this analysis). In valuing the playful exploration and questioning about language, the dramatic inquiry events created an environment where it was encouraged for students to take risks in asking questions about unknown words, using intertextual connections as word learning resources and co-creating and embodying hypothesis about those words. The social and multimodal supports then over time began to help students appropriate complex vocabulary, figurative language and idiomatic phrases in ways that were authentic and meaningful for their own purposes.

Over time, I began to see that all of dramatic play and embodiment had helped these 8 and 9 year old students to get to this point where they can begin to use their embodied understanding of the story to make visible their complex and creative higher order thinking and embodied inquiries. Thus, combining the embodied experiences, collective embodied interpretations and textual language inquiry processes helped to build up to and support the students in using higher order thinking and reading comprehension strategies—particularly inferring, questioning predicting, making intertextual connections, synthesizing and evaluating—and thereby performing multimodal literacy understandings and engaging in reading for an authentic purpose. The embodied inquiry and higher order thinking were visible when students spoke the internal thoughts of characters, wrote persuasively as-if they are a character, debated ethical issues in specific contexts, offered advice to characters in a moment of action, created physical but metaphorical sculptures of key themes and significant moments of interactions, designed visual representations of new understandings (e.g. color-coded map outlining power relationships, amusement park rides and comic strips showing key visual and verbal images ), shared a wide range intertextual connections from the plays
into other texts, and compared and contrasted across multiple Shakespeare plays in verbal and written forms. Embodied higher order thinking was also consistently expected and used by students in order to consider and embody possible backstories or missing scenes or actions, which were implied but not necessarily narrated within Shakespeare’s plays.

Though the students or teachers wouldn’t necessarily know to call it this, I saw these culminating embodied inquiries as performances of multimodal literacy understandings. These would typically happen towards the ending of dramatic inquiry reading events (though a few times Ms. G started with exploring some big, ethical question as a means to intrigue the students and to focus the ongoing dramatic inquiry for that day) or these authentic, multimodal performances of understanding of the plays happened in the last few days of exploring a Shakespeare play unit. These were *moments of poesis*—as I have called the poetic combination of creative thinking and the use of shared metaphors and connections to create socially recognized texts. Through the moments of poesis, students appropriated vocabulary to suit their own purposes, used creative, higher order thinking, socially constructed intertextuality and transmediation in order to move them into various multimodal performance of understanding (e.g. creating a statue to represent two character’s relationships and speaking their thoughts aloud). These moments of poesis could be recognized and used for further learning and more inquiry by the whole group.

Each dramatic inquiry event didn’t always include all of the reading practices but each segment always built upon the dramatic experiences, analysis, language and inquiries from the days and weeks before. Over time the students seemed to get more deeply involved and invested in the stories. As time went on, the majority of students began to question Ms. G *“when are we going to do more Shakespeare?”* Two students asked for the complete works of Shakespeare for Christmas. Ms. G shared with me that “students began to include pieces of the Shakespeare stories into their own free writing, drawing and in journals” and we both observed that they were bringing themes, characters and language into other texts, situations, games and play at recess (a few days they asked to take text extracts from dramatic inquiry outside to recess). Ms. G and I also shared a
consistent observation that over time the students began to get overly excited to offer their predictions about stories. In our final interview we agreed that this intertextual seemed to become particularly noticeably after the extensive exploration of the first two plays-Romeo & Juliet and Macbeth and I found this was confirmed by my data corpus dated on and after 12/20/10 when we were finishing up Macbeth. The biggest surprise to us we agreed was how often they began to used the intertextual connections from across the four Shakespeare plays to the understanding of other plays and to the reading other texts in the classroom.

It seemed that their wonder and excitement about the language and stories grew concurrently with their access to the complex and intriguing stories. Through the multimodal and social resources they were able to become more confident in their own ability to perform in-depth understandings Shakespeare which became highly visible in the ways they seemed to build a long-lasting relationship with the words and how they so often showed the desire to explore new texts through the intratextual connections across scenes within the plays and intertextual connections across plays they already had studied. The social and multimodal supports helped construct and expand the students access to such performances of multimodal understanding. In the following section, I offer my analysis of the textual resources used by the students over time through dramatic inquiry reading events.

**Textual Resources**

**Why Multimodal Texts?**

A wide variety of multimodal texts were used as semiotic resources during the dramatic inquiry reading events. The texts used in the multimodal, meaning-making process were those printed texts immediately in front of us (e.g. printed text extracts from Shakespeare’s original plays, printed information about characters or plot sections) or embodied texts (e.g. a frozen picture or interpretation, or a character’s intonation or gesture) as well as the vestiges and traces of our memories of our similar embodied and active engagement with past texts (David Bloome et al., 2009). Some of the memories
students invoked in later gestures and new appropriations of previously embodied
language, but other times portions of these texts could visibly be seen in the room. Ms.
G often wrote or printed out quotes and passages we had used or were related to our
dramatic inquiry that came directly from Shakespeare plays and put them up in huge print
all over the room. These large, *Words on the Wall* became such an important resource in
and of themselves and were often used across dramatic inquiry events, across scenes and
even across different Shakespeare plays by both teachers and students in making sense of
the stories. Therefore, in the following sub-section, I give a more detailed description of
the impact of *Words on The Wall* on the classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and
risk-taking.

**Memories of Embodied Texts: Words on the Wall**

This instructional strategy we called, *Words on the Wall*, grew into a “powerful resource”
(Teacher Interview-June 11, 2011) for vocabulary appropriation and story
comprehension. At the beginning of each Shakespeare play unit, Ms. G began by posting
a few key quotes, passages or at times information or key vocabulary related specifically
to the dramatic inquiry events. Ms. G left the Words on the Wall up throughout the unit
so that over the course of time the amount of words and quotes on the wall grew
cumulatively. The students often would look up to the Words on the Wall during
dramatic inquiry events and repeat them or use them to explain their idea, even if the
quote wasn’t even from that section of the original Shakespeare text. Over time, the
students built a close relationship with the language as Ms. G told me:

“They really do love these words. You should have seen them the other day when
I told them I was getting ready to get rid of the Words on the Wall. I told them
that we had to move into the other building and I had to take them down. And
they were like, nooooooo!!! But then...it was so spontaneous...one person
said a line and then another and then another until there was an outpouring of
words flowing from all of their mouths. They were longing to speak those words
one more time before I got rid of them. It sent chills up and down my spine.”
This long term relationship with Shakespeare’s language also became visible in the student’s picking up words and phrases that had been embodied in physical games or other dramatic inquiry strategies and reusing them in new contexts. For example, the word vexation was often used by students to describe anger in other settings. The phrase “false face” was a particular favorite from Lady Macbeth’s line “False Face must hide what the false heart doth know” which was used several times to play an improvisational game with this line. This line was so embedded in their consciousness that in my data I have evidence that students used false face as an intertextual reference in over 11 different occasions across the year. For example Yusef noticed an intertextual connection from Macbeth (studied in December) later during his participation in the non-dramatic low reading group work with a non-Shakespeare text (Best Friends, 2/11/11). While interpreting this text, another student, Marquell W described how a character from the book seemed to have offered a fake smile to “play it off” that “she was someone’s friend, even though she wasn’t”. Yusef said: “That’s like Macbeth” and the other boys in the group chimed in and began repeating the entire “false face” line and talking about how the false face can hide someone’s intention to trick someone else. Yusef’s intertextual connection to the deeply embodied understanding of a false face helped him and his other group members better make sense of their reading of a non Shakespeare fictional text.

Lastly, the passionate relationship with Shakespeare’s language the students had built was made apparent a week before school was out (May 26th, 2011). I had created a slideshow of pictures of the whole school year that I wanted to use for a tool to help students metacognitively reflect together on what it was about our dramatic inquiry reading work together that helped them be better readers. As it just so happened this was also at the very end of the day after their final Shakespeare feast. My research journal from May 27th offers a view into this moment:
...it was a long but highly exciting day as we had spent most of it in costume as our favorite Shakespearean characters and eating a Medieval Feast. I found that at the end of this very long day my hope to get some metacognitive reflection proved to be a bit of a difficult task for some of these 8 and 9 year olds. However, one particular picture piqued their interest. [See Figure 5.1]. As soon as I put up the picture of some of those Words on the Wall from Macbeth of [which we hadn’t studied since December] there was an audible gasp, cheers and a sudden overlap of excited chatter and voices.

![Figure 5.1: “Macbeth” Words on the Wall](image)

Some of them started spontaneously shouting out lines they knew. Marquell W. called out in earnest, “Aaaawww. I miss those words!” Ms. G and I looked at each other in disbelief. There it was. The metacognitive reflection about the power of this work was as clear as the writing on the wall!

**Complexity of Shakespeare texts**

Over the course of working through Shakespeare with her third graders, we both began to realize that the story chosen for dramatic did matter significantly to creating deeply engaged reading through dramatic inquiry. In the following transcript excerpt from the middle of the school year, Ms. G and I shared thoughts on the matter:

Ms. G: The story does matter. You know on so many different levels.
Camille: I never thought about it as much until now
Ms. G: This is the problem I had last year with trying out dramatic inquiry in my classroom. I don’t know if you heard me say this.

Camille: Yeah, you told me in the summer that was something, you had started to realize.

Ms. G: I realized that I was spinning my wheels trying to find stories that mattered. Or stories that were rich enough or deep enough umm and couldn’t find them. OR struggled with that… and then [this year] I thought why am I fighting this I should just do Shakespeare. I really think that’s true.

Camille: But at the beginning of this year when you first introduced dramatic inquiry you did have rich conversational moments with Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters.

Ms. G: But that was a story that mattered. That wasn’t a real fluff story really. Not like Jack and Annie. And I love Jack and Annie and I am talking about the Magic Treehouse.

Camille: I know you do!

Ms. G: The kids love Jack and Annie. But It is fluff.

(Teacher Interview Transcript, 12/20/10)

After reflecting back on the whole year of using Shakespeare Ms. G recognized her students’ deep relationship and ongoing fascination with the language and with the stories of Shakespeare—couldn’t just be explained only as a result of the dramatic inquiry work, (though I argue it was a highly influential factor). In our final reflection, Ms. G explained that during dramatic inquiry with the folktales unit the students had shown high engagement with and “loved the folktales using the dramatic inquiry.” She said this use of dramatic inquiry with non-Shakespeare stories was an effective way to ease the students into using the dramatic inquiry strategies to delve deeply into “big questions of the story” before getting into the even more complex stories of Shakespeare. She also shared that because the content of these particular folktales (Mufaro’s Beautiful
Daughter’s and The Woman Who Outshone the Sun) lent themselves well to embodying ethical dilemmas—it worked well as a short introduction to using embodiment and other practices of dramatic inquiry. I agreed with her but also reminded her that the work with the folk tales only could be maintained for 4-5 days at the most and also that I had noticed the students rarely mentioned these folktale books again much beyond September (as compared to their consistent discussion of all of the Shakespeare texts throughout the year) Ms. G’s developed a plausible explanation in her response: “maybe those books just didn’t have enough depth to maintain the deep interest over a long period of time like Shakespeare.” (Teacher Interview 6/11/11)

Throughout this project, Ms G and I came to realize that it wasn’t just any text that maintained student’s long term fascination with language and with the story. Ms. G’s words in the following two interview transcript excerpts at the end of the 2010-2011 school year best illustrate this new line of thinking

“..My first year in the program [2009-2010] I was still thinking I don’t know how I can do the Shakespeare bit with third graders. Especially in September I was looking for other children’s book that I could apply all of those dramatic inquiry and active techniques to but not use a Shakespeare story. When Brian came in and did a long period of dramatic inquiry with Macbeth (3 weeks-December 2009) that first year, I realized how cool that Shakespeare really was with kids... and I realized then that the story did matter. They liked the intrigue and the challenge. I stopped then looking for alternative texts and said I am going to just use Shakespeare...”

(Final Teacher Interview 6/11/11)

The complexity and depth of the content mattered for the 8 and 9 year old students that Ms. G taught. It wasn’t just any story that would suffice for their long-term engagement in dramatic inquiry. It also wasn’t just access to these text through familiar everyday language that would sustain their long-term fascination with Shakespeare either as Ms. G pointed out later in the same interview, when she stated:
“...The story matters. A lot of those other stories [fiction deemed appropriate for 3rd graders] are just fluff because they don’t go real deep. Not a lot of depth. Not a lot of angst or tension. Not like Shakespeare.... The kids loved and were fascinated by the rich language and intriguing stories of Shakespeare. In fact, they often told me this when we were reading those Bruce Colville books [children’s book versions of Shakespeare]. I mean they liked reading those too. But they would point out certain words Colville used to make the language easier for kids and they would compare those to the original Shakespeare lines they knew so well from our dramatic inquiry work. They always said things like, I just like Shakespeare’s words so much better...for example, they’d say they liked ‘smoked with bloody execution’ and they’d say, that’s so much better than ‘blood red swords. It’s just more exciting... “

(Final Teacher Interview 6/11/11)

Using dramatic inquiry with the Shakespeare plays and original texts seemed to make the difference. The complexity of the stories and language of Shakespeare truly mattered to these students and to their teachers.

**Balancing comprehensible input and retaining Shakespeare’s original text**

When the students task was to use the dramatic inquiry to make sense of the relationship among a set of characters and/or their interaction during a specific scene Ms G often handed out text extracts that she had prior edited from the original Shakespeare plays into manageable chunks. Other times, she would add the text extracts to the Words on the Wall, which she and the students used regularly in modeled, choral, and shared readings. Ms. G (without calling it such) created comprehensible input (Swain, 1995) for the English Language Learners because in her edits, she told me that sought lines and portions of character’s speeches that best portrayed some of the key ideas “at the heart of the inquiry questions” they were exploring (e.g. what is the power relationship between this father and daughter?). Ms. G found out though that when editing Shakespeare’s plays, instead of simplifying or adding modern English translations, it was necessary to
use Shakespeare’s original language because the cadence and the rich complexities and figurative devices were fascinating to the students and this deep interest spurred their ongoing interest in collaboratively solving unknown word meanings (Interview June 6, 2011).

After the year of our shared teacher development in incorporating reading instruction with the highly complex texts of Shakespeare—we shared with each other—our own surprise with the fascination her students had with these highly complex texts, with language that adults sometimes find too obscure (Teacher Interview 6/11/11). While all of the students in the classroom showed their fascination in different ways, the readers who struggled the most in the classroom such as Yusef were the also the same students who also most readily took to reading the various adaptations of Shakespeare Ms. G had available around the room. For example, when Yusef had the Macbeth and the Hamlet graphic novels at his desk during those respective units, corresponded with the two longest amounts of time (>20 minutes) I observed Yusef actually sitting and actively interacting and reading words. This high interactivity with the text was made visible in him telling other people what the words said, finding characters’ interactions, scenes and language he knew and reading those lines aloud to himself and to me and talking back to the book.

In Ms. G and my end of the year reflections and final interview, after we discussed this shift towards authentic performances engaged reading in many of her students when it came to the complex texts of Shakespeare we began to reconsider the ways we had thought about the choices for texts for reading instruction. We looked at and talked about the kinds of texts that were typically used by teachers for reading instruction by students in the third grade, and then we compared those to the kinds of texts we were using in Shakespeare. The differences were striking but what we agreed had made the difference is that we had included everyone in the challenge of investigating these complex texts were that some of these decisions about texts used and ways of grouping students were also based on our assumptions about the complexity of texts. The grouping seemed to be
based mostly around how fluently they could read texts aloud. The problem is that this conflates one skill with general intelligence and the ability to understand the story (e.g. sequence and relationship of events to each other, character motivations and relationships, etc.) and denies these students the opportunity to have “rich language experiences while simultaneously getting foundational reading instruction” (Final Teacher Interview, June 13th, 2011).

In a follow-up discussion after the 2010-2011 school year (June 11th, 2011), where we reflected on the complexity of the Shakespeare texts and her thoughts about how her reading instruction has and is changing:

“now having spent the whole year doing all of this dramatic inquiry work with Shakespeare. I realize how I can take just one of the Shakespeare works and just solely use that as your reading instruction based on that particular [complex] text. Though that’s not something I always did. “

Ms G’s final reflection showed her changing thinking on this issue. She explained “traditional ways of doing literacy” as in her practice of static, ability groups and highly familiar, patterned texts created a “dumbing down of text” which signals that “we think Yusef [or other struggling or “low” readers] can’t understand the story”. In that same conversation, about how successful all of her students were with engaging in the complex texts of Shakespeare, she made a point to note how so many of what she labeled as “low readers” were not only able to understand these texts but they highly valued stepping into the world created by these complex texts, and deeply engaging with big questions of the stories. She explained that with the dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare work, “I really saw that they loved to wonder, make predictions and offer deep intertextual connections and insights.” Instead of the highly challenging work being reserved for the best readers in the more typical ways of doing reading instruction, all of Ms. G’s students were given space to live through, talk back to and begin to take ownership of the complex texts of Shakespeare. The benefits of getting time and space
to “*think about ideas*” was even recognized by the focal students… (Interview Dasjah 12/14/10)

**Dramatic inquiry & read aloud: Giving students space “to think…”**

Ms. G’s read aloud of children’s literature novels to the students was one of the non-dramatic reading practices that seemed to share at least a few important characteristics with dramatic inquiry reading events—especially from the focal students perspective. In December, when the three focal students were asked what to create a continuum of what they thought was the most interesting and engaging among all of the reading practices (e.g. spelling, reading group, independent reading, dramatic inquiry etc.) of which they had identified and labeled in our reading interviews, they all immediately chose the dramatic inquiry pictures and labels. Significantly, though the three focal students also put read aloud close to dramatic inquiry or at least in the 2nd column closest to most interested. In order to understand this pattern of similarities between read aloud-a non-dramatic reading event and dramatic inquiry reading events, I turned to my constant comparative analysis.

I noted that across the dramatic inquiry reading events Ms. G intentionally made Shakespeare more comprehensible while she sought to retain Shakespeare’s original language and not to water down the complex issues and ethical inquiries brought up within these plays. The complexity of the Shakespeare texts and the collaborative and multimodal supports surrounding them gave students significant space to think deeply. While read aloud did not contain extensive multimodal and embodiment resources, Ms. G did support the ELL students to more deeply think about complex stories by making the linguistic more comprehensible (e.g. only reading a chunk of text that was meaningful and asking questions about it, summarizing key points, using changes in tone of voice to signal dialogue versus narration, etc.). This did not go unnoticed by the focal students.

Ino and Dasjah both told me they really liked read aloud because Ms. G read them “interesting” books which gave them so much to “wonder about” or as Ino said she
would Ms. G makes it even better because of her verbal “expression” and changing of voices to represent different characters and Ino explained:

“*She reads books that I have never heard. I think that they are going to turn out boring or something. When she keeps reading and reading it gets more interesting. And I can have more things to think about when I am at home.*”

(Ino Interview, 12/14/10)

During their interviews and in other informal reflections they both talked about similar reasons for their high interest in reading with dramatic inquiry. They noted on two different occasions that they like dramatic inquiry because you learned lots of new words and it made them think.

Both read aloud and dramatic inquiry were seen by Dasjah and Ino as not only fun but “exciting” and “interesting.” It seemed that the way Ms. G structured these two practices helped make the stories come to life and this pushed them to author “I wonder” questions (Dasjah Interview, 12/15/10) and again, both practices gave them significant space to think. For example, in her December reading interview, Dasjah looked at a picture of what other students had labeled as “Read Aloud”—and Dasjah called that same picture “Think of ideas and questions during read aloud”. When Dasjah looked at pictures of their most recent dramatic inquiry work with Macbeth—that other students had called acting out….(name of specific story event)---she labeled this same set of pictures “*Thinking about Macbeth characters.*” Dasjah particularly pointed out that because she didn’t have to spend all of her time making sure she was getting all the words right, she could spend time thinking about new ideas from the stories. Thus, a salient affordance for ELLs that I identified across both read aloud and dramatic inquiry was that in both practices Ms. G focused on making highly interesting and complex stories comprehensible—focusing on key understandings and decreasing the overall amount of linguistic input. As a result, the students’ focus could be turned more
towards deepening meaning-making and higher order thinking about the overall themes and subtexts of the stories.

**Why Multiple Shakespeare Texts?**

The fact that we actively explored four different Shakespeare plays and portions of the original texts ended up also becoming a resource for student’s comprehension later in the year as they had the prior experiences and knowledge from the other plays to draw on their current exploration. This was made evident in all three focal students as well as their classmates. Especially in the second half the year, these students created extensive performances of using prior Shakespeare texts as intertextual connections to new texts both new Shakespeare plays but also non-Shakespeare texts used in other reading events. In Ms. G’s final reflection, she talked about how doing all of the plays really pushed her students deepened fascination and understanding of Shakespeare’ stories. Her words are seen in the interview excerpt below.

*Ms. G: I think having Multiple Shakespeare texts also really pushed them and challenged them to see those different connections, but when they did they got so excited about that. By the time we worked on Hamlet [at the end of the year] they felt very confident in their Shakespearean understanding. (laughs) You know, I used to tell them they’re like high school students studying these plays. They were like I wonder what we’re going to learn in high school then about Shakespeare.*

(Final Teacher Interview, 6/11/11)

While the textual resources were often used long term, in the short term, the space in the classroom also got used as a part of the meaning-making resources. However, the space that existed in the classroom each day—had to be transformed every time they wanted to start dramatic inquiry reading events. This changing of the space during dramatic reading events is described in the next section.
Changing Spaces

Whereas in non-dramatic reading events, the students used student desks, tables, stools and chairs already in the classroom space, during dramatic reading events to be able to create the imagined, drama worlds and to use embodiment as a semiotic resource, the space had to be drastically changed. When Ms. G asked for her students (and often times myself) to move desks and chairs out of the way entirely so that there was a large open space in the middle of the room, this signaled that it was time to get started working with dramatic inquiry on our current Shakespeare story. Each time this signal occurred the level of excitement rose sharply with the suggestion by Ms. G to move the desks. However, Ms. G and I learned early on that once student were freed from the confinements of the desks, it both allowed us to see their visible excitement as well as reminded us of their need for a specific focus in order to have way to control their own growing bodies. Ms. G helped them to co-create some rules to help them successfully participate in the dramatic inquiry events. Both the excitement and the need for constant return to the rules of how we use our bodies and the open space are made visible in my research journal entry written immediately after my observation on January, 26th, 2011 which occurred on the first day of working on dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare since before the holiday break in December.

Every time the Ms. G asks the students to “move your desks against the wall”, I have noticed the same thing happen over the last four months. I hear a collective shout of “Yes!!!!” Immediately, the room fills up with excited voices as students rush to move the desks. Today it happened again, it was the first time they had explored Shakespeare since we ended Macbeth over a month earlier prior to leaving for the two-week holiday break. Today the students’ excitement made it difficult for them to get into a circle. Ms. G improvised a “game” on the spot to alleviate the problem having them scrunch up together holding hands and then slowly grow outwards as if they were becoming a growing bubble. Ms. G then valued their eagerness to study Shakespeare by saying: “I know you are so excited about more Shakespeare. I am really excited about Shakespeare too. However, you need to remember these things. Even if you are excited…” Then she
reminded them of their previously set of agreed upon rules for the large circle time of dramatic inquiry: “we agree to stand quietly, look at the person who’s speaking, not to talk unless you have permission from the whole group, and that movements are done that are safe.” Marquell W added on: “You can’t complain about what partner or group you get” and Yusef added: “Nobody can sit on stools or go under desks.”

This was a fairly typical practice that everyone would discuss the agreed upon rules. Typically this would be followed by students and teachers playing an “ensemble” building game together.

**Ensemble Building Games**

The ensemble building game often asked the students to do something collaboratively and to do so multimodally by using their bodies, minds and voices. These kind of ensemble games were inspired by warm-up and improvisational activities used by adults participating in performance ensembles and beginning any rehearsal session. These games didn’t always explicitly focus on content of the upcoming play or text but they always were intended to help them get switched over into the embodiment mindset and it helped them to work together better. These games then were intended to give them embodied practice and reflection on social processes, deemed especially important for successful participation in dramatic inquiry—such as getting people used to working with new people, authentically listening and paying close attention to each other, collaborating on ideas quickly, improvising spoken interactions and imagining and miming actions or objects that are not really present in the room.

At times this “ensemble game” would specifically relate to the upcoming content that they were going to be exploring, such as in Romeo and Juliet on 10/18/10, the students played a game where they found a partner and walked around only with that partner, while making sure everyone else in the room knew the pair were part of an exclusive “gang.” To introduce the line in Macbeth: *The false face doth hide what the false heart doth know*, the students played a “game” where one student walked into the middle of the
circle while improvising and displaying a “false face” and when they got to the middle they abruptly turned and moved towards another student while improvising with their facial expressions, gestures and posturing what was hiding behind that false face on the inside. While the one student improvised this, the rest of the students chanted the line. Following these games, the students would immediately move into embodying pieces and parts of the story.

**Dramatic Inquiry in Cyclical, Multidimensional Reading Comprehension:**

**Multimodal Experience of Living through Shakespeare’s “Stories”**

Typically, one of the primary teacher’s goals across reading events was to ensure students comprehension of the story. The way the students and teachers went about comprehending stories seemed to be structured in far different ways between the non-dramatic reading events and the dramatic reading events. In Chapter 4, I showed a linear pattern in the student and teacher talk and efforts to make meaning in the majority of the non-dramatic reading events. This pattern in talk focused around an isolated I-R-E sequence between one teacher and one student. One recurrent performance between teacher and students based in this type of interactional pattern seemed to be focused on testing an individual’s recall of the events or to ask a students to display a foundational reading skill with no authentic purpose. The teacher evaluated and then the event moved onto what seemed to be an entirely new I-R-E pattern that did not build on the last, or if it did the connections were not made explicit by the teachers or students. The patterns across the data corpus on dramatic reading events with Shakespeare plays or text extracts—showed the performances of reading were quite divergent from this structure. The dramatic reading events proved to deepen authentic performances of understanding of the story in a cyclical and multiple interconnected layers of embodied, performative and highly creative engagement with Shakespeare’s stories. In this section, I describe the overall themes created through my constant comparative analysis of the performances of reading that seemed to co-occur with the cyclical, multidimensional and multimodal reading comprehension tasks made available in dramatic inquiry reading events.
Cycle of Dramatic Inquiry Reading Events

The complex process of making sense of four of Shakespeare’s plays and related texts through dramatic inquiry was not straightforward but iterative and cyclical. During dramatic reading events while even if there were at times, a performance which seemed similar to the performances of knowing seen in non-dramatic reading events—such as to display an individual’s prior experience or a hypothesis about the meaning of the words, what happened in the moments and days after those initial individual attempts at meaning-making made all of the difference in how I coded those segments of events. With the introduction of each new play, and even each new interaction new settings, characters, concepts, language were introduced students played games and actively interacted with them through cycles of meaning-making with multiple different layers and transmediating between embodiment and verbal reflection during and after creating these embodiments. By the time a passage of text was performed or a form of inquiry was taken up for the whole group, students had already actively and highly engaged with embodied interpretations at the word, phrase and interactional levels of the text.

This pattern of the cyclical nature of the dramatic inquiry seemed to be an expansion of resources available to students. One surprising occurrence was that the dramatic inquiry reading events often disrupted the narrative sequence and simultaneously explored surrounding implications of actions on people implied but not narrated by Shakespeare, or multiple characters’ perspectives on the same event across time, often in non-sequential order. The key component that held these events together though was the students deepened comprehension of the complex themes, and interactions within the ongoing story. In order to illustrate this pattern, I overview a three-day sequence of students active participation in living through the story through embodiment and inquiry during Macbeth. This three-day sequence with Macbeth is seen in Table 5.2 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Focus</th>
<th>DRAMA TOOL &amp; Event</th>
<th>Teacher Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Day 1 (Nov. 30th) | **FROZEN PICTURE** - With partners making a frozen picture of:  
- 2 friends celebrating  
- 2 friends sharing a secret  
- 2 friends who don’t trust each other | **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**  
Connect own life to themes of book  
Scaffold Dramatic Inquiry Strategy |
| Embodied Experience | **PLAY** with controlled movements  
- Students make high, middle, low body movements  
- With partner make a series of call & response versions of those movements | **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**  
Dramatically play as if..  
**PLOT comprehension & BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE** |
| Embodied Interpretations | **PLAY** with controlled movements in **BATTLE SCENE**  
Students turn series of movements into staged battle & experience as if soldiers in the battle between Norway & Scotland |  
**CHARACTER Comprehension & HOT-higher order thinking** |
| Embodied Inquiry | **SENSORY NARRATION**  
Visualize the scene after the battle |  |
| | **GROUP SCULPT**  
Sculpt Victorious-Banquo & Macbeth  
Infer Changes when they find out they can’t trust each other |  |

Table 5.2: Student Cyclical Focus of Dramatic Inquiry during 3 days of Macbeth
| Day 2 (Dec. 1st) Embodied Interpret- & Embodied Inquiry | Discuss **WORDS on WALL** about how Brave & Worthy Macbeth-use for TRIADs movement game | **VOCA_**
|---|---|---|
| **ENSEMBLE & Movement Games** | Leader makes motions as if Brave, Worthy, Peerless Macbeth (words from speech) | **CHARACTER comprehension**
| **TEACHER-in-ROLE** | Teacher performs as King Duncan receiving word of Macbeth’s victory | **PLOT**
| | Students act as if other thanes in King’s counsel-and learn Thane Cawdor is a traitor | **Comprehension**
| | Students ask King questions to consider the implications of this choice to make Macbeth the new Thane of Cawdor | **VOCA_**
| **ECHO READING unknown words & TEACHER performs** | & Analyze Speech about Macbeth’s victory-to answer question-Why do people think Macbeth is so worthy? & Teacher MODELS movement to SHOW meanings | **CHARACTER comprehension**
| **PLAY/IMPROV as Scottish villagers during invasion by Norway** | The aftermath of the war is considered as students offer thoughts as if innocent villagers | **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**
| **THOUGHT TRACK innocent villagers after their death** | **HOT**-higher order thinking | **Continued**

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Table 5.2  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>SENSORY NARRATION &amp; GROUP SCULPT (returns to dramatic inquiry on Nov. 30th)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embodied Inquiry</td>
<td>Visualize the scene again when Banquo &amp; Macbeth are coming off the battlefield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embodied Interpret- &amp; Inquiry</td>
<td>Quick Sculpt of Victorious-Banquo &amp; Macbeth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING using WORDS on WALL (When shall we three meet again…)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modeled &amp; Shared Reading: ALL act as CHORUS chanting the meeting of the 3 weird sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Read for Meaning- All act same lines→ multiple interpretations (Small groups in Teacher-Less space)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING using WORDS on WALL (Macbeth and Banquo’s prophecy)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS chanting witches prophecy to students-as-Macbeth/Banquo &amp; Discuss new vocabulary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THOUGHT TRACK: Banquo &amp; Macbeth after receiving new information of witches prophecies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 students act as a frozen Banquo and Macbeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>other students come up behind and speak their thoughts</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHARACTER &amp; PLOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
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<tr>
<th>FLUENCY &amp; PLOT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
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<th>FLUENCY</th>
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<td>HOT-higher order thinking</td>
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<th>HOT-higher order thinking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOCABULARY &amp; CHARACTER comprehension</td>
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The middle of the chart details each of the dramatic inquiry segments, the left side of the chart demonstrates the typical focus of students during in these segments and the right side delineates the primary set of teacher’s purpose for the drama strategy or inquiry.

I chose to illustrate these three days (November 30th; December 1st; and December 3rd) from the beginning of the Macbeth unit because the events are representative of the cyclical nature of the dramatic inquiry over time. These three days help outline a consistent pattern I observed across all the dramatic inquiry events, in that students focus during these reading events was never on performing the skill, but instead they were actively engaged in reading and interpretation of meaning to do something purposeful.

For example, at the end of the third day, is the first moment the students have learned anything about Lady Macbeth. Their assigned task at that point was to be introduced to
the relationship between the Macbeth’s and foreshadowing of a crucial event in the play, (Lady Macbeth convinces Macbeth to murder King Duncan so he can become the king as the witches had said would happen in their prophecy in Act 1, Scene 1 of Macbeth). The students had to embody two key lines spoken where Lady Macbeth chides Macbeth into stepping up to be a man.

Backing up from that point with the Macbeths, students needed a great depth of knowledge about what this “becoming a man” meant within this particular context and setting of the play in order to understand how this particular interaction fit into the whole scheme of the play. Thus, the entire first day and part of the second day of Macbeth was significantly focused on students gaining an embodied experience of what it is like to be a soldier in war, and the aftermath of war on the villagers and the country. Even though the war had ended by the start of the first scene in the actual play of Macbeth, Ms. G set the students up to start their dramatic inquiry exploration of this play during the great war between Norway and Scotland that was only referred to and therefore, implied by the play. To set this up on Day One students were scaffolded through call and response body movements with a partner, in order to PLAY and improvised a staged battle scene. This understanding of war and its aftermath helped them make sense of the fact that King Duncan and the rest of the country were so grateful to Macbeth for finally driving the Norwegians from Scotland after years of war and turmoil. After battle though they skipped around to explore other issues through GROUP SCULPT (e.g. introduction to the changing relationship between the pair of best friends and victorious warriors, Macbeth and Banquo but something happens later that they no longer trust each other).

The students returned again though to the war on the second day where the students then created and improvised a different embodied experience with war where they then imagined themselves as villagers doing their daily activities near the battle scene. When the battle broke out, the students immediately had to decide their fate as the villagers. They spoke the thoughts of the now dead innocent villagers to the whole group. Then the students collectively debated the issue of when is killing ever right or is it always
wrong? This occurred on the same day that they were exploring how and why Macbeth was being highly exalted and honored by King Duncan for his bravery in the war. Also on the second day, the students embodied another event through Interactive Storytelling—which would shape the rest of the story—the three witches told Macbeth he was going to be king. Through the dramatic inquiry strategy of THOUGHT TRACKING characters, the students took turns speaking the thoughts of Macbeth when he first heard the prophecy. The students collectively decided this prophecy sounded great but has one problem (and a burning question to solve later) — How can Macbeth be king—when King Duncan is already the king? Among other instructional purposes, the cyclical nature of the dramatic inquiry events as illustrated here gave the students concrete, multimodal experiences and deepened authentic understanding of complex issues and a starting point with which to begin to explore and make sense of the different forces influencing the characters (e.g. Macbeth and the sense of power gained when people see you as a brave, leader or Lady Macbeth wanting to have more power). However, it also helped them build investment through the intrigue and desire to find out more.

**Theme #1: Cyclical Nature of Dramatic Inquiry—**

*Builds a Set of Shared Embodied Texts and gradually shapes deep conceptual understandings.*

Through the cyclical nature of the dramatic reading events, students were highly challenged and supported by the ensemble to interpret and make meaning not just because we have to get through reading time or recall the events but because they could actively live through the complex issues of the text. From the student’s perspective then their talk and work together always focused on active embodiment and inquiry instead of on displaying knowing. As each task cyclically moved them from active, playful experiences of living through the stories, into deep inquiry about the stories, it also pushed students to perform multimodal literacy understandings—such as to use the new language and the expanded multimodal and social resources to draw inferences, generate more possibilities and questions, evaluate the consequences of actions, and poetically synthesize shifts in understanding through the many layers of intertextual connections.
The sequencing then of recursive cycles of dramatic inquiry over time then turned the students towards performances of understanding not on performances of knowing.

Though this type of playful embodiment with highly intriguing stories was enjoyable and was highly sought after by the students, from the teacher’s perspective, the student’s were building deep story comprehension and created complex and creative performances of multimodal understanding as a result. Therefore, even if the student’s didn’t necessarily realize it, their experiences within these cycles of dramatic inquiry also met the teacher’s reading instruction purposes such as building complex vocabulary and in-depth social and cultural contextualized knowledge of the context of the play, and creating opportunities for students to increase their fluency, through repeated reading of texts and opportunities to make visible their higher order thinking. Next I describe two other themes that co-occurred across the dramatic inquiry events—Students and teachers in dramatic inquiry reading events used embodiment as a consistent semiotic resource for understanding the Shakespeare texts.

**Theme #2: Embodiment is key to performing multimodal understanding**

The salience of embodiment as a semiotic resource for building authentic performances of understanding became a key theme that fell across all of the categories of dramatic inquiry reading events. Researchers ((Deborah Wells Rowe, 1998; Wohlwend, 2008) have documented that students will spontaneously implement a wide range of multimodal resources including play and embodiment in their to engage with texts and new ideas, but in the official ways of doing non-dramatic events in this classroom, embodiment was rarely an officially sanctioned source of meaning-making. Conversely, in the performances of dramatic inquiry reading events students were consistently expected and supported to use embodiment as a semiotic resource to experience, actively interpret and inquire about the story and the underlying subtexts and meanings created by these stories. The following were key patterns of student talk and actions related to embodiment, which I located across all of the categories of dramatic reading practices but which were not present in the non-dramatic reading events.
1) *Embodied Experiences*: dramatic play and collaborative embodied representations or improvisations used to experience themselves as-if in imagined settings, or interactions or to gain background experience to make sense of larger themes and storylines. Often this would happen prior to students even looking at a full text extract.

2) *Embodied Interpretations*: collaborative, whole group or small group dramatic interpretations and interactive storytelling of the plot and sequence of events, re-reading for meaning and appropriation of vocabulary from various text extracts in order to move towards active performances of text extracts and Words on the Wall and ownership of multiple interpretations and perspectives of characters as part of living through the story (co-occurred with embodied inquiry).

3) *Embodied Inquiry & Higher Order Thinking*: performances of higher order thinking and multimodal literacy understandings built upon the dramatic play, embodied interpretations and in-depth reading engagement of living through the story. These poetic moments made visible students complex higher order thinking such as their newly synthesized in-depth understandings of underlying issues and concerns of the character’s perspectives and in the larger stories, generation of more questions and possibilities (e.g. possible backstories, implied interactions, predictions for what could happen), talking back to the text (e.g. questioning character’s actions) and intertextual connections across Shakespeare plays and into the understanding of other non-Shakespeare texts.

**Theme #3: Talking back to stories…**

*Being able to live through and talk back to the story from inside and outside the world of the story created performances of deeply engaged reading and performative responses to literary texts.*

Lawrence Sipe (2002) conceptualization of young students spontaneous and active literary responses during teacher read-alouds helped me to first make sense of this theme.
and the explicitly embodied and performative ways students were engaging with Shakespeare’s stories. Sipe following Barthes (1976) explained that children’s active literary responses make visible “the exuberant enjoyment of stories that takes children out of the world of the familiar and into the delightful world of the story” (Sipe, 2002, p. 479). Sipe illustrated that when young students heard storybooks read aloud to them by their teacher, their responses included but went beyond receptive engagement, analyzing the narrative elements (e.g. plot, setting, characters) or making intertextual and extratextual connections. He documented that the students did these things but often they also were actively making visible their deep engagement with the stories in performative ways. Sipe suggested five categories to describe the active, performative and mostly spontaneous expressive engagement young children created as responses to the stories they were hearing. Sipe’s original categories of “expressive, performative engagement” moved from the actions and talk that were most closely guided and related to the author’s given text to the other end of the continuum where students performative responses to stories were less closely guided by the author’s published text. Sipe’s (2002) categories included dramatizing, talking back, critiquing and controlling, inserting and taking over the story (2002, pp. 476-478) proved helpful in this project because it gave me a language with which make sense of Ms. G’s students performative and embodied engagements with stories.

Classroom based drama research by Wolf, Edmiston and Enciso (1997) also pointed out similar perspectives on using written texts for meaning-making during classroom-based process drama. According to Wolf, et. al. (1997) either the dramatizing and embodiment happens at the edge of the text or at the center of written texts. The teacher’s facilitation of and purposes in using drama determines how strictly the students work is directly related to interpreting the specific text in front of them. In my analysis of the dramatic inquiry reading practices, the teacher guided the structuring of the drama over multiple encounters which cycled back and forth between text-centered, deeply embodied interpretations and text-edged experiences and inquiries that related to one overarching story (e.g. current Shakespeare play).
Following Sipe’s (2002) discussion, the teacher has a significant part in creating the environment that either highly encourages and opens up space for active, performative engagement with literary texts and stories or the teacher’s performance can severely limit these spaces. My constant comparative analysis showed that across the dramatic inquiry events, embodied and performative forms of engagement were not just valued (or devalued) when students spontaneously created them (as in Sipe’s study). Instead the teacher structured the drama intentionally so students were working through a wide range of dramatic inquiry strategies across a cycle of multiple encounters in one dramatic event and across time. This not only allowed physical, forms of literary response and expression but expected students to actively embody the texts and performatively express their deep engagement with the overarching story, ethical questions and themes as well as do close text-centered analysis, embodied interpretation and inquiry.

I found Sipe’s categories of performative engagement with literary texts and Wolf et. al. notions of text-edged drama and text-centered drama in order to describe the patterns in ways students were performing Ms. G’s Class. In Table 5.2 I used and extended Sipe’s concepts of children’s performative engagement in literary texts, to illustrate how the students in Ms. G’s class were explicitly and consistently challenged to insert themselves into and live through the story (Parsons, 2006), create multiple interpretations of Shakespeare’s stories and the subtext of the stories and to actively perform deep engagement, authentic understandings and critical inquiry around the texts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text use</th>
<th>Categories of Embodiment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text-Edged</td>
<td>Embodied Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>dramatizing</em>-nonverbal and verbally imagining themselves in the setting as possible roles related to the text but not necessarily in the text (e.g. Norwegian warriors or village people in the aftermath of war)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>inserting</em>-children assumed roles of the characters and children from their class into similar events and situations of the story in order to later make sense of the characters involvement in such events (e.g. being part of family or gang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text-Centered</td>
<td>Embodied Interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>dramatizing</em>-nonverbal and verbal processing with whole or small groups to create performative interpretations of a particular text based interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>inserting</em>-children physically enact movements, gestures and intonation as if they are the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>talking back to/controlling (appropriating )language</em>- children talk back to and asked questions of Shakespeare’s choice of vocabulary and figurative language and considered what the words, phrases and overall interaction meant in a specific context. They used intratextual, intertextual and extratextual connections and embodiment to bring their own personal meanings to language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text-Centered &amp; Text-Edged</td>
<td>Embodied Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>talking back</em>-children talked back to the story as if they were in the world talking directly to the characters offering them advice or stopping them in the moment and making suggestions of what might happen to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>critiquing/evaluating big ethical questions</em>-children suggested alternatives in plot, characters or settings or critiqued the author’s choices (e.g. I wouldn’t have…) and drew inferences about possible back stories or implied scenes. In this way they personalized the stories and took some control over the plot and characters and it allowed their ideas to be seen as valid as the authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>taking over</em>-children used the story and multiple Shakespeare stories as a launching pad for their own creativity. In this response the child took over a piece of text, subverts and manipulates it for their own purposes and enjoyment (e.g. William says: <em>What if Macbeth had married Gertrude-Prince Hamlet’s newly widowed mother, I wonder what Lady Macbeth would have done?</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: Categories of Performing Embodied Engagement with Stories
Similar, to the students in Sipe’s study, the expressive performative engagement with the stories created by Ms. G’s students blurred the distinction between the imagined world of the story and the children’s everyday world. This seemed to contribute further to the students long term fascination and sense of ownership over these stories. Secondly, because embodied with stories was the central focus of dramatic inquiry, then performative engagement with stories was not only validated by the teacher and the structures of the classroom, but embodiment was seen as a necessary resource rather than just an isolated, spontaneous comment or even transgressive or disruptive response by the students. Lastly, the collaboration of the entire ensemble on performative engagement with literary texts and embodiment significantly extended the social and multimodal resources available to all of the students, especially the ELL focal students to use in the moment. The students could add these and their newly appropriated vocabulary and literary understanding to their repertoire of literary meaning-making resources to use over time.

Contrasting Ways of Structuring Reading

These three overarching themes from my constant comparative analysis asserted a contrast in the structuring of reading events than was seen in non-dramatic reading events. Students in dramatic reading events actively used all of the components of reading for authentic purposes and as part of this meaningful engagement with texts they used multiple modalities or language systems in context. In the majority of non-dramatic reading events such as Reading Group students talk and work were focused on individual and verbal displays of fluency, isolated word knowledge and story recall or as in the Word Explorer workbooks the students talk and work focused on displaying the ability to plug words from isolated lists of vocabulary into the correct usage in a sentence. In other words, through the recurrent performances of dramatic inquiry reading events the foundational competencies of reading were holistically used in the service of active and collaborative interpretation of complex texts and in multimodally engaging in a lived through experience with a story.
During dramatic inquiry events, reading was not necessarily broken down into discrete sections of instructional time where the students focus was on displaying and practicing the skill regardless of any long-term connection to context and language. Because I structured my constant comparative analysis charts following the categories developed around the teacher’s performance and the teacher’s reading instructional purpose, the following sections follow are organized by those six categories—Building Embodied Background Knowledge; Embodied Story Comprehension; Authentic Oral Fluency and Re-Reading for Meaning; Appropriation of Vocabulary; and Embodied Higher Order Thinking and Comprehension Strategies. However, I saw an important distinction drawn between the non-dramatic and the dramatic reading events—students seemed to not even realize they were practicing and performing the “skills” of reading comprehension. Because the focus was on embodied forms of understanding, inquiry and generating possibility, the students seemed less likely to engage in inauthentic performances of knowing. Instead they seemed much more focused on living through, critiquing and talking back to the stories. Within each section, I will more fully outline how the structuring of the comprehension of Shakespeare’s plays through dramatic inquiry maintained the students’ focus on embodied experience, embodied interpretations and embodied inquiry. Yet, from the teacher’s perspective it still gave students the necessary modeling and guided practice with which to align with their reading goals. After the fluency and vocabulary sections, I will more closely outline my analysis of the limitations and affordances offered to ELLs by the reading specific instructional practices created within these events.

Building Background Knowledge: Shared Embodied Experiences

As I coded and recoded the data using comparative analysis and looking at both the student’s focus and the teacher’s instructional purposes I kept running into a difficult analysis decision. Taken separately some individual dramatic inquiry events within the larger session of dramatic inquiry would not even seem to the outside eye to neatly fit
into explicitly developing specific foundational reading components. They didn’t always specifically focus on a defined piece of printed text and students spent a significant amount of time at the edges of a text (S. Wolf et al., 1997)

The student performances of understanding were most often text-edged during these background knowledge practices. For example, on the first day of Macbeth (See Table 5.2 above), Ms. G did not even use any piece of the text explicitly. Furthermore, the battle was not even in Shakespeare’s version of Macbeth, it was only implied because in the actual play, it is written so the audience first would see Macbeth and Banquo walking victorious from the battlefield and come upon a barren heath to meet the three “weird sisters” (often considered witches in other interpretations of Shakespeare but we weren’t officially allowed to use the word witches in this classroom, though students often took the interpretation that way). On this day Ms. G also set them up to have embodied experiences that were text-edged by working with a partner to make frozen pictures as if they are two friends who share secrets but then betray each other. This is text edged because it is related to themes of Macbeth they would explore later in the play but the students weren’t necessarily looking at a specific piece of text from the play. This same text-edged embodied experiences occurred when students dramatic played as if Scottish and Norwegian warriors in a fierce battle and as a group they offered and negotiated suggestions to physically sculpt two students as if they were victorious warriors and best friends coming off the battlefield. Ms. G even offered further desire to engage in the rest of the story by creating tasks that where they were embodying a “foreshadowing” of events that would come later. For example, Ms. G knew that at the moment in time they were studying right after the war, Macbeth and Banquo were best friends but she also knew that in the rest of the story Macbeth ends up betraying his dear friend Banquo by having him killed. Ms. G’s statement towards the end of the group sculpt was:

“Right now this is a picture of two best friends, Banquo and Macbeth. They are helping each other off the battlefield. What would it look like if they didn’t trust each other anymore?” (Video-Coded Notes, Group Sculpt, 11/30/10)
As in other instances of group sculpt, the students were expected to reconsider the way they would sculpt the two in the light of the new information and given circumstances of the characters. In the group sculpt from 11/30/10, the students had support to build an understanding of the implications and issues related to the loss of trust. Even though it wasn’t specifically a part of the text, because the students already had another embodied experience making a frozen picture as if they were two friends that could no longer trust each other, when they had to reconsider the loss of trust, they had more semiotic resources from which to build an understanding beyond just a verbal notion of betrayal and trust.

Through this example and other background building practices across the data corpus, though all of the events didn’t necessarily focus on a specific text the embodied experiences and collaborative inquiry and reflection from the first days of Macbeth frontloaded vocabulary and built a common shared background knowledge and helped sustain a shared sense of the imagined drama world. The shared embodiment and consideration of social and cultural specific background knowledge prepared students to begin to grapple with the themes and concepts of the larger plays. In this example from the first days of exploring Macbeth, the students began to make visible a growing embodied understanding of some of the historical, cultural and social concerns of the time period. By being able to embody experiences they have had (celebrating and sharing secrets with a friend, losing trust in a friend), then it helped them to visualize and clarify sometimes abstract concepts essential to understanding literary texts. Furthermore, the embodiment seemed to help students begin to invest in the story and the concerns and issues of the characters.

The sense of ensemble grew as they created a shared context of knowledge and deepened their investment and authentic understandings of the stories. Table 5.4 outlines my analysis of the practices that seemed specifically to serve the teacher purposes of Building Background Knowledge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Purpose</th>
<th>Dramatic Inquiry Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build up of specific embodied experience with and knowledge of social, cultural and historical settings of the story</td>
<td>Dramatic Play (as if…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-fiction research – with books, maps and pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual Effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soundscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build up of specific embodied experience in the setting of a particular interaction (within context of the entire play)</td>
<td>Sensory Narration of setting &amp; Students play and improvise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Introduction and Embodied Experiences with important themes and connecting their lives to abstract concepts of the play</td>
<td>Dramatic Play (as if…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frozen Pictures (sculptures made with their bodies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-to connect to their lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-to introduce an event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-introduce key lines/words from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students invest in the drama world and begin to connect to and take ownership perspectives of the characters</td>
<td>Moving and talking as if… characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frozen pictures:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Group Sculpt characters in a Portrait—using character information (*see character comprehension section)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate intrigue and create openings for students authentic questions and desire to find out more about the story</td>
<td>Teacher-in-role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvise Scene or Frozen pictures-- from possible back stories (not in play)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: Teacher’s Purposes in Building Background Knowledge

By spending a few minutes actively participating in such background building practices, students expanded their ways of knowing the world and characters of our co-authored the imagined drama worlds of *Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth, Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Hamlet*, respectively. The consistent opportunities to co-author this shared context of the drama world together in this classroom further linked the ensemble’s intermental zone Neil Mercer’s (2000) description of the ability to think deeper and do much more together than on their own.
Shared Embodied Experiences: Dramatic Play

The ensemble often used our bodies to *dramatically play* in and to collaboratively co-author the imagined “drama world” (O’Neill, 2005) together. The embodied experience within a setting involved active participation of the ensemble members to move as if we all are a certain characters from the original text or improvised roles who could possibly have been effected by the events of the play (e.g. rival gang members, soldiers, various workers in a castle, medieval Italian shopkeepers and citizens, Scottish villagers). We played out some of the actions being taken by these improvised roles in order to embody the experiences and build up investment in the imagined world and create a shared context with which to conduct further dramatic inquiry. The ensemble also dramatically played across time and space. An example started first on Day 1 of Macbeth in Figure 5.3, where the students played as if they were first brave warriors in battle between the invading Norway and Scotland. Then on Day 2, they all dramatically played as if they were Scottish villagers involved in different day-to-day activities up until the moment Norwegian soldiers invaded their Scottish village, which led to the ensemble’s debate over the higher order ethical question: *When is killing right or wrong?*

Sometimes Ms. G built up their specific embodied experience of the backdrop to particular interactions from the play by narrating using all five senses and the students improvised accordingly. For example, all of the students spread out through the room and mimed the possible actions of Romeo when he is sneaking into the Capulet’s garden prior to seeing Juliet in her balcony window. Other examples of sensory narration outside of the actual text included when Banquo and Macbeth were in battle and then what they saw in the aftermath (prior to the start of the play), when the fairies were playing in the forest of Midsummer Night’s Dream (before the mayhem of the play begins in the magic forest) or when students were walking as if villagers in the streets of Verona in Romeo and Juliet (before the first scene of the play where a street war breaks out between the Montagues and Capulets) or as guards on the castle’s embattlements in Hamlet.
Non-fiction Research

The teachers in the room often brought out pictures, books, or maps in which students used to create specific cultural, historical and social pragmatic knowledge of the time period and geographical location portrayed. To dramatically play as the shopkeepers and citizens of Verona in Romeo and Juliet in October, students used drawings and photographs of medieval Italian villages to make sense of the ways they could dramatically play. During Midsummer Night’s Dream (February) they explored pictures of Ancient Greece and shared prior knowledge. Ms. G also set up an entire unit of non-fiction work around medieval castles that occurred in November prior to work on Macbeth (December) and Hamlet (May).

The fact that Ms. G had done this medieval castle unit proved to be helpful in building the students knowledge of medieval castles and court life. Looking back on this with Ms. G we determined there was very significant difference in the amount of scaffolding that needed to be done around the historical, cultural and social settings and background understandings between Shakespeare texts and the texts she most typically used during non-dramatic events. The following excerpts from her interview is after we had been comparing the familiarity of settings and events in the series books for transitional readers to the need for building significant historical, cultural and background knowledge and giving students concrete experiences embodying interactions in those less than familiar places and events. When I asked Ms. G what she thought about these series books that she often used for her instruction during reading groups with the low and middle group such as Geronimo Stilton, The Polk Street Kids and the Bailey St School Kids. She explained that:

Ms. G: They’re fluff but they’re fun…. They are all the same formula. They [her students] know the characters and they know the characters are going to go on a adventure and they know they are going to return and they know that the characters are
going to learn something. The stories are in familiar places [like schools and with kids the same age as them] so they can identify with them and make connections with them.

Camille: however—and I guess this is a strength and a weakness is you don’t have to feel like you have to contextualize it for them..

Ms. G: right... you don’t have to tell them this is where the story takes place? You don’t have to explain the setting... like Ancient Greece [from Midsummer Night’s Dream] ... like Where’s Greece? You know? It’s in their own familiar world...

(Final Teacher Interview 6/11/11)

As Ms. G and I discussed what seemed to lie behind her decision to spend significant time setting up dramatic strategies so students could build embodied background knowledge as well as spending time doing research such as reading non-fiction books and looking at pictures.

Ms. G: see here in the United States there are no castles for kids to drive by and look at. It could be different in England and they might be more familiar with it but here they don’t have any or they have very little knowledge of that. I do think you are right that castle unit before we did Macbeth really helped them understand that whole scene. Somebody [another teacher from SUFSA teacher development project studying Midsummer Night’s Dream] was telling me that their kids were having a hard time understanding court life. And I was like—really? Because that was never an issue with my class. They understood the kings, the lords, the ladies, the nobles, the servants, the kings and queens and the servants. They got it and they understood it and they knew it wasn’t a court room with judges. Any time we said court life they understood. And they understood the hierarchy of power, too. You saw that when we did Midsummer Night’s Dream in the Duke’s Court. Well and with Macbeth and Hamlet too.
Camille: Right and I was thinking that building background knowledge too...like when you had just started Midsummer Night’s Dream and you looked at all of those pictures of Ancient Greece and the kids had so much to say-so many connections and things they were interested in and wondering about Ancient Greece... And also in December during Macbeth when I watched Yusef and Paarth work on creating and performing a frozen picture together of what makes a worthy king. They were going through the dubbing of the knight ceremony when they were showing a worthy king. I was thinking where did they get that...

Ms. G: Where did they learn that? Because we did it in that non-fiction work with castles.

Thus, as a part of this discussion, we collaboratively concluded that building embodied background knowledge had provided students with a way to better conceptualize specific cultural and historical knowledge which later proved necessary for students understanding of the complex stories and texts of Shakespeare. In the way that Ms. G had structured the ongoing dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare the students were able to spend time prior and during each play doing both embodied experiences imagining and making sense of the setting of the drama world and doing non-fiction research such as creating a three week non-fiction unit about medieval castles and court life supported a deepened understanding of the story. She also shared with me that this would be something she would share with other teachers as a strategy for scaffolding Shakespeare texts and other complex texts in the future. A second key finding within building embodied background knowledge category related to reconceptualizing literacy instruction similar to what other researchers have warned that students leaving the primary grades have had limited exposure to language and content outside of their everyday experience (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009) or as Ms. G reflected:
“if you just take those Polk Street Readers—and if that’s all you use [for instruction], they can’t make connections beyond their tiny little world and we are all about making connections to the greater world.”

After the whole year of exploring the complex texts of Shakespeare and their related non-fiction background, Ms. G and I both recognized how much the students need and want to think about complex engaging stories and language beyond their everyday experience. The fact that this doesn’t often happen though in primary reading instruction has been offered has a plausible explanation for the well-documented slump in reading scores for English Language Learners and other culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009).

**Visual Effects and Soundscapes**

Students also were involved in negotiating visually a portion of a setting or mood of event using visual or musical materials along with their bodies. For example, in Midsummer Night’s Dream the ensemble created one corner of the classroom into a piece of the magical forest from Midsummer Night’s Dream with large construction paper tree trunks and found items and they collectively created the animals of the forest in small groups using their bodies and sound effects.

At other times students also co-constructed the shared context of the imagined drama world by creating a *soundscape* of an event. To create a soundscape students re-read a text extract with the whole group and considered the way the mood of a certain event might be portrayed by the sounds heard in the background. To explore and create this kind of interpretation of an event, the students played with and experimented with various musical instruments and sound effects. Then upon Ms. G’s signal they would be orchestrated to perform a landscape of sounds. For example later in Macbeth, the students created a soundscape around the night that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth commit King Duncan’s Murder or in Hamlet they created a soundscape which helped them embody the experience of the guards and later prince Hamlet walking on the
embattlements and seeing the now dead King Hamlet’s ghost. Because they had access to other language systems for multimodal meaning-making, it further expanded their multimodal resources in order to visualize the story and invest in the character’s perspectives in the drama world. In Hamlet, this deepened understanding was made visible when the three focal students were able to write from the first person as if they were “night watchmen” who were on guard and had found the ghost of Old Hamlet on top of the castle walls. After having experienced as if the guards walking in the setting through a soundscape, Ino wrote-in-role (Field Notes May 5th, 2011) of the fear and confusion of the guards. She wrote: “I have seen the most weirdest thing in the world. It looked like a ghost. I shot an arrow but it went right through him. But I don’t think it was a regular ghost, I think that was the spirit of old Hamlet. What was I thinking. It was horrible. It said he was Old Hamlet.” Or Yusef wrote: “I saw a ghost. It was buy my shoulder. I try to get to the door. I saw it” In other words, such transmediation from the embodied experience in the soundscape into the first person narration as the guards provided them a backdrop to just talk about it but actually live through the story.

**Frozen Pictures**

In order to embody experiences, the ensemble would create still images with our bodies along with a partner or small group in what we called frozen pictures (often called tableaus in theatrical contexts). These frozen pictures were intended to connect themes or abstract concepts from the story in some way to an experience students have already had in their everyday lives, to show a significant gesture or action in the moment in a story or to actually have an experience as if… someone else in another time or place. At the end of a brief practice session, the sets of people got to perform their frozen picture for the whole group. On Day One (November 30th, 2010) from Macbeth, students set up 3 different frozen pictures with a partner; 2 best friends celebrating something really important, 2 friends sharing a secret, and 2 friends that don’t trust each other anymore. Ms. G used this to support students to connect their own personal life experiences to the upcoming themes of friendship, secrecy and betrayal in Macbeth. Each partner set got to
share their frozen picture with the whole group and there was discussion and links made between each frozen picture.

**Addition of Embodiment as a resource for ELLs**

The embodied experiences such as “frozen pictures” became texts that the students could use later as multimodal meaning-making resources. Having the access to non-linguistic forms of communication became an especially important resource for ELL focal students such as Yusef (intermediate English Language Learner). The first picture in Figure 5.2a below shows Yusef and his partner Jason who were observed on 11/30/10 working out a frozen picture of two friends who don’t trust each other. In their frozen picture Yusef ended up turning his back on the “friend” and the boys each made specific gestures with their mouth which I interpreted as signals of their embodiment of the mistrust and hatred for each other.
Later in the same dramatic inquiry event of that day, Ms. G asked all of the students to work collaboratively to create a Group Sculpt, where two boys standing in front used the students suggestions on how to best embody the two great warriors and best friends-(as-if-Banquo and Macbeth just coming off the battlefield.) The class collaboratively sculpted the boys based on play-based information supplied by Ms. G.

When Ms. G interjected new information (that foreshadow events later in the play) she asked the students:  How might this frozen picture change if Banquo and Macbeth found out they couldn’t trust each other anymore? Yusef immediately signaled he had an idea even if he couldn’t quite explain it linguistically. The second picture in figure 5.2b above illustrates how during this Group Sculpt, when Yusef had a chance to share his
suggestion for the Sculpture of the distrust between Macbeth and Banquo he ran up to the boys and attempted to physically move William-as-if Macbeth into a similar body position to what Yusef had created earlier with his partner Jason related to two friends no longer trusting each other (Field Notes 11/30/10). Yusef made visible an explicit intertextual connection to a previously embodied text (e.g. with the back turned, etc.). A piece of the latter interaction is seen in the transcript excerpt below. The transcript excerpt actually shows less verbal discussion and Yusef being able to build on past embodied experiences in order to move towards appropriating a deepened conceptual understanding because he had more expanded multimodal resources with which to make meaning and to make his thinking visible to others through embodiment. Over time this pushed students like Yusef to develop complex understanding about the characters changing relationships to each other and to the larger stories.

249 Ms. G: Right now this is Banquo and Macbeth. They are helping each other off the battlefield. What if… What would it look like if Macbeth no longer trusted Banquo?
(DRS is the only one raising his hand)
250 Ms. G: Ok. If they don’t trust each other now that they’ve come of the battlefield. What should they do?
251 Yusef: OK Macbeth (goes to move William’s shoulders but William doesn’t move)
252 Febea no we are not really/
253 Ms. G: Can you just tell them?
254 Yusef: OK Macbeth should turn around like this (and shows his back similar to what he did earlier with Jason when they imagined friends who didn’t trust each other anymore) and he…. (points to Banquo and shows him what else he thinks he could do)/
255 William yeah but you never know if he could pick up a sword from all the way back here (shows with his body) and stab me in the back.
256 st: oh… ooo, uh-huh
Even though he didn’t get to physically move William-as-Macbeth (251), Yusef was able to use his earlier embodiment (see Figure 5.2a) as a way of making sense of the idea of the loss of trust which is an ongoing theme in Macbeth returned to in the segment illustrated by Figure 5.2b. He is able to non-linguistically communicate (254) and have his idea socially recognized by the group (256) and he actively continues participation during this segment. The limitation from this could have been that didn’t linguistically express the words. This was overcome benefit of the fact that even he didn’t or couldn’t fully explain linguistically his understanding of the loss of trust was successfully communicated and even added onto by William. Furthermore, across other data on Yusef, his participation often waned at times when the linguistic demands on him were the highest (e.g. lengthy, verbal discussions about abstract concepts and language) and his visible participation was highest during the moments when embodiment was intentionally on offer as a key semiotic resource.

The students and teachers spent significant time using many forms of embodiment in this classroom and over time as the class had become enthralled with using dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare, embodiment became a highly valued semiotic resource. Therefore, students like Yusef more consistently and spontaneously used embodiment to successfully communicate and offer previous connections and embodied references when performing his understanding in front of the whole ensemble. Ms. G and other students also began to notice that Yusef was actually quite “good at using his body” or in other words he was adept with embodiment as a semiotic resources (Teacher Reflection 6/11/11). One day in February, when I went into the classroom after a week’s absence, the first thing Yusef said to me was:

“Guess what Ms. Camille, I got to be Puck yesterday…and the kids, the kids here they told me I was a good Puck.” (Yusef-Reflection 2/18/11)
A few students that were nearby confirmed this and began explaining what a great job Yusef had done embodying one of the main characters from Midsummer Night’s Dream. Whereas in the beginning of the year, it was a struggle for some of the “high” students like Ino and Brooke to be willing to work with Yusef. Over time, more and more students seemed to “want to work with Yusef, now” (Brooke-Reflection 3/16/11) Or as Ms. G explained in her final reflection about Yusef “he was such a good little actor.” Embodiment became a significant resource for meaning-making in the moment for Yusef and all of the ELLs, but particularly for Yusef, his ability to use embodiment also gave him a means to socially reposition himself within the culture of wonder and embodied inquiry that was forming all around him.

Addition of Frontloading Shared Context for ELLs

The more investment the ELL students built up within the shared context surrounding the texts, they were exploring, the more they asked questions and considered other intertextual connections. Secondly, the embodied nature of the tasks helped ELL focal students like Yusef appropriate abstract concepts as seen with the example above with the loss of trust and betrayal. Because it was assumed that all of the students needed significant scaffolding of social, historical and cultural background knowledge, Ms. G actually created interactions that “frontloaded” vocabulary and embodied understanding of the setting, and related interactions and some of abstract concepts that all of the students would be collaboratively facing in the play and the texts in the unit. As “frontloading” vocabulary has been touted as particularly effective strategy in making content comprehensible for English language learners, then this structuring of dramatic reading practices offered a space for the ELLs to build up their repertoire of multimodal resources from which to understand the current text and to make intertextual connections to other texts in the future. ELL students need multiple opportunities to gradually shape meanings in non-linguistic and linguistic ways. This set of practices opened up embodiment as a means to build background knowledge.
The limitations of this practice for English Language Learners seemed to be that depth of textual understanding was exchanged sometimes for breadth of number of different texts read. Ms. G had to spend time building the background knowledge and therefore, some days there may have been less focus on interpreting full texts. However, the long-term investment in the stories and willingness to live through, question and talk back to the story through multimodal performances of literacy understandings seemed to only be possible by the organic build up of all of the students’ shared contexts. The benefits of such in-depth understanding were most visible over time the as the focal students became more and more apt to use intertextual connections across stories. It was just because the collaborative, playful and embodied experiences early on that the students that prepared them for long-term engagement with the stories. Thus, the shared context and embodiment helped to frontload themes, language and relevant historical, social and cultural information and through multimodal resources focal students could appropriate abstract concepts and language and deepen their ownership over characters.

**Embodied Story Comprehension: Shared Embodied Interpretations**

Story comprehension took on a whole new meaning during dramatic inquiry reading events with Shakespeare. A wide range of social and multimodal supports were put into place during dramatic reading instructional events which simultaneously engaged students in an experience of living through the events and implied events of the plays. Similar to building background practices, the story comprehension practices deepened their investment with Shakespeare’s characters and stories. However, because they playfully and collaboratively moved in and out of embodied interpretations and inquiry about Shakespeare’s actual words, the students developed couldn’t help but develop an active and at times personal relationship to his language. Ultimately, the practices and its related outcomes with students helped create and sustain the culture of wonder and collaborative inquiry.
In a few instances certain social and multimodal supports became available across both non-dramatic and dramatic reading instructional events that supported story comprehension—such as working with a partner or creating a drawing and prediction of the next chapter in a reading group book. Yet, embodied story comprehension in dramatic inquiry reading events specifically refers to dramatic inquiry strategies observed in this classroom that asked students to use pieces of text and information from the plays to insert themselves into the story (Sipe, 2002) to interact as-if-imagined characters and in places not present and to embody multiple interpretations of the story events. When students were able to interact with adults or other students as if characters of the story, the focus was to collaboratively and dialogically create multiple embodied interpretations and meanings of the story or text under current study. The following section Interactive Storytelling describes a few of the patterns in performances of dramatic reading events that related to students embodied interpretations of the plot, characters and sequence of events. Character Comprehension describes the practices where students are focused on embodying interpretations of characters.

**Embodied Interpretation(s): Interactive Storytelling**

In order to maintain an atmosphere of collective inquiry over time within each Shakespeare play unit, Ms. G held back on sharing the entire story of the play. Therefore, some of the dramatic inquiry segments had to focus on the teacher sharing at least some pieces of the overall sequence and plot of story in order to move their dramatic inquiry along. Overall, I broadly grouped this set of practices as *interactive storytelling*. ‘Storytelling’ because the teacher’s purpose seemed partially focused on telling a piece of the story and moving the plot along but it was also ‘interactive’ because the practices most often required adults and students to actively participate in using embodied interpretation(s) as a key multimodal resource in making sense of the plot. I intentionally signaled with the plural (s) to denote the significance given in this set of dramatic reading practices around the valuing of multiple interpretations of the same interaction.
Overall, this set of practices required interactive participation by the students and adults and moved them towards public, dramatic performance (though the public audience was still only the ensemble itself). Based on my cross comparative analysis of my video-codes across all four play units, Figure 5.5. outlines the practices labeled within interactive story-telling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING:</th>
<th>Students Actively Live through the story while teacher uses it to introduce plot events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Performs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dramatic &amp; Exciting Narration</strong>—teacher uses dramatic tension, (e.g. whispers, turns out lights, etc.), changes in pitch and intonation or other various changes in expression to represent character voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Teacher-in-Role</strong>—teacher acts as character from within the drama world and thereby gives information about plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prep for Story-in-the Round</strong>—teacher reads key subsections of a section of plot summary including key lines of characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly, Teacher-Mediated</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interactive Sensory Narration</strong>—teacher describes the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings etc of an event and students improvise actions of characters as teacher speaks (*also could be part of creating visual effects or soundscapes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Woosh</strong>—teacher gives a bit of story &amp; all students act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interactive Storytelling (with WORDs on WALL or text extract)</strong>—teacher and students read pieces of text chorally and/or act chorally appropriate for the meaning of the words/event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—teacher tells a bit of plot while using a few students in front of the rest of class to model the event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5  Interactive Storytelling  Continued
Table 5.5 Continued

| (Semi) Teacher-Less Space | Story in the Round*—  
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|  
| • Students create, move, act and watch others perform  
• High levels of active student participation | Teacher edits texts and creates subsections summarizing the plot events of one part of a Shakespeare play including a few key lines or quotes from characters in the subsection. Small groups of students take a different subsection and create and “practice” the subsection in a teacher-less space. Each small group then publically performs their plot event in sequential order around a circle. |

**Teacher Performs as Teacher-in-Role**

A key feature started by Heathcote and used by many process oriented drama educators is ‘teacher-in-role’ (Bolton 1998). Ms. G and other adults used the dramatic strategy of teacher-in-role for multiple purposes. During practices intended to help student embody interpretations in order to better comprehend the plot sequence and events. Ms. G (sometimes with other adults) would take on the role of a character and the students and possibly give the students information about the event and introduce or review language they are exploring through the performance as that character for just a few minutes. Students also interacted with the character such as asking questions or offering advice. Ms. G, myself and other visiting artists and professors took up roles of various characters from all four plays. (e.g. Prince Escalus, King Duncan, Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, Puck)

Using Macbeth Day 2 as an example (See Table 5.2), I took on the role as-if King Duncan. Prior to the arrival of the king’s messenger, the students were positioned to imagined themselves as loyal thanes in the counsel of King Duncan as the king was in the middle of contemplating a concern. King Duncan was wondering what he should do because no warrior seems brave enough to get rid of the traitor to Scotland, Thane of Cawdor who has teamed up with the invading Norwegian army. Ms. G took on the role of a messenger (and later the king’s servant) arriving to tell him the traitor, Thane of Cawdor has been captured and confessed and Macbeth has led the defeat of the invading Norwegian armies. As the messenger, Ms. G launched into an expressive oration of the text extract from Act 1 Scene 2 (*For Brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name*)—
Disdaining fortune with his brandished steel which smoked with bloody execution...

which the students return to later in considering what people think of Macbeth at least in the beginning of the play.

I playing as-if-King Duncan acted overjoyed with this news and I/King Duncan told Ms. G/the messenger to go off and let the brave Macbeth know he is the new thane of Cawdor now. After the messenger left students dramatically took up roles as other loyal thanes are encouraged to ask King Duncan questions about this decision. The following excerpt from the video transcript from December 1st shows an example of this line of embodied interpretation and how it starts to move into embodied inquiry. In this type of event, students-in-role as fictional characters offered advice or asked authentic questions which deepened their embodied engagement and authentic understanding of the story. The teacher-in-role was able to playfully give students more information from “within” the story.

**Video Transcript Excerpt: 12/1/10**

*Bolded words* are words that have already been embodied, discussed or will be returned to in the future

Ms. G-as-King’s servant: Yes, Sir Marquell R

Marquell R-as-thane: How do you know he [Macbeth] can do it? How do you know he won’t get killed too?

Ms. G-as-King’s Servant: Such is the lot of the soldier isn’t it?

Camille-as-King Duncan: It *tis. Yet, I have faith in him for twice he has shown me. First he got rid of McDonwald that invaded from the Western Isles. Now he has fought off the invading armies of Norway who have worked with that traitor, the original Thane of Cawdor. I know Macbeth will be loyal to Scotland as he has shown it in his valiant efforts.
Other students continued to ask questions and the teacher-in-role improvised on the spot. This story comprehension practice of teacher-role demanded the students pay close attention and then create appropriate and authentic questions to ask but it also allowed the teacher-in-role to offer more information which is relevant to understanding the story. As seen here it created space for Ms. G and I to summarize and review information and even introduce new language. Yet, the understanding is co-constructed through students interacting within an embodied interpretation and through an authentic conversation between students and teacher.

**Highly Teacher-Mediated Embodied Interpretations**

Though Ms. G or another adult would use teacher-in-role as an engaging way to provide “plot” information, but more often she would highly-mediate the students to act or move as part of making sense of a sequence or set of plot events. In this set of practices, she might mediate student models to perform just a small section of an event where she would supply the words and taking suggestions from the audience the students would show the plot event. Or she would use the RSC tool of a “Woosh” (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2010, p. 300) where students take part in a quick, participatory telling of a story that uses text and action to establish a shared understanding. Students would stand in a circle and Ms. G would grab a set of students from the circle who would dramatically play out the piece of narration she was reading and sometimes she would give a character a key line to speak aloud. However, there were no set roles as the idea was just to quickly give an embodied interpretation of a sequence of events from a portion of the play.

**Semi-Teacher Less Spaces: Embodied Interpretations:**

One favored practice (asked for constantly by the students) involved “getting out the costumes” and creating a Story in the Round. In the latter case, adults would move out of the way and small groups of students worked on their own throughout the room creating and practicing a sub-section of the plot though some groups were assisted by adults in the
room. Because these practices overlapped with Fluency I offer examples of these in the fluency section. In the next section though I continue with the embodied interpretations that co-occurred with making sense of the character’s perspectives, moods, desires and relationships within the given circumstances of Shakespeare’s plays.

**Embodied Interpretations: Character Comprehension**

In order to make sense of the stories and specific interactions the students were supported through a wide range of dramatic inquiry strategies in comprehending the relationships and given circumstances of different characters. Developing embodied interpretations of characters proved invaluable to helping students conceptualize some of the subtext within the complex vocabulary, figurative language and sociopragmatic concerns with language. During the character comprehension practices students often inserted themselves into the story as-if characters, and then lived through a moment in time from the perspective of a character (even if only for a brief moment). Table 5.6 illustrates the reading comprehension tasks related to Character Comprehension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Group &amp; Highly Teacher-Mediated</th>
<th>Teacher-in-role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Sculpt Family Portraits</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Sculpt Scene between 2 characters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thought Track Characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role on the Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Groups or Partners &amp; Semi-Teacher Less Space</td>
<td>Embody Multiple Interpretations of Key Lines of Characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Character Maps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.6: Character Comprehension**

**Group Sculpt**

*Group Sculpt* was another version of frozen pictures where an audience collaboratively offers suggestions to just a few students or adults who are in the spotlight for a moment
on how they should stand based on an inference drawn from information given. Other times Ms. G would create a summary of different members in a certain family and then the students would all collaboratively with the teacher mediation turn a group of students into a frozen picture or a *Family Portrait* which literally and metaphoric represented the relationship between a set of characters in relationship to other characters frozen in time. An example of a family portrait of the Capulets from *Romeo and Juliet* is shown in Figure 5.3.

![Figure 5.3: Capulet Family Portrait](image)

Each of these students was given an imagined role as a character in the Capulet Family. Based on the suggestions for interpretive choices for their characters, the students had received from the audience they have created very specific ways of using their posture, body and spatial positioning in relationship to each other. The students though still had the choice in which suggestions to take and how to actually implement them. Whereas the nurse is looking longingly at her friend who she has long cared for in Juliet who sits below her parents on the floor. Yusef seen on the far right hand side of the portrait has used his clenched fists, lowered eyebrows to visibly display an embodied interpretation.
of Tybalt who is full of anger towards the families sworn enemy, the Montagues and he is actually looking away from the family as if to make sure none of those Montagues are coming near his family.

While Group Sculpt was on the most highly teacher mediated tasks and I observed that if it went on longer than 10-15 minutes, some of the audience would get restless and disengage. However, this task still proved highly beneficial for several reasons. It introduced the power relationships between people in an interactive way so that the students began to take ownership and students often returned to this information in later considerations. In Romeo and Juliet, the negotiations around power between Lord and Lady Capulet and their daughter that took place during the Capulet Family Group Sculpting task, were returned to often when issues of social positions of the father in relationship to his daughter came up later. This collective and embodied interpretation in Group Sculpt also helped students invest more into the specific relationships and character’s perspectives in the story.

With the Capulet family portrait for example, after the task seen in the picture and in the rest of our exploration of Romeo and Juliet, Yusef became highly interested in being Tybalt or thinking about things from Tybalt’s perspective or as Ms. G said “he wanted to own Tybalt. He wanted to own that character...” (Interview 12/20/11). For the rest of the day and even the next day after Yusef held the position as Tybalt he held on tightly to his name tag labeling him as Tybalt, and I found him taking the nametag off the wall, putting it on his chest and walking around with it (Field Notes 10/25/11). Even after no one else had mentioned Tybalt for over a week because the character had died as we explored portions later in the play—Yusef reminded the class that Tybalt’s body was also “in the crypt with Juliet” (Field Notes, 11/5/10).

Group Sculpt also occurred where Ms G would give students information about one or two characters during a specific interaction. The group would collaboratively “sculpt” the students into a picture based on the information given to them or they be a piece of
pre-printed text from a Shakespeare play that the students would then use as part of their collaborative negotiations about the implications of characters’ language in conjunction with their body positioning and gestures.

At other times, during Group Sculpt the ensemble would Thought Track the character or in other words, stand up behind or beside someone else and speak the characters thoughts as if they were them. This task actually pushed students into the poetic realm because not only did they have to understand the character they had to perform a creative and authentic understanding. Because there was pressure to perform something creative and express something new each time for the audience’s sake, the students had to think of different possible ideas then the people that had already gone before they had a turn to Thought Track. Figure 5.4 offers an illustration of Dasjah’s participation in Thought Tracking on 12/3/10 where Dasjah spoke as-if-Macbeth.

“That means the king will die and I will become king.”

(Dasjah-as-Macbeth, 12/3/10)

Figure 5.4: Dasjah Thought Tracks “Macbeth”

After hearing that the witches had given Macbeth a prophecy that he would be king, students had many thoughts to shared about what Macbeth would have been thinking. As seen in Figure 5.4, Dasjah stood up by Marquell W-as-Macbeth (who was already sculpted as such earlier). She spoke Macbeth’s thoughts about the witches prophecy just
given to Macbeth as if she were really him thinking out loud. Dasjah-as-if Macbeth inferred through their prior embodied experiences and interpretations of characters what Macbeth might be thinking about the implications of the witches prophecy. Other students added on and the students began to wonder what was going to happen to the current king in power. Within that same day, Dasjah then was able to use this newly embodied understanding to help her make predictions about what could possibly happen in the events still to come in the play.

**Authentic Oral Fluency & Re-Reading for Meaning:**

**Embodied Interpretations: Moving Towards Active Performance**

Authentic Oral Fluency & Re-Reading For Meaning was a category for a set of practices that I observed to be specific to repeated readings of the same text. The teacher’s purpose in these practices seemed to be to give students multimodal and social support to gain confidence in oral reading fluency and using expressive reading to make the words on the page more meaningful and relevant to the specific context.

The students focus in this practice was playful and embodied but also text-centered. The students would play around with their interpretations of the words spoken between two or more characters using a specific text extracted from Shakespeare’s original play. A key component of this recurrent practice was that either through whole group and high teacher mediation or in students working small groups, students did many repeated readings of the same piece of text. In the small group work students were given only a relatively small amount of time to practice with their partner or small group, and thus there was a social pressure to create a coherent, recognizable performance based on the piece of text they were given but it was also fun at the same time. The students seemed to favor the latter small group style of embodied interpretations because they got to work with partners or a small group and at times they could “get out the costumes” as part of the process of representing their interpretation of a Shakespeare text extract. All three focal students chose the small group interpretations or “expressive reading” as one of
their favorite reading events which aligned with Ms. G’s reflection that the “kids loved getting out the costumes and reading.” Table 5.7 details the reading practices within this sub-category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly Teacher-Mediated</th>
<th>Teacher Purpose: Exposure &amp; Practice with pronunciation, prosody and cadence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modeled Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Forum Theatre:</strong> Teacher (or students) in role reads and perform multiple times from the same scene --ensemble stands up and shows suggested interpretive choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                         | **Watch Multiple Embodied Interpretations**  
|                         | Students watch and hear multiple groups of students perform (actively read) the same scene multiple times |
|                         | **Teacher Models Reading**  
|                         | -teacher-in-role  
|                         | -mediates students to act while reading  
|                         | -Interactive Storytelling—seeing, hearing, saying words on wall—related to context |
| **Shared Reading with Movement** | **Choral Reading and stamping** or other sets of pre-planned gestures |
|                         | **Choral Reading & Punctuation Turn** |
|                         | **Choral Reading and move lines across the space or advance and retreat as two lines of same characters** |
| **Shared Reading with Immediate Pronunciation & Meaning Feedback** | **Echo Reading** |
|                         | **Punctuation to Punctuation Reading**  
|                         | Students each read a line up to the next punctuation mark or end of line |

**Table 5.7: Modeled & Shared Repeated Readings for Fluency & Meaning**

**Modeled Reading**

Modeled reading took place when the teacher specifically mediated an interactive task where students participated in some way but also heard and watched the embodiment of a piece of text occur in multiple ways. Modeled reading of the text co-occurred consistently with students getting ready to go off and perform a reading on their own as with a partner or in a small group. Typically, the students had the printed word in their hands or it was up on the wall. Then the teacher would use a wide range of strategies to
introduced the new language. When there was extra adults willing to perform a scene, Ms. G set up a *forum theatre* where two adults would begin by reading the lines to each other and make some attempt at interpretation. As they watched this embodied interpretation of a scene by adults-in-role in the middle of the circle students were encouraged to stop the action offer them advice about how to better position their bodies to best interpret the scene.

Modeled reading was usually fairly brief and gave them an opportunity to see, hear the correct pronunciations, in conjunction with embodiment, posturing and gestures that helped to bring the meaning of the character’s interaction and the words on the page into three-dimensional life. This form of modeled reading for meaning rarely happened in non-dramatic reading events. This style of modeled reading benefited the comprehension of the complex texts by all of the students which was made visible in their consistent appropriation of the new vocabulary in meaningful performances.

**Shared Reading with Movement**

Another practice intended to increase students fluency involved repeated shared readings of the same text. Though in the dramatic inquiry events, repeated readings were highly engaging for the students as they often did them in conjunction with movements (e.g. reading while walking on a tight rope and turning on the punctuation marks). Ms. G would also lead the students in repeated, choral readings where the students followed the lead of an adult who read and acted out the interactional meaning of the words at the same time. An example of this occurred during Midsummer Night’s Dream where an actor in the classroom stood in a horizontal line with half of the students and all read and gestured appropriately with the line of the character, Demetrius and they all moved in similar fashion towards the other half of the class, who was in line with Ms. G. Ms. G’s group then responded by reading the lines chorally, gesturing, and moving as if the character, Helena. (Field Notes, 2/4/11)
Students also stamped or created rhythm together while they did shared reading. Because a large part of Shakespeare’s text is written in iambic pentameter it lent itself well to rhythmic shared readings. The following transcript excerpt from Macbeth shows how the students stamped and tapped the iambic pentameter rhythm on the floor as part of their chorally, shared reading along with Ms. G.

All:  *(hitting their hands on the floor in rhythm)*

When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain? When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain? When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain? When shall we three meet again? When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain? *(the volume gets louder with each time they return to the line again)*

**Shared Reading with Immediate Pronunciation & Meaning Feedback**

Another shared reading practice used to introduce a new piece of text was called punctuation to punctuation (RSC toolkit, 2010) where students and teachers would stand in tight circle and each would read a phrase or line until they got to the next line break or punctuation mark, then the next person in the circle would read to the next punctuation mark. The words would go quickly around the circle. When the group got to the end of the text piece, the next person would start over at the top. The text chunks never ended on the same person which ensured a different phrase was read by the same person each time. The specific text extract usually was read in full by the collective whole at least 4-5 times where each focal student would get 3-4 turns at reading a different phrase. Prior to the actual reading, Ms. G would usually ask them to point to any words they didn’t recognize and she would give model the correct pronunciation. However, this was meant to be a quick introduction so they didn’t spend significant meaning at this point as the cyclical nature of the subsequent events ensured the students would continue to face and make meaning with this same piece of text in multiple ways. At other times, a
combination of modeled and shared reading would take place where the teacher would read a line and students would echo back the reading of the words. Other times the teacher would read and the students would echo or call out important words from the passage while she was reading or they would echo unknown words.

**Small Group Fluency Practice**

Either through modeled reading, or various versions of shared reading of text extracts the students would first be repeatedly exposed to appropriate pronunciation of words and they had an opportunity. During whole group and in preparation for the active, performance, of which they would work on later in small groups, students were encouraged through either verbal or dramatic strategies to ask questions about unknown or unclear vocabulary (e.g. using words-on-wall to discuss the known word parts, stopping a teacher-in-role to ask unknown words). Then students would go off into semi-teacher less spaces and work with partners or in small groups. Students would practice re-reading and deciding how to best interpret the underlying meanings and appropriate ways of performing the interaction laid out in the text extract. Table 5.8 details the reading practices within this sub-category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Teacher Less Spaces</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Purpose:</strong> Students are Re-Reading multiple times &amp; Making Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<th>Small Group Re-Reading &amp; Perform “Costume Reading” (of text extract)</th>
<th>Partners or small groups play with and interpret a specific text extract --scene from the play --story in the round</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Re-Reading for Meaning (of play text extract)</strong></td>
<td>Back to Back Reading Whispered Reading Reading in different pitches and tones</td>
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**Table 5.8: Small Group Fluency Practice: Re-Reading for Meaning**
**Partner Re-Reading For Meaning**  
After initial introduction to text extracts students would often work with a partner to read the text many times to each other. Ms. G gave them various novel ways to do this partner reading, such as sitting back to back and changing their intonation to different levels, pitches, depending on different contexts (e.g. at a library versus a football game).

**Small Group Re-Reading For Meaning**  
In this kind of partner or small group work students worked in semi teacher less spaces. As they worked with their group to figure out the most appropriate, creative and enjoyable interpretation, they also ended up authentically re-reading the same text multiple times but with a specific focus on creating a meaningful performative interpretation of the scene.

To illustrate this recurrent pattern, I will again return to Macbeth Day 3 (Table 5.2). During the interactive storytelling around Macbeth and the witches prophecy, students were asked to work with a group of three to embody the perspective of the three weird sisters that appear at the very beginning of Macbeth (Ms. G specifically avoided using the word witches, even though this was the reference most often used by the students in their interpretations). Also, the students were asked to embody an interpretation with a longer version of the same text extract on Macbeth, Day 4 (Field Notes,, 12/6/10).

Prior to entering the teacher-less space to work with their small group, the students were involved in chorally reading and beating the rhythm on the floor with their hands and feet along with Ms. G. This practice served to give a shared reading of the text extract from the 3 sisters speech which is the opening scene of Macbeth. The students then worked with their group of three students to create their own interpretations of this same scene “When shall we three meet again, in thunder lightening or in rain….” (See Appendix F) Figure 5.5 shows an example of Ino practicing with her group of three. Ino is seen moving her fingertips together and cackling. This seemed to be a fairly common embodied representation as it was used by other groups in their interpretations of witch-
like women who cast spells and give people prophecies. Since other students like Yusef seemed to use a similar embodied text related to “witches” during their group practices, this may be have been a common extratextual connection, which linked students interpretation in the classroom to other embodied representations of witches that may have been seen by many of the children in recent movies and TV shows or other popular cultural texts. They had the space though to use those embodied texts as semiotic tools.

Figure 5. 5: Ino’s Group embodies three witches

In such small groups the talk and play together focused on the creation of a their own embodied interpretation of the scene. Ino’s group negotiated over who or what these creatures might look like and how they might go about speaking these words, moving their bodies spatially and using gestures and how they might respond to and interact with each other if they are “so withered and so wild in their attire” (a line shared with the students through a teacher-in-role version of Banquo’s line from Macbeth)

As was typical in these small group fluency practices, they only had a few minutes to practice for the upcoming performance so it forced the students to really hone in on the interpretive process and re-read for meaning several times. In addition, the students
were also the audience members and were able to watch multiple performances of the same scene that they too had been practicing. This further gave students access to hearing and seeing the words multiple times in meaningful, performances. When the different groups of students all worked on fluency around the same scene, students had the opportunity to see other possible interpretations and ways of re-imagining the characters and the setting (which is also important to students recognizing their own agency in making meaning with texts).

The students seemed to enjoy the perception of freedom from adult mediation as they often asked Ms. G to do this type of work. Evidence that supported Ms. G’s assertion that “they loved this kind of fluency work” was observed on 12/8/10 during their non-dramatic literacy work time, a few students spontaneously asked Ms. G for the text extract and they begin not only re-reading it multiple times but they moved around in space, creating and playing out their embodied interpretations of the three sisters. Dasjah and her two group members immediately began doing the same thing until eventually other groups began to practice re-reading their own scenes.

**Costume Reading**

Because during this small group and partner reading and embodied interpretation students often begged Ms. G to be able to put on costumes or use a prop Ms. G affectionately began to call this practice “costume reading.” Overall, students would re-read the passages many times precisely because it set-up a highly engaging and challenging reason for re-reading and for sorting out the words and meanings of the text. Therefore, deep engagement in reading was spurred on for these students by their desire to what they saw as “play” with their friends as well as the pressure of creating a recognizable public performance. From the teacher’s point of view, the students were embodying interpretations as means to continue to embody a deeper understanding of the plot and characters and to help support them in exploring ongoing inquiry questions (e.g. who are these two people in relationship to each other? how might these two characters be speaking with each other? Why?). Ultimately, making sense of why characters would
speak to each other in certain ways helped the students more clearly make sense of some of the complex stories created by Shakespeare’s plays. Secondly, in this process of inferring and questioning the students were re-reading and practicing the justification of interpretation in the text. Lastly, the practice of costume reading was simply just great fun for the students as Ms. G stated (and I observed may times)

“the kids absolutely love costume reading. It’s so funny because if an outside observer saw them they might be wondering why these two kids seem to be just standing there reading and re-reading from a piece of paper in a crazy costume. But for my kids, they love it. They will re-read all day, if I give them Shakespeare’s words, let them get up and move and especially if they get to wear a costume. They’ll read all day.” (Interview June 6th, 2011)

The challenge of these small group embodied interpretations task was pushed forward by the pressure to perform a justifiable and recognizable performance for themselves and the rest of the ensemble. The students though were supported by their opportunity to see, hear, and listen to multiple modeled and shared readings of the same text and to work jointly with others on the active, embodiment of their performances. This also met and went beyond the teacher’s instructional intentions because the students were highly engaged in many repeated readings of the same text but with deeply authentic and meaningful purposes

Specific Analysis of ELLs and meaningful fluency tasks

During dramatic inquiry events, Ms. G sought meaningful ways to “get the words into the mouths of students as much as possible” (Reflection Feb. 11th, 2011)” and to keep returning to the same piece of text in meaningful and performative ways. To do so, Ms. G pushed forward embodied interpretations of Shakespeare text extracts as a means for students to authentically re-read multiple times and to do so as a part of a meaningful and authentic purpose.
Repeated reading of the same text has been identified by reading researchers (C. Snow, 2002) as essential in building all students fluency and automaticity in word recognition. However, English Language Learners also have been identified as a population particularly susceptible to the fourth grade slump due to the very fact that primary reading instruction tends to be focused more on the decoding and fluency skills and do little in regards to building ELLs need for complex academic, literary and content vocabulary (Chall & Jacobs, 2003b; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). The difference between the non-dramatic fluency tasks and this dramatic fluency work in this classroom was that the repeated readings intended for to increase oral reading fluency were not isolated but instead authentic, highly meaningful and purposeful.

**Authentic, engaging and enjoyable reasons to do repeated readings**

The fluency tasks in the dramatic inquiry events were authentic in the sense that the three focal ELL students like most of the other students were already deeply invested in living through, talking back to the text, critiquing and taking over the text. From the focal student’s perspective, the task of embodying and interpreting a piece of text, was also a chance to have fun and work with their friends and it became a much desired activity of the focal students. When I asked Ino about this practice, she responded:

> “We work with partners and pretend to be some of the characters and would act out the things that we needed to... It was fun.”

*(Ino-reflection 5/27/10)*

In all three focal student interviews the “re-reading with expression” (as Dasjah called it on 12/16/10) or as Ms. G called the fluency work with partners or small groups was considered a highly valued practice that they all three listed in the “most interested” column in their reading interviews. Both Dasjah and Ino had also went on to explain that they really appreciated that the teacher read “with expression” during read aloud and that this helped them become more “interested” in those read aloud stories. When Ms. used
expressive reading it gave them “more to think about at home” (Ino 12/14/11). Thus, this combined with other patterns in the dramatic reading events, helped me to understand that these three focal ELLs wanted to be able to deeply engage in the meaning of complex stories. Through the embodied experiences, interpretations and inquiries of the dramatic inquiry events Ms. G was able to give them this support for deep engagement and comprehension of the larger story. Secondly, because of the collaborative and long term embodied inquiry and the ability to play with their expression, rhythm and language of these highly engaging stories seemed to sustain their engagement in multiple re-readings of the same text with meaningful purposes. As Ms. G words explain below, the students fell in love with the rhythm and language of Shakespeare and as a consequence teacher was not having to push them to “get through” the procedure of practicing fluency, they readily chose to work on repeated and highly meaningful readings of the same text.

“It was very easy to use passages from the text we were exploring for fluency work because students were already familiar with repeated reading practice and they want to do it. I am still amazed at how deeply my students love the words of Shakespeare. It’s what keeps them going with this fluency work.” (Teacher Reflection, 2/26/11)

During the reading events with Shakespeare, the normally static reading groups based entirely on fluency scores, were disrupted, “un-grouped” and the students were intentionally switched often into different groupings. As a result all three focal students had many opportunities to be highly engaged in conversation around interpretations of text with various conversational partners. They had consistent practice with re-reading with expression as part of an ongoing, fun and collaborative investigation of the themes and intriguing stories of Shakespeare’s plays.

**ELLs and Re-Reading with Expression**

From the students’ perspective working on re-reading was not an isolated task separate from ongoing meaning-making. Instead in the process of collaborative creating a quick
performative interpretation using a piece of edited Shakespeare texts, the focal students had multiple opportunities to play with a text and practice “reading with expression” (Dasjah 12/16/11) multiple times. They all three mentioned the phrase “reading with expression” related to this type of embodied interpretation in their separate reading interviews. Dasjah and Ino seemed to recognized “reading for expression” was a strategy that helped them better visualize and understand the story. In their reading interviews I had played a bumbling fictional character named Ms. Fuzzyminds writing a book about reading without knowing much (She even held the book upside down sometimes) to try to see what kinds of things a third grader might offer to other students learning to read. When I talked to Dasjah in this way, she shared “I would say [to another student having a hard time understanding a story] that they have to try to read with expression. Re-read and as you re-read, read with expression.” In summary, because of the oral fluency practices in authentic contexts, the students came to understand that in order to read with expression, a reader has to consider the social context of the interaction and audience to the text being read and thus reading for expression became equivocal to reading for meaning.
Meaningful Fluency as Part of ELLs story comprehension

Even if they were having fun and thoroughly enjoying it, the need to perform an interpretation of the language pushed all three of the ELLs to re-read the same text many times in meaningful ways, gain practice with expressive reading and appropriate new vocabulary all within highly contextualized and authentic contexts of comprehending the Shakespeare stories. As I detailed in Chapter 4, some non-dramatic reading practices in this classroom intended to give students multiple exposure to hearing and reading the same text multiple time actually created inauthentic tasks that were isolated from content and language learned in other areas. While the non-dramatic fluency practices offered Yusef and Dasjah repeated practice of decoding the words it offered very little to these ELLs for gaining contextualized vocabulary or new content knowledge. Since it was done with isolated passages and practiced independently of the teacher or other students it proved to give Yusef and Dasjah little focus on meaning.

The ELLs provided a particularly rich case study of the power of meaningful fluency tasks. Table 5.9 is a graph of Yusef’s fluency scores and Table 5.10 is a graph of Dasjah’s fluency scores across the year.

![Yusef Fluency Scores](image)

Table 5.9: Yusef Fluency Scores
Table 5. 10: Dasjah Fluency Scores

The blue columns are scores for number of words per minute on the schoolwide DIEBELS fluency test at the beginning, middle and end of the year benchmark testing dates. The red column compares the Macbeth “cold” and “hot” scores (cold = prior to any embodied interpretation or practice) on a passage from Macbeth after two weeks. The two green columns represent a cold and hot score on a passage from Midsummer Night’s Dream after three weeks. In both of these graphs, Yusef and Dasjah showed significant growth in their fluency scores in the two and three week periods between their cold and hot scores on the Macbeth and the Midsummer. The proportion of growth for both passages across only a few weeks is significantly higher when compared to the growth over a six month period in between the DIEBELS testing. Dasjah even showed a slight decrease in her DIEBELS fluency from her beginning of the year score and after returning from the holiday break (Middle of year testing).

I recognize that a limitation of comparing these scores is the fact that the DIEBELS scores are taken across different isolated passages whereas the Shakespeare texts were the same passages measured before and after the students had worked on the passages through many embodied interpretations. However, the complexity of vocabulary in the Shakespeare fluency passages far exceeds the complexity of language expected to be familiar to third graders and which they are assessed on in the DIEBELS testing.
Secondly, I also recognized that the students did extensive practice with the iambic pentameter of the Macbeth Act 1, Scene 1 passage which may have lent itself to more of poetic style of memorization and thereby, making it easier for the ELLs to show significant growth on the Macbeth fluency scores. I have evidence that indeed at least one focal student may have actually memorized the Macbeth passage. On 5/19/11 (6 months after the work with Macbeth) while Dasjah wrote her non-fiction essay comparing and contrasting Macbeth to another play, she wrote the entire Macbeth fluency passage from memory into her essay. (See Appendix F for that passage of 107 words).

On the contrary the Midsummer passage according to Ms G was perceived by the students to be very difficult (Appendix G). I observed it seemed less rhythmic and the students did not spend as much time explicitly practicing it as with the Macbeth passage or even looking at it much for several weeks before testing. However, Ms G explained because they had come into such deeply engaged relationship with the language and stories and the active, dramatic work related to their exploration, the students persevered. Ms. G’s thoughts around this Midsummer fluency passage can be seen in the following excerpt from her written reflection in February:

_They love doing fluency work with Shakespeare’s text. Just today I was assessing students on their post score with a difficult passage from A Midsummer Night’s Dream. We had not practiced this for several weeks. Students were encouraged to practice before their final score. Even though we hadn’t looked at this text for a few weeks, I was amazed at how well they performed. I remember when students first tried reading this passage. They all complained that it was so hard. Now, they are so confident in their ability to read it smoothly and fluently. It is so amazing to see nine-year olds read Shakespeare so eloquently and know that they also understand what they are reading. “_  

_(Teacher Written Reflection, 2/28/11)_
Because the Midsummer passages seemed more difficult, then one might assume that the ELLs growth in the fluency scores for Midsummer fluency passage would have been lower in relative comparison to the Macbeth passage. Instead all three focal students including Ino showed significant growth in their Midsummer fluency scores. The difference of the number of words read correctly per minute between their cold and hot scores (pre and post tests) for Dasjah was 45 and Yusef 54. Ino’s fluency scores on Midsummer passage rose 47 words. Ino’s fluency scores are also seen in Table 5.11.

![Ino-Fluency Scores](image)

**Table 5. 11: Ino’s Fluency Scores**

The hot score for Macbeth fluency passage for Ino were skewed because Ms. G didn’t expect students to read all 107 words in the passage in a minute but Ino and some of the other “high readers” did read 100 + words even in that first, cold score reading. and thus already quite close to the ceiling for the highest possible number of words read in the chosen text extract (107) Therefore, when Ino read the Macbeth passage the second time for the hot score, the highest she could go was 107 words because that was the entire length of the fluency passage which explains the seeming lack of growth. However, during the cold and hot scores with the more difficult Midsummer Night’s Dream passage (and with the ceiling on number of words possible much higher) Ino also showed significant fluency growth over the three weeks with the Midsummer passage (47 word
difference) which was similar to the amount of growth she showed in DIEBELS fluency scores over the whole year (42 word difference)

Since Ino was already considered a fluent reader, the way the non-dramatic reading practices were set up this afforded her more time for silent, independent reading. The National Reading Panel’s meta-analysis showed that research was inconclusive on the effect of extensive sustained, silent reading on fluency. Similarly, Ino didn’t necessarily create the same kind of huge gains in fluency growth across the whole year when it’s taken into consideration the high levels of language appropriation and deepened comprehension that co-occurred with high levels of fluency growth even in only a three week period.

Overall the significant theme that ran across the dramatic reading events related to ELLs growth in fluency was that the meaningful fluency tasks not only engaged them and challenged them to read more complex words at faster more fluent rate, they were able to do this as an integrated part of understanding the overall meaning of the entire play. I have amassed a wealth of data from all three ELL focal students that shows that they not only grew in their fluency but they also performed highly complex understandings of the stories, character relationships, themes, and ethical questions during the Macbeth and Midsummer units (and actually across all four plays). The ELLs also simultaneously showed significant growth on similar pre and post testing of complex vocabulary. Furthermore, they maintained this vocabulary and deep levels of comprehension even after 6 months for Macbeth and 4 months for Midsummer when I gave them my follow-up assessment at the end of May that spanned all of the plays. Through the dramatic inquiry events with Shakespeare, Ino and the other ELLs had repeated embodied interpretations and embodied inquiry which created purposeful reasons for repeated readings which were always then cycled back into their deepened understanding of the stories. Thereby, they not only accessed meaningful oral language experiences in context so as to build up more complex academic vocabulary while deepening comprehension. This performance of reading was not only the linear recall of the plot
and the characters but deeply engaging with the stories and performing authentic and multimodal understandings of the text and the larger play and set of Shakespeare plays.

**Embodied interpretations: a multimodal, semiotic resource for ELLs**

Lastly, I found embodied interpretation became an additional multimodal semiotic resource, the ELLs could use to make sense of the language and events in the texts. Across my data corpus on the ELLs participation in the dramatic reading events, I noticed that all three at times built their own interpretations partially on the observation of and response to others performances and playful improvisations within the moment of the performance. Yusef again was particularly prone to using others embodiment as his own semiotic resource. Figure 5.6 shows an example of Yusef performing as Macbeth with his partner Ricky as Lady Macbeth.

![Figure 5.6: Yusef-as-Macbeth](image)

“**I dare do all that may become a man!**”

When Yusef and Ricky began working together on this embodied interpretation of two key lines of Macbeth (Lady Macbeth= Art thou afeared? Macbeth = I dare do all that may become a man) confusion arose over turn-taking and about the meaning of the two
As a result the boys ran out of time and did not get to plan or truly practice their performance (Field Notes 12/3/10). However, after watching several other interpretations of Macbeth, Yusef improvised in the moment a believable performance as an indignant Macbeth after speaking as-if-Macbeth: I dare do all that become a MAN, he threw down his paper defiantly. Even though he had not practice nor was this specific act of defiance necessarily what any of the other “Macbeth’s” had performed. Yet, through watching the other performances, he was able to appropriate a deeper understanding of the language and the social functions of the language in conjunction with gestures. It is through such embodied inquiry which supported him to clarifying his understandings of the relationship between characters.

Limitations

While some students, including Yusef were unabashed at fully performing bodily in front of the group (which later helped him to reconstruct his own social positioning in this classroom), other shier students such as Dasjah did not always demonstratively perform with their bodies at least as made visible in front of the whole group. When I returned to code the field notes and videos I had of her work in small groups, I noted Dasjah and other students who seemed less physically demonstrative in the “public performance” were still deeply engaged in re-reading the text extract many times in order to play, experiment and begin to sort out what sort of voice intonation, gestures, spatial relationships and movements are most appropriate based on their group’s interpretation of the text. Even for shier students like Dasjah and others the process of preparing for the inquiry questions and public performance created an authentic purpose for re-reading for meaning beyond the display of mechanical reading of the words.

Appropriation of Vocabulary:

In order to prepare a creative and social recognizable public performance of deep reading engagement and authentic understanding of Shakespeare’s plays, students had to be explicitly supported in their investigation of complex vocabulary and literary and figurative language as well as early modern English word forms. Throughout the
dramatic inquiry students were significantly supported in appropriating vocabulary through non-linguistic resources as well as linguistic resources.

**Co-occurrence of Embodied Interpretation & Inquiry**

Across the data corpus around vocabulary-specific segments of dramatic inquiry, I began to notice a co-occurrence between the *embodied interpretations* already described and *embodied inquiry* about language. During coding of the dramatic reading events, I began to use the term, embodied inquiry to delineate actions and talk used often as an instructional tool by teachers or a semiotic resources where students or teachers would dramatically play and use their bodily movements, gestures and spatial positions as well as intonation and voice expression to in order to help them non-linguistically clarify or visually illustrate a conceptual understanding of abstract ideas, words or phrases.

As vexation became a salient vocabulary word re-used by the focal students and others in various contexts in the classroom, I returned to the origins of the collective embodiment of this word during the school year. From my notes, I notice the word vexation was first introduced was on the first day of studying the Shakespeare Play, A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

472 Ms G: Let’s figure out some of these words mean
473 Ms G: Full of vexation came I with complaint against my child. What do you think vexation means?
474 Kiley maybe he’s sick?
475 Ms G: He’s Sick? I’m coming with you because my child’s sick?
476 Ms G: See that words complaint. You know what it means to complain about something?
477 Brooke: You won’t do what I say.
478 Ms G: Aaah will not do what I say.
479 Megan: Anger
480 Ms G: Anger
Natalie: Hermia doesn’t want to marry the Duke
Ms G: Let’s look at this for a second both of you could be correct.
Megan: says he’s angry. I’m going to read it as if I’m angry and see if that makes it easy for you to understand.
Ms G: (Reads with hands on hips and stamps in the space between students) Full of vexation came I with complaint against my child.
Ms G: Does that make sense?
Ms G: Stand Forth Demetrius! What do you think that means?
Bayley: Stand Forth – Stand up to be a man, Like you’ll be king. Like step up
Ms G: Yeah stand forth D- (motions to Demetrius, the student to stand up)-, stand forth Demetrius
Ms G: My noble lord this man hath my consent to marry her
Ms G: Stand forth Lysander/ (motions to Marquell W to stand up) Stand forth
Lysander/ and this man have bewitched the bosom of my child.

Typically, when Ms. G intended students to create their own embodied interpretations with a piece of text she first briefly introduced them to the language they would eventually be using either to create an interpretation or other form of embodied inquiry as seen in line 473. Even if the students didn’t spontaneously embody the word in context at the time, Ms. G might use her own body and tone of voice (484) to invoke or build shared cultural contexts to ultimately scaffold their own embodied interpretations later. She also used students as models (488, 490). In line 487, Bayley one of the typical “displayers of knowledge” in other settings may be described as displaying knowledge again. However, my code for displaying knowledge is based on what happens afterwards—are the rest of the non-speaking students able to actively make meaning around this language. Without the resources of embodiment and moving towards performance, the I-R-E pattern may have ended at Ms. G’s evaluation of “yeah…” in line 488.
In only 3 instances across my field notes on non-dramatic reading events did I observe Ms. G using her body to display an idea, though I noticed that a few students would occasionally display a visual conceptualization with their hands while they spoke, but it was rare. Conversely, across my vocabulary-focused samples, non-linguistic clarification and embodied inquiry were highly prevalent on multiple occasions within every dramatic inquiry reading event and used both by the teacher and the students as resources for their learning and teaching purposes. When I asked Ms. G about why she supposes that I did not consistently observe embodied inquiry with language in the non-dramatic reading practices and she reflected in the following interview excerpt:

*I suppose it’s because there really isn’t room. In reading group we are all squished in together at that tiny table in the back. Or if they are in a whole group lesson, they are confined by their desks. During dramatic reading events, there is so much space to move.*

(Teacher Interview 6/11/11)

The opening of the space to playful improvisation and embodied inquiry, seemed to expand the resources available for teachers and students, even though no material items were added to the room. In fact, material items such as desks, chairs and stools were moved out of the way, in order to make space for this embodied inquiry to become a more common practice. Also because of the pressure towards collaborative understanding, students were actively and authentically “standing up” and creating meaning with the texts. In order to get this opportunity, the students needed to collaboratively draw out shared knowledge or develop a common understanding from which to start. Thus, instead of the list of words, or the isolated skills, the teacher and the student talk around vocabulary was purposeful and contextualized by challenging and engaging texts and complex literary language and joint productive activity.

The dramatic inquiry reading events then were structured in way that asked all the students to be active participants in using non-linguistic means as well as verbal means to make sense of and re-use new words and embody word and phrase meanings in an
authentic contexts and for a meaningful purpose. Any practices which explicitly and implicitly give students the opportunity to gradually shape meanings non-linguistically and linguistically through the repeated exposure to and multiple use of words in authentic contexts were labeled under the teacher purpose category of Appropriation of Vocabulary. I build on Bakhtin’s term for the ways that people appropriate language when they populate it with their own meanings and purposes. Students appropriating vocabulary then means taking up a word and reusing for a meaningful purpose.

**Verbal Inquiry & Vocabulary**

Collaborative verbal inquiry around vocabulary was often done in preparation for creating or during the act of an embodied interpretation or inquiry around a text extract from Shakespeare. Since this was a consistent structure during dramatic inquiry, students seemed to become more aware that this indeed was a space where we are all trying to figure this language out together. They also seemed to become implicitly more aware that they authentically needed the whole group’s support to make sense of the unknown language because immediately following the verbal inquiry, they would be expected to create their embodied interpretation of a scene or in sculpting other students or adults as characters using this language. This pattern was made most visible in my analysis of the focal students (and other students) growing willingness to ask questions about unknown language (and thus admit that they “don’t know”) as well as to offer contributions to the ongoing verbal inquiry about what the words possibly could mean. Even if this was one of the least “active” practices in relative comparison to the other dramatic reading events, because of the groups shared history together using embodiment the students actively engaged together in this process. Ms G and students alike were also highly likely in this space to use some form of embodiment or intertextuality to other embodied texts to clarify their verbal explanation of a word. The verbal inquiry with vocabulary seemed to become both a collaborative and authentic space to make sense of the language while continued to build on the intertextuality of previously shared, embodied texts and shared understandings of vocabulary.
As a result of this typical structuring, a significant difference was noticed in my coding of the vocabulary specific performances created by teachers and focal students (and others students). Especially with the pressure of the performance when they knew they were going to have to stand up and make meaning and perform in some way the current piece of text they often asked questions about unknown pronunciations and unknown words. Or they would offer up multiple possibilities of the same word based on inferences they could draw from the text, intertextual connections to other texts, especially the prior Shakespeare texts or they would draw on prior turns at talk by other students or teachers. I labeled these turns at talk as verbal inquiry because while they were moving students towards embodied inquiry, the students were mostly talking among each other and their teacher and looking up at a word or phrase in the Words on the Wall or in a text extracts in their hand. While some students turns at talk involved them showing with their bodies or making a guess at the word meaning. Other students would listen to this hypothesis about words/ phrasal meanings and then use their own intertextual connections and ideas to add onto the ongoing collaborative inquiry. While others did not make their appropriation of vocabulary visible at the time (e.g. adding a verbal comment) but later during their practices and public performance of their embodied interpretations all the students are forced to actually use the word in a meaningful context.

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<th>Verbal Inquiry (Whole Group Discussion)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>V1a: Morphological Word Analysis in context</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V1b: Relate New to Known in context (Teacher or students use intertextual connections)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V1c: Word Associations: Idioms &amp; Phrases, Synonyms &amp; Antonyms related through context</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12: Verbal Inquiry with Vocabulary
Or at other times, the investigation of Shakespeare’s language itself was prompted by an ongoing inquiry question such as: What do you think the relationship is between X character and Y character? Who has more power? What are the implications of this person’s speech and actions? How do other people feel about this person?

**Embodied Inquiry & Vocabulary**

During or immediately after the verbal inquiry, students actively participated in embodied interpretation & embodied inquiry. This embodied inquiry with vocabulary built on their collaborative inquiry that occurred in preparation for their performance, their prior experience with improvisation and pushed them to appropriate the new words into their current meaning-making processes in creating embodied interpretations. The following chart in Table 5.13 lays out the kinds of practices that seemed specifically helpful in supporting students appropriation of vocabulary in meaningful and authentic contexts through embodiment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embodied Inquiry</th>
<th>Group-Created Gestures</th>
<th>Group Sculpt/ Analyze Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V2a: Whole Group &amp; Teacher Mediated Embodiment</td>
<td>Group Movement Games</td>
<td>Teacher Mediated Embodied Models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Stopping Characters –in-action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Visual, embodied representation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V2b: Teacher-Less Space (practice embodiment with small group or partner)</th>
<th>Frozen Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Show to whole group but meaning is mostly made in small group….</em></td>
<td>Dramatically play with Words on Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpret and Perform Text Extract with small group/partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.13: Embodied Inquiry with Vocabulary**

**Group-Created Gestures/ Movements**

Across the plays the teacher mediated the whole group to negotiate gestures to go along with words that a small group would speak in front of them as an audience or they would
create gestures to go along with their choral reading of a Shakespeare text extract. An example of the group created gestures for a choral reading occurred on 10/26/10 during Romeo and Juliet. The students worked together with their teacher create gestures using a text extract of Romeo’s speech (Act 2, Scene 1… But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun…)

Immediately prior to the speech analysis, Ms. G created a sensory narration while the students improvised and mimed motions as if they were sneaking around as Romeo in the Capulet’s garden outside Juliet’s window. At the end of the narration, Ms. G had me act as Romeo and read the speech to a student-as Juliet who stood in her “balcony” (or a chair in the corner of the room). The rest of the students sat on the floor and each student had their own individual copy of the speech. While I had read the speech several times, she asked the students questions to illicit their inferences about the larger meaning of the speech set within their embodied understandings of the play so far (e.g. Why is he speaking in this way here? What are some of the important words to help us know that?) During this the students collectively identified significant words and offered possible gestures for each word. In Figure 5.7, Dasjah is seen making the group created gesture for “sun” along with other students.

![Figure 5.7: Dasjah’s Garden Speech Gestures](image)

Typically, when the whole group was able to be fully involved in the speech and the gestures, then they were likely to want to return to that speech over and over again, even
without the teacher’s explicit direction. With the Romeo Garden speech, I observed on three separate occasions several students, including all three focal students would come into the room during both non-dramatic and dramatic reading times and without being directed by any adults, and they would spontaneously begin reciting the speech with gestures. They also would find Romeo’s garden speech on the wall and repeat some or all of the words but always in conjunction with making the gestures. On 11/4/10, when the students saw a local theatre company perform a children’s version of Romeo and Juliet along with the rest of the school, they got to sit cross-legged in the front row on the floor directly in front of the actors (who performed on the gym floor). When Romeo began speaking the Garden speech lines in the theatrical performance, the students from their seats starting saying the words along with the actor playing Romeo. Some of the students even did the gestures to go along with the words. The actor playing Romeo even made a signal to them that he had noticed and validated this behavior. At other times, students played all sorts of improvisational games where they would be expected to use certain lines with the appropriate gestures (See False Face Game-Words on Wall section).

In reality, separating out the verbal inquiry from the embodied inquiry, served more as distinct analytical categories for my research because in the way the students experienced these, the line was blurred. Verbal inquiry was entirely intertwined with and readily supported the embodied inquiry and both helped to create spaces where students were exposed to complex vocabulary in multiple but interrelated contexts. Through both verbal and embodied vocabulary students actively questioned unknown words, created and tested hypothesis about language and they had engaging reasons to appropriate vocabulary in authentic contexts.
Specific Analysis of Vocabulary Practices

Affordances & Limitations for English Language Learners

Vocabulary specific talk was one of the few samples that I could easily apply a similar method of coding as I had done during the dramatic reading events. Table 5.14 gives a graphic depiction of the results of my coding.

Table 5.14: Vocabulary Focused Samples of teacher turns at talk

The most surprising pattern that I found across my vocabulary focused samples was how much more time Ms. G actually spent directly talking about the unknown vocabulary or parts of the words or meanings of the unknown word and related words. This was almost the reverse in the graph for vocabulary-specific samples of non-dramatic reading events. This is an important affordance for ELLs whom need as much vocabulary instruction as possible, and even still the vocabulary talk between teachers and students is not just abstract but it was contextualized in their shared contexts and long-term inquiry with Shakespeare’s plays.
Contextualized Vocabulary Talk

The following steps were used by Ms. G when the purpose was to build the background and shared context of all of her students as to make a direct discussion of vocabulary meaningful.

1) Building direct, emotional “lived through” experiences, gestural, verbal and visual connections to and elaborations on word meanings
2) Analyzed, asked questions and evaluated experiences as a whole group
3) In some cases, adjusted our ideas about word meanings and “tried it again” to make it more vivid and appropriate for the context (slightly transforming actions which further deepened background knowledge)
4) Motivated by the authentic question or their performative role in the fictional or imagined context, students then analyzed and inferred word level, phrase level, character level, event level and thematic level meanings

(Examples-Inferring Prince Escalus thoughts through analyzing his speech to the villagers, Understanding the words spoken about Macbeth, Using Witches Prophecy to understand the changes in Macbeth and Banquo’s relationship)

Thus, this pressure of moving towards multimodal performances inspired not only playful improvisation and re-reading for meaning but also for transmediating back and forth across embodiment and gestural language systems to oral and written language systems. The embodied interpretations helped the ensemble to engage in purposeful engaged reading. As a result they collectively built an understanding of the underlying relationships and implications of the words and actions of the text (as compared to offering guesses on word meanings as a procedural display and never return to meaning-making with those words again). At times students or teachers performed pieces of scenes or acted as if a character it was always within our own classroom where we all served as both performers and audience at the same time. These strategies were not drawn out over days and the students usually had to improvise on the spot or only had a
short time to “practice” (typically 5 minutes or less). Therefore, the pressure of the performance pushed students to work together, to interpret create a recognizable performance and to authentically desire to re-read the words from the text extract. But more importantly from the students perspective getting to work with other student partners to create active performances in a semi-teacher-less space was fun! While at times it could be highly challenging it was also highly engaging. In their mid-year interviews, each of the three focal students labeled this practice as one of the most interesting and engaging literacy practices in their classroom.

**Space for asking questions of language**

This culture of wonder and collaborative inquiry made a significant difference for the focal students. Instead of the perception that they should already know, all of the students were assumed to be “in this together” It gave them space to ask questions of the language of the text for an authentic reason.

Because I observed that Ino was particularly susceptible to restraining from asking any language questions with the other non-dramatic reading events, it was surprising when I noted across the dramatic reading events she was one of the people who asked questions of the language. An example of this pattern is seen at the end of Day 3 of Macbeth (see Figure 5.3 and detailed transcript in specific analysis of vocabulary) students read together a summary of information about Lady Macbeth and Macbeth and their relationship. Prior to this they knew a fair amount about Macbeth but they knew nothing of his relationship to his wife, Lady Macbeth. Through this brief summary they were introduced to two portions of key lines the pair speak to each other later in the play.

Lady Macbeth: *Art thou afeared?*  
Macbeth: *I dare do all that may become a man.*

As students sat around in a circle exploring this summary and getting prepared for their practice and eventual public performance of these two key lines as-if Lady Macbeth and
Macbeth, students were quick to inquire and talk back to the text such as to ask questions about the characters and unknown language. (see detailed analysis of vocabulary practices for this example). This immediately makes visible a space for Ms. G (and myself at times) to recognize their authentic questions, and partial understandings so as to be able to best scaffold their embodied interpretations and model some of the underlying messages that could be hidden not just in the words but in the way the words are delivered.

Brooke  She wants Macbeth to be more powerful than he is.
Ms. G   She wants Macbeth to be more powerful than he is. She wants him to be more powerful. And read the next one, Nick.
Nick    She had a baby in the past, but now she and Macbeth have no children.
Ms. G   And now they have no children. And here’s the line that she says (*looks to* Rose-Davey).
Rose-Davey  Art thou afeared?
Ms. G   Art thou afeared? Know what that means? Look at that word, afeared. You see another word in there you might know? Tori?
Tori    Afraid.
Ms. G   Afraid or …
Rose-Davey  Red.
Ms. G   Oh, you see the word red, ok. How about bigger words?
Dasjah  Fear.
Ms G    Fear. Ok, and Tori said it, she figured it out right away. She said, are you afraid? Art thou afeared? That means are you afraid?
Ino     Of what?
Demetrius  It says art you afraid.
Ms. G   Art thou afeared? That means are you afraid?/
Ino     Of what?
Ms G /Are you afraid? / Are you CHICKen? (now in different mocking voice, cocks her head slightly and puts hand slightly towards hip) Are you scared? Are you afraid?
(st lots of overlapping talking and repeating the mocking tone-MQW voice can be heard: are ## powerful)
Ms G Say it again.
Marquell W Are you powerful?
Ms G: Afraid and powerful? Think of another synonym for afraid. Are you…/
(points at MQW)
MQW Scared!
Ms G Are you scared? Perfect.
Camille Good synonym.
Ms G Perfect.
Marquell W Are you a chicken?
Ino Why does she say… Art thou afraid?
(with a shrug of her shoulders as if to say maybe…)
Marquell W Are you a girl?
Ms. G Ino said, “why did she say why are you afraid?” We’re gonna find out!
(some students say ooo. NN raises her hand quickly possibly with an idea)
Ms. G Macbeth. Let’s read about Macbeth. Jason, what’s the first sentence?

Though there were many other examples where Ms G was more physically demonstrative way she used her body to connect to a cultural text that many students recognized as a way to mock other people.

Ms G /Are you afraid? / Are you CHICKen? (now in different sing-song, almost mocking voice, cocks her head slightly and puts hand slightly towards hip)

Are you scared? Are you afraid?

This illustrates that Ms. G’s teaching resources were expanded during the dramatic inquiry reading events. Because of embodiment being a resource she is able to better scaffold students understanding of these characters and the meaning(s) behind the words
they speak to each other—and in this instance its only through small motions and changes in voice intonation. As a result, (as can be seen in the longer excerpt above) as soon as this particular turn at talk is over, there was a great overlapping talk among students which seemed to make visible their immediate recognition of the cultural and social cues of the tone of her voice and her gestures and began to play with it and try out the mocking tone of voice on their friends.

All of this shared and embodied inquiry (and their shared history with similar kinds of collaborative dramatic inquiry) a space seemed to open up space for the ELLs to negotiate meanings with new words. Dasjah used morphological analysis which helped push the idea of fear into the intermental (Mercer, 2000) thinking space and Ino took a risk in asking a clarification question both about language and about the subtext underlying the use of this language.

**Cyclical return to re-use and appropriate vocabulary in other related contexts**

Because the dramatic inquiry reading events were cyclical and constructed over, the students often were asked to or spontaneously returned many times to embody and re-use words learned in the past through our shared context of the drama world and we even left ongoing vocabulary, phrases and quotes up in the room as “Words on the Wall.” As a result of this practice I documented that over time the focal students (and all the students) began to make numerous intertextual connections using these words across Shakespeare texts. I also observed that they were able to really bring the long-term and embodied understanding of words and phrases into understanding of other words and other texts. In the picture seen in Figure 4.5, the students were working on a page in their Word Explorer workbook on 2/17/11. Because of their shared context of exploring Midsummer together, Ms. G was able to build on in order to model the meaning of “extraordinary.” When Ms. G asks a student to read the next word in the list (which was mischief), Demetrius already was able to make an intertextual connection and shouted out: “that’s what Puck did. He caused all kinds of mischief.”
Researchers have shown the influence of explicit vocabulary instruction on word learning and reading comprehension provided the words are used in meaningful contexts and combined with the opportunity to be exposed to and reuse the words across numerous contexts (Carlo et al., 2004) During dramatic inquiry events, students embodied interpretation and embodied inquiry about language were essential in moving students into appropriating vocabulary for meaningful purposes and returning to those words many times over the long term. Two of the three focal students themselves even explicitly recognized that the drama events such as practicing “expressive reading” with partners were “good” because “it helped her learn new words.” (Dasjah, Interview 12/14/10, Dasjah and Ino informal reflection 2/29/11, Ino 5/29/11). In other words, the authentic purposeful engagement that came along with truly wondering and inquiring about the four Shakespeare stories, seemed to open space for appropriating vocabulary in authentic ways. As they collaboratively embodied inquiry questions and played through and experiment with some of the underlying social concerns and perspectives of the characters, students were highly scaffolded towards appropriating new vocabulary within the shared context. Significantly, for ELLs they creatively improvised actions with these words and so also accessed a deep embodied understanding of some of the nuanced meanings behind and ways of using language in specific social and cultural contexts, or the sociopragmatic portion of linguistic development.

During their vocabulary and reading comprehension assessments relating to Shakespeare all three ELLs showed deep comprehension of the vocabulary, stories and text extracts immediately following each play unit. This comprehension of the stories was consistently seen across all three students even at the end of the year. Significantly, with this deep comprehension was a co-occurrence of evidence of deeply embodied word knowledge. Yusef doubled his vocabulary knowledge in pre and post tests of specific play units. Dasjah and Ino tripled their word knowledge across all three vocabulary assessments (2 play specific pre and post vocabulary assessments & final Shakespeare word association). While Dasjah and Ino only missed one or two word associations on the final word association, Yusef could not immediately recall 3 out of the 9 target words.
I completed a recursive analysis across the data corpus of Yusef’s instances of interactions with the 9 targeted words. Comparing his exposure and re-use of the target words that he was and was not able to recall immediately, helped me understand this issue of maintaining long-term, depth of word knowledge. His ability to recall independently seemed more pronounced when he had multiple embodied experiences, and more than one or two opportunities to see, hear, and re-use words across a variety of contexts and plays. The more exposure he had to using the Shakespeare words in multiple but related contexts the more immediate his recall and ability to associate the target word to other words.

The following tables offer a my analysis of the affordances and limitations offered to ELLs by the vocabulary-specific practices of dramatic inquiry. Table 5.15 describes the ELLs’ affordances and limitations of the *Gradual Shaping of Meanings* in authentic contexts. (+ represents affordances and – represents limitations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gradual Shaping of Meaning</th>
<th>through Repeated Exposure to and re-use and appropriation of words in a variety of authentic contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Embodiment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Show &amp; Act Meanings of Words, Phrases &amp; Idioms in context consistently asked ELLs to take part in negotiating word meanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Highly active tasks forced ELLS to make their thinking visible, which also pressured them into appropriating and re-using new vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Embodiment pushed ELLs to transmediate between non-linguistic and linguistic ways of conceptualizing words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immediate feedback</strong> in Embodied Representations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ given during the preparation and practice for embodied interpretations and embodied inquiries (and watching others perform interpretations of the same scene) students and teachers supported each other on appropriate usage and shades of meaning in an authentic context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ ELLs highly motivated by the desire to work with their friends and to “perform” in socially recognized way and thus had an authentic reason for interpreting meaning, gradually shaping their own word meanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.15: Gradual Shaping of meanings

Continued
Atmosphere of wonder and collaborative inquiry
+long-term fascination with language and complex themes, characters and highly dramatic action provided the following:
  - impetus for repeated interactions with words of the texts over time.
  - promoted students to ask specific questions about language and to be willing to take risks to try out a hypothesis about a word

Shared Memories & High Levels of Intertextuality
+ Quotes, Questions, Conceptual & Character Maps co-constructed by the students were displayed and consistently referred to by students
+Words on Wall & Ongoing growth of the Imagined world provided a Shared Context for ELLs to gradually shape meanings
  - students could reuse newly acquired words and phrases, concepts and even polysemic meanings of the same word or phrase (e.g. draw, put up).
  - collaborative inquiry in order to co-author the shared context sustained this risk taking
the use of newly acquired oral language was honored and bolstered other students understandings, connections and elaborations of the word/phrase meanings as words were learned thematically.

Most Visible Limitation:
-Less Breadth of Vocabulary Studied
  - ELLs may have read less # of new words and texts so “book flood” and breadth of vocabulary is exchanged for in-depth work with complex texts
BUT…
Word Depth supported students attempts to clarify themselves
+When word knowledge is deepened as part of deepening specific plot and conceptual comprehension, over time this deepened background knowledge gave access for ELLs to many more opportunities to verbalize ideas (orally or written) & thus supported them in the appropriation and the contextualized uses of new oral vocabulary (see long term inquiry)

Table 5.16 below describes the ELLs’ affordances and limitations of the Explicit Vocabulary Instruction as consistently co-occurred with embodied experiences, interpretations and inquiries. The fact that they occurred within the students shared context of the drama world provided them more texts and semiotic resources from which to draw.
**Explicit Instruction on Unknown Words in authentic, shared contexts**

*During Dramatic Reading Events*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertextual Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ students were directly instructed to connect the new vocabulary to the known (e.g. to improvise on the fighting words of the 15th century) and then turn that discussion into a performance, which increased # of times of recycling and actively using the new words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Feedback during Preparation for Embodied Interpretations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ the eventual need to create an oral performances in front of group created an authentic context for immediate feedback from the teachers and the whole group on pronunciations and meanings of specific words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embodiment as Semiotic Resource (even in Verbal Inquiry)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Students encouraged to use multimodal forms of elaboration (e.g. Visual, Physical and Symbolic) to make sense of authentically “needed” words/phrases. Teacher built and elaborated from students suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ teacher directly mediated specific vocabulary meanings and pronunciation often by modeling with her body, symbol or performance, and/or by showing/having student volunteer show meaning with their bodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cyclical Sequencing *of the dramatic inquiry event in the moment &amp; over time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ created time for ELLs to ask specific language questions/ do text analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ building on student’s immediate questions and ongoing inquiry questions as well as in an effort to support plot and character comprehension—teacher built a sequence of activities both over time and within the same day so as to scaffold the analyzing of specific pieces of text which specifically involved explicit instruction about vocabulary in context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most Visible Limitations**

- lack of time and limitations on appropriate feedback in teacher-less spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- if there was social conflict and with limited time to practice for the “performing”, some of the small group work at times did not always mediate ELL students correctly in pronunciation and/or meaning (see next + for caveat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited attention span in verbal-only inquiry spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- however, there seemed to be a limit on how much prior discussion and vocabulary input the students could take in reasonably before some disengaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5. 16:** Explicit Instruction on Unknown Words
Table 5.17 describes the ELLs’ affordances and limitations of the *Instruction in Word Learning Strategies*. This was one area where I saw Ms. G highly mediating the students to use a wide range of strategies to make sense of words. However, there was very little explicit attempts to raise students metacognitive awareness of the word learning strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building independent word-learning strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>During Dramatic Reading Events</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing access to Words on Wall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Models and collaboratively utilizes instructional strategies such as Visual aids graphic organizers and charts of vocabulary, quotes on the wall to have students identify word parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Visible Limitations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-less consistent explicit metacognitive awareness of vocabulary learning strategies beyond the shared context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-multiple instances of direct teaching of unknown word meaning strategies (e.g. morphological analysis) in context but they weren’t consistently taught as part of every dramatic inquiry lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-less consistent review of newly acquired words and word learning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-because of the shared context a highly productive review occurred using word association &amp; morphological analysis of vocabulary words, but only happened once in my observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.17: Explicit Instruction on Word Learning Strategies

The analysis of vocabulary specific affordances during dramatic inquiry provided plausible explanations for the ELLs deep and long-lasting word and conceptual knowledge. It also brings up some other areas that need further research.

**Embodied Inquiry: Higher-Order Thinking & Comprehension Strategies**

After my initial open coding my recursive analysis around higher order thinking during the dramatic reading events was slightly different than my recursive analysis across non-
dramatic reading events. This was related to the inquiry-focused, multimodal and cyclical nature of the dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare reading events. It became a key theme in this study that across the dramatic reading events students were consistently being asked to use higher order thinking processes throughout the embodied experiences, embodied interpretations and embodied inquiries with Shakespeare’s texts and stories but those higher order thinking processes were not separated out as isolated reading comprehension skills to be “practice”. A second key theme from this analysis showed the salience of a certain set of recurrent teacher performances contributed to an environment of asking questions and making predictions and intertextual connections. As a co-occurring consequence over time, students began to more consistently perform collaborative inquiry and a deep fascination and wonder about the language and stories of Shakespeare. Because the teacher’s focus for this work was reading instruction, then this set of practices fell specifically under the area of reading comprehension strategies. The seven categories of reading comprehension strategies I considered in this analysis included visualizing, inferring, questioning, making connections, synthesizing, evaluating and the metacognition of the use of these strategies (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

**Embodied reading comprehension strategies**

As seen in the above section, I was able to create a teacher turns at talk analysis around the segments of dramatic reading events related to vocabulary, but the higher order thinking as part of deeply engaged reading comprehension proved far more complex and it was not possible to create a similar set of purposive samples to use for constant comparative analysis. In order to see how students were beginning to use embodiment in relationship to the effective reading comprehension strategies, I could not separate out specific segments of time where the teacher was specifically focused only on asking higher order questions, or even directly teaching specific reading comprehension strategies. There was also little evidence that teachers and students were performing in recurrent ways that might correspond with the I-R-E patterns that were so prevalent in non-dramatic reading events. Instead, I kept an ongoing constant comparative analysis.
conceptual chart across my two extensive ethnographies of two Shakespeare units, documenting each time students were actively involved in some version of embodied higher order thinking and then I mapped other evidence of students (focal and non-focal) visible engagements in performances of understanding that seemed to connect to this higher order thinking and inquiry either in the moment or at a later time. Then in my recursive analysis with the two other plays, I was able to support, extend and complicate this analysis.

Students were actively engaged in embodiment related to the reading comprehension strategies approximately three-fourths of all of the segments of every dramatic reading event. First and foremost every single time the students created a physical embodiment they were part of creating a multimodal visualization of stories, characters, interactions and themes and ideas related to the story. During my focus groups with all of the students in December, the majority students readily discussed how the dramatic inquiry work helped them to clearly “picture the story in their minds” (Field Notes, 12/9/10). Because I have already offered my extensive discussion of the wide range of embodied visualization strategies, in this section I only offer my analysis of embodied higher order thinking practices that seemed specific to allowing students to perform multimodal literacy understandings, which went beyond the dramatic inquiry strategies that I have already outlined in other sections (even though those practices also intentionally asked students to use multimodal, higher order thinking as well).

It became apparent from my long-term ethnographic data collection and analysis, that it wasn’t just that the students were using embodiment in the moment as a means to strategically comprehend the text. The practices that I coded as embodied, higher order thinking and reading comprehension strategies were also slightly different than some of the other dramatic reading practices because these practices were so intertwined with and often a direct result of the students long-term, collaborative, embodied inquiries and deeply performative engagement with the four Shakespeare’s plays. Therefore, in my coding of those segments of reading events that were specific to embodied higher order
thinking, I first noted the dramatic inquiry specific strategies. However, over time this was also used to categorize forms of written or verbal expression directly related to and created by the cyclical use of the dramatic inquiry strategies. In our December reading interview, Ms. G began using the term, *verbal engagement with inquiry (Interview 12/20/10)* to describe these performances of higher order thinking and authentic Shakespearean understandings that so often co-occurred with or that seemed to related back to the dramatic inquiry practices, even if at the moment of the performance they may not have been embodied. Therefore, I have also included the *verbal engagements with inquiry* alongside the dramatic inquiry strategies as they were an equally significant part of using creative and complex higher order thinking processes and reading comprehension strategies. The categories that I created across my constant comparative analysis then of the dramatic inquiry strategies and related verbal engagement in inquiry were the following:

1) analyzing text & inferential thinking;
2) generating questions, predictions and possibilities (led to ongoing inquiry)
3) synthesis & shifts in thinking;
4) evaluating & critiquing actions to talk back to the characters and stories
5) intertextual Connections (includes intra-, extra- and intertextual);

The second difficult analysis decision about these categories was that they often co-occurred with so many other categories of the dramatic reading practices. Thought tracking of characters during an event both involved students in story comprehension and drawing inferences from the information they had been given. Creating an interpretation or group sculpting a group of characters asked students to re-read a text many times, draw inferences and offer and embody specific suggestions for body positioning and gestures. Students often did an evaluation task called *vote with your feet*, which was where they decided if they agreed, were unsure or disagreed on an action or decision taken by a character either from their own everyday perspective or as if they were characters in the story. It was significant to my grounded theorizing about multimodally supporting
reading comprehension that the students ability to make visible higher order reading comprehension strategies co-occurred consistently with embodied interpretations and inquiries where the students were inserting themselves into those character’s perspectives or even at times stopping the character in the middle of an action or thought and asking them a probing question to help them reconsider their actions.

Similar to the vocabulary-specific analysis, even the less active tasks, where verbal higher order inquiry seemed most visible it still was a part of the larger cycles of embodied inquiry during that event. For instance, when students were sitting and looking at a piece of text and collaboratively analyzing, make inferences and justifying their inferences it was always done in the service of moving into the students creating performative interpretations of a character or as part of debating a larger ethical question. The events that I observed students identifying all the words that implied a character’s perspective in order to back up an inference of that character’s feelings or relative power relationship in the situation was a part of a cycle of several different embodied interpretations and inquiries using that text and immediately following the verbal inquiry (Field Notes, 10/18/10, 12/3/10, 1/26/10). Each higher order inquiry also was supported by the ongoing collaborative inquiry with Shakespeare across the school year because students showed more and more over time that they used their deeply embodied understandings and intertextuality from the prior dramatic inquiry work to make sense of the new texts. When students developed other more visual and written creations such as character maps, comic strips, Shakespeare theme park set designs, Venn diagrams and essays comparing the plays, the students were able to use extensive intertextual connections and synthesis of the many facets and layers of embodied understanding they had created across time. Because they were transmediating back and forth through multiple language systems, entirely new insights were created as well. In other words, the higher order thinking processes were never done as an isolated task, where the students practice a certain comprehension strategy (e.g. inferencing) as I had observed happen in other non-dramatic reading events.
In the table 5.18 below, I outline my documentation of the ways certain dramatic inquiry strategies and related verbal engagements with inquiry co-occurred with performances of embodied higher order thinking and reading comprehension strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performances of Higher Order Thinking &amp; Reading Comprehension Strategies</th>
<th>Dramatic Inquiry &amp; Related Verbal Engagement with Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyze Text &amp; Infer Meanings</strong></td>
<td>Group Sculpt characters based on text/ given circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students active in inferring a character’s perspective from the text</td>
<td>Thought Track—characters based on new information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students draw on information in the text to create reasonable embodied interpretations and inquiry about themes from the text</td>
<td>Vote with your Feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generating Questions &amp; Possibilities → ongoing inquiry</strong></td>
<td>Trading Game of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students share ideas for possible questions</td>
<td>Brainstorm possible questions to ask character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students question or give advice for future actions of character</td>
<td>Teacher-in-Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional construction of multiple possibilities</td>
<td>Specific focus on creating multiple interpretations of same interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional construction of multiple connections, predictions and questions</td>
<td>Connections, Predictions and Question Sheets and Words on Wall left up in the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional construction of long-term collaborative forms of inquiry</td>
<td>Teacher’s Collaborative Inquiry Language moving towards multiple possibilities- What’s another way he might act? What’s another idea?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing Character Map (Role on the Wall,)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Words on the Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big Inquiry Questions on the Wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5. 18: Embodied Higher Order Thinking in Dramatic Inquiry**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performances of Higher Order Thinking &amp; Reading Comprehension Strategies</th>
<th>Dramatic Inquiry &amp; Related Verbal Engagement with Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synthesize &amp; Shifts in Thinking</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thought Tracking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing character’s static or changing perspectives</td>
<td>Written &amp; visual products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing in-depth plot understanding</td>
<td>• writing-in-role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-authoring new information surrounding text extract or event</td>
<td>• Showing Changes on Character Traits Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher think aloud → shifts in position</td>
<td>• Color Coded Character Relationship Mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluating / Critiquing</strong></td>
<td>Written &amp; visual products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating Consequences of Actions</td>
<td>• written narration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble-based immediately visible -appropriateness &amp; relevance to context -offers -multiple perspectives</td>
<td>• narration illustrated physically or visually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing and reflecting from competing perspectives</td>
<td>• reports of events “in role”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote w your Feet</td>
<td>• essays and Venn Diagrams comparing Shakespeare plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-naturalistic representations</td>
<td>Co-authoring Backstories--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• interrupt Character during story event and give advice or ask questions</td>
<td>• maybe this could have happened….before…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• multiple interpretations of same scene</td>
<td>Co-authoring Implied scenes—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performances have to be justifiable and socially recognizable</td>
<td>• maybe this happened that Shakespeare implied but didn’t narrate specifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering of multiple interpretive choices and ideas pushes students to consider other’s perspectives individual student hadn’t thought of…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The only category not seen in Table 5.18 is the broadly defined *intertextual connections* category as I found they were essential to the higher order thinking and reading comprehension throughout all of the rest of the categories. In Table 5.19, then I also provide a brief synopsis of the types of intertextual connections used as semiotic resources.

**Intertextual Connections**

*Used as new semiotic resources for understanding new play*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Text to Text (in classroom)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Text to Self/World (out of classroom)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intratextual:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Extratextual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using pieces and parts from earlier text extracts from the same play</td>
<td>Personal experiences with multimodal texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Idiomatic Phrases within same play</td>
<td>• Social and cultural significance of messages and cues through embodied texts (e.g. <em>pushing hands off chest to tell someone to get out of their personal space or to “step off”</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intertextual</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific events or lines from one Shakespeare play ↔ past Shakespeare play</td>
<td>Personal experience with idioms &amp; other culturally specific verbal texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary understanding of the Shakespeare plays</td>
<td>• Social and cultural significance of messages and cues given by certain idioms and other verbal texts (e.g. <em>Are you chicken?</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• typical narrative structure</td>
<td>Knowledge of Embodied texts from TV, movies, internet, etc. (e.g. the ominous signal of finger motions to represent a witch or an evil-doer coming up with a plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• vocabulary and language forms</td>
<td>Other multimodal texts from popular culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily Texts (from earlier embodied games)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to Historical/Cultural Information from other non-fiction texts or photographs, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare Texts to other non-dramatically explored texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.19: Types of intertextual connections**

Across my data corpus, students consistently used higher order thinking as a result of their growing embodied understandings and as a result of the teacher’s moves to create a more multimodal and collaborative learning space. During close-text based analysis they were involved in high levels of inference but at the same time they had the
embodiment as a resources to help them draw these inferences. The teacher encouraged them to keep up ongoing higher order inquiry by creating space for their thinking to be made visible in the room through putting up lists of ongoing predictions, connections and burning questions. Memories of their shared dramatic inquiries were made visible because the Words on the Wall, co-constructed Character Maps and big ethical questions were also displayed around the room. As they prepared to move towards an embodied inquiry (e.g. thought tracking, asking a character questions or giving advice from their omniscient reader position), they were pressured by the performative engagement to synthesize their understandings and create “deep questions” for the character. As they worked on creating visual and written products or to create implied scenes and backstories the students were supported through their deeply embodied understandings and their growing set of intertextual connections across the plays and other texts.

A key purpose in facilitating dramatic inquiry is in creating space where students are confronted with contradictory perspectives and complex ethical questions. The students were often asked to synthesize and use their embodied understandings of the complex layers of Shakespeare’s plays to evaluate actions and offer different possible ways of acting. Ms. G was consistently creating structures which gave students just enough embodied experiences and deeply embodied understandings of the characters’ perspectives and relationships which helped them create in-depth discussions of big inquiry questions and to keep alive a sense of ongoing ethical inquiry and debate. These kinds of open ended ethical questions challenged and engaged students to offer possible inferential interpretations and evaluation and then justify their positions. Creating a reasoned argument and then appropriately justifying the reasons using text-based evidence is typically a significantly difficult task for 8 and 9 year old though it is one of the district’s reading goals and an overall significant component to lifelong competence in academic writing and oral arguments. During the evaluative portions of the dramatic reading events, Ms. G’s students were often engaged and supported towards performances of critical reading and reasoned verbal argument.
In summary, as the ensemble collaboratively performed higher order thinking through the dramatic inquiry strategies and verbal engagement related to these strategies students were supported to draw and justify inferences, question the text and the author, shift thinking, create intertextual connections and other forms of synthesis across new information, and to evaluate consequences of actions. Especially towards the latter half of the year, students started to ask for these opportunities to use higher order thinking in performing their deeply embodied and complex understandings of Shakespeare. After the first day of Hamlet, Ms. G’s students begged her to put up another connections and predictions chart (4/27/11). Later in the Hamlet unit (5/12/11) Marquell W. asked to make a color-coded character map to visually represent the relationship between the Hamlet characters—a task that they had done twice within their prior exploration of Midsummer Night’s Dream. However, the patterns in my analysis showed this co-construction and perpetuation of a classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking didn’t just happen by chance, the teacher played a big role in its construction.

Teacher’s Mediation of Collaborative Inquiry & Multiple Interpretations

Across the dramatic reading events, a few key codes were consistently applied to Ms. G’s talk related to the verbal engagement with inquiry which did not appear consistently or at all within the interactional patterns of talk across the non-dramatic reading events. During ethical debates and discussions, Ms. G acted as a facilitator of collaborative inquiry and multiple possibilities. Instead of closing down the meaning-making or trying to tidy it up into a finalized answer or a neat moralistic box where she as the teacher had the last word, Ms. G explicitly seemed to create space to leave the answer open-ended. In addition and as was described in all of the previous sections of this chapter, Ms. G consistently created a wide range of dramatic reading events which positioned students to actively and collaboratively inquire about the meaning underlying stories and the interactions depicted in a text. In the moments or the days following any of this collaborative form of verbal engagement, the ensembles shared history together had created the student’s implicit notion that they would not only just talk about the big
inquiry questions and ideas but they would also be supported through subsequent cycles of embodiment or they would return to these understandings again later.

It was significant that during the verbal engagement with inquiry Ms. G was coded consistently as intentionally constructing collaborative sense of inquiry. Language within this coding scheme included turns such as: There’s not one answer. I was wondering….do you think we could think more about…? This is going to be challenging but I think we can do it. Let’s look at this and see what we can find out… What else? What were you thinking? What makes you think that? Through this style of language, she consistently grouped herself into the category of fellow explorer and inquirer about Shakespeare. Through this style of language she signaled that she assumed that everyone in the room including herself wanted to be challenged and work together. Ms. G explained that this sense of ensemble was so important to maintaining her students’ high level of fascination with Shakespeare. Through the active and dramatic approaches of the ensemble in her classroom everyone was actively involved and supporting each other through the challenging language and stories and “we are all figuring out this complex Shakespeare stuff together” (Teacher Interview 6/16/10).

**Ms. G’s Collaborative Talk & Making Higher Order Thinking Visible**

This collaborative inquiry focused language also made visible to the students, Ms. G’s own sense of curiosity and willingness to accept multiple interpretations. Yet, at the same time, not just any answer was seen as acceptable she also pushed students to be collaborative, creative and thoughtful through the structuring of the drama strategies and by asking them to justify their responses and offers of ideas to the group. Therefore, the recurrence of Ms. G’s collaborative inquiry talk contributed to a classroom environment where every person was challenged to not just consider evaluative questions in an abstract sense but to insert themselves into the story, offer multiple possibilities and make this higher order thinking visible to each other. An example of this type of collaborative inquiry talk during an evaluating and predicting segment of one dramatic inquiry event is
illustrated in the following transcript excerpt from Macbeth on Day 3. Ms. G is seen at the beginning of this excerpt creating a *Vote with your Feet* dramatic inquiry strategy.

947 Ms G: this is just a stand up or sit down thing. Stand up if you think Macbeth will share this prophecy with his wife. He will tell his wife about the prophecy. Stand up if you think he will.

948 Camille: If you’re not sure, you can raise your hand in the middle.

949 Ms. G: If you don’t think he’s going to share this prophecy with his wife, think of a reason why you think that. Nick…

950 Nick: He wants to surprise her.

951 Ms. G: He wants to surprise her. When he’s king it will be a nice surprise. What else? Dasjah…

952 Dasjah: Um, he wants to surprise her. It might be her birthday soon and he wants to surprise her with a present.

953 Ms G: Yes. He wants to surprise her with a present. Why else?

954 Rose-Davey: He doesn’t want her to spend any of his gold.

955 Ms. G: He doesn’t want her to spend any gold before he’s actually king.

956 Ino: Um, cause he doesn’t want her to know.

957 Ms G: He doesn’t want her to know. Why?... Why not tell her? Won’t she know eventually?

956 Brooke He doesn’t want to tell her because what if he doesn’t become king and he tells his wife too early and she gets all excited but he doesn’t become king.

957 Demetrius Yeah because King Duncan is king.

The specific structures of the dramatic inquiry strategy, *Vote with Your Feet*, set up in Ms. G’s turns (947-950) first promoted active participation in the collaborative inquiry by all students (by moving the students had to make their evaluative thinking visible). Then Ms. G’s “what else?” type of questions (951, 953) encourages more students to join into the verbal engagement with creating possible predictions about Macbeth’s future.
behavior. In line 949, 957, Ms. G’s talk pushed students to provide specific justifications for their claims. In lines 951 and 955 Ms. G repeated and elaborated on what the child just said while signaling that this wasn’t the final or only acceptable answer as she still walked around the room, and sought other possible predictions from other students (Field Notes, 12/3/10). When Ino predicted that Macbeth doesn’t want Lady Macbeth to know of the prophecy (956), then Ms. G followed by asking for a justification (957). Then both Brooke and Demetrius picked up on what Ino seems to be implying—and co-construct a justification—such as maybe Macbeth knows that this information might be too premature to tell his wife.

When this segment occurred the students were not aware of the events in the rest of the play—such as Lady Macbeth convincing Macbeth to kill King Duncan. But through their earlier embodied interpretations of the two lines of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth—the students as a whole began to build an embodied understanding that Lady Macbeth wanted more power. In line 957, Demetrius brings the earlier embodied knowledge that King Duncan is still the king back into the thinking process and thereby a question was left hanging in the air—what could a power-hungry Lady Macbeth do with this information? However, since the dramatic inquiry event ended shortly after this discussion, I followed up with the focal students to see what they made of this situation.

In two separate informal reflections with both Dasjah and Ino immediately I asked them to consider what they thought about Lady Macbeth and what they thought she might do if she did receive the new information about her husband potentially become king. Ino thought Lady Macbeth was “going to do something challenging” and that Macbeth probably “doesn’t want to get into bad stuff” but she though he would end up doing anything “just to try to make his wife happy.” Dasjah predicted that Lady Macbeth “might be trusted at first…but because she really wants to be more powerful, she might sneak and kill the king.” Thus, due to the kind of cyclical, collaborative and embodied inquiry structured by Ms. G’s facilitation of dramatic inquiry and her mediation of collaborative inquiry both of these ELL focal students were able to draw on their
embodied and collaborative understandings—to shift their thinking and make some viable predictions (justified in the textual evidence) about Shakespeare’s text.

**Specific Analysis of ELLs: Access to Creative & Higher Order Thinking**

As the focal students participated in dramatic inquiry they use creative and higher order thinking and many of the reading comprehension for an authentic purpose. This moved the focal student beyond just practicing reading comprehension strategies as “skills” with an isolated, decontextualized text as happened in some of the non-dramatic reading events. The following sub-sections describe the patterns I located across my data of the specific affordances and limitations offered to ELLs performing multimodal literacy understandings with the complex language, texts and stories of Shakespeare.

**ELLs & Inferencing**

As outlined elsewhere in this paper, the focal students were supported in drawing inferences from text-based analysis through extensive multimodal and social supports. Their access to social and multimodal semiotic resources helped them make inferences at the sentence and interactional level but significantly this was also always a part of understanding the overarching themes of the play. Because they had multiple cyclical encounters where they were inserting themselves into the stories and relationships of characters as well as stepping out to do other forms of embodied interpretation and inquiry with the themes and stories—all three focal students consistently engaged in performances of authentic higher order thinking in this case, inferencing and justifying those inferences.

I noted within these inferencing practices, the students were particularly supported towards in-depth inferential thinking because they had built up such deeply embodied understandings of the themes and big inquiry questions of the stories. These embodied understandings were supported and deepened by the cyclical, multimodal and collaborative nature of dramatic inquiry. The following series of pictures illustrates this
pattern for all three focal students, though Ino’s specific performance is foregrounded. The pictures seen in Figure 5.8 were taken during a month long exploration of Romeo and Juliet in November. Figure 5.8 is meant to illustrate Ino’s cyclical participation and her insertion into multiple perspectives within the same story. It also illustrates the non-naturalistic and cyclical way that the students came to understand not only the story but also some of the underlying themes and subtexts contained within Shakespeare’s plays. The red arrows follow the “real” chronological time of the classroom while the blue arrows show the sequence as it was narrated and embodied by the students insertion into the story and the timing of implied events created and embodied by the students in the text-edged “drama world” (O’Neill, 1995).

Figure 5.8: Ino’s cyclical, embodied understandings of Romeo & Juliet
These were only a few examples of the varied ways Ino was able to physical, emotionally and relationally insert herself as characters in the drama world of *Romeo and Juliet*. The drama world often went out to the edges of text (Wolf, et. al, 1997) such as asking students to create backstories that could have led up to the current situation in the play. In this case, seen in the lower left picture in Figure 5.8, on 11/4/10 students collaboratively imagined and embodied events that could have been a possible backstory which may have led to and sustained the long-standing feud between the Montagues and Capulets at the start of the play. This cycle of embodied experiences among other embodied interpretations and inquiries in the unit contributed to Ino’s ability to later in December draw on her embodied understand to infer about how and why the two warring families finally changed and made peace in Verona. The transcript excerpt below is from my Shakespeare talk show with the focal students on 12/20/10. It illustrates Ino’s inferencing built in her past living through the story and performances of embodied understandings within Romeo and Juliet. Prior to the start of this excerpt we had been talking about how much “Macbeth” had changed as a character during that play.

271 Ino: Can I say another part about who changed?
272 Camille: Who Changed?
273 Ino: Both of the families in Romeo & Juliet. They both changed/
274 Febea: /yeah and eventually/
275 Ino: Because people kept dying and dying and dying.
276 Dasjah: and then they just quit
277 Ino: They couldn’t do it anymore. The next thing you know maybe Tybalt. No wait Tybalt is already dead. Maybe one of families will kill the dad. They just didn’t want that to happen anymore.
278 Camille: That to just to keep happening. Do you understand what she’s saying?
279 Febea: Or maybe more couples from different sides starting
coming together.

280 Camille So let me get what you’re saying—What do you think caused that big change finally?

281 Ino: both of their children die. And that was their only children so they didn’t want anybody else to start dying. Cause it wouldn’t really be…right…

Based on similar patterns across the data related to ELLs support for inferencing, one highly plausible explanation for Ino being able to draw these inferences about the family (277, 281) was because she had the cyclical and multilayered experiences of living through the story from multiple angles and even in non-chronological time. She was able to insert herself into the story in the middle of the warring families from various competing perspectives and emotional investments including a mourning family member, and an angry, Tybalt fighting for his honor. Through embodied interpretations and inquiry she also reflected on the lovelorn and now dead Juliet and how this feud may have contributed to this outcome. Then on 11/4/10 Ino and her classmates spent significant time evaluating the implications of characters’ actions in that play and they spent significant time considering and embodying events that may have led up to the two families long-standing war. In turn this gave them an opportunity to discuss alternative choices various characters “could” have made, which may have had different outcomes. To be able to make the kinds of inferential statements seen in the transcript excerpt above Ino was extensively supported towards making sense of the complexities of this story, through cyclical, embodied and non-chronological ways of using dramatic inquiry.

**High Value on Making Predictions and Connections**

After having the extensive exploration of the first two Shakespeare plays (Romeo and Juliet-October and Macbeth-December) by the time the students were working on Midsummer Nights’ Dream in February and especially Hamlet in Late April and May, the three focal students were all deeply involved in what seemed to be a whole class fascination with sharing predictions and intertextual connections as a key semiotic
resource. My experience with the whole class during their work with Hamlet May 12th, 2011 helped make visible the classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking that seemed to have steadily grown over time. On this day, it had exploded into the room.

It was typical for Ms. G to hold back from sharing the whole story. Therefore, on this particular day, May 12th, 2011 (and directly before the transcript excerpts seen in the next section) Ms. G was briefly providing a synopsis so of several key scenes of Hamlet which the students did not know about yet. Each of the scenes were edited down into a short paragraph narrating the events and containing a few key quotes from the original Shakespeare play (See Appendix H for these paragraphs). Ms. G had created these short paragraphs to give out to various small groups as she intended that the class would create embodied interpretations of 5-6 key events, which would lead the students into embodying the plotline up to the climactic end of the play in a Story in the Round. The students were typically highly enthusiastic about getting to work on Story in the Round tasks because they got to read and “play” with their friends in small groups and they often got to get out the costumes. At first glance this wasn’t the case when I entered the room on 5/12/11. I noticed Ms. G had just gotten started on reading out the events of the play in order to move the students Story in the Round task, so I was surprised at how much she was struggling to get through the quick reading of the six paragraphs. According to Ms. G’s reflection on that day, this was supposed to be a really quick modeled reading “maybe two minutes or less but the kids they just wouldn’t let me go on. They were so excited to make their predictions and connections to other stories. (Reflection, 5/12/11) and instead this segment took twenty-five minutes. Returning to my research journal from that day I wrote,

“It really seems to have become an entirely different world in Ms. G’s room now. Every single one of those kids had something highly insightful to share today—a prediction, a connection to another play. She couldn’t even get through the little bit of reading needed to set up the Story in the Round because the students were making predictions left and
right and using their deep understandings of the past plays to make sense of this play. Though I have observed them asking for this space for making connections and predictions for some time now, I still was surprised today when they couldn’t even get to one of their most favorite activities—costume reading because they wanted to so badly to share their predictions and connection with each other and their teachers. It just seems that they are now sitting on top of a giant volcano of deeply embodied knowledge of Shakespeare and every time Ms. G gives them the slightest chance to think about and talk about Shakespeare, in the public arena, the volcano erupts (Research Journal 5/12/11).

Overall, though the fact that she could not seem to ―go on‖ through the reading proved to not be a negative thing, instead it clearly supported other patterns in my data over time. This became a key finding of my analysis of the outcomes of long-term dramatic inquiry implementation with Shakespeare—students became completely enamored with Shakespeare and they highly desired asking questions, making predictions about the stories and using their extensive embodied understandings of Shakespeare as intertextual connections as semiotic resources for and with each other.

**ELLs: Intertextual Connections & Living Through Predictions**

As this classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking overlapped and began to overtake the classroom, the ensemble’s shared embodied texts and contexts related to the previously studied Shakespeare’s plays, proved to be a consistent support for ELLs to be able to take an active part in the highly valued cultural practice of generating multiple possibilities for interpretations and predictions. The more time the ensemble participated in long-term dramatic inquiry across multiple Shakespeare texts, the more models the focal students had both from their teacher and from other students of utilizing intertextual connections as semiotic in authentic contexts. Since these intertextual connections were built on a history of a reading practice and a set of stories and language that they had grown to love, whenever their teacher or student brought their attention to an intertextual connection, there tended to be immediate social recognition of the intertextual connection and often a lengthy discussion would ensue with students making
more connections. The more the focal students became attuned to the semiotic benefits of using those intertextual connections to explain themselves and make their complex thinking more clearly visible, they more they were able to actively create and publically share their predictions or in other words visible perform their multimodal literacy understandings.

I labeled this cultural valuing of intertextual connections as a co-occurrence with making inferences and predictions of a story, a highly beneficial affordance for ELLs in developing a deep understanding of the language and stories. In Figure 5.20, is an example of my analysis of ELLs specific co-occurrences of intertextuality with predictions. The transcript excerpt is from 5/12/11 during the attempt to read over the Story in Round #2 with Hamlet. (The paragraphs that Ms. G was using for the Story in the Round can be seen in Appendix H). This transcript excerpt provides a rich illustration of the type of consistent intertextuality and generation of multiple possible predictions and interpretations which occurred with more and more regularity from around the start of Midsummer Night’s Dream (January 26th-February 18th) and onward into Hamlet at the end of the year. In the first excerpts I focused mostly on the talk and language leading up to and near Yusef’s responses. Yusef’s case of responses in this instance illustrates how the long-term dramatic and collaborative inquiry seemed to make it possible that he could use the class’ shared intertextual connections to create predictions outside of the drama world and then have his prediction make sense to the group. The shared history of the ensemble-- as a group who makes their thinking visible through embodiment--also supported Yusef to more clearly communicating his meaning-making process. Because he was able to insert himself into the story, and embody a characters perspective, he was able performative and coherently express a prediction to the whole group of what could happen in the story.
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predict</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Yussif:</td>
<td>I think that the next thing... Who are those 2 guys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Ms. G:</td>
<td>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Yussif:</td>
<td>yeah, they're umm going to spy on Hamlet. And, and they're going to do the false face must hide...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Chorus:</td>
<td>yeah, false face must hide, what the false heart doth know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ms. G:</td>
<td>Who else had a false face here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 #St:</td>
<td>Ophelia because she went to Hamlet like her father said. And they spied on him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 MarquellW:</td>
<td>I think the Father didn't want Ophelia to be spending so much time with Hamlet because he thinks he should get all of her attention. If she is spending all of her time with Hamlet then she wouldn't spend it with him. The father is going to be jealous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 #St:</td>
<td>I think Ophelia's going to tell Hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Ms. G:</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 MarquellW:</td>
<td>She's going to say to him [Hamlet] my father made me. He's going to say to her, but did you know I saw my father's ghost and he told me that his brother killed him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Tori:</td>
<td>It's kind of like the opposite of Midsummer. Hermia didn't want to listen to her father but Ophelia did listen to her father.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...Megan's talk of rumors about Hamlet...

Table 5. 20: Attempting to start Hamlet Story in the Round #2
Table 5.20  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Brooke:  I have something, a connection to Toot. That one was in a Midsummer night's dream but its like Romeo &amp; Juliet too. Because Montague and Capulet—that one was Juliet again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Chorus:  Capulet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Brooke:  Um, um the father didn't want Juliet around Romeo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>William: Because he was a Montague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ms. G:   That's right and Polonius doesn't want/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chorus:  Ophelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>St + LG: Ophelia around Hamlet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...Marianne and Brooke add more connections to Midsummer Night's Dream...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Yusef:   Ms. G I got a good one (waves hand wildly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Ms. G:   Ok. One more and then I am going to tell you the rest of the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Yusef:   I think, I think the next thing Hamlet is going to do is he is going to be like: &quot;none of these people don't, don't even know whether killed my father. So I'm about to go to talk to Claudius/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Demetrius: talk to the King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Yusef:   and say Claudius (and starts beating on the desk and yelling loudly, imitating Hamlet talking to himself angrily about the revenge he wants while beating loudly and wildly on the desk) he's killed my father. I'm about to go in the castle and kill him////</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Ms. G:   Ok so he's going to get revenge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In line 7, Yusef was able to use the intertextual connection to the “false face” line from Macbeth as a semiotic resource for himself and to successfully share his prediction with the whole ensemble. He created this prediction from outside the story looking in on it and with the confident knowledge built from past experiences with Shakespeare’s plotlines. In line 34 and 36, he used embodiment as a semiotic resource. This time he inserted himself into the story for just a moment to live through Hamlet’s perspective in the story at the narrative moment in question. He started this turn (34) by signaling that he was going to make a prediction about the story: “*I think the next thing that Hamlet is going to do is...*” but then he signaled that he was going to insert himself as Hamlet by saying “*he is going to be like...*” and then Yusef started to spontaneously embody his interpretation of Hamlet in this narrative moment—this included speaking Hamlet’s thoughts and creating gestures that Hamlet might have made at the time. Because he there was a highly validated space in this culture where he could act if he was the character Hamlet, then Yusef was able to more clearly communicate his meaning and have his prediction about Hamlet socially recognized by others.

After these interactions, the transcript continued for five more pages as Ms. G tried to get the Story in the Round sections read aloud while the students inadvertently interrupted the brevity of this process by enthusiastically creating a wide range of intertextual connections and predictions. In those five pages of transcript, there was talk among the students about how Hamlet might be going crazy like Macbeth and a discussion that maybe Claudius will begin “feeling guilty” (for his murder of King Hamlet) much like Lady Macbeth had began feeling guilty for her part in the murder of King Duncan (from their earlier exploration of Macbeth). When Ms. G continued to read the Story in the Round text, she read about the young Prince Hamlet’s indirect method of seeking the guilt of his Uncle Claudius (who was now made the king) by using actors to imitate the suspected murder in a theatrical play form, Dasjah immediately jumped into the gaining the speaking floor strategies by wildly waving her hand. The following transcript excerpt shows Dasjah’s prediction.
Ms. G: Hamlet was delighted. He had convinced the actors to perform a play called the Murder of Gonzago. Hamlet said, hmmm the play’s the thing wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king.

St: *(Dasjah immediately throws up her hand, 10 others all do too, more overlapping talk)* Ms G, Ms. G, ooohhhooohhh, I got one.

Ms. G: Dasjah?

Dasjah: *(attempts to speak oooohhing drowns her out…)*

Ms. G: wait, wait. I am going to do Dasjah and then I am going to do Brooke.

Dasjah: They are going to do the play and then the king’s going to watch it and he’s going to try to kill his self. [INTconSKPS] because that’s what he did to Old Hamlet.

The past Shakespearean understandings shared by the entire ensemble became a resource again for Dasjah’s prediction. Dasjah made this prediction from outside the story but looking in on it. Without referring to it in this turn at least verbally, it was recognized in the group that she used intertextual connections from prior Shakespeare work specifically, Lady Macbeth killing herself over the guilt of murder (This intertextual connection was mentioned earlier by Marquell W and Marquell R but this discussion not seen in these transcript excerpts.)

Overall, the three focal ELL student, their classmates and teachers significantly use their shared embodied experiences together over time as a springboard to create the highly valued cultural practice (and effective reading comprehension strategy) of predicting and generating multiple possibilities. The long term embodied engagement with the stories supported them to make predictions from outside looking in on the story and they also had a validated space to insert themselves into the story and performatively express their predictions through ‘becoming’ the character for a moment. In addition the growing classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking seemed to further encourage the ELLs to actively make their higher order thinking visible by publically sharing as many possible interpretations and connecting thoughts as possible.
ELLs: Evaluating Actions and Considering Ethical Questions

During the dramatic inquiry the ensemble often focused their talk and actions on collaboratively inquiries about big, ethical questions such as: when is killing right or wrong? When do you choose loyalty to your family or group versus loyalty to yourself and individual people that you love? What can a person do with power? How should people deal with deep betrayal and anger?  

One practice involved students in playing out fictional roles not necessarily narrated in the play but affected the actions of characters narrated in the play. Ms. G would then freeze the “playing” and students could authentically analyze what is happening from inside or reflect on the implications of character’s actions from outside the story. For example, on Day 2 of Macbeth-Thought track (see Table 5.2 earlier in this chapter), the students first played as if they were innocent villagers and then due to the war many innocent villagers died. The ensemble thought tracked themselves as-if-innocent villagers who had been killed in the aftermath of war, or in other words students offered what they were thinking right at the moment of their “imagined” death. Therefore they embodied the inquiry question: What are some of the consequences of war on innocent bystanders? Then outside of the story (and over time with Macbeth) the students verbally inquired and reflected on the question: When is killing right [or justified]? but through the dramatic inquiry strategies they were able to have such evaluative inquiry with more depth and nuance having had the prior embodied inquiry experiences of multiple perspectives (e.g. the warriors fighting for their country, Macbeth and the King trying to save their country, and innocent villagers who got trapped in the crossfire)

During another dramatic inquiry strategy in which I categorized as evaluation Ms. G would ask the students to make their evaluations visible by standing up and moving, or as the strategy is people were expected to Vote with your Feet. During this practice of evaluation of the story, Ms. G or another adult would at times model their shifts in thinking based on competing perspectives or various piece of evidence from the text. For example in the Vote With Your Feet from 11/4/10 at the end of Romeo and Juliet, Dr.
Brian Edmiston and a local actor came in the classroom to do some dramatic inquiry after the students had just watched the actor in a 45 minute children’s version of Romeo and Juliet. The actor structured this activity in very similar ways as Ms. G typically did with this practice-by starting with a big inquiry question. He first asked the students: “Who do you think made the biggest mistake in Romeo and Juliet?”

Students responded with answers such as: “Romeo and Juliet... because they got married to each other against their parents’ wishes, Romeo...because he killed two people, Romeo and Juliet...for killing themselves, or Peter... for not knowing how to read” (Peter was the Capulets illiterate servant who mistakenly invited Romeo to the Capulet’s party by asking him to read the invitation). The actor then set up a Vote with Your Feet strategy where students had to walk to the “corner” or area of the room, to stand with the people who shared the same evaluation. All of the student in the space were to have chosen the same character and for the same reason. The actor reviewed each group and then said to the students “you can move over here, if you think Romeo killing Tybalt and those guys you can move there if you think Juliet....made the biggest mistake, but then you can change your mind when you hear other ideas.” (Field Notes 11/4/10)

The following is an excerpt from the transcript from that Vote with your Feet activity. This excerpt illustrates the affordance that I saw for Yusef and the other ELLs from this type of performance of higher order thinking. Because everyone was moving, all the students had to actively participate in considering their position. In creating and justifying their evaluative stance they had to actively synthesize all of the embodied understandings they had acquired so far in order to perform and justify their evaluations.

47 Actor: I am going to step over here because I think Romeo killing those two guys was a big mistake (FMS moved with him and says to someone: I am going over to Romeo)

48 Actor: Now I am going to move over here because I think killing himself was a bigger mistake. [FMS: That’s a bigger mistake]
Mr. Brian: Mind you if he hadn’t killed Tybalt he wouldn’t have been in a position to do that. (and Brian moves)

Actor: Right. We’ve got another one here.

Rose-Davey: If Juliet would have never did anything curved then he (Romeo) wouldn’t have come and killed himself.

.... More ideas offered....

Ms G: (standing with Brooke who originally offered Peter as a choice ) I I am over here because if the messenger had known how to read

Mr.Brian: he thought he was so smart asking Romeo to read it, but he wasn’t /

Ms G: but of only the messenger had known how to read…

Mr.Brian: But if he had know how to read, none of this would have happened (actor and Brian move to Peter)

Actor: Excellent. That is really interesting to see some of the mistakes that were made.

Yusef: I got one more. If Romeo didn’t, If Romeo didn’t not know that uh… Juliet was dead, then he wouldn’t um put the um…thing, you mean the (got the word poison from DMC-poison) the poison in.

Actor: Yeah that’s right. if he hadn’t thought she was dead. Who’s mistake was that?

Yusef: the friar’s

Mr.Brian: Why was it the friar’s?/

DeShaun: Or it was the seller’s ?/

Yusef: /because he was trying to. Get ummm… ummm… uh… uh… um

Actor: yeah he was trying, he had this weird plan. What is that plan supposed to do? Why did he have her take that medicine that made her look like she was dead? What was that supposed to do?

Yusef: That was supposed to made her like, uh. go to sleep for forty hours.
Because the actor was modeling shifts in thinking and a lack of one singular “answer”, he actually used similar collaborative inquiry language that Ms. G used in similar dramatic inquiry situations. His used this type of talk in conjunction with the structure that pushed everyone in the room to make their higher order thinking visible (through moving with their bodies) and the collaborative talk mediated and supported everyone to offer as many possible scenarios as they could create. Yusef accepted this challenge by offering another possible evaluation in line 61 in which he reiterated his and the group’s shared knowledge that Juliet took the sleeping potion in order to fake her own death, but Romeo thought Juliet, his true love was really dead and killed himself with poison. The stage that was set though for him to do so positioned him to be offering this as a building block in the groups collaborative effort to deepen their understanding. This is quite a different stage from which students and teachers can perform in comparison to the stage that was often set in non-dramatic events where students seemed to most often displaying their knowing of literal recall questions with no connection to building everyone’s meaning-making and performances of more complex higher order thinking.

The specific affordance for Yusef’s being able to use evaluative thinking in this type of collaborative atmosphere was that he was pushed to think more complexly (as opposed to assuming Yusef can’t understand big, abstract questions), make this thinking visible and recognizable to others and he was supported to do so by the ensemble’s shared context. In the example from line 61, even if he did not give a complete explanation of his thinking, because of the shared context and embodied understandings of Romeo and Juliet they had all shared in together, Yusef could have his partially expressed thinking socially recognized and even built on by adults and other students. The actor and Dr. Edmiston, the other mediating adult at the time helped Yusef’s verbalizing process along by pushing Yusef to further justify his thinking about why he thought it was the friar who made the biggest mistake (62,64,67). As Yusef negotiated his verbal expression to make his meaning more clear, he also clarified his own thinking for himself and others. Other students ended up being able to build from his ideas as well. For example later in this same segment, there is evidence that students built onto Yusef’s original idea that there
was a huge mistake in communication because Romeo didn’t find out that Juliet was only faking her death. Several students had expressed an interest in this and the related question: what happened to the message or the messenger who was supposed to but failed to get the news about Juliet’s faked death to Romeo and later whole class began another dramatic inquiry segment based on the new question inspired by Yusef’s comment.

**ELLs: Teacher-in-Role and talking back to the story**

Ms. G, myself and other visiting adults playing teacher-in-role in this room, could quickly assess the authentic misunderstandings and burning questions about the stories. Using playful improvisation we could give the students additional information that was appropriate and relevant for them to further live through and engage with the story and authentically deepen their meaning. This practice is in stark contrast to the interactional practices in some of the non-dramatic reading events, where students just passively answered or observed the answering of a question to just get through the procedural display of the “lesson”, regardless if they were deepening understanding or engaging authentically in effective reading comprehension strategies.

I observed a pattern when Ms. G she would set herself or another adult as a Teacher-in-Role specifically for the students to question the character like this. First it set up an official space ask authentic questions and playfully talk back to the story. Typically these questions made visible the students higher order thinking which in many cases was evaluations about the underlying feelings or desires of the character or the consequences of the characters actions. The Teacher-in-Role strategy provided a way for the teacher to field such authentic questions and give the most authentic response because they are acting and speaking in the first person as-if the character.

Consistently Ms G created a teacher-in-role that would “perform” a specific interaction from a text or an improvised event and then the students were encouraged to stop the action and talk back to the character at that very moment in the story. As an example
my analysis of affordances offered by this practice of teacher-in-role, I will return to a
different segment of the dramatic reading event on 11/4/10. After the Romeo & Juliet
vote with your feet segment seen in the above transcript excerpt, Ms G mediated the
students to group sculpt the actor and Mr. Brian as Teachers-in-Role. The group had
decided to explore the Friar’s biggest mistakes in the play. The characters were then
“put” into the scenes and timeline of frozen pictures of all of the scenes in which the Friar
is involved was collaboratively created using the suggestions of the students. Then as the
adults performed students were able to freeze time right in the moment of action during
the play, and the student could ask the “Friar” questions about why he had chosen a
certain decision or to offer him advice on a better course of action. In the following
transcript excerpt the group goes back into and watches an embodiment of the moment in
time (from the play) when the Friar is giving the potion to Juliet. They were encouraged
to yell PAUSE or STOP to ask the Friar questions.

Rose-Davey: PAUSE. Why does she have to marry him? I’m sure there are
lots of people she could marry. Why does she have to marry Paris?
Actor as-if-Friar: Oh, I wish she could marry whoever she please… but have you
ever met Lord Capulet
Brian-as-Lord Capulet: (stamping around and uses loud volume, and
alarmingly gruff tone) I WILL tell my daughter who to marry!!!

…..the teachers-in-role then performed other frozen picture that “comes to life.”

“Playfully” mediating ELLs deep engagement in higher order thinking

During the same segment, when the frozen picture was created and performed where
actor-as-Friar Lawrence comes and tells Ms. G-as-Juliet to take the sleeping potion that
makes her appear to be dead, Ino stops the action and speaks to the Friar by saying:

Ino: PAUSE Why does Juliet kill herself after Romeo Dies?
Ino’s question above was a burning question for her (as seen in other data) and in this task she hoped to gain clarification from the Friar about it but the temporal issue proved complicated. In order to “play along” with talking back to a character during that moment in time meant the actor had to live through the Friar’s perspective at that moment in time and he could not appear to seem to omniscient to all of the future events of the play, though the students outside of the story looking in were omniscient to these later events in the play.

However, another pattern I noted in the dramatic reading events was the following--The teacher inserting her or himself as character was often able to socially repositioned the students as more knowledgeable because the In this task of stopping a character and asking a question in the moment of the story, the teacher-in-role is typically positioned as having less knowledge than the students because the character is confined by chronological time of the story and therefore cannot know in advance what will happen in the future. This capability of this type of social repositioning heightened the student’s engagement and investment in the event and it expanded the teacher’s meditational resources.

In this example, the students already knew the whole story, and could take a higher status role as the omniscient reader who already knows the consequences of the Friar’s current actions. The fact that Ino struggled with the time issue in the example above (e.g. Friar couldn’t have known that Juliet had died) was not approached by the adults in a typical corrective stance such as let me tell you (or have another student tell you) the correct answer or how to perform a skill correctly—. Instead an adult stepped out of role for a brief moment and helped negotiate another way into the “play” which then still signaled that we are all playing, and trying things out so it’s no big deal if we make a mistake…

Brian: At this moment he doesn’t know that. Would you like to tell him that? Of course, you know what happens in this story
but he doesn’t. And at this point, what does he hope that is going to happen?

Brooke: His plan?
Brian: that his plan is going to work! (to Ino) So tell him what you think might happen and see what he says that.

Ino: I think your plan will work great.

Then after this negotiation Ino chose a safe route of playing along with the Friar’s actions. The Teacher-in-role then also used this moment to further clarify the character’s position at least at the narrative moment in question and explains the decisions behind his actions from the limited knowledge he has at that time in the story.

Actor-as-Friar: Thank you very much. I appreciate that you think it is going to work too. I am really hoping that with this both of her parents will think she is dead. It will be very sad for them at first, but when they find out she’s alive they won’t feel so bad that she’s married to Romeo. And perhaps, they will love each other, the Capulets and Montagues will start to love each other and stop fighting.

Ino: Oh!

As was typical of the dramatic inquiry reading events, Ino was not passively given the “right” answer but she was able to construct her own shifts in understanding through the teacher’s negotiations in and out of the dramatic “play.” Secondly because the students seemed to enjoy the play and performative engagement, focal ELL students showed high levels of active engagement in the moment and later in their questions and ideas even when the task had them sitting on the floor while a few students got the floor (as in this example).
It is difficult to fully capture the nuanced and intricate ways each of these various dramatic reading practices overlapped and contributed to long-term sense of wonder and collaborative inquiry. In the following sections, I provide a summation of this atmosphere of collaborative and embodied inquiry through the creation of an ensemble of inquirers and risk takers. Then I offer a short synthesis of one or two unique ways each ELL was supported through embodiment, higher order thinking and long-term sense of collaborative inquiry and how this seemed to contribute to them finding ways to reposition themselves as learner, thinkers and inquirers.

**Atmosphere of Collaborative & Embodied Inquiry**

As Ms. G never told the students the whole story, they slowly built up their understanding of the four plays through an investigative approach to reading and understanding Shakespeare (Stredder, 2010). Ms. G often gave them small extracts of original Shakespeare texts and used dramatic play and active, ensemble-based approaches to “figure this out together.” Ms. G noted on multiple occasions (June 2010 & 2011) this investigative atmosphere allowed her to position herself as much more of an equal with her students—where they all could wonder together about the meaning of idiomatic and figurative language and where they could use the tools and strategies of dramatic inquiry to collaboratively offer multiple meanings behind and implications of character’s interactions as well as to inquire about big ethical questions. I also noted a pattern in the data that showed she extended this atmosphere with her collaborative forms of talk during the dramatic inquiry events. This focus on collaborative investigation and ongoing inquiry seemed to help sustain the students eagerness to ask questions and take risks.

**Ensemble of Inquirers & Risk Takers**

The tools of dramatic inquiry gave the ensemble the means to collaboratively make meaning and interpret complex texts which contributed significantly to Ms G’s curricular goals for reading instruction. In addition to the focus on more traditional areas of
reading instruction like vocabulary, comprehension and fluency the long term dramatic inquiry helped build a shared background knowledge and context that supported higher order thinking as students over time began to be more and more willing to take risks such as generate multiple possibilities, questions and predictions, and create deep intertextual connections and at times students began to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ideas posed by our big inquiry questions. Ms. G explained it was because of the support of the ensemble towards facing the complex text taking that creates such a risk-taking atmosphere it’s the explicit and implicit agreement that “we are in this together trying to figure out this complex text” (Teacher Reflection 6/16/10)

Because I spent the entire year in this classroom, I noticed that the classroom culture of reading: collaborative inquiry and risk-taking, first only slightly overlapped with the other classroom culture of reading: getting through the text and performing knowing. For example in October, during the exploration of the first play, Romeo and Juliet, the teacher inserted examples from that play to give examples of words in her spelling lessons which were recognized by the whole class’s shared participation in that work together (Field Notes October 25th, 2010). However, towards the end of the year when I returned after a break for data analysis (late March-late April), I noticed that the classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking around Shakespeare had seemed to overtaken the other culture. Ms G. corroborated that Shakespeare began to readily and spontaneously interject their predictions and intertextual references to all of the previously studied plays in highly meaningful ways across other lessons and within the current play under study.
Yusef and the power of multimodal literacies and intertextuality

Towards the latter part of the year, entirely new cultural values had taken over the classroom—where being able to work collaboratively to interpret texts and competently use embodiment and intertextual connections as semiotic tools became highly valued. Yusef learned to do well within all three of these areas. Because Yusef was as Ms. G called him a “good little actor” he became quite adept at using embodiment as a semiotic resource. Other students began to notice this too. Since he was willing to work cooperatively in groups and share and importantly let go of some of his ideas—he soon became a desired group partner for students who had previously not been willing to work with him. As Ms. G and I looked back on his consistent access to embodied forms of understanding—Ms. G corroborated other evidence showing that this learning environment was particularly favorable for deepening Yusef’s engagement in stories, and gave him authentic reasons to re-read the same text multiple times and make his thinking visible to others.

Ms. G: oh it was a perfect classroom for him! As I think about it, Yusef would have died in another classroom. And I worry about what he’s going to do next year. I really do.

Camille: He’s so great. It was really an interesting case study because I feel like this was the perfect classroom for him because he was so able to use his body.

Ms G.: It was. I do worry about him next year. Those fourth grade teachers are very strict. They are very traditional. They are very sit down and be quiet. And he can’t. He can’t do that.

Yusef’s opportunities to make sense of a story were deeply expanded the more he began to use embodiment as a meaning-making tool. A transcript excerpt from an informal conversation I had with Yusef on 5/12/11 provides an excellent illustration of how much deeper he inserted himself into the story and how much more clearly he could explain
himself after he became aware of using his body as a tool. Prior to this reflection the whole class had been making predictions about Claudius reaction to Hamlet’s play. However, Yusef had been the most interested in thinking and embodying how Hamlet must have been feeling (See transcript example from Table 5.20). After the whole group discussion was over, Yusef seemed disappointed that he didn’t get to share his latest idea with the group. I asked him what he had wanted to say to the group and this is where this transcript starts with my question.

Camille: What were you going to say?  
Yusef: I think, I think when Claudius is guilty, he’s going to run (and he motioned as if running). He ranned out. And he ran down um, see and then um Hamlet’s going to run downstairs and go see Claudius. And Hamlet’s going to say. Hamlet, eh, ..Claudius is going to say: You are going to die of the death with a sword (and shows himself as Claudius drawing a sword). And then Hamlet’s going to say: “It’s all over Claudius. You killed, you killed my father (and holds out another sword this time much higher and more sturdy looking) and they’re going to fight it. (and starts moving around and making slashing noises and sword movements) Then he’s going to, Um then, Hamlet’s going to um, going to cut uh, (motions to his own neck as he tries to think of the word) cut Claudius’ head off.

Camille: And do what with it?  
Yusef: And Show it (and he motions as if holding a head on a spear above his head.)  
Camille: (laughs) What’s that remind you of? (Yusef smiles)  
Yusef: (immediately) Macbeth!  
Camille: Why?  
Yusef: Because Macduff killed, uh, Macbeth and he showed his head all of the way up (repeats the motion spearing above him with the head) and then the new king was the little one, King Duncan’s kid.

(Video Transcript Excerpt, Hamlet-Story in the Round #2, 5/12/11)
The narrative form makes it difficult to see just how much his body came into play—but what is key is that he is not dramatizing something that has happened (nor does it actually happen in the play), he is using his body as part of him deeply engaging in Hamlet’s perspective on the story. When I returned to transcripts of informal conversation I had with Yusef about the dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare work much earlier in the year, he did not seem to spontaneously use embodiment as a resource as he did much more consistently later in the year. I also noted another pattern in Yusef’s performances as a reader during dramatic reading events. Because he had a shared history of embodied texts and deeply embodied understandings of the past Shakespeare plays, he had a wealth of relevant background knowledge, language and forms of communicating meaning in order to make sense of the new plays and communicate his understandings to others. This pattern can be seen at the end of the transcript excerpt when he brings in an intertextual connection to a previously embodied text (e.g. putting the head of Macbeth on the embattlements) from their work with Macbeth 5 months prior to this work with Hamlet.

Dasjah and the Power of Space to Talk and Think Deeply

Because of the classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking Dasjah was able to reposition herself as “a deep thinker” As Ms. G reflected back on Dasjah’s style of participation during the 2010-2011 school year:

“Dasjah was not an extrovert like other people were but she internalized everything. This came back out in questions and really deep thoughts she shared. Students like Marquell W and Yusef really used their bodies and actions to make meaning but Dasjah was shy. When she did offer insights though they were deep. She loved to make predictions and connections. Like she blew me away with that connection to the plague on both your houses from Romeo and Juliet and using that with thinking about the murder of King Duncan [dramatic inquiry of implied scene from Macbeth]. But you know what, if we didn’t have this [dramatic
inquiry] work, she wouldn’t have been asking these kinds of questions or making these text-to-text connections. She wouldn’t have had the space to offer those questions. And I do think, she really didn’t ever talk much in the reading groups or in whole groups except to answer those easy, teacher questions. If things had continued using my traditional reading group practices only, where there is so little higher order thinking, Dasjah would have always just read what she was told and she would have never volunteered. I don’t think we would have seen what a deep thinker she really is. (Teacher Interview June 6th, 2011)

As made visible in Ms. G’s characterization of Dasjah, if a large portion of the reading instruction had continued in the I-R-E pattern where inauthentic, procedural displays of knowing propelled the group to get through the text—Dasjah would have never found space to be seen and develop fully her potential as a deep thinker.

**Ino & the Power of Collaborative Inquiry**

In our final reflection, when I brought it to Ms. G’s attention, she concurred with my analysis about one of the biggest limitations of the non-dramatic reading practices for Ino. We concluded that some of the social positioning work related to being seen as a “good reader” seemed to obstruct her from asking authentic questions about language or meaning. Ms. G added support to my analysis when she explained that Ino “really was a displayer of knowledge. She wanted to make sure everyone knew that she was smart...that she already knew all the words.” (Interview 6/11/11) As a result, I observed that during the non-dramatic events Ino rarely took risks to try out and idea or to negotiate meanings of new words which limited her access to authentic inquiry and appropriation of new complex language and conceptual understandings.

Instead as the entire ensemble became characterized by willingness to take risks and admit they didn’t know something as well as to play and experiment with many different ideas—it created a different sort of literacy learning atmosphere for Ino. In my recursive
analysis about her question asking and risk-taking, during the dramatic reading events. Ino seemed to be one of the students who asked the most language centered questions in front of the whole group. The power of collaborative inquiry with Shakespeare for Ino was in the fact that it gave her space to ask questions about language and even in the same moment consider big ethical questions. Ms. G summarized this idea when she stated:

“in this space where we are all trying things out, she doesn’t have to display herself…it’s not a big deal that she’s asking big questions… or small ones.”

**Ms. G’s shifts in performances of a reading teacher**

In Ms. G’s class I began to document the unique part the teacher’s role played in constituting a culture of purposeful engaged reading characterized by an atmosphere of wonder and inquiry. Importantly though it was the co-constructed performance of students in response to a shift in teacher’s performance. Neither Ms. G nor the text itself maintained the position as the sole authority and evaluator of knowing, instead she had to make intentional moves to position herself as a member of the ensemble such as using the collaborative inquiry language of “we” and “let’s try it out” or “so so we were wondering….” With this role she added the responsibility of becoming a performative and responsive mediator of ideas. In other words, she had to be proactive in creating and mediating the opportunities for students to truly hear and build on each other’s ideas. Yet, it was also just as crucial that she purposefully did NOT ask the ensemble (which included herself and adults) to only have verbal, abstract discussions about texts but to “stand it up” and make the semiotic process of exploring texts a visible and collaborative multimodal project. As she shifted her performance as a reading teacher Ms. G was able to use the tools of dramatic inquiry to create significant access for her ELLs and all of her students to transmediate across language systems, specifically using somatic, kinesthetic and gestural in addition to verbal and collaborative engagements with inquiry so that they could better visualize, build onto and learn from each other’s ideas.
Dramatic and embodied forms of inquiry made higher order thinking much more visible which made it was much easier for Ms. G to be responsive to the questions and misunderstandings of the students and provide scaffolding in the moment and even across time. Ms. G used a wide range of drama strategies to provide further scaffolding if the students were unclear about how to create a certain frozen picture or how they might go about creating an embodied interpretation. Sometimes she would combine or use another drama strategy to help students move past a misunderstandings or shift in their thinking. For example, at times she became a Teacher-in-role where she (or another adult working with her) could playfully clarify a situation. Another key expansion of her own teaching repertoires seemed to be that she began to embody words/phrasal meaning as a form of explanation of meaning (e.g. model a meaning of the word with her body movements, gestures and intonation)

During the dramatic inquiry events with Shakespeare, the students were able to authentically engage in “reading comprehension” or the meaning-making process that went far beyond the decoding of words. Importantly, this engaged reading of Shakespeare was carefully planned and orchestrated by their teacher’s careful extraction of text, and willingness to be a responsive mediator of the ensemble’s collaborative and dramatic inquiry into Shakespeare’s texts. By using dramatic inquiry, embodied modes of teaching and learning and ensemble-based teaching approaches, Ms. G was able to move away from a top down, transmission or individual process models of teaching reading. As a result a new culture among the people constituting this classroom, began to develop where the atmosphere teemed with wonder and collaborative and embodied inquiry.

**Summary: Performance of multimodal literacy understandings**

Each dramatic inquiry event demanded the active participation of the focal students in co-authoring the imagined drama world together through reading and interpreting both background information and text extracts of William Shakespeare’s original texts.
Their teacher’s consistent structuring of dramatic inquiry strategies, space for verbal engagement with inquiry as well as her own ways of using collaborative inquiry talk supported the three focal students and their classmates towards deeply engaged and purposeful reading comprehension with each of the four Shakespeare plays. The performances of reading events moved from performances of knowing and imitation of known skills to authentic wonder, collaborative inquiry and consistent performances of multimodal literacy understandings.

While I recognize engaged and purposeful reading will look different and mean different things across different academic content areas, my study focused on the engaged reading of texts that were most often used for reading-specific instruction in Ms. G’s class—fictional literature. The avid readers who were co-researchers in Linda Parson’s (2006) study also focused on fictional literature in creating a grounded theory of what an engaged reader actually does within fictional texts. There categories describing an authentically engaged reader included being in and living through the book, connecting to characters, experiencing emotions, having physical reactions, wondering, predicting, and visualizing. Both Sipe’s definitions of primary children’s literary responses and Parson’s 5th graders definitions of what engaged reading provided me a way to describe the transformation in the students and teachers performances as readers of complex fictional stories. The performances of engaged reading in Ms. G’s classroom moved from silent, independent reading and faked performances of this process, and taking alternating turns displaying and evaluating others fluency skills towards deeply performative, engaged reading. Ms. G’s students most certainly lived through the stories and inserted themselves into the texts. They embodied, visualized, and experienced authentic emotions and physical reactions. They connected to characters, evaluated their actions and talked back to them from outside and inside the story. They created extensive predictions and asked and debated ongoing inquiry questions. They synthesized their embodied understandings and intertextual connections in highly complex and creative ways and in doing so began to take over the personal ownership of Shakespeare’s stories.
As the culture of wonder, collaborative inquiry and risk-taking emerged the performative stage for reading events in this classroom was transformed. The following affordances occurred for ELLs which weren’t made nearly as visible (if at all) during non-dramatic reading events. Over time, the affordances for ELLs from the dramatic inquiry reading practices included:

1) students had consistent opportunities to engage in multimodal understandings during authentic reading comprehension tasks meaning-making with texts and appropriating language and comprehension strategies to be use for their own purposes and academic success;

2) classroom teaching model moved towards an active, inquiry and ensemble-based learning approach and promoted collaborative inquiry and risk-taking;

3) ELLs had extensive access to complex texts, vocabulary and literary language;

4) ELLs had extensive social support through collaborative inquiry with these complex texts, which pushed them to ask and face authentic questions and to develop a deep fascination with the rhythm, rich figurative language of Shakespeare and the intrigue, complexity and timelessness of his stories;

5) ELLs had consistent opportunities to build shared context of language and embody background knowledge and experiences with the setting, possible interactions and concepts before, during and after reading texts so as to increase the possibility of making intertextual connections;

6) ELLs had consistent opportunities to use embodiment as a valid semiotic resource to gradually shape meanings and appropriate complex vocabulary in authentic contexts using non-linguistic and linguistic systems;
7) ELLs had consistent opportunities to participate in long-term, cyclical dramatic inquiry, which challenged them to re-read for meaning, return to newly learned language and concepts; and to be generative and creative and make their higher order thinking visible;

8) ELLs had consistent opportunities to build a shared history together using embodiment and the complex stories of Shakespeare the students intentionally created space and as a result they could make and share their intertextual connections, even of embodied texts and have them socially recognized, which significantly deepened their understandings of the stories far beyond what they could do independently.

The complex process of highly engaged reading of Shakespeare was only made possible because of the teacher’s willingness to disrupt the transmission model of teaching and she began to move away from the comparing reading skills model of reading instruction. Instead of this model, she set students and herself up as active members of an ensemble and co-inquirers about the complex texts of Shakespeare. Ms. G created and implemented a wide range of dramatic inquiry strategies and other forms of verbal engagement with collaborative inquiry, which consistently pushed students towards higher order thinking. The ELL focal students and all of Ms. G’s students were significantly supported to authentically perform deep understanding of Shakespeare’s stories through joint productive activity, authentic uses of language, transmediating between verbal and non-verbal language and sign systems and always in the service of purposeful reading comprehension and creative thinking around highly engaging texts.

These performances of multimodal literacy understandings with Shakespeare built on each other over time so that it pushed students into more engaged and multimodal forms of reading for authentic understanding and sharing their meaning-making with others. It is this kind of reading for wonder and inquiry that push people to be lifelong readers.
Chapter 6: Discussion & Implications

The following chapter is a discussion around the key conclusions to my two research questions. I drew these conclusions from my ethnographic research throughout my extensive participant observation during the 2010-2011 school year in Ms. G’s class. I specifically drew on the case studies of Ino, Dasjah, Yusef and my collaborative teacher development work with Ms. G. In doing so I answered the following two research questions:

1) *In this classroom, how do reading events get co-constructed by the performances of teachers and students and how do some of these performances become typical reading practices?*

2) *What affordances and limitations do the recurrent non-dramatic and dramatic reading practices offer to intermediate and advanced English Language Learners?*

I start first with an entry to my research journal from February when I first captured a sense of a new classroom culture of doing reading being constructed in this classroom in contrast to another set of classroom culture of reading which had already been defined. Next, I give an overview of the two classroom reading cultures and the affordances and limitations created for ELLs by each of these two sets of classroom cultural practices in respect to the research on most effective pedagogies for culturally and linguistically diverse learners and a few possibilities for other lines of research. Then I will follow up with implications for theory and pedagogy with a particular focus on reimagining and making changes to third grade reading instruction that can work for all students but which especially takes into consideration the specific needs of ELL students.
The excitement had been palpable as one of the university actors stepped in the door. The children barely even let him take his coat off before they were peppering him with questions left and right. *Have you ever been in Midsummer Night’s Dream? Did you ever play Demetrius? What’s going to happen to Hermia? Is she going to have to marry Demetrius even though she loves Lysander? What do you think about Egeus? I mean he is kind of mean to Hermia…* Then there were more overlapping questions from other plays they’d studied: *Have you ever played in Macbeth? or what about in Romeo and Juliet? What about Juliet’s cousin, Tybalt-have you ever played him?* When the actor said he had been in Macbeth, they had more questions. *Do you think maybe Lady Macbeth was one of the three witches in disguise? What did you think of Macbeth hiring murderers to kill Banquo?* There were questions fired about his opinions on various situations and characters’ relationships from those plays. Afterwards, the actor who had never met these students before shared that he “absolutely loved it. It’s so amazing to see their excitement. I wish I could get my college students be so excited about Shakespeare.”

It has been almost 4 months since we started using active, dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare with 23 third graders in Lorraine’s classroom. What is it that creates in these third graders such an overwhelming passion for Shakespeare? ….

In those first few minutes with the university actor, as the students started discussing their knowledge of Midsummer Nights’ Dream Lorraine kept looking at me and shaking her head. “It’s so amazing”, she had said, “They have learned something!” I would say it is far more than something. They are absolutely fascinated by the richness of Shakespeare’s language. They thirst for more opportunities to echo its rhythm and cadence in their words and their bodies as his plays have pushed them deep into their imaginations. They are intrigued by the endless possibilities for questions and debate among his challenging plots, themes, and ever changing character relationships which always is rife with fantasy and magic and boundless love as well as the suspense of
betrayal, suspicion and murder. Lastly, Ms. G’s third grade classroom has opened up a whole new dimension where there is space for long term, collaborative inquiry, a space where they can build on each other’s ideas and a space where their gestures, actions, improvised and rehearsed performances are seen as valid learning resources. Long-term collaborative inquiry with the rich stories of Shakespeare truly has transformed at least one part of these students. But it’s not just adding those “things” that changed. It is this sense of collective excitement and rising to the challenge of becoming an artistic ensemble which seems to grow the more we are pushed to collaborate and embody meaning-making. So in the end it is our ensemble imagining the possible that has supported all of us as teachers and as students to be able to reach such depths of understanding with Shakespeare.

**Two Classroom Cultures of Reading**

Following Blythe and Perkins (1994) distinction between *performances of knowing* and *performances of understanding*—this research across the two distinct classroom cultures of reading documented a shift from reading events that were characterized by performances of knowing or imitating the skill towards multiple ‘performances of multimodal literacy understandings’ where students consistently did a variety of thought demanding reading comprehension tasks and as a result showed deep engagement and understanding of the complex texts of Shakespeare. During many of the non-dramatic reading events, the students and teachers focus seemed to be on getting through the “correct” procedural display (D. Bloome et al., 1989) of accomplishing the event—regardless if the students acquired new understandings or engaged in doing anything thought-demanding with new skills. Students performances during most of the non-dramatic events were typified most often by *performances of knowing* as a result. For example, reading group events relied on individual performances of prior experience with a setting or isolated vocabulary that was rarely returned to at a later time nor was it used as a model for reading comprehension strategies. The students did not have access to multimodal exposure to vocabulary and background knowledge and the texts were rarely
interconnected which limited the potential for ELL students to participate in authentic forms of meaning construction with shared vocabulary and background knowledge and it limited ongoing fascination with engaging storylines, analogous complex vocabulary and intertextual connections.

In contrast, when the ensemble used the tools of dramatic inquiry with original Shakespearean texts, over the time of exploring four plays it created a parallel classroom culture of reading focused more on possibility and inquiry. This second culture eventually overlapped and began to overtake with the first, and was characterized by long-term, collaborative play and inquiry, authentic comprehension tasks, authentic purposes for reviewing and using newly acquired language, and consistent space for transmediation between linguistic and non-linguistic systems of communication. Embodiment became a highly valued multimodal resource and gave the students a way to make visible higher level thinking related to the dramatic inquiry tasks. Co-occurring along these dramatic inquiry events, were consistent, engaged performances by ELLs of multimodal literacy understandings which included high visibility of their fascination with the language and stories of Shakespeare, appropriation of complex language in new contexts, intertextual inferencing across the four Shakespeare plays and other forms of complex and creative thinking. Ethnographically grounded assessments of the ELLs’ Shakespearean knowledge showed long-term retention and high depth of word knowledge with complex syntax and vocabulary, as well as nuanced understandings of the plays and high levels of intertextual thematic and character connections. This was in addition to building significant growth in meaningful fluency with Shakespeare’s texts. All three ELL students developed new spaces from which to social position themselves because they could access multimodal forms of communication, they had space to inquire about language and misunderstandings and the multimodal, social and long term inquiry supported them to think deeply about complex texts and language.

While my focal students were all considered English Language Learners in some capacity, they each had wide variations in backgrounds, and unique personalities,
interests, desires and preferences. I found that both their differing ways of interacting and their patterns of performing reading in relationship to their teacher’s performance as a reading teacher shed light on how these two cultures of reading got constructed. Taking an in-depth look at what sustained the recurrent performances of reading events helped me reconsider our attitudes and ways of creating and “performing” reading instruction with ELLs and other students who are leaving the learning to read stage and starting to read to learn.

**Affordances and Limitations Non-Dramatic Reading Practices**

I recognize that schools and districts place real, material pressures on teachers to get students to reach standards and pass the reading tests and so I recognize and feel deep empathy for Ms. G’s struggle to do so. Thus, the teacher’s role in these performances weren’t just of her own choosing as many of the tasks she asked the students to do were imposed on her explicitly by the school (e.g. spelling and fluency programs), by the district (e.g. Vocabulary workbooks, district reading goals and assessments) or by the state (e.g. Standardized assessments, and grade level indicators). There also seemed to be some “thick discourses” (Leander & Sheehy, 2004) about effective reading instruction that were shaping and shaped by these impositions.

As I argued in the introduction, I do not disagree with accountability, as building the foundational reading competencies is necessary for the academic success of all students. What I set out to understand better through this research is what kinds of typical practices of reading instruction are set up by the skills-based literacy that is related to this push for quantifiable accountability and secondly, how does that create or deny ELLs access to most effective forms of reading comprehension instruction. Thus, my first findings chapter described the patterns in the data around non-dramatic reading practices. A key finding was many of these seemed to align with the transmission and comparison of reading skills offered by the school and dominating discourses about school-based literacy (Gee, 2007). I also described what sort of recurrent performances were then
created within those practices between ELL students and their teacher. The following
sections is a discussion around my conclusions to both of my research questions related
to the non-dramatic reading practices—the ones that seemed to be most directly linked to
the co-creation of culture of comparing reading skills in this classroom.

**Affordances: Small reading groups = More face time with teacher**

One of the things that Ms. G pointed out to me was that when a teacher is held
responsible for students meeting certain foundational reading competencies, then the
teacher’s focus often gets consumed by ensuring that each student is getting equal time
with the teacher in small groups working on these instructional purposes. As I focused on
the English Language Learners in the non-dramatic reading events, I noticed one
affordance of these small reading instructional groups may have been opportunity to have
face time with the teacher. Working in small groups offered ELLs more access to
building a personal relationship with the teacher. From the teacher’s perspective, she got
to hear each student read a short piece of text almost daily and the students could gain
immediate feedback on their reading strategies and language pronunciation and
meanings.

**Limitation: Reading Instruction Focused on Fluency**

A limitation I noted about creating these small reading groups was that the comparisons
of reading skills sustained at other cultural levels (e.g. school’s testing and sharing of
results with teachers) resulted in significant more attention on fluency and less focus put
onto understanding and making higher order thinking visible. These focus on fluency
scores helped to maintain ability-based reading groups based on these scores with a
tendency to disregard understanding, and often did not give ELLs authentic reason to re-
read stories for meaning and for oral fluency simultaneously.
Limitation: Performances of knowing limit understanding & complex thinking

The way the majority of non-dramatic reading events were performed among teachers and students became much more about the procedural displays (D. Bloome et al., 1989) of getting through the reading event. In my analysis of the requisite performance of the ‘good’ reading teacher and ‘good’ reading student involved the implicit agreement to create and allow performances of knowing instead of performances of understanding (Blythe & Perkins, 1994). In between the teacher’s low level questioning or request for students to individually display fluency to her (but which was also displayed in front of the group of students too) and the students desire to please their teacher and socially position themselves as good readers, they created a semblance of accomplishing the ‘learning’ how to read task. In reality the performance of many of the non-dramatic reading events did not ask the students to do anything new or thought demanding. If the students offered a literal recall and guessed correctly what the teacher was expecting nothing else seemed to be done with it in terms of using it for building academic skills or content for other student.

In small reading groups, for example, when it came to students answering the typical recall the last chapter questions, the prior knowledge questions or the ‘what’s that mean?’ vocabulary question, the students fought to gain the floor and try to guess correctly what the teacher wanted to hear and they were evaluated and then moved on to another IRE pattern. The teacher’s turns at talk were typically not intended as instruction or meant to elaborate and link students ideas together in new ways. Instead the teacher’s turns were about managing “correct” behavior in the procedural display, telling information or judging a single individual’s ability to tell the knowledge, or imitate the teacher talk or skill on demand regardless if they understand its application in other contexts nor if it helped others understand the story better.

Significantly, I labeled this recurrent practice a performance of knowing because it was typically created as the result of low level questioning or isolated reading comprehension tasks which did not press students to think beyond what they already know (Blythe &
Perkins, 1994) nor to have a purposeful and authentic reason to engage in re-reading and making their higher order thinking visible. This was especially of concern for the ELL because it limited their access to authentic negotiations of meaning and expressive output where they actually did something oral and written with the new information as part of helping them understand the book better. Even if the original intention of the question may have been to activate student’s knowledge, the linear structure of the small group lesson doesn’t lend itself to returning to this knowledge to deepen understanding.

If the ELLs (and others) attempted and were successful in gaining the floor then this typically involved a verbal performances of knowing. I noted that the verbal questions and responses that the three ELLs gave or heard (if they were a non-speaker) did not usually set them up to better understand what they were to be reading, it did not ask them to do anything thought demanding with information beyond literal recall (and in a very general sense). If they were only passive observers of the responses given by other students (which was often for all three of them) the lack of access to meaning-making was significantly decreased.

**Limitation: Social Positioning Strategies**

These recurrent performances of knowing seemed to be shaped by and shaping strategies that students implemented to reposition themselves as “good readers”. This had variable consequences on the ELLs typical performances in reading groups. Since Yusef was seen as less than competent overall he was often corrected significantly more in his oral reading by other boys in his group at the expense of building his content vocabulary and background knowledge. Though in few negative cases the pressure to perform pushed him to appropriate new language in the moment, for the most part Yusef took risks even at times without even thinking, he just seemed to want to be a part of the competition for the speaking floor. Dasjah was very reticent and shy and either didn’t attempt to gain the speaking floor or was overlooked. Even though we found her to be a really insightful and deep thinker in other settings, during non-dramatic reading events Dasjah did not seem to find spaces where she was asked the significant higher order questions nor a space where
she was pushed to make deep, higher order thinking visible in the reading groups. The influence then of the performances of knowing and social positioning also seeped out into the related practices in the classroom such as independent reading. As the performance of engaged in reading of chapter books became highly valued and associated with good readers, certain students like Yusef and Dasjah seemed to “fake” reading to seem as if they were engaged in this practice. Ino on the other hand, seemed to cling onto her positioning already as a “good reader” and she therefore, only seemed to vie for the floor if she was certain of her success and rarely asked questions about language for the risk of being seen as ‘wrong’.

**Affordance: Building of Shared Context & Frontloading Background Knowledge**

At the same time the small reading groups were going on Ms. G did build other non-dramatic reading events that were highly collaborative such as much of a month long folktale unit (though parts of that used a performance of folktale puppet shows and dramatic inquiry with two folktales) and the three week non-fiction, medieval castles unit where students were exposed to a rich assortment of children’s literature and other resources related to the particular topic. These collaborative inquiries seemed to offer ELLs multiple opportunities to work with various students to build a shared context—language and background knowledge of the topics at hand over a lengthier period of time and to negotiate meanings of and with various texts related to the same topic and using the same language. As I explained in Chapter 5, this building of the shared understandings about medieval castles proved later be significant for the ELLs (and all the students) in making sense of the medieval court life and castles in three of the four Shakespeare plays they would study after the castles unit.

**Affordance & Limitation: Background Knowledge & Familiar, Patterned Texts**

The use of familiar patterned texts during small reading groups was coded as both an affordance and a limitation. From Ms. G’s perspective, the students were supported to become better independent readers because the familiarity of the language and consistent narrative elements, and patterns across the books in the series supposedly made it easier
for them to read on their own. The focal students chose at least two sets of the series books as “favorite” books—including Geronimo Stilton series and the Magic Treehouse series. Though I did not explore this issue further, these two series were also touted by Ms. G as her “favorite” books to read with her students—so I still wonder if the teacher’s implicit and explicit ways of signaling her enthusiasm about certain texts influence student’s choices.

Researchers on English Language Learners have pointed out that ELLs need to have “frontloading” or explicit access to background knowledge (connecting known to new) and vocabulary in order to better understand what they are reading (Brock et al., 2009), which necessarily includes non-linguistic and linguistic ways (seeing the word, writing it with a student generate meaning, drawing a picture, showing it with your body, etc.) and opportunities to re-use the word across multiple contexts as to gradually shape meanings over time (Folse, 2004; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). One of the limitations of using the familiar texts for reading instruction, especially for ELLs who need access to wide range of complex vocabulary—the familiarity of these texts is actually created by the authors use of “everyday” language, scenarios and dialogue of which third grade students are already expected to have experienced previously. Secondly, very little time was spent prior to reading a chapter or passage explicitly giving instruction or ‘frontloading’ the vocabulary beyond a quick verbal I-R-E with one student. There was little chance for ELLs to use embodiment and other multimodal forms to build up background knowledge and shape new meanings of words they would face in the reading nor were there opportunities to consistently review less-familiar vocabulary during and after the reading of the text. It seemed that because of the familiarity of the texts, it was assumed that the students actually needed little building of background knowledge or vocabulary.

Limitation: Incidental Vocabulary Exposure and guessing from context

When there was a focus on new vocabulary that was incidentally crossed over by a student during oral reading in the small groups-the students were only mediated to use one word learning strategy--local context clues. The students did not see the words again
either later in the lesson or in the next days (as in a review). As Folse (2004) pointed out second language research has shown that “to use context clues effectively one has to have a large vocabulary already (p.82).” ELLs in this class could have possibly used more multimodal ways to frontload of vocabulary both the improve their understanding of the story, chapter, etc but also to help them in acquiring and retaining the new vocabulary over time. Secondly, research has shown second language learners are more likely to learn words when their exposure to new words and meanings are followed up with other activities and additional exposure to the words (Folse, 2004). Yet, across the non-dramatic reading practices related to vocabulary analyzed (incidental vocabulary exposure in reading group, explicit vocabulary instruction) the students were not asked to return to the words to review in any way. ELLs did not have opportunities to interact with and review the vocabulary they were incidentally exposed to once during the specific reading event.

Affordance: Repeated Reading (for some students)

Two of the three ELL students were expected to consistently complete a series of ‘improving fluency’ activities that asked them to interact with the same piece of text multiple times. This included reading a passage multiple times, listening to it on tape and following along with the passage while listening. Repeated reading of the same text has been identified by reading researchers (C. Snow, 2002) as essential in building all students fluency and automaticity in word recognition. Therefore, this was coded first as an affordance for ELLs that took part in the program because they engaged in repeated readings of the same text with some pronunciation feedback from listening to the passage read several times.

Limitation: Repeated Reading with Isolated Texts

The two ELLs who were involved in the ‘repeated readings’ tasks—only faced isolated passages each time they began working with a new passage. The students could choose random passages from a set and these did not connect to each other in any explicit way
nor did they connect to any content or vocabulary the students had been working on in class. English Language Learners have been identified as a population particularly susceptible to the fourth grade slump (Gandara et al., 2003) due to the very fact that primary reading instruction tends to be focused more on the building of decoding and fluency skills as isolated components from building complex literary and content vocabulary (Chall & Jacobs, 2003b; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). Yet, the ELLs in this class had little access to a focus on meaning of the passage nor did the passages connect to each other or to other content they were studying. Especially for Yusef, the key focus seemed to be on only imitating the words he had heard and he paid little attention to the meaning of the overall passage. Dasjah may have paid slightly more attention to the meaning of the passage as evidenced by her filling out the prediction questions prior to reading the text and the comprehension questions afterwards yet the passages were still highly isolated from each other and from her other literacy and language-based work in the classroom. Ino was already considered a fluent reader and did not take part in this practice. Thus, the three ELLs lacked access to authentic purposes for re-reading the same and related texts multiple times, and thereby increasing opportunities to develop fluency simultaneously with gradually shaping meanings of vocabulary through exposure to similar content vocabulary in related passages nor did they have multimodal opportunities to use appropriate the words across other contexts such as in talking with others, embodying, drawing, writing or reading the words in other contexts.

**Affordance: Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**

According to various authors of research on ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Folse, 2004; Morrow, Rueda, & D. Lapp, 2009) teachers must be allocate time for explicit instruction on vocabulary and not just make the assumption that if the students are reading extensively they are actively acquiring vocabulary. In this classroom, there was a pattern that showed the whole class including the ELL students received explicit vocabulary instruction separate from small reading groups 2-3 times per month using pre-printed workbooks, mini-books and activities on the overhead or SMARTboard. Through this the ELLs had access to morphological analysis instruction such as using
suffixes and prefixes, recognizing and using the appropriate homophones in context, creating compound words with certain base words, and word learning strategies for acquiring new words while reading, (though the only strategy taught using local context clues). The words were not grouped in a semantic list (such as all the words that describe colors or ways of feeling happy) but instead were grouped more around morphological analysis or what fit appropriately into the topic of a passage. This is an affordance as according to second language research—the practice of creating semantic list can create difficulties for ELLs to retain vocabulary over time. During these events, the ELLs showed that they participated successfully in imitating the skill, though Yusef needed significantly more support from teacher and other students to do so. I recognize that a limitation to my research was that I was not able to collect data on the long-term retention of the ELLs vocabulary from the non-dramatic reading events that specifically focused on explicit vocabulary instruction so I have no way to know whether the students knew these words prior to the workbook tasks nor if they seemed to retain them after their exposure to and use of the word once or twice during the event. However, because I noted evidence that all three students showed signs of metacognitive awareness of the word part instruction they had received in later instances, I coded these tasks related to explicit instruction in vocabulary as a general affordance for English Language Learners.

Limitations: Lack of Access to Gradual shaping of meanings over time

Similar to the limitations observed across the non-dramatic fluency tasks, a key limitation for the explicit vocabulary instruction was the ELLs had little opportunity to gradually shape word meanings over time (Folse, 2004) using both non-linguistic and linguistic means (Marzano & Pickering, 2005). During the events, where the students were exposed to a new set of new words in their vocabulary workbook or mini-book that were based on a target word part (e.g. suffix –y, -ly), the class did several tasks that helped them imitate the newly learned word analysis skill and at times even use the newly created words in different contexts. However, those words were only seen once or twice on the day they were written on the pre-printed papers and they were never
returned to explicitly by the teacher nor was there opportunities where students were expected to re-use the new words in other contexts later after the initial exposure.

**Affordances: Reading Comprehension Strategies & Metacognitive Awareness**

Early in my study I had not collected data on metacognitive awareness of reading comprehension strategies but only when I noticed a large portion of time was devoted to engaging in uses of reading comprehension strategies during dramatic events, did I realize their salience to the teacher’s reading instruction.

In my recursive analysis, I returned to find samples where the talk during non-dramatic reading events focused students on either tasks which supported students to engaged in purposeful reading comprehension strategies (e.g. visualize, connect, infer, summarize, evaluate, question, synthesize) and I focused on samples where talk focused on “metacognitive” awareness of these strategies. During non-dramatic reading events, students were rarely given a purposeful task where they consistently and collaboratively made visible their engagement in these strategies. I did observe in the few reading event samples which did specifically name a reading strategy, the performance involved the teacher giving a lesson about the strategy and telling them directly the name of a comprehension strategies, namely visualizing, predicting and inferring and then the teacher gave them some examples of how they would use such a strategy. The ELLs and other students in their group engaged in a verbal abstract manner at that time to discuss the strategy. Those few samples I tentatively coded as ELLs performing their knowing or “metacognitive awareness” of the reading comprehension strategy. However, I did not have consistent data to support or refute whether increasing their general metacognitive awareness of certain strategies such as visualizing influenced their comprehension of specific stories read.

**Limitations: Too much talking about reading comprehension strategies??**

During non-dramatic samples where there was explicit talk about metacognitive strategies, it was rare that the students made visible their use of comprehension strategies.
In other words, the few samples where I saw students explicitly talking about the strategies of visualizing and inferring with their teacher they spent the majority of the time in a verbal abstract discussion talking about the strategy and the teacher offering examples but they were not asked explicitly engage in the strategy over several days. (* I did not have data collected on instruction on the other comprehension strategies). During non-dramatic events, there typically was not a return to the strategy once it was introduced at the beginning of the lesson (as in pointing out where students may have used the strategy) so in other words, the students then were assumed to be able to use it once they have talked about it. There were no tasks or evidence of student performances which made visible to me whether the student was specifically engaged in the newly taught strategy while reading or after reading, other than a general sense of story comprehension through the collective or individual answering of multiple choice questions. This assessment of comprehension of the story did not necessarily seem to correspond with them being able to use the strategy.

Of particular interest is the negative case analysis described in Chapter 4 from 2/7/11 (Boys Reading Group, Best Friends). In this instance, Ms. G used some of the tasks with inferring that students had been doing within the dramatic inquiry reading events with Shakespeare during her small reading group. This negative case occurred with the low reading group as they read a non-Shakespeare, familiar and patterned series book. Yusef and the other boys in his group made visible their higher order thinking process of inferring—when they authentically engaged in re-reading portions of the previously read chapter many times and they made their thinking and justifications from the text visible to the group as they all assisted Ms. G in filling out a over-sized poster drawing inferences about an inquiry question from this book. Ms. G continued to refer to what they were doing as inferring but the group spent little time talking about ‘what inferring is’ but they actually spent time collaboratively engaging in inferring for an authentic reason (e.g. filling out a giant inferring chart of facts, clues, connections and inferences on the big inquiry question like they had done for Duke Theseus in the Midsummer Night’s Dream whole group work). The performances created with this reading group
were typically marked by one student’s performance of knowing (or fluent reading) and the other students either disengaging or vigilantly comparing and correcting each other. But in this case, the group of six boys, which included the focal student Yusef, made highly visible their collaborative engagement with reading because of their focus on higher order thinking within a collaborative and purposeful reading comprehension task, whereas in other instances the performance in reading events was quite the opposite for Yusef (and for the other boys).

To try to understand this issue of metacognitive awareness better as it relates to ELLs, I returned to the research on general student populations done by the National Reading Panel. The NRP’s study (2000) identified that high quality, explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction significantly affected reading comprehension for the general student population (not necessarily ELL). The National Literacy Panel on Linguistic Minority students (August & Shanahan, 2006) found the effects of reading comprehension instruction (cooperative learning, substantive instructional conversation) were strong for ELLS but the teaching of reading comprehension strategies was not nearly as strong for ELLs and possible this was so weak it had “no effect at all” (as cited in Goldenberg, 2008, p. 19)

I did not have as much data collected in this area which points to an area where more research is needed. However, from the data that I did collect a tentative theme began to develop (but needs further empirical research). This tentative theme noted that when the two advanced level ELL students (I did not have enough data on Yusef on this issue) had spent time ‘talking about’ reading comprehension strategies, Dasjah and Ino were likely to be able to repeat or imitate their teachers talk about the strategy regardless if they were able to make visible that they could or were using the strategy during their own reading. In other words ‘talk about’ metacognitive strategies led students to be able to imitate the teacher’s way of talking about it but it is unclear rather that talk about the strategy actually connected to their comprehension of the story at hand or if they were or could appropriate that strategy in their reading of other texts
Affordances and Limitations of Dramatic Inquiry Reading Practices

Since according to Goffman (1959) all social interactions are performative, this study imagined students and teachers as not stuck in rigid identities but having the capacity to shift and reframe identities in different social contexts. This created a way to see the teacher and the ELLs as choosing among the possible performances available by how the stage gets set by the overarching performance of a classroom culture of reading as it gets played out by the social actors involved in the setting (though this is also located on the stage set by the school and larger culture’s discourses about reading and ‘good’ reading instruction).

As part of the ethnography of performance of the dramatic reading practices summarized below I looked at the same students and teacher that were also simultaneously performing the non-dramatic reading practice. During the recurrent performances of the dramatic reading event, the teachers and students relationships to each other were being set up differently and they were performing together on a stage with an entirely different set of presuppositions and entirely different set of reasons for reading. Over time the creation of an overall performance of a culture of wonder and collaborative inquiry seemed to have co-occurred and developed alongside the growth in the sense of the performance-based ensemble as it collaboratively engaged in active approaches and long-term dramatic inquiry with Shakespeare. Dramatic inquiry’s unique hybrid of play and performance (Beach, et. al. (2010), pushed forward playful embodiment and collaborative, multimodal experimentation as part of moving towards creating a socially recognizable poetic performance and making embodied understandings and higher order thinking visible.

The following sections offer my discussion related to the conclusions I have drawn about my research questions as they related to the dramatic inquiry reading event—-the ones that seemed to be most directly linked to the co-creation of culture of wonder and collaborative inquiry. Because of the interrelated and cyclical nature of dramatic inquiry, it was not possible to create narrative parallels between the two cultures. However, this
also points to the difference in the instructional purposes underlying the two sets of reading practices.

The non-dramatic reading events were intended to give students opportunities to practice their reading comprehension skills most often as isolated components (e.g. fluency practice, incidental vocabulary exposure, retelling plot, explicit vocabulary instruction) using isolated texts and disconnected vocabulary. Therefore in the section above it made sense to separate the affordances and limitations of the non-dramatic reading events out my different instructional focus of the event. The affordances and limitations for ELLs from the dramatic reading events with Shakespeare did create significant growth in the traditional ways of defining reading as performances of knowing and displaying isolated skills irregardless of conceptual understanding. Thus if I were to stick to that epistemological and pedagogical model than I would stop with the conclusion that in respect to the dramatic reading events, ELLs showed growth in fluency with Shakespeare’s texts, retained high levels of complex vocabulary during the unit and over time, they developed highly detailed story comprehension. Instead I specifically return to my re-framing of literacy instruction towards performances of multimodal literacy understanding. In trying to understand how ELLs used dramatic inquiry as a multimodal tool to actively and purposefully use reading and academic language for an authentic purpose or thought demanding task, I returned to my literature review on effective literacy instruction for ELLs. The following sections of my discussion are concerned with the affordances and limitations offered to ELLs by the consistent performance of dramatic inquiry as a reading instructional practice but they are specifically separated into the three factors that researchers have determined to be most effective for ELLs to acquire and maintain academic literacies: access to creative and complex thinking; authentic purposes for language in context; and joint productive academic tasks. I will follow these three sections with my explanation of the key limitations I noted from the way these reading practices were performed in this classroom.
Access to Complex & Creative Thinking:

Building embodied background knowledge with complex concepts and language

Ms. G and all of her students had to be willing to take some risks in order to be able to try out these different ways of doing reading instruction. Since these students were relatively young they were still really excited at the thought of getting to get up and move around and play “pretend” in their classroom and even at times dress up in costumes (This is in comparison to older students in the larger project whom had a much harder time with their willingness to actively use their bodies and play as semiotic tools in the beginning of the active approaches to Shakespeare). Because of the assumed complexity of Shakespeare’s historical settings, themes, and subtexts (love, romance, consent to marry, guilt, betrayal, suspicion, death, etc.) and the deeply figurative language, iambic pentameter and the archaic early Modern English syntax and vocabulary, Ms. G also assumed that all of her young students needed embodied experiences in order to build up a shared context of such abstract experiences and deeply embodied background knowledge and understandings of complex language. Thus all of the students including the ELLs had access to significant opportunities to actively embody and create a shared context of complex concepts, social, cultural and historical background knowledge and language, which both built intrigue, and questions as well as supported the students’ deeply embodied understandings of complex concepts. The ELLs also had multiple, cyclical exposures to and opportunities to build onto this background knowledge and re-use their embodied understandings of language and intertextual connections to make deeper meanings and shift their thinking within each play unit and across their explorations of the four Shakespeare plays.

Depth & Complexity of Stories

A key realization that Ms. G and I discussed multiple times is that comprehending Shakespeare’s plays in all its depth and complexity of stories and language was not daunting (as it had been for both of us in the past) when it was scaffolded in playful and active ways. In fact, this complexity of text was what seemed to be a salient factor in the
students ongoing excitement about Shakespeare’s original language and in their growing sense of confidence about performing multimodal Shakespearean understandings (e.g. creating intertextual connections, drawing inferences and synthesis). The way that Shakespeare had created such intriguing stories along with their teacher’s structuring of a multimodal, collaborative and investigative approach to Shakespeare (Stredder, 2010) through dramatic inquiry sustained the students focus in the reading comprehension tasks even when they were difficult.

**Making Higher Order Thinking Visible**

The typical practices that were shaping and shaped by the culture of wonder and collaborative inquiry created a space where students could go beyond merely having ‘fun’ dramatizing and living through stories as they are written but they were consistently asked to talk back to and critique stories and take over texts. The reading comprehension strategies that were ‘taught’ to students as isolated skills in non-dramatic events, were actually used consistently in highly embodied and overlapping ways during dramatic reading events. Approximately three-fourths of every dramatic reading event involved students in engaging in and making visible their active use of all of the reading comprehension strategies including connecting to prior knowledge, inferring, visualizing, summarizing, questioning, evaluating and synthesizing into something new (though there was not always consistent metacognitive talk about the strategies in dramatic events—see limitations section). In Chapter 5, I outlined how over time the atmosphere of the classroom (and especially related to dramatic inquiry events) became more and more focused on making their creative and complex higher order thinking visible through generating multiple possibilities, questions and predictions, and creating deep intertextual connections.

This co-occurred with ELLs increased use of embodiment and other semiotic resources to make visible their engagement with these higher order ways of thinking and interacting with fictional texts. As a result these students (and their whole class) had authentic reasons to re-read for deepening understanding, and many opportunities to re-use new
vocabulary explain complex conceptual and literary understandings to others in the room. For instance, because Yusef, like the other two ELLs, seemed to be highly fascinated and engaged with the big inquiry questions and the highly valued practice of making inferences, informed predictions and intertextual connections, then his performances seemed less about seeking to display the correct answer and be validated for it, instead he was sifting through his way of understanding and finding a way to explain his meaning in a socially recognizable performance. While Yusef was pushed to make his thinking visible and understood—he also was supported with an expand set of multimodal resources to do so.

There seemed to be two parts to ELLs performance of making higher order thinking visible during the dramatic inquiry events. The first seemed to be that the more cycles of embodied experience, interpretation and inquiry they had with a certain Shakespeare play, the more in-depth understanding of the story and conceptual ideas which got performed by ELLs in multiple forms (e.g. embodied or verbal sharing with the ensemble, written or visual artifacts, informal reflections, etc.). However, another pattern I also noted was that there was not just pressure to use higher order thinking for receptive understanding of the stories as they were written by the author but there was also high value on using the understanding for the synthesis and production of new ideas or performative and creative purpose like imagining and producing new possibilities. Through the embodied inquiries in the dramatic reading events there were many open ended questions and opportunities to generate multiple interpretations, offer alternative actions for characters consider backstories and implied scenes the ELLs were all constantly creating I wonder… What if… questions about the Shakespeare texts.

Transmediation

A key affordance of the dramatic inquiry events was that the constant need to transmediate across sign systems gave ELLs access to complex and creative thinking. For example in many of the dramatic inquiry strategies, ELLs had to move back and forth between non-linguistic language and sign systems such as embodiment, gestural,
kinesthetic and spatial positioning in conjunction with linguistic sign systems. There were also cases where students moved into visual sign systems in the creation of comic strip and narrative retellings with illustrations, graphic organizers, scene backdrops and character relationship maps. Each time I noted that any of the three ELLs made visible a new way of explaining or a shift in their thinking, based on a multimodal exploration, I included this within other data on transmediation. Transmediation pushed ELLs to create a more complex understanding of whatever concept or vocabulary meaning they had been trying to grasp. Even though the task wasn’t necessarily focusing students on a specific reading skill, before, during and after such transmediation, students had to figure out ways to translate meaning across sign systems and in doing so they also appropriated language in new contexts and more clearly defined conceptual understandings in ways that made sense to their current level of interest and understanding of the interactions and stories.

Access to Authentic Uses of Language

Fascination with Rich, Rhythmic and Poetic Language and Stories

A key affordance for ELLs created by an active approach to Shakespeare’s texts was first and foremost, the students had just enough multimodal and social support to not be overwhelmed by the language. Yet, they also were given just enough exposure to the rich stories and rhythmic and poetic language that it sustained their long-term fascination with exploring the language. This fascination with language proved to be essential to maintaining the long-term, collaborative sense of inquiry, exploration and experimentation and the consistent access they had to using language in what was perceived to be an authentic purpose (e.g. sculpting multiple interpretations of a scene with their friends, giving advice to their teacher-in-role as a character, etc.).

Willingness to Negotiate Meanings using non-linguistic and linguistic forms

Exploring language includes so many complex facets but one that was particularly important for ELLs was this ongoing fascination with Shakespeare’s language and stories
co-occurred with a collaborative effort to interpret different possible ways language is (or could be) performed during embodied forms of text and for authentic purposes (e.g. persuade, inform, give advice) and for specific audiences. Through the embodied experiences, interpretations and inquiries, the ELLs had access to shape meanings both linguistically and in non-linguistic forms in the moment when they are first exposed to the word. One of the related affordances of the long-term and cyclical nature of the dramatic reading events was that the newly acquired language was never just put away. The students in one event might deal with the same speech or interaction 4-5 different ways. Then the text was often hung in large print on the wall and returned to spontaneously by students or intentionally in later dramatic inquiry events days or weeks later.

**Appropriation of New Vocabulary in Multiple Authentic Contexts**

During the dramatic inquiry reading events the three ELLs in this class, had long-term access to vocabulary on the wall, and the cyclical nature of the segments within the events often asked them to re-use the language again and again in many different forms while still relating it to the larger shared context of the drama world. The ELLs picked up on certain phrases that were socially appropriated multiple times and gave them back verbally (false face), written (I dare do all that may become a man…) or at times in embodied forms (vexation). No matter how they returned to the word they were able to appropriate language for their own semantic purpose and intent (Bakhtin, 1981). The ELLs showed in multiple ways that they retained the new words in different authentic contexts both in the short term and over the long term when they had multiple opportunities for appropriation in new contexts (as opposed to only being exposed to in one event and then not intentionally returning to re-use the word later.)

**Authentic reading comprehension tasks**

A key theme that ran across all of the dramatic reading events was that these events consistently created a wide range of collaborative, playful and authentic reading comprehension tasks for students. The tasks were collaborative in the sense that Ms. G
was intentional about modeling and guiding them in productive, forms of collaborative processes instead of just sticking students together in a ‘cooperative group’ and asking them to display their knowing. The tasks were playful in the sense that the students and teachers were all aware of the existence of an overlapping everyday world with the imagined world (Beach, et. al. 2010) and they were willing to suspend disbelief in order to take part in the shared context and drama world they helped to co-construct.

Lastly, these were authentic reading comprehension tasks because the students were not just ‘reading’ because they were expected to practice reading skills during reading group and they were not just plugging in the appropriate word in a vocabulary review because that was the isolated vocabulary task for the day, instead they had a purposeful reason to actively interact with a text in multiple ways. Each separate skill of reading was interconnected and used to make meaning and the desire to play through the dramatic inquiry strategies and continue deepening their understanding and critical questioning of their beloved Shakespeare stories created authentic purposes for engaging in the reading comprehension. The way these tasks were structured in dramatic reading events included all of the following: purposeful reasons a teacher or someone else might model or do shared readings or embodied interpretations with a text; purposeful reasons to re-read the text multiple times and with meaningful expression and embodied gestures; purposeful reasons for negotiating meanings with others at the word, sentence, passage and text level; purposeful reasons for re-using newly acquired language and embodied conceptual understandings; and purposeful reasons to make embodied and verbal forms of higher order thinking visible.

In relative comparison to the non-dramatic reading events, during the performance of these authentic reading comprehension tasks the three ELLs were more highly interactive and expressed themselves at many more turns at talk specifically related to understanding the meaning of language or stories. This created consistent opportunities for ELLs to engage in authentic uses and re-uses of language in authentic contexts.
Access to Joint Productive Activity

Long-Term & Collaborative inquiry with Complex Texts

Because the joint productive goal of the dramatic inquiry events was to develop multiple and nuanced views on inquiry question and a more complex understanding of big problems as well as to offer multiple interpretations and new possibilities, it opened up everyone into more and more active participation in the meaning-making process. The way the dramatic inquiry events were performed demanded a non-hierarchical environment where there were no arbitrary scores that created distance between those who are and aren’t assumed to be able to deal with complex tasks and questions. Instead this notion that “we are all going to face these complex texts together” became the implicit mantra of the ensemble.

Willingness to asks questions and take risks

This style of inquiry based learning though wasn’t done only in a verbal abstract sense. Students were actively supported in this long-term inquiry by their embodiments which were necessarily created with others and through the reflection on others ideas. As the sense of the performative ensemble began to take risks together to play and experiment with collaborative forms of play, engage in authentic reading comprehension tasks and make their higher order thinking visible —the performances became less and less associated with the social positioning strategies and the related performances of knowing. The three ELLs were able to have safety in taking risks to ask questions about language and about the meaning of interactions and stories and they could offer multiple possibilities. They all three began to show a deep understanding of Shakespeare’s stories during their many performances of multimodal literacy understanding but it was further promoted by the entire ensemble’s willingness to ask questions and take risks.

Social Construction of Intertextuality with Embodied Texts
In this classroom, the social construction of intertextuality created through the shared embodied texts and multimodal uses of dramatic inquiry broadly expanded the textual and semiotic resources available for the learners to use. This long-term embodied intertextuality created a space where the implicit message among the ensemble is—‘we are not just going to be good readers, we already are engaged readers and deep thinkers’. The fact that everyone in the room was perceived as being challenged by this work and collaboratively sharing multiple possible ways of understanding it—then it also further created a “need” for everyone to share in the generation of as many possibilities and the intertextual connections as they could. Because of their long-term, dramatic inquiry and a shared history of embodied texts, the students began to find ways to see each other’s offers as a means to deepen their own understanding of the story.

The more the three ELLs and their classmates were able to make visible their intertextual connections across time—the more they made visible a growing confidence in their own Shakespearean understanding and the more they tried to make further connections and extend their visible performances of understanding. The sense of the performative ensemble built through the long-term engagement in dramatic inquiry with the complex texts of Shakespeare was essential to enriching the sense of the social construction of intertextuality and ultimately for supporting the ELLs to consistently perform deeply engaged forms of reading comprehension and performances of multimodal literacy understandings.
Limitations of Dramatic Reading Practices

The I noted some key limitations for ELLs in the way the dramatic reading events typically got performed in this classroom. I delineated these in the following sections.

Lack of consistent, explicit instruction on independent word learning strategies

It was not apparent until I was towards the end of my research how much the ELLs and all of the students engaged in multiple word learning strategies through dramatic inquiry reading events. They also showed tremendous growth in pre and post tests of vocabulary during the unit and over time. However, I cannot offer evidence that this would or did transfer into their ability to strategically solve unknown words in their own reading. One of the key limitations of dramatic inquiry events, is little time was spent explicitly helping students become metacognitively aware of the ways they already were using a wide variety of word learning strategies that were collaboratively used as group in solving unfamiliar words (e.g. morphological analysis, using known word parts, global and local context clues). In this way ELLs may have been more likely to recognize and more consistently use strategies that they maybe had been using inefficiently or not at all (Folse, 2004).

Limited meta-cognitive awareness of reading comprehension strategies

While I did collect some evidence on the explicit teacher talk pointed students awareness of their use of a few key metacognitive strategies (e.g. visualizing, inferring, predicting) during dramatic inquiry reading events. Though I have a series of three dramatic reading events in January which focused students specifically on inferring. over the rest of the data there was only highly sporadic instances where students would access a teacher’s passing reference of the use of a certain strategy. While there was high visibility of the students engaging in all of the reading comprehension strategies in active, collaborative and embodied ways, the metacognitive talk about reading comprehension strategies did
not seem to be a consistent pattern as to characterize the typical dramatic reading practices.

**Breadth of number of words exchanged for depth of word knowledge?**

Another possible limitation that I noted across the dramatic reading events is that because students spent more time interacting with the same piece of text multiple times during an event, the students may have been limited in their access to an expanded range of exposure to new words. This is in relative comparison to students spend independent reading time and reading group time moving in linear fashion from chapter to chapter each day or various passages of non-fiction text. It is unclear from previous research how this could affect ELLs academic language acquisition. A series of book flood studies reviewed by Elley (1991) showed that when elementary age second language learners were given access to numerous high interest and illustrated storybooks and personally meaningful text without tight controls over syntax and vocabulary, these children learned the language incidentally, and developed positive attitudes toward books. When exposed to this “book flood” and encouraged to read, talk about and share these books, the second language learners learned the target language faster than those students who were in more systematic forms of grammar and linguistic instruction. Yet, the National Reading Panel showed the effects of extensive independent reading on the vocabulary development of the general population of students in US schools was debatable (as cited in Snow, 2003).

In this study, the breadth of the number of different words read may have been decreased in relative comparison to reading multiple chapters. On the other hand, during the dramatic inquiry events the depth of word knowledge was relatively much higher as made evident in their significant growth in fluency and long-term retention of vocabulary even with the complex and at times archaic vocabulary of Shakespeare. Thus, this is a gray area of which needs more research.
Theoretical Implications

Through play the ELLs and all the students shared embodied experiences that physically connected them to the themes, language and stories. They also significantly extended their embodied understandings through multimodal transmediation across embodied interpretation and embodied inquiry. The collaborative sense of authentic inquiry and shared history of embodied texts constructed over the long term supported students not only to receptively understand the stories as the author had written but they were also supported to create a poetic expression of their deep engagement with these texts. Poetic expression is the term I used to distinguish between forms of expression in a classroom which only imitate what was already given in the text. Poetic expression builds on the social constructed nature of language but it juxtaposes sensory images, metaphors and language in a creative synthesis as to imagine new possibilities. This is significant to understanding how to support ELLs in literacy instruction—because as we found out in this study—it’s not just the play and active movement students also want to be active inquirers and creators of new possibilities.

Intersection of Play and Poetics: Dialogic Meaning-making in Classrooms

The four categories of performance together but especially the intersections of play and poetics provided me a new way to understand and describe the rich, three dimensional learning and dialogic meaning-making that unfolded in one third grade classroom. Whereas it was not visible in the comparison of reading skills culture, the intersections of play and poetics became crucial to creating a classroom culture of collaborative inquiry and risk-taking. This intersection centered dialogic meaning-making—as opposed to displaying knowing verbally or only giving voice to some students with little focus on everyone creatively making new meanings and appropriating the language and interpretations in ways that made sense to them and yet had to become recognizable to those around them. Figure 6.1 illustrates a transformative view of this classroom culture as an ongoing fluid performance and in a more multi-dimensional and spherical space.
At the intersection of play and poetics is a space for dialogic meaning-making that goes beyond individual displays of knowing and verbal, abstract discourse. It is in this multi-dimensional space of dialogic meaning-making where students alongside their teachers can and are reconstructing more sophisticated understandings and complex thinking about the ways we use language and actions to construct our worlds. Furthermore such a multi-dimensional view of literacy instruction pushes forward the most effective practices shown to increase ELL simultaneous academic language and literacy development—authentic uses and appropriation of language in meaningful contexts, the intertextuality of joint productive activity and transmediation are all made readily available as valid learning resources. These conceptual frames arising from the intersection of performance theories, critical sociocultural theories and dramatic inquiry pedagogies offer a new lens and a productive dialogue for reconceptualizing literacy and instruction for English Language Learners.

**An Additional Performance Conceptual Frame: Ensemble**

The pedagogy of dramatic inquiry intentionally brought the elements of power, process, play and poetics into productive tension among the people in this classroom. This balance seemed to be salient in creating three dimensional learning spaces where we were not only talking about things in a verbal, abstract sense but we were authentically
experiencing and living through stories (Parsons, 2006) and critically reflecting on ideas and inquiry with our bodies, voices, minds, and hearts (S. Wolf et al., 1997). However, in order to clarify my conceptualization, I found I also needed to add ensemble as the fifth performance-based conceptual sphere among Conquergood’s original four categories of performance paradigm—power, process, play and poetics. Because of my specific use of performance theories in classroom contexts, the social nature of coming together as learning ensemble is a crucial component.

Conquergood (1989) and Alexander & Gallagos (2005) often alluded to the social nature of groups involved together in the process of creating performances. However, I found the collaborative and dialogic meaning-making processes through ensemble-based dramatic inquiry became so central to this classroom full of dynamic and creative interactions among students and teachers that now ensemble for me lies centrally at the intersection of all four of the prior categories of power, process, play and poetics. (Furthermore, ensemble’s centrality to this research explains why throughout I have already used the word, ensemble, in multiple instances). Ensemble provided me an additional performance-based conceptual sphere that seemed to maintain a balance among all of the other areas. Figure 6.2 provides an illustration of an ensemble of learners as multi-dimensional, overlapping and yet central to the maintenance of this productive tension between all of these forces.
The whitest space in the middle is where the ensemble is consistently seeking space to maintain and grow its capabilities for dialogic meaning-making. In a public school classroom this space offered a view of literacy that moves towards dialogic, meaning-making and performing multimodal literacy understandings. While recognizing the power of the cultural, social and institutional demands of successfully acquiring the imposed Academic language and literacy, it also re-centered people-in-process in the classroom as active agents within and across texts and hybridized communities of practice. From this reconceptualization of literacy instruction, there is the recognition of the reliance on verbal discourse but it also pushes open space for the playful, embodied, emotional and relational ways of knowing and to the equally important ways of performing understanding, critically deconstructing, talking back to and refashioning texts and our worlds. It asks students to collaboratively use their language and literacies for authentic reasons so as to develop a passionate adventures with language (Hade, 1991) and to create powerful moments of poesis for specific audiences.

Ensemble-based learning by nature is a messy, dialogic process. In process-oriented ensemble of learners—the learners are most often the audience and the performers alike
so the ensemble process itself has its own collective growth and development that pushes individuals in ways that they could never do on their own. In a classroom using dramatic inquiry and active, ensemble-based teaching approaches--play, energy, experimentation and flux of ideas were heightened by our collaboration but group negotiation processes also thrived on the contradiction and willingness to explore differences.

To the outsider observer, the final product of the active, embodied interpretations meant for public performance may have seemed at times to be similar to a skit where the purpose is for entertainment or aesthetic engagement. However, upon longer periods of observation and over several days and weeks, it becomes clearer that the meaning-making was not “located” in the final performed product but in the process of moving towards the poetic creation of a public performance either of a possible interpretation of the meaning of piece of text or in imagining and creating possibilities. The playful experimentation and move towards creating poesis—or the creation of the performative pieces (e.g. students practiced and then performed with a partner) was in itself an essential collective meaning-making resource. Thus the embodied interpretations of texts as they moved towards performance, gave students access to doing an in-depth analysis of characters and interactions offered or implied by Shakespeare’s text as well as to begin to build a deep ownership and connection to various character’s perspectives as well as a relationship with the language. This deeply lived through experience with Shakespeare’s stories and language often co-occurred with and supported more complex thinking about big inquiry questions and higher order thinking.

**Pedagogical Implications**

An essential component brought into the classroom in the study was not only the playful embodied understandings of texts but the opportunities to build embodied understandings, link intertextual connections as new semiotic resources and imagine other possibilities. ELLs were constantly challenged to expand their multimodal meaning-making, willingly take risks, face challenging language, ask “I wonder” questions and make their creative and complex thinking visible through performances of
multimodal literacy understanding. The explanations underlying the consistent performances of multimodal literacy understandings with Shakespeare included factors such as the themes and complexity of the story, the collaborative, multimodal and long-term nature of the inquiry.

**The Story Matters…**

Students want complex texts and to be treated as if they can handle its complexity. They want intrigue, mystery, magic and suspense. They want to explore the complexities and dangers of emotion that comes with being human. Of course they want to explore familiar topics of friendship and love, but they are just as fascinated by jealousy, guilt and hate. When adults expect that they are able to work hard to understand big problems like issues of power and injustice, children will rise to the challenge and far outreach your wildest expectations.

**Complexity of Text matters…**

In this study, ELLs involved long term dramatic inquiry events with complex texts were treated as capable of higher order thinking and as members of an ensemble of learners they far exceeded expectations. Even the high inferences and higher order thinking it takes to make meaning together and “stand-up” pieces of text within the complex plays of Shakespeare, could be possible for any age and perceived ability of student, when they can use active movement and inquiry as a learning tool. The assumption made by the teacher about the abilities of her students to understand complex texts and language can influence the learning conditions for those students who are struggling in literacy such as ELL students.

In order to develop and sustain long-lasting dramatic inquiry about texts, the tasks ELLs are given must ask them to collaboratively and playfully engage in authentic reading comprehension tasks with highly engaging and complex texts. With the right kinds of social and multimodal supports built over time within a ensemble of learners, students
can and should be expected to not only use but make visible higher order thinking to solve challenging tasks. So instead of only asking ELLs to perform isolated tasks, they need to be appropriating language in multiple ways as they move towards “performing” bits (if only for classmates) and they need to generate possible interpretations of the words in the form of bodily, spatial, gestural and verbal action as well as to make their higher order thinking visible.

**Ensemble Matters…**

Dramatic approaches in Lorraine’s room such as developing a series of spatial movements between partners that is then narrated by the teacher as the battle between Scotland and Norway in the beginning of Macbeth creates the high interest and concrete experiences which build background knowledge and generate more questions as the students collaborate and build on each other’s ideas. Group Sculpting a set of characters based on given information on the text available, asks that the students generate inferences, accept multiple interpretations, and creatively build on each other’s ideas. Lorraine’s facilitation of the ensemble’s active movement and embodied forms of learning has helped the students not only comprehend the story but they have develop a sense of a collaborative ensemble where we are all using these tools to ‘try to figure this out together.’ Furthermore, it is just because of their growth into an ensemble of active, collaborative and critical thinkers that they have been able to use their past history of inquiry, embodiment and deconstruction and reconstruction of texts, plots and characters.

Students want to be active, collaborative inquirers about the world and their abilities to perform multimodal literacy understandings could grow steadily if they can gain access to appropriate multimodal and social supports that will challenge them to use creative and complex thinking. For adults, it’s easy to dismiss children as lacking the experience, vocabulary and background knowledge to explore critical issues. This study showed that ELLs and others whom struggled with academic literacy, have a high need and a desire to face complex texts within an ensemble of collaborative and embodied inquiry. Typically such learners are given simplified stories, texts and syntax to make the reading more
comprehensible but instead they need to have access to challenging and engaging texts and confidence in their willingness to take risks to investigate and explore the texts collaboratively and in order to simultaneously build their oral and written academic language in authentic reading comprehension tasks and deeply engaged forms of reading.

**Long-term inquiry and the dimension of the possible matters...**

Even at eight years old and with less than fluent oral English, with the right amount of playful and collaborative but reflective experiences to build background knowledge mixed with a clear focus on inquiry and children can and will make unbelievable insights and a vast range of intertextual connections. When the joint productive goal of the small group or whole group is to develop a more complex understanding of the “big problem” it opens the world of meaning-making to possibility and not one single answer. I never considered the possibilities Lorraine’s students uncovered throughout the 2010-2011 school year. For example, maybe Lady Macbeth was one of the weird sisters and tricked everyone. Or one student made a connection to the foreshadowing in Romeo & Juliet and compared it to King Duncan’s implied words at the moment of his murder by Macbeth (which is not actually presented in the text only implied). She suggested he could have something similar to “a plague on both your houses”—in implicating both Macbeth and his wife in the violent unraveling of Scotland, just as Mercutio implicated both families in the unraveling of the lives of their young offspring.

As time has gone by and they have constructed a more in-depth history together of dramatically exploring the themes present in the complex texts of Shakespeare—these students are consistently making references to the issues and concerns of earlier Shakespeare texts, and even other texts, Lorraine has read with them in the class (e.g. Shiloh). I also see that the productive use of their bodies as texts creates another source to draw from which may not even at times be entirely conscious. As this atmosphere of resourceful problem-solving builds on these intertextual connections, more students have been taking the risk to offer these ideas verbally and in their writing. Furthermore, the long term inquiry has created students who are more physically and verbally expressive.
which also seems to become visible in students offering more performances of imaginative and empathetic forms of reading. They easily express themselves in the subjunctive (What if…) or from within the perspective of a character (As if…).

In sustaining long term inquiry using dramatic and active approaches, most of the students have built a deep knowledge of vocabulary in context that is made visible as the students continue to use the contextualized vocabulary during further dramatic inquiry, across their exploration of other texts and when trying to understanding new vocabulary. For example, when they had to use the word mischief in their vocabulary book, one student immediately referred to Puck always causing mischief within the play Midsummer Night’s Dream. Furthermore, many of the students who are considered less than proficient readers, have improved their fluency as they have a deep investment in the stories, an authentic reason to re-read many times and often have the opportunity to read, interpret and “perform” from different character’s perspectives. All of the students have shown they can offer highly sophisticated inferences and carry on generative conversations that clearly demonstrate a depth of knowledge far beyond what is typically expected of third graders. Returning to the first point, students facing complex texts using active and dramatic inquiry tools could more consistently engage in authentic uses of the reading comprehension strategies such as exploring open-ended inquiry questions without simplistic answers in order to give authentic reasons for students to use the foundational reading skills for a meaningful purpose.

Towards performances of multimodal literacy understanding

In the classroom in this study, dramatic inquiry was used as an active, embodied and gestural methods to collaboratively make meaning. The students and teacher in this ensemble of learners built their semiotic and performative work together around ongoing inquiry questions, critical reflection and generating possibilities of interpretation within and among a variety of Shakespeare’s texts. The addition of the complex texts of Shakespeare provided a high level of challenge for the diverse set of third grade students in this classroom. Not only were they learning to use their bodies and each other as
learning tools while making sense of the literal comprehension of the narrative elements of the story (plot, characters, setting) as well as words and figurative language from the Shakespeare texts, they were also asked to engage in highly challenging tasks related to literary interpretation and they were asked to make their creative and higher order thinking visible. They worked with the whole group or with small groups towards sculpting physical representations or small bits of performance (e.g. making interpretive choices for characters’ movements and inflection based on the text) as well as to “talk back” to the text (Sipe, 2003) which might include offering possible inner dialogue of a characters, stopping a character in the middle of an action to ask him a question or to offer advice about future actions based on their ways of understanding Shakespeare’s plays and socio-historical contexts surrounding the plays. As the students were involved in cycles of dramatic inquiry that moved them across time and space and deeply into the drama worlds they had co-created with the help of Shakespeare’s four original plays. The playful performance of their drama worlds they created within and around these stories created an entirely different type of active, authentic and purposeful form of engaged reading and it pushed them and supported the ELLs to perform a wide range of multimodal literacy understandings.

In order for students to co-construct authentic performances of multimodal literacy understandings in classrooms, they must engage physically, emotionally as well as intellectually with texts and information all while learning the messy processes of relating in and among a group of people. In the same way the actor must delve well below the surface to give a genuine performance, students who grow into a dramatic, ensemble-based learning approaches are consistently expected to rise to the challenge, to take risks and to “combine full body engagement with critical reflexivity” in an ongoing cycle of doing and reflecting, experiencing and interpreting (Pineau 2005, p.31). However, this is never a solitary, and decontextualized meaning-making process. In other words, the ensemble itself must work to maintain liminal, performative spaces (B. K. Alexander et al., 2005) where multiple voices and texts can be overlapped or “dialogized” in a Bakhtinian sense (1986) and thus, layered with play and poetics, contradiction and
uncertainty, where ELLs and all students uses of literacy are generative and purposeful, and where literary engagement is authentic. For it is in these spaces where the potential for deeply engaged reading, multimodal literacy understanding and transformation grow and thrive.
References:


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<th>Focus</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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<td>Aug. 25-</td>
<td>Phase 1: ongoing exploratory</td>
<td>Peripheral Participation-Observe typical literacy practices &amp; texts/tasks (FN)</td>
<td>Daily FN write up &amp; Reflective Journal</td>
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<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>ethnography</td>
<td>Collect Initial Focal Student Artifacts (DAF)</td>
<td>Analyze &amp; Edit Video for Video Cued-Reflection</td>
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<td>Folktales Unit</td>
<td>Sample of Literacy Events-Video Recorded</td>
<td>Adjust interview questions</td>
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<td><strong>Focus Areas:</strong></td>
<td>Photo/Video Non Dramatic Inquiry Literacy Events—(DV, AU)</td>
<td>Running List of teachers major issues, questions</td>
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<td><em>Social and Cultural Contexts of</em></td>
<td>Photo/Video Dramatic Inquiry Events—(DV, DC)</td>
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<td>Transcribe &amp; code Video Samples-non-dramatic reading events</td>
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<td>*(e.g. ways of talking,</td>
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<td>Open-Coding across FN, Interviews</td>
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<td>participating, using texts)</td>
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<td>Transcribe Student Interviews-- develop chart</td>
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<td>*Meaning of Reading/ competent</td>
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<td>readers*</td>
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<td><strong>Focus Areas:</strong></td>
<td>2 Video Cued Reflection-Teacher on literacy instruction (AU 2 per unit)</td>
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<td><em>Development of Inquiry</em></td>
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<th>Analyze &amp; Edit Video for Video Cued-Reflection</th>
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<td><strong>Dramatic and Non-Dramatic Reading Events</strong></td>
<td>whole group &amp; focal student (one per day)</td>
<td>Transcribe/ Analyze</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planning &amp; Reflection</strong> with Teacher (AU)</td>
<td>Collect Student Artifacts</td>
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<td><strong>Video Cued-Focus Group Reflections</strong></td>
<td>Focal Students + other students</td>
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<th>Students and teachers worked on Medieval Castles Thanksgiving Holiday Break</th>
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<td><strong>Focus Areas</strong></td>
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<td>Multimodal Support for Higher Order Thinking</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Planning &amp; Reflection with Teacher (AU)</th>
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<td>Shakespeare Unit 2: Macbeth</td>
<td>Full Participant-Observations (FN)</td>
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<td><strong>Focus Areas</strong></td>
<td>Focal Student Artifacts &amp; Learning Logs (DAF collected weekly)</td>
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<td>Engagement &amp; Fluency</td>
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<td>Multimodal Support for Higher Order Thinking</td>
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<td>Multiple Language/ Literacy Purposes</td>
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| **Dramatic Inquiry Events (VD 3x per week)** |  |  |
| **Video Cued-Reflections (AU 2x per unit)** | Teachers Students Focal Students- Oral group Reflection on Shakespeare (VD) |  |
| **Teacher—ethnographically grounded interview** |  |  |
| **Focal Students— ethnographically grounded interview** | Initial Reading Interview 5 Focal Students (DV, DC, AU, DAF) |  |

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<th>Jan. 3rd- Jan 21st</th>
<th>In-depth Analysis</th>
<th>Holiday Break for Students</th>
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<td>In-depth Analysis of Teacher Talk &amp; Axial Coding</td>
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<td>Constant Comparative analysis</td>
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<td>Work on axial coding</td>
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<td>January 26th - March 18th</td>
<td><strong>Phase 4:</strong> Continue ethnography</td>
<td><strong>Member Checks with Teacher</strong></td>
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<td>Dramatic Inquiry in other curricular areas</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Reflection with Teacher (AU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Changes in reading strategies, participation, talk about or selection of texts, resources used</td>
<td>Full Participant-Observations (FN)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Focal Student Artifacts &amp; Learning Logs (DAF collected weekly)</td>
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<td><strong>Sample of Literacy Events-Video Recorded</strong></td>
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<td>Photo/Video Non Dramatic Inquiry Literacy Events—(DV, AU)</td>
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<td>Photo/Video Dramatic Inquiry Events (DV, DC)</td>
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**Teacher Reflection on Literacy Instruction**
4 Literacy Events w/ verbal reflection (DV)
2 Video Cued Reflection-Teacher on literacy instruction (AU 2 per unit)

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<th>March 21st - April 21st</th>
<th><strong>In-depth: Analysis &amp; Writing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Students in OAT testing</strong> (in-depth analysis—middle of year)</th>
<th><strong>Selective Coding</strong></th>
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<td>Spring Break Member Checks with Teacher</td>
<td>Peer-Debriefing</td>
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<td><strong>Begin to create reflective coding matrix &amp; initial writing</strong></td>
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<th>April 25th - June 2nd</th>
<th><strong>Recursive Phase 5 With Member Checks</strong></th>
<th><strong>Final Interviews</strong></th>
<th><strong>Final “Thinking Together” Talk Analysis</strong></th>
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<td>Hamlet Unit Comparative Essays</td>
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<td>Axial &amp; Selective Coding – move to Reflective Coding Matrix</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Member Checks Final Interviews</td>
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<td>Transcribe &amp; Analyze final interviews, discussions</td>
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</table>

**Final Teacher Interview (DV, DC, AU, DAF)**

**Final Focal Students Interviews (DV, DC, AU, DAF)**

**Video-Cued Reflections (DV)**

Audio-tape discussion about Shakespeare, drama & Reading Complex Texts (AU, FN)

**Final member checks (AU & VD)**
Review Artifacts & Statements with participants

**Final Teacher Interview (DV, DC, AU, DAF)**

**Final Focal Students Interviews (DV, DC, AU, DAF)**

**Video-Cued Reflections (DV)**

**Artifact Collection**

**Final “Thinking Together” Talk Analysis**

**Axial & Selective Coding – move to Reflective Coding Matrix**

**Transcribe & Analyze final interviews, discussions**

**Further consider Discrepant Data**

**Analyze & Edit Video for final Video Cued-Reflections**

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Colored sections are times research will be in the classroom

**Abbreviations**

T = Teacher

FS = Focal Students

FN = Field Notes

DV = Digital Video

DC = Digital Camera

AU = Audio

DAF = Document or Artifact

VCR = Video Cued Reflection
Appendix B:

Ethnographically Grounded
Reading Interview-Students

**Ethnographically Grounded Reading Interview (STUDENTS)**
Possible kinds of activities/questions using still pictures and imagined roles as cues

**Materials Needed:**

- Notecards & Tape
- Ethnographically Ground Digital Pictures of various literacy events observed
  ***need to have pictures that show individual students, students in partners/groups, teacher and students
- Small Pictures of Individual Students & Teachers—“Picture People”
- Map representing classroom (with sketched in furniture, spaces, computers, class library, etc.)
- Individual Students bring Reading Journal & Current Book they’re reading
- Recording Sheets for each student
- Video Camera & Tiny Tripod
- Audiotape, Digital Camera & Individual Tags w pseudonyms of picture

**Estimated Time:** 20-25 minutes on 2 separate days

**Introduction:**
I have been taking all of these classes with other adults about how to teach reading and writing with 3rd graders, but sometimes adults have a hard time remembering what it’s like to be in 3rd grade. So I really need your help. Do you think you could help me by being a researcher together with me about reading and writing in your classroom? *(Assuming they agree:)*

I have been wondering what 3rd graders think about reading and writing. Do you think it would be alright since we are going to be researchers together now, we will talk and look at some pictures from your classroom and your friends and teachers and while we’re doing that I will ask you some questions and I will write down what you say? We also might pretend we are other people to help us answer some of my questions. And because I can’t write down everything, to help us remember while we are talking I will videotape and take pictures of what we do and say. There are no right or wrong answers, and this doesn’t have anything to do with your grades. I just want you to try to answer
the best you. Since you know yourself best, you can help me understand what you think about 3rd grade. You don’t have to answer the questions or you can say I don’t know. It shouldn’t take very long, but if you get tired we can also stop and finish another day.

Does that make sense? Do you have any questions?
Do you agree to do this with me?

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<tr>
<th>Research Talk (Black)</th>
<th>Researcher action (Red)</th>
<th>Imagined Role (Blue)</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free List Literacy Events</strong></td>
<td>Can you tell me all of times you can think of during the school day where you and your class talk about or do things to learn about reading and writing? <em>(recording the list in order of students listing)</em></td>
<td><strong>Possible Prompts (based on observations)</strong></td>
<td>What else is kind of like X? What would you call when we ________ _in here (e.g. this morning, yesterday) or when we Y?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matching Literacy Events with Reading Actions</strong></td>
<td>My next question is how do 3rd graders do reading?</td>
<td><strong>Students can respond with words if they can… (but if not go on to matching)</strong></td>
<td>So do you think we could match any of these action pictures with any of these times (cards of reading events) Why do you think these match?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Picture Cued—Participation/Social Expectations</strong></td>
<td>What is the students (or your) job during this time?</td>
<td><strong>Student can verbally respond</strong></td>
<td>if student has trouble verbalizing students can dramatize with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the teachers job during this time?</td>
<td><strong>if student is having trouble ask them to show you with the picture people and classroom map—teacher may first give an example</strong></td>
<td><strong>Possible Prompts:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What are the rules during this time?  
Where do you often sit?  
Can you work with other people?  
How do you know when it is your turn to talk? | picture people of T, themselves and other students |

**Learner Engagement** (Literacy Events on Continuum)  
Which of these times are you the most interested or mostly stay right in the middle of the learning for most of the time? What about least interested?  
*T: Offer for the student to pick only 1 for now for most interested/least interested and lay them at opposing corners of the table*  
**Also, once again if student is having trouble offer a model using the picture people as models of Interest/ Disinterest**  
What else do you like about doing _____? Or is there something else not in the picture that you like doing?  
Can you tell me more about that?  
Can you put these other ones somewhere in between (show how as in a continuum) of ones where you have the most interest to least interest?  
*After student makes continuum*  
Why do you think so?  
**Take note of reasons—may need later**  
*May need prompting to be more specific besides I like it...It’s cool.***  
**Take picture of continuum**  

**Using Learning Resources:** what people do when things are hard…  
Can be a tricky question because young students often don’t want to admit they have a harder time  
- What are some of the things you would teach a new 3rd grader to do if they were having a hard time with _____ (use example they gave)?  
- What do you do when you are reading and you come to a word you don’t know?  

If children don’t say anything you might offer examples they’ve been observed using in classroom (work with partner, re-read, etc.) but maybe didn’t realize it. Or move to next question because it comes back to it.  

| Students may verbally answer or point to cards/pictures OR show with picture people.  
Student lays most interested on one corner and least interested on the other corner.  
Various Student responses | Students can point or verbally say it.  
Students can point or verbally say it.  
Students can give verbal answers |
STopping Point

Working with Other People
(Sociograms through Imagined Roles)

**Especially if they mention working with other people go on to this question soon after…or if they don’t mention it above, then T can suggest—well sometimes, I notice that you ask other people to work with you.

(If they haven’t already said earlier--)
Are there times when you can work with other people? What do you think about that?

Did you know there are a lot of adults who think children can’t learn from and with each other? They think 3rd graders can only learn from adults. I am wondering about that… and was thinking that really isn’t true but I am not sure… I thought we could play a little to help use figure it out.

Are you interesting in imagining we are other people? Does it sound kind of cool to imagine you are an adult and someone very important, like a teacher of teachers…
Assuming student agrees—allow them to offer a suggestion or if they don’t have one... you can offer something and then go into role—to help them imagine it…
--maybe the Wisest Teacher or Greatest Teacher in all the Land? Who could you be? What will your name be?

Since my question is about how 3rd graders work together—Ms./Mr. ____ XXX _______ probably could teach other teachers how to arrange people together in classrooms so they learn the most they could about _________(e.g. reading, understanding new words)?

Assuming student agrees. Then you ask them if you could be a person needing help—a flustered substitute teacher-Ms. Fuzzy minds. When I count down from three and I get to 0 lets change positions of our body and step in as if we are frozen as these new people. You got a way to move and change yourself in your imagination? OK ready…3.2.1.0

Researcher begins by speaking (in role) and improvising a script similar to what follows:

R: Teachers, Teachers--May I have your attention, please. the Wisest Teacher in the World has been summoned by an urgent email from me, Mrs. Paltry Fuzzy minds. Mr/Ms ______ XXX _______ (insert Student’s character name )I have been really been struggling with how to help

Students verbally say or with prompting point to a picture.

Students agree and offer suggestions for role.

Student and teacher both change positions or switch places.
**Purpose of Reading/ Teacher’s Reasons for Instruction**

I have noticed that you all do a lot of work and talk in here about reading and writing. I have been wondering why Ms. G sets up all of this stuff *point to cards* for you to do about reading and writing in the third grade?

*To help us answer--Ask student if they want to go back to imagining they are the Wisest Teacher of the World and you as Ms. Fuzzyminds.*

*Build on their responses to get a sense of what reading means for them or being a “good reader” means.*

| Students may say things like: *so we can learn to read/write better, we can know more words, we can learn new stuff, be a good reader, etc.* | Ms. Fuzzyminds takes a picture. (and may offer prompt for more)

Hmmm... I wonder why that might be?

(Researcher suggests—let’s step out for a minute...and talk as ourselves)

Did you like that? Its really interesting because you know a lot about yourself and your learning... I wonder if you have ever thought about why your teacher and your parents all want you to do all of this... (go on to next question)
Possible Script for imagined Space

Mr/Ms._________ why in the world does Ms. G’s students do all of that reading and writing stuff? I know you Mr/Ms. XXX have written many books on this subject—I just don’t get it... Why is this reading thing so important for 3rd graders to learn to do better? I mean they already know how to read they learned that in 1st and 2nd grade.

(point to cards as cues)
Like journal writing?
Read aloud?
Reading Response?
Why in the world does she want them to do these things?

(Ms. Fuzzyminds gives them reasons why they shouldn’t do various areas-so the student has to offer reasons why these activities might be important...

I just think they don’t really need to be doing silent reading...I think I’m just going to get rid of it all together.

I know on your website you have also written about good readers, Mr./Ms. XXX. What do people do who are really good readers? Could you show me with the computer module, what things good readers could do in this classroom, say inside their heads or say to each other?

(e.g. do they read a lot, all the same things, lots of different things, talk to other people about ideas they read or ideas they want to write about)

ask students to step out of the space...
What did you think about all of that?

When you pretend you are other people in class with stories, do you like doing that too? Why?

Texts/ Reading Interests
What do you like to do in your free time? What can you do well? (or what would someone say you do well?)

Do you like to read? Why or why not?
- What are you favorite things to read?

Can you show me your response journal and the book you are reading?
- What’s something you want me to notice? What is something that you are proud of? Or tells me something about you as a reader?
• Can you tell me about this book?

Let’s look at your Lists--Books I’ve Read/ Books I want to Read (ongoing class assignment) Talk about why they choose books.
  • Do they remind you of any body or places that you know? Is that why you like reading them?
  • Do you ever find out anything new from reading books?
  • These are all ______ (fiction…)Do you ever read _______ (non-fiction)? For what reasons? Topics your interested in knowing more about?

Are there other things you like to read about that aren’t here at school?
  • for example at home—are there other reasons you read and write?
    (e.g. read internet sites, magazines, instruction manuals, make lists, write/read notes, cards, emails)
  • Do you read and write with people at home? Who reads with you?
  • What about when you are playing with your friends or family?

Thanks so much for doing research with me!!! Do you have any questions for me about all of this? Are there things about my reading and writing that you want to know?
Appendix C:

Ethnographically Grounded Reading Interview-Teacher

Ethnographically Grounded Reading Interview (TEACHER)
Possible Research Questions—using still pictures, and sociograms as cues

Materials Needed:
- Note cards
- Ethnographically Grounded Digital Pictures of various literacy events observed
**need to have pictures that show individual students, students in partners/groups, teacher and students
- Small Pictures of Individual Students & Teachers—“Picture People”
- Map representing classroom (with sketched in furniture, spaces, computers, class library, etc.
- Blank Paper & Recording Sheet, various Colored Pens
- Video Camera & Tiny Tripod
- Audiotape, Digital Camera

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Learning Spaces (across the day)
T-verbally makes a list of all of the various times of the day (not just literacy)
For example:
Best-----------------------------------Worst
-------------Math----------------------
------------Word work----------------
-------------Read aloud-------------

Space and materials
R marks on the map and T place herself as a red dot on continuum/students as blue dots
As we talk, can you show me on this map how the space is used. (physical arrangement, location of students, materials available for student use)

Picture Cues
Is there any picture here that represents in some way something about the best sort of learning space you would like to create? (put it on one side of table)

Is there something here the represents something about the learning space you would least like
to create (but maybe feel you have no other choice, etc.)? Why?

How do you see your involvement in these spaces?
Where do you feel you could put yourself on each continuum (one for each learning time like silent reading) closest to most like the teacher you want to be/or the least like the teacher you’d like to be? Or where your classroom is closest to the best/worst kind of space you’d like it to be?

Mark with blue dot- where you most often see your students, generally, in these spaces/times of the day along this continuum?

**Focus on Literacy Events**

Teacher chooses from the list and adds any others to determine all possible kinds of literacy events (social activities specific structured by ways of using and talking about texts) on separate cards

**Rank Sort Cards on continuum from Most to Least (in your opinion)**

**Academically Important**

Learn the most about their lives
Amount of teacher talk

**Important Socially for students**

Amount of opportunity to talk to each other for academic reasons

Would this be the same for amount of visible student engagement? What students generally seem to like most/ least?

**Participation/ Social Expectations**

*What is your role in the classroom in regards to student’s literacy learning?*

Returning to putting just the literacy events in our original continuum of learning spaces… Which are most like the spaces you’d like to create? Which are least?

Why? R points to one of the highly ranked spaces…
What have you noticed about your teaching during this time?
What are the rules?
What are the participation roles? What are you doing? What are kids doing?
How do students sit? How do people talk?
How do people use materials?
If they can how do they work with other people or make choices of texts/materials?
**Learning Engagement/ Working Together**

Using the map and small pictures of students—teacher will be asked to create a sociogram showing how students engage with learning and how students work together.

*Possible Prompts for questions:*

How would you characterize various students in regards to being towards the center of engaged literacy learning or at the edges of literacy learning?

How would you characterize how different students work together?

T—places students pictures as she talks

We’ve talked about _____________ + _______________

Would you say then that _____________ (student) then you could put in the center of engagement in any of these areas?

T—can be modeled how to put pictures of students in the middle of certain areas….

Is there anybody in particular that you can think of that is that you would put in this area _______? I wonder why?

IF not brought up ask about specific focal students—and how she sees their participation in learning activities?

When there are opportunities for students to make choices on materials or forms of literacy to use—(e.g. showing in gesture or art, instead of telling in words) How would you characterize these times in terms of who is engaged? Do you see this to being important to academic learning in any way? If so, how?

**Goals, Academic Language and Academic “Performances”**

Can you return to one of these pictures?

What was happening here? What was being taught?

What were some of the major instructional goals of that lesson?

What kind of academic language is needed?

How did students show what they learned? Why?

I know your district is trying to get you to move more towards higher order thinking tasks and performance assessments? Why what do you see as the benefits? Limitations of those?

In 3rd grade level reading expectations (as defined by your district) are there some things that 3rd graders more typically struggle with the most?

**Reading Resources**

Overall, what do you think are some of the most important resources and strategies you want
your students to learn and continue to use consistently both now and in the future?

What kind of academic language and higher order thinking is needed to ____________ (her responses)?

Have you noticed anything that has been particularly effective for promoting this?

**Purpose/ Meaning of Literacy**

Why do you think literacy is important?

What does reading mean to you in your life as an adult? What interests you as a reader?

What does reading mean in schools? Does the common public opinion align with this idea?

What does it mean when kids say “I know how to read”? Is “learning to read” different from “reading to learn”? How is that distinction important in here?

What does reading mean to a 3rd grader? How would you characterize your students’ reading interests?

What do you consider when thinking about texts to use in your classroom? Has that changed as you have begun to use dramatic inquiry more? How?

I know you’ve said before that there was something about the use of the complex texts of Shakespeare last year—that everybody was working together on a difficult text (including yourself) that seemed to transform the space. How do you define complex texts for 3rd graders? What does it mean to work together on a difficult text?

**Reading Competence**

If it hasn’t been addressed yet:

How do you determine a good reader?

What kind of school assessments do students do? What are your thoughts on those? how much information they can give you about what the student can do?

What kind of informal assessments do students do?

What role does any of this play in your instruction? Grouping? Instructional goals and specific activities or sequencing/pacing of activities?

Do you think institutional labels with which precede students into the classroom, at times, influence your perceptions of students? In what ways?

How do you think children determine who are good readers? In what ways do they compare themselves to each other in regards to reading competence? What do you think about this?
### Implementing Drama & Dramatic Inquiry

Describe your experience as a veteran teacher attempting to implement this new set of teaching approaches.

What has been the easiest to implement? Hardest? What are the benefits? Limitations?

What have you noticed about your class when using these methods? Individual students? What have you learned about yourself?

Do you see a difference between drama and dramatic inquiry? How? (If so) what is the significance of the inquiry piece? Benefits and limitations?

### Transforming Practices

In what ways are you hoping to change any of these practices?

What if you were given complete free rein on any way or anything you wanted to teach?

What if your professional judgment was completely trusted and there were no limits by architecture or use of space or materials available, could you imagine doing reading and writing instruction any differently? And if so, how?

Thanks so much!!! Do you have any questions about any of this?
Appendix D:

Dasjah’s Word Association Assessment

Shakespeare Words/Phrases Association Assessment

Draw a line from the __**big word**__ in the middle to the three words that always go with the meaning of that word in the middle because they mean almost the same thing.

- **valiant**
  - brave
  - scared
  - noble
  - disloyal
  - has courage
  - unworthy

- **beguile**
  - truthful
  - trick
  - mischief
  - honest
  - false face
  - faithful

- **opposed**
  - in conflict
  - take arms against
  - kinsmen
  - silence
  - make peace
  - enemies

- **victorious**
  - future
  - successful
  - conquered
  - winner
  - losing
  - victim

---

- Macbeth was valiant when he saw Macbeth in the beginning.
- Macbeth was valiant.
- Macbeth was valiant.
- He made Macbeth do that. He made Macbeth do that. He made Macbeth do that.
- Macbeth turned both Macbeth.
- Macbeth was valiant.
- Macbeth was valiant.
- Macbeth was valiant.

(SKIPPED INTENTIONALLY)
What are some possible things that Shakespeare might have meant by this line from Macbeth?

**Sleep no more. Macbeth doth murder sleep.**

Madam, should't sleep any more because 'tis murder while someone's

was sleeping.

Why do you think Hamlet says this when Claudius calls him "my son"?

Hamlet: **A little more kin and less than kind.**

What did this line mean in Hamlet and could it relate to any other plays?

**Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.**
Art thou afeared. Lady Macbeth \rightarrow Macbeth

Romeo & Juliet

The course of true love never did run smoothly.

Mother, you have my father much offended. Hamlet

Full of vexation come I, with complaint against my child. Escalus \rightarrow Duke of Florence

O, a plague on both your houses. Hamlet

The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. Escalus \rightarrow Duke of Florence

Is this the dagger I see before me?

If this shall not be wed, graze where you will but you shall not house with me. Lord Gualt. \rightarrow Juliet

False Face must hide what the false heart doth know. Macbeth

I have remembrances of yours that I have longed long to re-deliver.

Ophelia \rightarrow Hamlet

Draw if you be men. Polonius \rightarrow Rame

To you your father should be as a god

Duke of Florence \rightarrow Hamlet

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? Midsummer Night's Dream

To thine ownself be true

I dare do all that may become a man.

I love thee not therefore pursue me not. Demetrius \rightarrow Helena

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace, Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel. Prince (Escalus)
Appendix E:

Teacher Talk Codebook

**Codebook Teacher Turn Taking:**

**Specific to Dramatic Inquiry Events**

**General Teacher Turns**

**TELL:** Telling or Giving Children the information (May overlap with Teaching Vocabulary)

*TELL/RES:* This is a blend between tell and evaluate with negative feedback-repeat which could also fall under EVALUATE but because the teacher is repeating a part of a students response usually with a variation and in doing so is telling what she wanted to hear or her known answer its broadly lumped with TELL codes.

**EVALUATE (EVAL):** Teacher evaluates the students response to K through one of the following:

*EVP-YES:* Teacher says simple yes, right, nods head in the affirmative.

*EVP-REP:* Teacher is giving positive feedback for the correct/expected answer or partial expected answer by repeating the child’s answer or repeating the partial answer and extending it (YES…and)

*EVP-EXG:* Teacher is giving positive feedback for the correct/expected answer with highly exaggerated surprise.

*EVN-NO:* Teacher says no

*EVN-IGN:* Teacher also may evaluate through giving negative feedback such as ignoring the incorrect/unexpected answer

*EVN-QF:* Teacher giving negative feedback by repeating the child’s incorrect or partially incorrect statement in the form of a question (and thereby implicitly assuming the child or other’s will supply the correct form).

**COLLAB:** Teacher specifically asks students to interact, offer input, collaborate and work together before the teacher tells or in order to offer the student a chance to make meaning for themselves and as a learning resource for others (All COACH codes fall under COLLAB)

**COLLAB-SMGR/PTR (small group/partner):** Teacher directly asks students to talk/think together

**COLLABThats Like-That’s like:** Linking texts, personal experiences, responses to each other

*COLLAB-Tlike-SKSP:* Teacher prompts a specific connection either verbally or physically to Romeo & Juliet = *that’s like R&J*

**COLLAB-CLARIFY:** Teacher either summarizes a statement specifically to mediate students to hear what each other has offered or asks a clarification question to indicate that what the student said isn’t quite clear enough for all
others such as *what does that mean?* In order to ask the student to elaborate or clarify what they meant by a statement (as opposed to the teacher telling)

**COLLAB-INQ:** Teacher explicitly leaves “answer” open-ended with no finalized answer such as…”We don’t know. There’s not one answer...We’re going to find out...” Then usually provides verbal, dramatic and/or social support for students to actively inquiry around words or at character interaction level.

May includes turns that scaffold specific things to pay attention to… (ooo, we might be getting a clue here...” )

**LOT Lower Order Thinking:** Teachers ask students Lower Order Cognitive Thinking Question such as to recite, recall information and literal comprehension. Often requires a simplistic nod or yes or no answer.

**HOT Higher Order Thinking:** Teachers ask students Higher Order Cognitive Thinking Questions. This category is also used to describe a teacher who specifically validates and scaffolds students towards. It is asking them to manipulate information in ways that transform its meaning such as when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesize within and across texts (SYN), infer (INF), inquire (INQ), hypothesize or arrive at some evaluation (EVAL) or interpretation (INT)

**HOT-INQ** Teacher’s turn is taken after listening to student’s utterance related to inquiry question, repeating and elaborating to extend the inquiry process. Students are encouraged to generate as many possible interpretations as possible as after each student offers a possibility—teacher may repeat it and then add on clarification

**Other Teacher Turns**

**Manage (MNG):** The teacher manages the activity, discussion, etc by calling on children or asking children to wait or redirecting a child’s actions. Silence on the part of the teacher can also give authority to some actions or statements.

**Social & Emotional (Soc-Em)** The teacher is dealing with helping children use language politely or connecting with a student emotionally or their everyday identity or promoting the groups identity.

*EMC:* Emotional/Identity Connection-attention to how people are positioned.

For example: Sorry [you have to go] but we will see you in a bit. Look how much __ you’ve [all] done.

*Soc-EmFUN:* “more fun” this way... Or did you have fun doing that?

*Soc-Prag:* Restating language in a more socially appropriate form

**Teacher Turns at talk with Specific Instructional Purposes**

**VOCAB:** Teaching Vocabulary (Word +Appropriate Meaning) Explicitly. Direct purpose of teacher’s turn is to give direct instruction on the meaning of a word or phrase.

| TELL-meaning | *VOCABTELL:* Telling or Giving Children the meaning directly |
| **TELL-w** | **VOCABQ-Guess:** A direct question about the meaning of a word. So what’s ______ mean? OR _______ What does that mean? This is usually without any prior context so that it’s asking a student to GUESS and “perform” themselves and their “knowing” of word meaning. The teacher evaluates and usually adds her expected meaning. |
| **COLLAB:** | **VOCAB-CBK:** A direct question that specifically references a student’s background knowledge with prior “shared context” to draw meaning of the word for other students.  
**VOCAB-MODEL/CLARIFY:** More Teacher directed but still collaborative because of shared context. Teacher finds an object or human model as illustration in the room, or makes or allows students to offer links to popular cultural texts (extra-textual) and/or clarifies and summarizes across other students utterances and uses interTEXT examples to illustrate word associations and word meanings (e.g. teacher might use gestures or movement while using the new word).  
**VOCAB-SKSP/INQ:** Teacher asks for high interactive input. Asks for multiple possibilities for word/phrase level meaning (e.g. *what could it mean? what do you think?*) or offers prompts towards students constructing collaborative understandings of word meaning (*What word do you see within that word? What else do you think?*) builds from an inquiry stance that actively investigate words meaning in context  
- **ver.INQ verbal inquiry:**  
  - morphological analysis to frontload scene  
  - values multiple “hypothesis” without finalizing meaning  
  - values interTEXT & word associations, replay of word in new context  
- **emb.INQ embodied inquiry:**  
  - Whole Group negotiates a gestures and movements to show words  
  - sculpt others, stop characters to ask them about unknown words  
  - allows space for replay of bodily text +word in new context |
<p>| <strong>Student display of knowing</strong> | <strong>NO shared context</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELL word recognition</th>
<th>RTELL-PRON: Teacher gives the correct <em>pronunciation</em> of the word to student and usually student repeats and goes on with rest of reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| TELL reading strategies | RTELL-RST: Directly tells a “definition” of what it means to do ___________ reading strategy  
“When we compare contrast we find things that are the same and things that are different” |

**COACH reading decoding or comprehension:** Teacher is prompting/ providing scaffolding or support that could transfer to other reading text situations as students are attempting to answer a question or use a strategy. For example; breaking words up into smaller parts, justifying answers through the text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COACH word recognition</th>
<th><em>RCOACH-TDDC:</em> Teacher offers prompts for decoding such as let’s look at the first part of the word or think about the i-consonant-e but still fairly teacher directed.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>COACH-RW:</strong> Teacher reads a word simultaneously with student as a support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACH reading strategies</td>
<td><em>RCOACH-RST:</em> Teacher offers a prompt to use a strategy during reading. For example: This is a penny pencil question. Go back in the text and tell me why…</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>RCOACH-MCRST:</em> Teacher turn is intended for metacognitive awareness of the reading strategy. The teacher describes or ask a student to identify a strategy and/or its purpose-NAME it, WHAT does it mean? (Visualization…what does that mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>RCOACH-MODEL:</em> Teacher demonstrates an example , Think Aloud or asks a question related to the model to get students to have a clearer understanding of strategy or skill.</td>
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</table>

**SCAFFOLD students in complex story comprehension:** (Which includes scaffolding both the drama strategies and the meaning-making)  

**SCAFF DI- Scaffold Dramatic Inquiry Strategy**-- Prior to students setting off to work dramatic inquiry strategy (e.g. embodying or speaking with a character ) Teacher turns summarize key points and/or guides students towards phrases/ pieces of text that could be important and/or  asks open-ended questions to get them considering some of the significant concerns of this interactional segment (If we know this…then what do you think about….? What kinds of questions would we want to ask… ???) Or making sure the students are understanding their dramatic focus…(e.g. tableau that comes to life)
*SCAFFMM-EMB.INQ*- Teacher scaffolds the students in their meaning-making process as they focus towards public performance.

---MMcomp.input
- repeat st utterance/ reading & emphasize key words using rising intonation and other expressive tone of voice sometimes adds meaningful gestures
- Repeats & Enunciates Key Words Clearly or intentionally has student enunciate clearly as part of shared context

---EMBinterpretations
Teacher’s turn might involve modeling interpretive possibilities with text extract in conjunction with prosody, intonation and embodiment (e.g. showing a possible body movement and spatial positioning in relationship to other character while saying selected lines with possible expression)

*SCAFF Justifications*—Teacher asks students to not just take a position but to justify their reason or interpretation. This might include Why do you think so?

*TEMBODIES (character)*- Teacher turn at talk is embodying a stance and way of talking as if a character from the story
Appendix F:  
Macbeth Fluency Passage

Name __________________________

hurly-burly – fighting
ere-fore
graymalkin – gray cat
paddock – toad
postern – fast travelers
anon – immediately

First Sister
When shall we three meet again 6
In thunder, lightning, or in rain? 12

Second Sister
When the hurlyburly's done, 16
When the battle's lost and won. 22

Third Sister
That will be ere the set of sun. 30

First Sister
Where the piece? 33

Second Sister
Upon the heath. 36

Third Sister
There to meet with Macbeth. 41

First Sister
I come, graymalkin! 44

Second Sister
Paddock calle. 46

Third Sister
Anani 47

ALL
Fair is foul, and foul is fair: 54
Hover through the fog and filthy air. 61

The weird sisters, hand in hand, 67
Posters of the sea and land, 73
Thus do go, about, about, 78
Three to thine, and threes to mine, 85
And threes again to make up nine. 92
Peace, the charm's wound up. 97

So foul and fair a day I have not seen. 107

Cold Score: Errors Score

Hot Score: Errors Score

491
Appendix G:
Midsummer Fluency Passage

Name _______________________________    Act 1 Scene 1 - Midsummer Night’s Dream

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid,
8   To you your father should be as a god,
17   One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
25   To whom you are but as a form in wax
35   By him imprinted and within his power
42   To leave the figure or disfigure it.
49   Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

54   So is Lysander.

57   In himself he is.
61   But in this kind, wanting your father’s voice
69   The other must be held the worthier.

76   I would my father looked but with my eyes.

85   Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.

93   I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
101  I know not by what power I am made bold,
111  Nor how it may concern my modesty
118  In such a presence here to plead my thoughts:
127  But I beseech your grace that I may know
136  The worst that may befall me in this case,
145  If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

151  Either to die the death or to abjure
159  Forever the society of men.

Words read ___________         Words read ___________
errors ___________ = ___________ - errors
_________ = ___________ Cold score
Hot score

492
After Hamlet had seen the ghost of his father, it wasn’t long until it seemed that Hamlet had changed. He walked around with looking pretty strange, but watching the King’s every move. One day, he barged into Ophelia’s chamber acting wild with his clothes all in disarray. Ophelia ran to her father, Polonius, very frightened. Polonius became excited and believed that Hamlet was in love with Ophelia and that this relationship had caused Hamlet to act strange. He said, “Love not returned has caused madness full blown”. Let’s go tell King Claudius.

Whoosh!

King Claudius was not sure that Hamlet was mad.. He thought and thought. He said “I need some spies to sniff out the truth!” SO, he called for two of Hamlet’s friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They agreed to spy on Hamlet and report back to the king for some extra money.

Whoosh!

Polonius returned to King Claudius with great news. Polonius said, “Since brevity is the soul of wit, I will be brief”. Ophelia had given her father the letters that Hamlet had written to her. Ophelia had followed her father’s advice and turned away Hamlet’s advances. Polonius believed that Hamlet must be mad with sorrow. Polonius said that he will watch his Ophelia and Hamlet together to see if this is true. King Claudius agreed.

Whoosh!

Hamlet was being watched by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. One day Hamlet was reading a book and walked passed Polonius. Polonius asked, “do you know me, my
lord?” and Hamlet replied, “You are a fishmonger!” Polonius shook his head and was now convinced that Hamlet was indeed, “far gone, far gone!”

Whoosh!

________________________